

# News story: Britain to take leading role in next-generation air power, as Defence Secretary launches Combat Air Strategy

Announcing the publication of the new [Combat Air Strategy](#) at the Farnborough International Airshow, the Defence Secretary said he had taken action to strengthen the UK's role as a global leader in the sector and to protect key skills across the UK industrial base.

He outlined the Strategy in front of the combat aircraft concept model which has been developed by UK industry in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence – being publicly unveiled for the first time, it acts as a powerful demonstration of the UK's world leading technical capability and industrial expertise.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We have been a world leader in the combat air sector for a century, with an enviable array of skills and technology, and this Strategy makes clear that we are determined to make sure it stays that way. It shows our allies that we are open to working together to protect the skies in an increasingly threatening future – and this concept model is just a glimpse into what the future could look like.

British defence industry is a huge contributor to UK prosperity, creating thousands of jobs in a thriving advanced manufacturing sector, and generating a UK sovereign capability that is the best in the world.

Today's news leaves industry, our military, the country, and our allies in no doubt that the UK will be flying high in the combat air sector as we move into the next generation.

For the last 100 years the UK combat air industrial sector has ensured the UK has been at the forefront of technological and engineering developments, delivering world leading capability to the RAF and our allies. This Strategy will ensure the UK continues to maintain this leading position.

The Strategy outlines the way in which the UK will acquire future Combat Air capabilities to maximise the overall value the UK derives from the sector. The framework will balance military capability, international influence, and economic and prosperity benefit along with the overall cost.

It reinforces the commitment in the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review to deliver the Future Combat Air System Technology Initiative (FCAS

TI). The Government, in partnership with industry, is taking steps to grow existing world-leading design engineering capacity and skills, ensuring that the UK continues to be at the cutting edge of combat air technology.

The concept aircraft has been put together by British firms including BAE Systems, Leonardo, MBDA and Rolls-Royce, which have joined together with the RAF Rapid Capabilities Office to form 'Team Tempest' to pursue the opportunity.

Team Tempest brings together the UK's world leading industry and sovereign capabilities across future combat air's four key technology areas: advanced combat air systems and integration (BAE Systems); advanced power and propulsion systems (Rolls-Royce); advanced sensors, electronics and avionics (Leonardo) and advanced weapon systems (MBDA).

The MOD will now set up a dedicated team to deliver the combat air acquisition programme. They will deliver a business case by the end of the year, and have initial conclusions on international partners by next summer – with engagement with potential partners beginning immediately.

Early decisions around how to acquire the capability will be confirmed by the end of 2020, before final investment decisions are made by 2025. The aim is then for a next generation platform to have operational capability by 2035.

The UK is already a world-leader in the combat air sector, with a mix of skills and technologies unique in Europe, supporting over 18,000 highly skilled jobs. The sector delivers a turnover in excess of £6bn a year and has made up over 80% of defence exports from the UK over the last ten years.

Investment in combat air technology, combined with the strengths of UK industry, has resulted in the UK being the only Tier 1 partner with the US on the F-35 Lightning II programme, with British industry delivering 15% by value of every F-35 built. The UK has been able to help define the operational capabilities of the aircraft, while reinforcing UK industrial capability, critical skills and supporting wider economic prosperity.

The UK also continues to lead the way in combat air power as one of the four partner nations in the Eurofighter Typhoon programme. With more than 20,000 flying hours on deployed operations to date, the Typhoon delivers world leading capability, unparalleled reliability and proven interoperability with our allies. The MOD will continue to invest in the Typhoon for decades to come, with the best technologies being carried forward on to next-generation systems.

The F-35 Lightning II and the Typhoon are two complementary multi-role combat aircraft that will make up the RAF's combat air fleet, placing the UK at the forefront of combat air technology – with the Typhoon expected to remain in UK service until at least 2040.

Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, said:

The Combat Air Strategy will bring together the best of our people,

industry and international partners to support the RAF lift-off into the next century of air power. Team Tempest demonstrates our commitment in ensuring that we continue to build our capabilities, draw upon our experience and history to bring forward a compelling vision for the next generation fighter jet. In last 100 years, the RAF has led the way and today's announcement is a clear demonstration of what lies ahead.

Charles Woodburn, Chief Executive of BAE Systems, said:

The UK's combat air capability, built by generations of committed and highly skilled people through a century long partnership between the RAF and industry, is admired the world over. The UK Government's Combat Air Strategy is a powerful statement of intent to invest in next generation combat air systems. We're proud to play a key role in this important programme, with our world leading technology, capability and skills, which will contribute to the UK's defence and prosperity for decades to come.

Warren East, Chief Executive Officer of Rolls-Royce, said:

As the UK's long-term power and propulsion partner, we warmly welcome the Government's announcement of a Combat Air Strategy. The UK's capability in combat air power and propulsion is at a critical point and this long-term commitment from Government will allow us to protect the expertise and key skills that are vital to retaining sovereign capability. It ensures that we are able to develop and deliver the advanced technologies that will be required in future combat air systems to help ensure our national security.

Norman Bone, Chairman and Managing Director of Leonardo in the UK, said:

As Britain's national champion for advanced defence electronics, we are proud to be a part of Team Tempest. Work we have conducted under research and development programmes such as FOAS and FCAS has significantly advanced our thinking with regards to the complex electronics required for future air combat scenarios and we stand ready to support the future needs of the Royal Air Force. We are excited about the work that's already been done, and the work still to do, on the FCAS TI programme and are all set for these activities to feed into the Typhoon successor programme.

Chris Allam, Managing Director of MBDA UK, said:

MBDA is proud to be providing its complex weapons expertise to the

Team Tempest partnership. Delivering effects is central to next generation combat air systems, and we will continue to invest in developing our world leading complex weapons and novel technologies to ensure the UK retains sovereign operational advantage and freedom of action in Combat Air. The strong partnership (through the Portfolio Management Agreement) between MBDA and the MoD has already changed the paradigm for complex weapons developments in the UK, delivered world leading capabilities to the UK Armed Forces and provided savings in terms of both time and money. The Team Tempest partnership has the potential to do the same for Combat Air.

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## [News story: RAF receives 20th Atlas transport aircraft](#)

Secretary of State for Defence Gavin Williamson announced the arrival today at a gala dinner at the Royal International Air Tattoo. The aircraft was handed over to the RAF at Brize Norton, home of the UK's Air Mobility Force. This coincided with crucial trials to test Atlas's ability to deliver cargo by parachute and undergo air-to-air refuelling using a RAF Voyager aircraft.

Atlas, which contributed to hurricane relief in the Caribbean last autumn as part of Operation Ruman, is currently deployed on operations in the Middle East and replaced C-130 Hercules in the South Atlantic this spring.

Secretary of State for Defence Gavin Williamson said:

From deploying troops to transporting armoured vehicles, the Atlas aircraft has played a global role in operations in the Middle East against Daesh and providing vital relief in the Caribbean. As we come closer to receiving the full fleet of aircraft, we can be proud of the role the Atlas has played in supporting the RAF lift-off into a new century of air power.

The newly-delivered aircraft has formally entered service with the RAF, ready to begin crew training ahead of operational deployment. The international Atlas programme, being delivered by Airbus, is supporting around 8,000 jobs in the UK. In total the UK has ordered 22 Atlas aircraft which are all expected to be delivered to the RAF by the early 2020s.

Adrian Baguley, Director Air Support for Defence Equipment and Support, the MOD's procurement organisation, said:

The DE&S Atlas delivery team, based at MOD Abbey Wood and Brize Norton, is proud to be delivering the Atlas aircraft for the RAF which means the UK has a world-leading tactical and strategic airlift capability. We will continue to work hand-in-hand with Airbus and trials personnel to ensure that this fleet of world-leading aircraft is fully delivered and qualified for UK operations.

The cargo delivery trial, carried out by a UK aircraft crewed by Air Warfare Centre and QinetiQ personnel, involved containers weighing around one tonne in weight being dropped in sequence over Salisbury Plain.

For the air-to-air refuelling trial, which took place near Seville in Spain, an Airbus-owned Atlas, operated by a joint crew including Airbus and UK personnel, received fuel from an RAF Voyager tanker aircraft over a wide range of altitudes and air speeds. The results from both trials are now being analysed with a view to delivering operational clearances.

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## [News story: Waddington to operate Protector, with best of British air power on show at Air Tattoo](#)

RIAT this year saw the arrival of the Protector from the US, paired with the announcement that RAF Waddington will be the main operating base for the aircraft, which continuing the foundations of flying Reaper, will operate this next generation, world leading aircraft.

The Defence Secretary also presented two British pilots with 1,000 flying hour certificates after they reached the milestone in the submarine hunting P8-A Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft being purchased by the UK. Squadron Leaders Mark Faulds and Ian Tuff reached the achievement as part of their time training in the Seedcorn crew with the United States Navy.

The UK has ordered nine of the aircraft, investing £3 billion over the next decade in its Maritime Patrol Capability, building upon the principle of collective defence and security and strengthening US-UK interoperability. The Defence Secretary recently cut the first turf on a £132 million facility for the new fleet at RAF Lossiemouth.

Speaking at RIAT, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The Royal International Air Tattoo is a perfect example of how Britain continues to lead the way in airpower, showing the story

from the historic Lancaster, to the stealthy F-35 Lightning and now the incredible arrival of the Protector.

Not only are we continuing to invest in our own people and capabilities, but we are fostering partnerships with close friends, working with our American allies as we bring the Protector on board and set the way forward for the future of our submarine-hunting capabilities. Today's show embodies how our RAF continue to have the equipment they need to protect our country and our interests around the world.



Protector, a new Remotely Piloted Air System (RPAS) ordered for the Royal Air Force. Crown copyright.

Marking the Protector's arrival into the UK in time for RIAT, Defence Minister Guto Bebb was also at Fairford to see the latest addition to the Royal Air Force.

In a historic first, the aircraft flew non-stop from North Dakota, United States to Gloucestershire in a flight that took over just over 20 hours, setting the record as the first Medium Altitude Long Endurance Remotely Piloted Air System (RPAS) to transit across the Atlantic.

Designed to double the RAF's Reaper capability, the Protector will provide world leading capability, able to persist for over 40 hours. The aircraft will contribute to Homeland and Defence tasks across the spectrum of operations, including but not limited to, military aid to civil authorities, and armed intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and target acquisition

at long range and for long periods until beyond the mid-2030's. The aircraft will be based at RAF Waddington, with planned investment of £93 million to construct a new purpose-built hanger as well new facilities and accommodation for crews.

Speaking at RIAT, Defence Minister Guto Bebb said:

Protector's arrival in the UK marks a significant milestone in our determination to target future threats that we face. The Protector will bring us an opportunity to enhance our armed surveillance abilities and increase our weapons payloads to deter those who seek to do us harm.

RAF Waddington is renowned as the home of the UK's eyes and ears in the sky, providing critical information about activity on the ground, in the air and at sea. Protector will help reinforce this capability and will not only give us a decisive advantage on the battlefield but will help us reach new heights to keep us safe at home and overseas.

The Protector is designed with anti-icing and lightning protection ensuring an unmatched ability to operate in adverse weather conditions. It will be able to contribute to an array of homeland defence tasks, including search and rescue, disaster monitoring or flood prevention activities. The Protector is also the world's first RPAS to be designed, built and certified against stringent NATO and UK safety standards.

It was also announced yesterday by the Chief of the Air Staff Sir Stephen Hillier that the first RAF Squadron to be equipped with this latest technology will be Number 31 Squadron, passing on the baton for the Squadron's proud operational record from the Tornado Force.

For the first flight across the Atlantic to succeed, the RAF provided guidance, advice and supervision of UK airspace procedures. To support bringing the aircraft into Service, the Protector Combined Test Team was recently established in the United States and is working closely with colleagues from industry and the United States Air Force to coordinate testing and evaluation of the vehicle.

The aircraft will be placed on static display at the Royal International Air Tattoo, demonstrating a key component of the future fleet the next generation aircraft.

As well as the demonstration of future equipment capabilities, RIAT featured the next generation of engineers and pilots. A cadet crew as part of a scheme sponsored by Boeing, showed off their fully working aircraft that they built.

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## Speech: Chief of the Defence Staff at Air Power Conference – 12 Jul 18

Great privilege to have the chance to be with you in this the RAF's 100th Year and my first conference as Chief of the Defence Staff – I'm 4 weeks in and rapidly building my tri-Service knowledge – and it was very helpful for me on Tuesday in terms of understanding some aircraft recognition and that sensational flypast that we saw.

And it's been quite a week really – the first death of a British citizen on British soil from nerve agent poisoning, dynamic politics at home and internationally, a pivotal NATO summit – and sadly football's not coming home just yet.

These are demanding times that seem to become more demanding every year – and the resources don't become any easier. Meanwhile, the strategic context is complex and dynamic, and the threats that were identified in our 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review have diversified, proliferated and intensified rather more rapidly than we anticipated. The upshot is a global playing field characterised by constant competition and confrontation, which has increasingly assertive and aggressive states, utilising techniques below the threshold of what we would once have called conventional war, all of which is overlaid by the threat of terrorism from violent extremist organisations – hence we are presented with challenges on multiple fronts.

This is felt in every domain, but it is particularly marked in the Air Domain with six Air Expeditionary Wings deployed, involving some 16 missions in some 28 different countries across five continents. And these missions are also remarkably varied, from sustaining a now four-year task of countering violent extremism in the Middle East, requiring great precision and integration; and as we saw in April, the need to take markedly greater risk in response to the Syrian regime's use of chemical weapons; and in Europe the 24/7 task of protecting our air space, requiring a high degree of readiness and responsiveness, as well as contributing forces to NATO Air Policing.

Resolving this challenge requires us to mobilize to match the threats of today, while in tandem 'wing-walking', which I will come back to, to a modernized future with a horizon of say 2030, enabled, in Defence's case, by a multi-year transformation programme that places Defence on a more sustainable footing, and will enable us to run the 'business' better – not least by properly defining Jointery as the integration of the domains to achieve an output that adds up to far more than the sum of the parts.

This level of commitment inevitably begs questions about prioritisation, about long-term sustainability and about the importance of striking the right balance between 'fight tonight' and 'fight tomorrow'. Particularly as it's rarely possible nowadays to retain forces as dedicated contingent capability – we are now far more likely to recommit forces that are already deployed. The problem though is compounded by the nature of the threat.



But there are also some difficult questions being posed about the evolving character of warfare in which our state-based competitors have become masters at exploiting the seams between peace and war – what constitutes a weapon in this grey area no longer has to go ‘bang’ – energy, cash, corrupt business practices, cyber attacks, assassination, fake news, propaganda – and good old-fashioned military intimidation – are all examples of the weapons used to gain advantage in this era of ‘constant competition’; and the rules-based international architecture that has assured our stability and prosperity since 1945 is, I would suggest, therefore threatened.

To be clear, we face a strategic challenge that requires a strategic response – we will fail if we see this as a series of crises.

The deduction we should draw from this – is that there is no longer two clear distinct states of ‘peace’ and ‘war’ – we now have several forms – indeed the character of war and peace is different for each of the contexts in which these ‘weapon systems’ are applied. And the risk we run in not defining this clearly, and acting accordingly, is that rather like a chronic contagious disease, it will creep up on us, and our ability to act will be markedly constrained – and we’ll be the losers of this competition.

While not alone in employing these techniques, the arch exponent of this is Russia – probably the most complex and capable state-based threat to our way of life since the end of the Cold War – and recapping on Russia’s approach provides a useful lens through which to view this type of challenge. In so doing we should recognise that they have no single model for conflict. They use a multi model approach – utilising conventional, unconventional and nuclear domains – a hybrid version that might involve little green men, big green tanks and huge green missiles.

Their thinking is very flexible – their General Staff is able to change, evolve, learn lessons with agility – for example they know that demography is not on their side – so they are developing capability that needs fewer men. They have developed coherent concepts of equipment and training that are focused on our vulnerabilities – for example, our dependency on technology, space and digital communications; our lack of massed fires; and so on and so forth.

They apply a ruthless focus on defeating their opponents – not seizing ground for the sake of it – but making sure that our vital ground and our long assumed freedom to project power as we see fit is denied to us, and this has major implications for the Air domain – I shall return to their missile capability in a moment. Since 2016 we have seen a marked shift to cyber, subversion and coercion as well as sophisticated use of smear campaigns and fake news – for example interference in the US democratic process and the attempted coup in Montenegro.

Chris Donnelly at the Institute for Statecraft suggests that they are creating new strategic conditions – their current influence and disinformation campaign is a form of ‘system’ warfare that seeks to delegitimise the political and social system on which our military strength is based – and undermine our centre of gravity which they rightly assess is our

political cohesion.

China is also developing its military capabilities, reported recently in the open press that it is expanding its expeditionary capability to, I quote, "manage a crisis, contain a conflict, win a war" – developments include the testing of stealth and anti-stealth technology, and the application of information technology in all aspects of military operations is becoming ever more prominent.

Now I'm not in any way suggesting that Russia, or any other of these state-based threats wants to go to war in the traditional definition of the term – rather it is the risk of escalation leading to miscalculation that is the greatest threat, as we don't have the same level of understanding that we had in the Cold War, and the tried and tested systems and diplomatic instruments are not what they were – confidence building measures, arms reduction negotiations, public monitoring and inspection of each others' military activity etc. But that said we should be wary of bigging them up too much – remember what we found at the end of the Cold War.

This then is the context in which we are conducting the Modernizing Defence Programme.

There are two major themes to this: the compelling need to mobilize rapidly to meet the threats I have described, while in parallel modernizing for what the future may bring, with the latter being enabled by a multi-year transformation programme that I referred to earlier, that will lead to the 'business' of Defence being managed very differently in ten years-time.

Starting with mobilization, this envisages much improved readiness – recognising this is about speed of recognition, speed of decision making and speed of assembly. It's about resilience and lethality – and the important thing, it's about demonstrating that we are prepared to fight the war we might have to fight, because that is the best way of deterring that war from happening.

The NATO Readiness Initiative seeks to do just this, linked to an exercise rhythm that increases the base load of activity so that the foundation of readiness is much higher. But it's got to become much more integrated and much more joint by design. At the moment the domains work in stovepipes, we must pull them more closely together. It's also about forward basing, stockpiles, much improved resilience and getting serious about rapid deployability. It's about giving real meaning to the SDSR statement that we would be 'international by design'. And it is tremendous to see in this auditorium today the extent to which our allies and partners are with us. We have a number of bilateral and multilateral relationships as Armed Forces – for example the recent signing of the UK Joint Expeditionary Force Comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding is a significant step in working together to develop genuine interoperability which will be a force multiplier.

As a lead framework nation, the UK must enable interoperability by providing technical systems that are extrovert by nature so that our partners have the sockets they can plug into for shared situational awareness, for a common

operating picture, and for the coordination of digital joint fires. But deep interoperability is built on long-term relationships, developed by exercising together, testing doctrine and tactics together, and building mutual trust and understanding.

International by design is also about delivering more capability in partnership with Allies. We see that in the Land domain with general support engineering with the Bundeswehr in Germany, and the international collaboration with the US Navy and Norway on maritime patrol aircraft – partnerships of this kind deliver economies of scale and generate a higher operational tempo than we could achieve on our own.

And as we mobilize we must think creatively – it is not about matching an adversary's strength with strength, but thinking about how to out-manoeuvre him by threatening his vulnerabilities, by holding what he cares about at risk and by thinking laterally and asymmetrically. This will likely involve prioritizing some new capabilities – such as those that will allow us to manoeuvre in the information domain to create information advantage, enhancing our range of capabilities in cyber, space, electronic warfare and information operations – and to build our own resilience and protect our critical national infrastructure and other vulnerabilities – such as our networks, such as CBRN, and survivability – all working within a cross-Government framework to utilise all of the levers of national power.

And we must build our strategic depth – seizing the opportunity that the newly amended Data Protection Act allows, for us to retain effective contact with those ex-Regulars who are statutorily liable for mobilization. And in due course, starting next year, conduct routine mobilization exercises for the Reserve and the Regular Reserve, with Ministerial engagement, as we used to in days gone by.

Rarely are there any purely military solutions, so we must maximize Defence's contribution within the idea of 'Global Britain' and in a cross-Whitehall context for best strategic effect. This means thinking of ways to generate more points of presence, making more productive use of those capabilities that are not designed for the higher levels of risk associated with war-fighting scenario. Holding these at a lower 'war-fighting' readiness and utilising them on tasks to generate understanding and build relationships, to enable soft power to have effect, building institutions, capacity and resilience in nations that matter to us – as well as countering the agendas of our competitor states ... not least in Africa – which will be a source of significant instability by 2030 if nothing is done.

In tandem with mobilizing – we must get the right balance between 'fight tonight' and 'fight tomorrow' – hence the importance of placing the right emphasis on modernization.

As Richard Susskind advised in his book 'The Future of the Professions: How Technology will Transform the work of Human Experts' – the best way to predict the future is to invent it. The Chief Scientific Adviser, who I think you will hear from later this morning, identified what he calls 'big bets.'

It is reasonable to assume that information technology – sensors, computing, communications, cyber, machine learning, artificial intelligence and autonomy and so on – will continue to evolve apace and that information manoeuvre, which enables information advantage is already a domain in its own right. This will clearly be at the heart of modernisation – and it is absolutely vital that we establish the information architecture to provide the open systems framework for all of our capability.

In the underwater battle space, new information technologies will revolutionise detection, tracking and understanding of potential threats – using advanced machine learning methods for acoustic signal processing and increasing the use of autonomous systems for mine control measures and fleet protection.

In the land domain, resilient communication networks combined with pervasive, organic and real-time intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance will give unprecedented understanding and situational awareness. Combining this with modern effects – directed energy, electromagnetic attack, delivery of tactical offensive cyber – will substantially contribute to war-fighting mass and deterrent effect.

Future air power will also be driven by information advantage and its application in enabling understanding, protection and effect. Situational awareness must increasingly be delivered through fusion of data from multiple sensors on multiple platforms and organic distribution to all of the force – with implications for spectrum management, communication, algorithmic warfare and autonomy.

At the same time modern concepts of multi-functional antennas mean that platforms must simultaneously become sensors, communication networks, directed-energy attack vectors and deliverers of cyber effect. The needs of air survivability and our ability to project power by countering anti-area-access denial will drive a further step change in the use of information and physical technology – autonomy, shared information and the mixed role of air platforms and future complex weapon systems.

The joint force though must also expand to include all of government in enabling the nation to deter and defeat the full spectrum of threats and actors. The role of information technology here is profound – from bringing together understanding and situational awareness through advanced data fusion, through the use of machine learning and artificial intelligence to recommend courses and consequences of actions, to the delivery of a range of non-traditional deterrent effects.

We also know that automation and AI will change the make up of the future force, with it being increasingly made up of different types of people on different types of engagements, shared across similar sectors in the UK, thus ensuring that we can access the skills and talent we need to fight and win in the future. The force structure will need to be as adaptable as possible, whilst maintaining the core of war fighting professionalism.

None of this will surprise any of you in this room, we've heard this sort of

thing before – and you will recognise that the challenge is how we actually make it happen. And it must be different this time – it must be led from the top and it must be properly resourced. Above all we have to establish a culture of innovation – if you like, an open architecture and a Defence portfolio – in which we unlock the ingenuity and talent of every level in Defence. This means creating the headroom for experimentation, providing a laboratory in which we can test ideas and ‘wing walk’ our way towards a modernized future. This audience will understand the metaphor – moving on the wings of an airframe during flight – but keeping one foot on the airframe while you do it. It requires an appetite for risk, and a preparedness to accept some failure.

There are good examples of innovation in all the domains – particularly in the RAF’s Rapid Capabilities Office – ‘Team Tempest’ – which is achieving much with the BriteCloud expendable active decoy and the improvements to end-to-end manufacture of advanced flares. We now need to take this I would suggest to a new level.

Not least because experimenting in this way would enable a very different relationship with industry – a shared approach to risk and opportunity – with innovation at the heart of procurement. It would encourage external investment, venture capital and a culture that contracted for through life outcomes, rather than setting tightly specified requirements that stifle development.

This is a feature of Philip Dunne’s report, that was published this week, in which he talks of modernizing our approach to acquisition, increasing our agility and pace, and adopting a culture more focused on finding the right procurement solutions, and less on defining and avoiding obstacles at the outset. This requires us to develop better understanding of how defence requirements and the market interact and shape each other.

Despite the changing character of warfare, the nature of war does not change – it remains a human endeavor, and there will inevitably be some Industrial Age capabilities in our Armed Forces come 2030. So as we mobilize to face the threats of today, and place ever greater emphasis on modernizing – we should remember the wise advice of our most eminent military historian Sir Michael Howard when he observed: “the trick is not to perfectly predict the future, but to be not too far wrong when war breaks out, so that one is well prepared to adapt at speed”.

And we must never forget that war is about fighting – so the context for all our effort must be about preparing to fight the war we might have to fight – because as I said earlier, in so doing we will deter that war from ever happening. And this was at the forefront of Lord Trenchard’s vision 100 years ago. As you think about the Next Generation Air Force I’m going to present you with a deadly serious – and practical task. You have just heard me say, as I have said before, that we face a series of very grave challenges to adapt – so that we can cope with the threats that the future, both near and far term, may throw at our country with little warning.

We will not defeat these new threats by rebuilding our old Defence system,

buying a few more pieces of equipment, filling some gaps in our recruiting. We need to embrace the radical changes of the modern world and meet these challenges with new, creative thinking; by taking risks; by finding new ways to expand our Forces effectively in time of urgent need; by adapting tools we have to new, unforeseen tasks; by defeating any enemy asymmetrically – not attritionally.

The task I am setting all of you, therefore is not to design a new force structure; not to invent new weapons; not to create a new concept of Air Power. No – it is to create, invent, design, introduce, at every level of command, new ways of thinking, new forms of leadership and management that will enable us to embrace new ideas, to integrate and exploit new technologies, transforming our current system into something which is permanently innovative, adaptable, responsive and proactive.

I do not want to hear new ready-made answers; I need to hear new ways of finding answers for future, unforeseeable threats, and new ways for us to keep on finding answers. This is much more difficult and painful, I know, because it needs us to change the way we think, act, acquire equipment, exercise command and lead. We are at, I think, a paradigm shift in the character of conflict: we need to change the way we do things fundamentally.

This is the essence of modernizing Defence. Fail to change now and our adversaries, slowly but surely, will overcome us, they will erode and finally overturn the democratic, rules based, stable system under which we have all lived comfortably for nigh on three generations. I fear our 70-year long holiday from history may well be over – and we all have a job to do to fix it.

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## [News story: Don't Blow It! Safely eliminating munitions on the battlefield](#)

*Updated:* Text updated to reflect competition is now active and addition of closing date for submission of proposals

The Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) has launched a new competition aimed at the private sector and academia, to seek innovative solutions and approaches to accessing, disabling and/or irreversibly destroying chemical and biological weapons munitions, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and bulk agents in challenging environments.

The competition is aimed at non-traditional defence and security innovators. DASA will be particularly interested to hear from those in allied technology

areas such as the oil and gas, mining sectors as well as those which have experience in handling hazardous materials.

With an initial £500,000 to fund multiple proof-of-concept proposals at low Technology Readiness Levels (TRL), it is anticipated that an additional funding of £1.5 million may be available depending on the outcome of the initial funding phase.

It is joint funded by the UK Ministry of Defence and the US Department of Defense, and will operate under an existing memorandum of understanding between both nations.

The competition launched at an event in London on 26 September 2018 and will close for submission of proposals on the 19 November 2018 at 5 pm (UK time).

## **Competition Document**

Details about the competition can be found [here](#).

Any queries regarding this competition, should be sent to [accelerator@dstl.gov.uk](mailto:accelerator@dstl.gov.uk)