

The Defence Command Paper sets out the future for our armed forces

The Integrated Review heralds a step change in how the UK engages and operates across the world. The [Defence Command Paper](#) has now set out what it means for defence. Strategic Command will be at the heart of the modernisation of the UK's armed forces.

Why it was necessary

The threats of today are different from those we are used to. Our adversaries no longer only seek to challenge us in open, large-scale warfare, but instead seek to use activities below the threshold of open war.

There now exists a global competition over trade, values and interests, and the expansion of the internet and the development of new technologies have created more potential ways for our enemies to do us harm.

As they seek to exploit our vulnerabilities to further their causes and constantly compete with us, they are careful to avoid fights in the open unless they can deny us our advantages and are confident of victory.

What it means for defence

To keep the UK safe in this changing world, defence will be more active and globally engaged. We will work with our partners to address the challenges we face and secure the interests we share.

Each of the armed forces and Strategic Command are seeing increases in investment as defence begins a genuine transition to information age capability.

We will focus on speed, operating below the threshold of war to prevent conflict, and building resilience. With international co-operation and new technology at the heart of our approach, we will be more visible around the world; more engaged in countering threats, supporting our partners and advancing UK interests; and smarter in how we use communications and intelligence to deter our enemies.

More of the overall force will be deployed to support the UK and our allies' interests, more of the time.

What it means for Strategic Command

There has been substantial investment in many areas for which Strategic Command is responsible.

Firstly, the importance of data and digitisation has been highlighted as critical to ensuring a modern, integrated defence which has information at

the heart of how it will understand, decide and act.

Strategic Command, through Defence Digital will help deliver this by:

- developing our IT and communications systems or our digital backbone
- creating an artificial intelligence centre of excellence, as part of a wider digital foundry initiative
- growing our classified IT through the development of secret cloud technology.

The importance of understanding an increasingly complex world is recognised by the investments in Defence Intelligence (DI). Through DI, Strategic Command will lead on the application of artificial intelligence and autonomy – processing data faster, achieving deeper insights and making better decisions that outpace our adversaries. We will also lead the way in developing the UK Defence's approach to information warfare.

In the cyber domain, we have secured key investments that recognise the domain as the most competitive and contested in the next 10 years. We will keep pace with our adversaries thanks to:

- investment in our cyber defence
- multi-year funding for the National Cyber Force
- the development of cyber skills through a cyber academy
- the establishment of a dedicated team to manage our activities in the electromagnetic environment.

Through our Directorate of Special Forces, we will ensure that our world-leading special forces continue to counter an expanding array of threats, including those in the sub-threshold environment. We will also enable closer integration and sharing of equipment capabilities between the special forces and other partners across government.

Our Defence Medical Services will continue to deliver world-class medical care, which best fits the future force. We will continue to work with our partners in the NHS, invest in medical innovation, and ensure that our medical personnel are managed properly.

Our newly formed Defence Support organisation will continue to deliver critical logistic support to operations around the world. They will begin modernisation programmes which will enhance decision making and the effectiveness and resilience of Support operations, to increase equipment availability and readiness. Through this change, Defence Support will ensure that our strategic base is efficient, modern and suited to the strategy of persistent engagement.

Our overseas bases are a critical to both supporting operations and in ensuring the vision of a more globally engaged defence. As such, we will see improvements to the capability and capacity of our overseas bases, and Strategic Command will continue to support them through the Directorate of Overseas Bases.

In the increasingly contested domain of space, we will work alongside RAF and

newly formed Space Command as part of defence's ambitions for space. Strategic Command will deliver the SKYNET 6 programme. A £5.2-billion investment to enhance our satellite communication capabilities, we will launch our first satellite in 2025 with plans to launch up to four more in the next decade.

There is also investment in an integrated synthetic and modelling enterprise, and the investment of £6.6-billion on research and development will support some game-changing technology development across Strategic Command.

This is an important moment for defence. With the prominent and growing roles of cyber, space, and special forces, Strategic Command will ensure our armed forces are better integrated, and able to compete in a changing world.