



DEBATE PACK

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The Government's review of defence capability

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Debate initiated by Marcus Fysh MP

Compiled by:
Nigel Walker

Subject specialists:
Louisa Brooke-Holland
Claire Mills

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

1. Summary

Just before summer recess the Government launched a review of national security capabilities, to be led by the National Security Advisor. The review is understood to include the defence capabilities of the armed forces. It is unclear when the review will be published or in what format.

The review comes at a time of heightened concern about the financial ability of the Ministry of Defence to deliver all of the equipment it has committed to. The current Defence Equipment Plan outlines a £178bn spend over the next decade on equipment. The National Audit Office warned at the beginning of the year “the risks to the affordability of the Ministry of Defence Equipment Plan are greater than at any point since reporting began in 2012”.

The NAO particularly highlighted concerns about the cost of additional commitments exceeding the increase in funding for the plan and the reliance on making efficiency savings to bridge the gap. The NAO warned “there is little room for unplanned cost growth” and expressed concern about the plan’s vulnerability to changes in foreign exchange rates, given that approximately £18.6bn is to be paid in US dollars. The UK is buying new combat aircraft, maritime patrol aircraft and Apache attack helicopters from the US.

Speculation about what may be cut has been rife in the media. The Navy’s amphibious capabilities have come under particular attention, with the potential retirement of its amphibious ships and cuts to the Royal Marines, and also to helicopter numbers.

Library briefing paper [*The defence capability review: equipment*](#) provides a simple introduction to the major front-line equipment of the armed forces.

2. Press Articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

[PM's former security adviser warns of Brexit defence cuts](#)

Observer
Michael Savage
14 October 2017

[Threat to marine landing ships and navy helicopters in defence review](#)

The Times
Deborah Haynes
6 October 2017

[Britain should increase 2% defence spending target, says Michael Fallon](#)

Daily Telegraph
Ben Farmer and Con Coughlin
3 October 2017

[HMS Queen Elizabeth: UK's new £3bn aircraft carrier dismissed as 'massive distraction'](#)

Independent
Lizzie Dearden
16 August 2017

[Ready for action? U.K. reviews defense capabilities before leaving Europe](#)

Newsweek
Josh Lowe
27 July 2017

[Soldiers and spies face review amid fears for defence budget](#)

The Times
Deborah Haynes
21 July 2017

[Forces cuts 'mean the UK cannot deploy a division abroad in future war': Damning US report warns defence chiefs will struggle to sustain more than 6,500 troops in a future conflict](#)

Daily Mail
Larisa Brown and David Williams
31 May 2017

[Spiralling cost of UK defence projects signals hard choices](#)

Financial Times
Sam Jones
5 February 2017

3. Journal Articles

[UK defence secretary wants to grow budget above NATO 2% GDP target](#)

Jane's Defence Weekly
Tim Ripley
4 October 2017

[UK launches defence plans review](#)

Jane's Defence Weekly
Tim Ripley
25 July 2017

[Ministry of Defence Facing Tough Financial Choices](#)

RUSI
Peter Roberts
29 June 2017

[General Election 2017: A Strategic Moment for Defence?](#)

John Louth
RUSI
2 June 2017

4. Press Releases

Strategic Defence and Security Review Implementation

Cabinet Office and National security and intelligence

20 July 2017

The government has initiated work on a review of national security capabilities, in support of the ongoing implementation of the [National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review](#) (NSS & SDSR) which was published in November 2015.

The work will be led by Mark Sedwill, the National Security Adviser, with individual strands taken forward by cross-departmental teams, and will be carried out alongside continued implementation and monitoring of the 89 principal commitments set out in the NSS & SDSR.

The national security capability review will include examination of the policy and plans which support implementation of the national security strategy, and help to ensure that the UK's investment in national security capabilities is as joined-up, effective and efficient as possible, to address current national security challenges. The review will also be informed by work which has already been commissioned in response to recent national security-related incidents.

The government is committed to report annually on progress in implementing the NSS & SDSR, and published its First Annual Report on implementation in December 2016. Further progress on implementation of the NSS & SDSR, and related work, will be reported in the Second Annual Report after the end of the second year of implementation.

As detailed in the [First Annual Report](#), the government will set out in subsequent annual reports where a significant change of approach in implementing the NSS & SDSR is considered necessary as a result of changes to the national security environment.

Flexible working for Armed Forces

Ministry of Defence

21 June 2017

New arrangements to attract and retain the best men and women for our Armed Forces by adapting service life to meet their modern needs and aspirations have today been announced in the Queen's Speech.

The changes will deliver a career which is as flexible as possible by allowing service personnel to work part time for short periods, as long as the operational effectiveness of the military is maintained.

The measures, which are due to come into effect in 2019, are part of the Armed Forces (Flexible Working) Bill. They will also limit the amount of time that personnel will need to spend away from their home-base and their families.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

To compete for the best people in society our Armed Forces must offer a career that better reflects the realities of modern life. Allowing greater flexibility over how long and where people work will help attract and keep the talent we need to keep Britain safe.

The Bill will amend parts of the Armed Forces Act 2006, and the new arrangements were developed after a consultation with the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force. Personnel said they wanted more choice over the way they serve for when their circumstances change; such as starting a family, or undertaking caring commitments.

Applications for part time working will be assessed against the needs of the individual and the need of the Armed Forces to maintain operational effectiveness. Personnel would still be required to deploy on operations, at any time, should the need arise.

This will lead to more balanced lifestyles with opportunities for Service personnel to serve in a way that better suits their personal aspirations and family circumstances. Reserve personnel will benefit from these changes, as we continue to seek to increase opportunities for them to serve in a greater range of roles alongside Regular personnel.

These reforms are part of the modern offer to personnel and the government's commitment to strengthen the Armed Forces Covenant, which was enshrined in law in 2011 to ensure Service personnel are not disadvantaged through their work.

The government also reaffirmed its NATO commitment to spend at least 2% of GDP on defence in the Queen's speech.

[Publication of Annual Report 2016 on the National Security Strategy & Strategic Defence & Security Review 2015](#)

**Ministry of Defence
15 December 2016**

Acting UK Ambassador to NATO, Paul Johnston, announces how the UK's commitments to NATO in last year's SDSR are being realised.

On 7 December, the UK Government published its first Annual Report to Parliament on the 2015 National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence & Security Review (SDSR).

The 2015 SDSR set out our vision of a secure and prosperous United Kingdom, with global reach and influence. It established three overarching National Security Objectives: 'protect our people'; 'project our global influence' and 'promote our prosperity'.

Nothing that has happened since has changed those fundamental objectives, nor the importance of our NATO membership to securing them: if anything, the latter has increased.

The Annual Report sets out progress on achieving our objectives, many of which are central to our Alliance commitments. For example, the Government:

- is investing in the renewal of the UK's independent nuclear deterrent;
- has launched a new National Cyber Security Centre; and
- has expanded the UK's diplomatic and defence engagement networks.

We have created a joint FCO/MOD department to shape our policy on NATO and European security, mirroring the joint FCO/MOD delegation we have in NATO.

Since the SDSR was published in November 2015, the Government has also renewed its commitment to spend 2% of GDP on defence (one of only 4 European Allies to meet this NATO target), with a real terms increase of 0.5% a year in the defence budget until 2020-21, and 0.7% of GNI spent on overseas development, also crucial to long-term national security.

We are the only NATO Ally to do 2% and 0.7%. We are also one of the few Allies to be spending more than 20% of our budget on equipment, the other NATO target, including new aircraft carriers, maritime patrol aircraft and fighter jets.

We have also:

- agreed to deploy a battalion to Estonia and an infantry company to Poland, strengthening NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence;
- increased our military presence in Iraq helping to train Iraqi forces, which NATO will also be contributing to from next month;
- renewed our participation in joint naval operations to tackle illegal migration in the Mediterranean;
- decided to deploy UK fighter aircraft to contributing to the NATO Southern Air Policing task in Romania;
- helped remove 500 tonnes of chemical weapons precursors from Libya;
- reiterated its commitment to double the number of UK troops on UN peace-keeping missions

As the Annual Report describes, there have been changes to the international environment since 2015, including the UK's decision to leave the European Union.

But the main threats to our security remain: state-based threats; terrorism and extremism; cyber attacks from state and non-state actors; and renewed challenges to the rules-based international order. And therefore the central role which the SDSR gave to our Alliance membership and the contributions we make to NATO remain also.

5. PQs

[Strategic Defence and Security Review](#)

13 Oct 2017 | 105935

Asked by: Keith Vaz

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he will conduct a new Strategic Defence and Security Review when the UK leaves the EU.

Answering member: Sir Michael Fallon | Department: Ministry of Defence

In the light of the rapidly changing international situation and the intensification of the threats identified in the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review, the Government is conducting a National Security Capability Review to ensure our capabilities are as effective and efficient as possible. Defence is playing a full role in this work - undertaken to look again at the specific capabilities available not just to the Ministry of Defence but across Government, to ensure that as threats intensify we continue to have the right capabilities in the right places to meet them.

[Antiship Missiles](#)

10 Oct 2017 | 105167

Asked by: Andrew Bowie

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the Royal Navy's decision to withdraw the Harpoon anti-ship missile by the end of 2018 on the capabilities of the Royal Navy.

Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Department: Ministry of Defence

The Royal Navy continuously reviews the capabilities it requires. While work is in hand to consider options for the replacement of the Harpoon missile system, the Navy has decided to extend its service life beyond 2018.

[Defence: Industry](#)

09 Oct 2017 | 10169

Asked by: Rebecca Long Bailey

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to publish a defence industrial review.

Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Department: Ministry of Defence

The Ministry of Defence is actively involved in the cross-Government work on an industrial strategy. Many of the themes in this apply to defence, and we do not plan a separate defence industrial strategy or review. However, as part of the recently announced National Security and Capability Review, we are refreshing defence industrial policy and taking further action to help the UK's defence industry grow and compete successfully.

Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft

09 Oct 2017 | 10166

Asked by: Rebecca Long Bailey

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to ensure that the UK has the capacity to manufacture (a) parts for and (b) whole manned and unmanned fighter aircraft.

Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Department: Ministry of Defence

The Defence Aerospace and the Combat Air sector make a strategically important contribution to securing our military operational advantage and freedom of action, developing high-end technologies and a skilled workforce, and generates revenues and international influence through exports. UK industry leads the world in a number of technology, design and manufacturing capability areas, and maintaining those capabilities is in our national interest.

In the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 we launched the Future Combat Air System Technology Initiative (FCAS TI) which is sustaining our design engineering capacity and skills, ensuring that the UK continues to be at the cutting edge of combat air technology. This includes our cooperation with France to design and build an Unmanned Combat Air Vehicle Demonstrator.

Our investment in the F-35 programme has secured 15% workshare (by value) of every F-35 to be built in the global programme of 3,000 aircraft, sustaining high-end manufacturing capabilities, skills and capacity as well as providing enduring economic benefit. In addition, from early 2018 North Wales will be home to a global hub, providing maintenance, repair, overhaul and upgrade services for F-35 avionics and aircraft components. Over the lifetime of the programme, the components for hundreds of European-based F-35 aircraft will be serviced and maintained at the site. Similarly our acquisition of, and success in exporting, Typhoon aircraft has provided a considerable manufacturing workload, particularly in the North West of England.

The Ministry of Defence is considering our future combat air capability requirements and the best approach to delivering the UK's operational needs as well as maintaining our leading role in the combat air sector. This will involve detailed consideration of the industrial, prosperity, international and financial implications as well as a clear military requirement.

Military Intelligence

27 Jul 2017 | HL864

Asked by: Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

Her Majesty's Government what proposals they have for maintaining the UK's intelligence, surveillance, targeting, acquisition, and reconnaissance capability.

Answering member: Earl Howe | Department: Ministry of Defence

The Ministry of Defence continues to sustain and deliver multiple intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance (ISTAR) programmes in line with our announcements during the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015. These capabilities enable us to build our understanding across the five domains of Space, Maritime, Land, Air and Cyber. We also continue to benefit from significant investment in our ability to share intelligence across Government and with key Allies.

During 2016, two major ISTAR programmes sponsored by Joint Forces Command and now in delivery with the Royal Air Force received approval to proceed to the demonstration and manufacture phases of the acquisition cycle. The P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft will be operated from RAF Lossiemouth and enhance our ability to counter an increasing submarine threat. Protector will replace Reaper as the UK's armed remotely piloted air system (RPAS) capability and will be equipped with UK precision-guided weapons.

Our Signals Intelligence capability has been enhanced by improvements to Royal Navy platforms and by the recent delivery of the third Airseeker aircraft.

We have also learned much from the investment in our ability to fuse open source intelligence with more traditional sources, and our ability to analyse this increasing amount of data will be improved by further investment in data science capabilities.

Finally, in order to ensure the UK remains one step ahead of our adversaries, we continue to invest in science and technology to develop new sensors and improve our ability to exploit information.

[Strategic Defence and Security Review](#)

20 Jul 2017 | 5407

Asked by: Dan Jarvis

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the review of the 2015 strategic defence and security review will take place.

Answering member: Sir Michael Fallon | Department: Ministry of Defence

I refer the hon. Member to the Cabinet Office statement of earlier today.

The Government has initiated work on a review of national security capabilities in support of the continued implementation of the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review.

To ensure that in the light of current national security challenges that our capabilities are as effective and efficient as possible, Defence will be playing a full role in this work.

[Aircraft Carriers: Unmanned Air Vehicles](#)

18 Jul 2017 | 4336

Asked by: Kevan Jones

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what funding has been (a) approved and (b) considered for the development of an additional unmanned air systems capability for the Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers.

Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Department: Ministry of Defence

The priorities for integration into the carriers at the initial operating capability in 2020 remain F-35B Lightning, Maritime Force Protection Helicopters (Merlin Mk2 ASW/Crowsnest) and Battlefield Helicopters. With a planned life of around 50 years, we will continue to review the capabilities to be integrated into the Queen Elizabeth Class carriers in line with other Defence investment priorities at the appropriate time.

[Royal Marines](#)

04 Apr 2017 | 782 c944

Asked by: Lord Stirrup

My Lords, I listened very carefully to the answers the Minister has given. If there is a key strategic judgment to be made about the balance of capabilities between the surface fleet and the Royal Marines, surely the last strategic defence and security review was the time and opportunity to do that. It was not done then, so is not the only conclusion we can draw from the current situation that there is insufficient funding in the Ministry of Defence to afford what was decided upon at the end of the last SDSR?

Answered by: Earl Howe

My Lords, we set out our key priorities in the 2015 strategic defence and security review. At that time we announced an £11 billion investment package towards our highest priority defence equipment needs over the course of this Parliament. We have been quite open that some of the funding for this is contingent on delivering efficiency savings. I concede that the savings are challenging, but we are working very hard to deliver them.

[Armed Forces: Deployment](#)

03 Feb 2017 | HL4955

Asked by: Lord Touhig

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the length of time it would take to deploy Joint Force 2025 following authorisation of the Prime Minister, in the light of the maximum 66,000 personnel which may be deployed, as set out in Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015: Defence Key Facts.

Answering member: Earl Howe | Department: Ministry of Defence

Joint Force 2025 will be composed of a full spectrum of capabilities, and be able to conduct a wide range of operations, up to major combat operations. At the most demanding end of the scale we will be able to deploy a potent expeditionary force of around 50,000. Deployment times would depend on the scale, expected duration and location of the commitment.

6. Other Parliamentary material

6.1 Debates

[Armed Forces: Capability](#)

12 Jan 2017 | House of Lords | 777 cc2122-2161

6.2 Statements

[Defence Infrastructure Reform](#)

13 Jan 2017 | HCWS410

Mark Lancaster (Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Defence):

Defence infrastructure is a vital component in enabling the Armed Forces to train and prepare for operations, and for the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to deliver its outputs. The MOD spends nearly £5 billion each year operating, maintaining, constructing and disposing of its extensive infrastructure base, which represents 1.8% of the UK land area.

In November, we announced a long term programme to invest £4 billion over the next decade in an estate that will help deliver Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015's ambitious plan for Joint Force 2025 enabling savings in running costs of £140 million over 10 years, whilst releasing 91 of our most expensive sites by 2040. This will help to deliver the MOD's contribution of land sufficient for 55,000 new homes towards the Government's housing target.

In parallel, we have reviewed how our estate is managed and infrastructure decisions are approached, taken, and implemented across the whole of Defence. This includes the role of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), the Royal Navy, Army and Air Force Commands and MOD Head Office. The aim has been to ensure that every pound we spend on our estate represents optimum value for money.

We have reached two principal conclusions from this review. First, we will achieve improved allocation of available funding if infrastructure decisions that bear on the work of the military Commands are taken by them rather than by the DIO. The Commands are better placed to balance infrastructure requirements against other enablers of military capability such as equipment and trained personnel for which they already hold the budgets. In line with the Defence operating model, we therefore plan to delegate this authority, and the relevant funding, to the Commands and to Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) from April 2018, subject to confirmation later this year that all parts of the organisation are ready to support this, and that effective safeguards are in place to ensure that we continue to drive towards a better estate that more efficiently and effectively enables military capability.

Secondly, we will restructure the DIO to operate more effectively in the new delegated environment. This means making it more customer-facing at both the strategic and operational level, improving its internal operation so that it can work better with, and deliver better value from

infrastructure providers, and also strengthening its abilities to act to assure that appropriate standards are being met across the Defence estate and to provide Ministers with advice on the long term affordability of the estate and the strategic implications for the estate of decisions taken by the Commands. Since 2014 a Strategic Business Partner contract has been in place with Capita, under which they lead and manage the DIO. Capita have been instrumental in helping us deliver the Better Defence Estate Strategy and in sustaining specialist capability. We are reviewing with Capita how their continued support can be adapted to the new infrastructure model we now envisage.

Strategic Defence and Security Review

15 Dec 2016 | HCWS367

Sir Michael Fallon (Secretary of State for Defence):

The Army is refining its force structure to deliver the capabilities set out in the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) 2015 and modernise the Army's ability to fight at the divisional level. The SDSR 2015 significantly increased the readiness levels required of the Army, underpinned by investment in new capability and a war-fighting division as part of Joint Force 2025. It introduced the innovative Strike brigades, based on the new AJAX vehicle family and the development of Specialised Infantry battalions, reconfigured to provide an increased contribution to countering terrorism and building stability overseas.

I am today setting out refinements to the Army which will take place during the life of this Parliament. These have been aligned with the "Better Defence Estate" strategy announced in early November. As we previously committed, we will continue to sustain a regular Army of 82,000, a whole force of 112,000 regular and reserve troops and the Army's footprint in the devolved nations. All existing regimental cap badges will be retained. Large parts of the Army will be unaffected but it will involve some units changing their role, equipment or location.

A modernised division will be centred on the 3rd (UK) Division, organised with four brigades of two Armoured infantry and two Strike, rather than three Armoured infantry as now. A significant uplift in capability, it will hold one of each at high readiness, rather than the current single armoured infantry brigade. From this, in times of crisis, the Army will be able to deploy a credible division of three brigades. To develop and transition to this new posture, in 2017 the Army will launch a Strike Experimentation Group in Warminster. This will ensure that the first new Strike Brigade will be formed by the end of the decade.

In 2017 the Army will also create the first two new Specialised Infantry battalions to pioneer this new capability. A new Group headquarters for the units will be established, initially based in York alongside the 1st (UK) Division of which the Group will be part, before moving to Aldershot by 2020. To reinforce this capability the Army plans to create two further Specialised Infantry battalions by 2019. They will conduct defence engagement and capacity building, providing training, assistance, advice and mentoring to our partners.

As part of our continued investment in the Army Reserve we will build on the success of the Future Reserves 2020 plan. We will optimise reserve structures, embed the successful pairing of regular and reserve units and increase the number of reserve combat units supporting the division. As a result two new reserve infantry battalions will be created from 2017. A new reserve Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) regiment will also be created.

A summary of the Army units most affected is described below.

Summary of changes proposed under Army 2020 Refine

Strike Brigade

The first Strike Brigade will operate from Catterick and Salisbury Plain and will be composed of the Household Cavalry Regiment, The King's Royal Hussars, the 1st Battalion Scots Guards and The Highlanders, 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland. A number of Royal Logistic Corps (RLC) and Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineer (REME) units will be allocated to provide close support logistic support, beginning with 1 Regiment RLC and 1 Close Support Battalion REME.

Specialised Infantry Battalions

In 2017 the Army will also create the first two new Specialised Infantry battalions to pioneer this new capability. These units will be The Royal Scots Borderers, 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland and 4th Battalion The Rifles, the former relocating to Aldershot from Belfast by 2019. A new Group headquarters for the units will be established, initially based in York alongside the 1st (UK) Division of which the Group will be part, before moving to Aldershot by 2020. To reinforce this capability the Army plans to create two further Specialised Infantry battalions by 2019. These units will be the 2nd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and the 2nd Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment both joining the group in Aldershot by 2020.

Renaming of administrative structures

The introduction of the Specialised Infantry capability will mean some reorganisation of the infantry divisional structure, within which infantry regiments are administered, from seven to six divisions.

The Scottish and The Prince of Wales's Administrative Divisions of Infantry will merge, incorporating The Royal Regiment of Scotland, The Royal Welsh Regiment and The Royal Irish Regiment. This administrative division will be called The Scottish, Welsh and Irish Division. The Mercian Regiment from the Prince of Wales's Division will join with the King's Division. Army administrative divisions of infantry are the groupings within which the Army manages its infantry soldiers and officers to give them the necessary broad spread of relevant career experience from across a number of different units and activities. They have no operational role. There will be no changes to the names or regimental construct of The Royal Regiment of Scotland, The Mercian Regiment, The Royal Welsh Regiment, or The Royal Irish Regiment as a result of these administrative changes.

Support

The changes announced will require adjustments in some supporting and enabling elements of the Army. HQ 102 Logistic Brigade, 32nd Regiment Royal Artillery, 35 Engineer Regiment, Headquarters 64 Works Group Royal Engineers, 2 Medical Regiment, Headquarters 4th Regiment Royal Military Police, 33 Field Hospital and 104, 105 and 106 Battalions of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers reserve will be rationalised, with all manpower in those units being redeployed to other areas of the Army in its refined structure.

Army Reserves

As part of our continued investment in the Army Reserve we will build on the success of the Future Reserves 2020 plan. We will optimise reserve structures to better support the modernised division, embed the successful pairing of regular and reserve units and increase the number of reserve combat units supporting the division. As a result, two new reserve infantry battalions will be created from 2017. These are 4th Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and 8th Battalion The Rifles. A new reserve Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) regiment will also be created.

Defence Estate Rationalisation

6 Sep 2016 | HCWS133

Mark Lancaster (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Defence):

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is nearing the completion of an ambitious Estate Optimisation Strategy programme which will provide a plan for a smaller, but significantly better Defence Estate to meet the needs of the Armed Forces. The MOD expects to announce the finalised Estate Optimisation Strategy later this year and can today confirm the expected release of 13 sites, shown below. These will contribute some £225 million toward the MOD's £1 billion target for land release sales as set out in Spending Review 2015.

These sites also contribute to the Government commitment to provide land for 160,000 homes in this Parliament. The intent to dispose of these 13 sites will provide land for up to 17,017 homes (of which some 12,565 are expected to materialise in this Parliament). In addition to the sites announced in January and March of this year, this represents the expected provision of land for up to 14,700 homes this Parliament against the MOD target of 55,000. The remainder of the target will be met through other rationalisation activity including the Reserves estate, the Training estate and MOD accommodation.

The Estate Optimisation Strategy aims to better support military capability and force generation; allow the formation of clusters of sites which facilitate the collocation of similar functions and thereby reduce running costs through shared resources; as well as dispose of under-utilised sites for which there is no longer a long-term Defence requirement.

Over the coming weeks further work carried out in consultation with all stakeholders including the Trade Unions will determine the future re-provision of each site. The release of land by the MOD has the potential to provide land for new homes and we will continue to engage with impacted Local Authorities to determine how the Department's assessment of housing unit allocation against each site may be considered as part of the authority's Local Plan. I acknowledge that these moves will have an impact upon civilian and military staff; the Department is making arrangements to provide for units and functions based at sites which will not have a future Defence requirement. I will make a further announcement setting out the Estate Optimisation Strategy with details on the sequencing and timing of these moves later this year.

- RAF Henlow (Bedfordshire)
- Middlewick Ranges (Essex)
- Amport House (Andover)
- Land at Harley Hill (Catterick)
- Chalgrove Airfield (Oxford) Transferred to the Homes and Communities Agency
- Colerne Airfield (Chippenham)
- Azimghur Barracks (Chippenham)
- Prince William of Gloucester Barracks (Grantham)
- Old Dalby (Melton Mowbray)
- Venning Barracks (Telford)
- Parsons Barracks (Donnington)
- Southwick Park (Fareham)
- Royal Marines Stonehouse (Plymouth)

6.3 Early Day Motions

ROYAL NAVY'S AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT CAPABILITY

EDM 391

12 October 2017

Luke Pollard

That this House notes the recent speculation that the Government is considering scrapping the two Devonport-based Royal Navy amphibious assault ships, HMS Albion and HMS Bulwark; further notes that scrapping these warships would mean removing the Royal Navy's entire world-class amphibious assault capabilities; observes that these defence cuts risks severely reducing the role of the Royal Marines in future conflicts; highlights that this would create a significant capability gap for the UK; acknowledges speculation that equipment, programmes and personnel in the Army and Royal Air Force are also being considered for cuts in the Government's capability review; calls on the Government to end speculation around HMS Albion and HMS Bulwark and the strength of the Royal Marines by pledging to safeguard these Royal Navy warships and the Royal Marines; and further calls on the Government to reaffirm long-term commitment to the UK's world-class amphibious assault capability.

7. Further Reading

Government publications

[National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015](#)

HM Government
Cm 9161
23 November 2015

Library Briefing Papers

[UK Defence Personnel Statistics](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-7930
29 June 2017

[The Armed Forces \(Flexible Working\) Bill](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-8018
23 June 2017

[Future Capability of the UK's Armed Forces](#)

Lords Library Note LLN-2016-0071
21 December 2016

[The 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-7462
12 January 2016

Committee inquiries

[SDSR 2015 and the Army inquiry](#)

Defence Committee

The SDSR 2015 set out the Government's strategy for the Army for the next 10 years and built on announcements made in SDSR 2010 and the Army 2020 plan of 2012.

This page has the committee's final report, as well as transcripts of evidence sessions.

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