

ARMY 2020

Roles, Capabilities and People

Mark Phillips



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I. Introduction

The announcement on the future of the army is long awaited, largely because of political delays. Much attention has focused on the emotive issue of which regiments will be lost or merged as a result of significant reductions in regular force numbers. Retaining the ethos, traditions and connections that are part of what makes the British Army so effective – particularly those characteristics that derive from the regimental system – is a stated ambition of the government, despite the structural changes that will inevitably result.

However, while changes to regiments are certainly emotive and perhaps the most high-profile of the changes that will occur, morale is also being affected by a more fundamental question: what the purpose and role of the army will be post-2015, and how this will affect people and capabilities.

The Army 2020 study was completed in early 2012. It was understandably undertaken by a compartmentalised team, partly to regain political trust in the service, and partly to void vested interests. However, this approach also resulted in further uncertainty for servicemen and -women, adding to that which already existed as a result of the significant changes – including redundancies – announced by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) centrally. Political delays in announcing Army 2020 have sustained this situation.

What is known is that three roles are envisaged for the future army:

- Contingent capability for defence and deterrence
- Overseas engagement and capacity-building
- UK engagement and homeland resilience.

The army will be comprised of 'Reaction Forces' for the first task (contingent capability), and 'Committed and Adaptable Forces' for overseas engagement, UK operations and to provide additional capacity. A significant part of these forces will be made up by the Territorial Army (TA).

This paper not only informed the work underpinning Army 2020, but is also intended to aid implementation once Army 2020 is announced. It explores in detail:

- The future UK engagement and homeland resilience role, including the capabilities required
- The challenge of using contingent capability effectively. While the army has shown in Afghanistan that it is an organisation capable of adapting on the ground to meet challenges, it must achieve more than tactical success. The army must be able to understand the government's strategic intent at home and abroad, be able to interface

with government and departments at the strategic level in such a way that the utility of land forces and military choices are understood better, and develop a better appreciation of how to deliver precise effect. The assumption is that despite political reluctance, many future intervention operations will be undertaken in urban areas in view of urbanisation, population distribution and the localities of extremists, terrorists, organised criminals and supply chains. While army force development has focused on how to improve the ability of land forces to operate in urban areas at the tactical and operational levels, another question sits above this: namely, what effect the army will have in these complex environments

- How to integrate the reserve component into the Regular Army.

Further work needs to be undertaken on the requirements of upstream prevention through capacity-building and engagement; the army itself acknowledges that there is very little thinking on this subject at present.

II. By 2020, What Capabilities Will Land Forces Require to Provide UK Homeland Security and Resilience?

The Coalition Government's National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA) is notable in the emphasis it places on homeland security and resilience. Three of the four Tier One risks directly concern domestic security: namely, terrorism (including CBRN attack), attacks on UK cyberspace and large-scale e-crime, and major civil contingencies. Of the fifteen risks identified in the NSRA, eleven can arguably be classified as having a larger domestic than foreign dimension.

However, there is a disconnect between the high priority placed on homeland security and resilience in the National Security Risk Assessment on the one hand, and the Military Tasks, Defence Planning Assumptions and Future Force 2020 outline structure put forward in the government's SDSR on the other hand. This is because the SDSR was skewed by ongoing operations in Afghanistan; the challenge for defence is bringing the Future Force 2020 in line with the NSRA.

It is important for defence to determine the capabilities required to undertake homeland security and resilience tasks, as these are very likely to remain, if not continue to increase, as political priorities. This is because considerable political tension surrounds the execution of homeland security and resilience operations – more so than for expeditionary operations – as the requirements in the homeland are immediate and 'on top of the population'.

The trend currently is for homeland security to take its place as a relevant military task. There is a growing notion that the military should do more than expeditionary operations or, at the very least, that there should be a better balance between these two activities. This is due to four realisations.

First, the lead time for risks in the homeland is much less than previously thought (the concern is that the UK could be surprised by a major incident or a quick escalation of events – as seen in the August 2011 riots across the country, which could indicate a change in the nature of protest and public order activities).

Secondly, the compressed timelines for decision-making.

Thirdly, the difficulty in operationalising the concept of 'upstream prevention', both because of a lack of political will to invest over long timeframes and difficulty in identifying where to invest (despite efforts such as the cross-government Countries at Risk of Instability project undertaken by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit in 2006; the new Building Stability Overseas Strategy might help overcome this, but even so it will be hard to measure and

guarantee the success of preventative activities). Moreover, there are some risks, such as natural hazards and home-grown terrorism, which cannot be addressed purely through actions abroad.

Fourthly, the realisation that there is a much wider public acceptance of a greater military role.

However, the culture within the Ministry of Defence and armed forces is still too conditioned by the 1998 Strategic Defence Review and the emphasis it placed on expeditionary intervention. For example, it is argued by some that investing in broader capabilities for the homeland is only useful, or can only be justified, if they can also be used in the context of the Building Stability Overseas Strategy (providing homeland resilience in another country). Some progress was made recently by the Future Reserves 2020 study, which earmarked homeland security and resilience as roles to which reservists could be attributed, but more remains to be done and the tasks should be reviewed across the regular forces and contractors as well, as part of the Whole Force Concept.

This paper contributes to this work and debate by:

- Identifying policy and strategic-level issues for UK resilience, how they affect the military contribution and might need to change
- Identifying high-priority risks for which the UK is underprepared
- Identifying priorities for future military contributions based on previous domestic crisis and how defence (particularly the army) could meet these, including through the Whole Force Concept and different forms of engagement and collaboration with civil authorities¹
- Exploring possible risks and challenges associated with a greater military role in the homeland and how these might be overcome.

The Strategic and Policy Framework for UK Resilience: The Place of the Military

The UK's approach to resilience is premised on a bottom-up approach; that is, facilitating and investing in emergency responses at the lowest possible level, including through local emergency services, voluntary groups, the support of the private sector and by building community resilience. It is argued that this bottom-up approach is the only way of meeting the multiplicity and unpredictability (at least in terms of the timing of an event) of the UK's risk profile, which is characterised by the impact of an event being felt in different ways by different groups. In the current financial climate, it is also argued that this is the most cost-effective way to achieve resilience.

This is reflected in the Civil Contingencies Act and its designation of Category 1 and 2 responders, which follows the approach of 'You ask, we provide if we can'. While the approach does have significant value and potential, not

least because individuals will always be required to respond to an event before professionals arrive (and their response can have a direct effect on the eventual scale of damage), there is a growing argument that too much is being driven by this bottom-up approach, with too little national guidance or national-level requirements. This is particularly so in relation to high-impact, low-probability events that are qualitatively different to other crises.

The military is affected by this approach – and not in a positive way – for planning, training and exercising purposes, given that it has to prioritise investment. While the culture within the armed forces and Ministry of Defence has undoubtedly hindered greater efforts to plan for and be involved in homeland security tasks to a greater extent until relatively recently, based as it is on a largely expeditionary mentality, the approach of the Cabinet Office is also telling. Premised on the bottom-up approach,² military proposals for greater involvement in the homeland are met with the response that the military does not need to provide a solution, but if it wants to get involved it can be made use of and a role could be found. In other words, there is a growing disconnect between the demand and supply sides of the equation. The charging regime for the military undertaking homeland tasks, which is based on full cost recovery from requesting departments or agencies, has also not encouraged government as a whole to plan for using the military – though in the context of the Olympics, full cost recovery has been abandoned and this could be a useful precedent. Organisations have become conditioned to not request much from the military. Interestingly, this position does not necessarily match that adopted by the government, and it is notable that the prime minister has considered asking the military to take risk against ongoing operations in Afghanistan for certain homeland tasks.

The net result of the bottom-up approach to resilience and the culture within defence is that the military has not been integrated properly into the domestic National Risk Assessment, which priorities risks and develops planning assumptions and capability requirements to guide (though not direct) responders. (Through this process the NRA also identifies gaps in responder capability.) In practice, this has meant that, except in a few niche areas, the military does not provide a guaranteed service, and any response is characterised by:

- A lack of contingency planning and preparation
- The use of accidental (not contingency) military capacity
- Potential problems with force-generation times
- Best effort on the day.

The potential problems that result from this were seen during the response to the Gloucestershire floods of July 2007, when the military contribution was strained during the second week. Ultimately, these factors also mean that for

many years civilian responders have not had trust or confidence that the military will be deployed when requested, quite apart from the lack of opportunities to train and exercise together; this will need to change in the future.

It should be noted that there have been some innovations recently – particularly in the context of the Olympic Games (through Military Working Groups with the Home Office and Metropolitan Police), and in response to prison guard strike action (which has seen the Ministry of Defence develop a Service Level Agreement/SLA for strike cover using military personnel) – which indicate that this could be changing. Indeed, SLAs could provide a useful tool for guaranteeing military contributions against specific tasks/risks, provided these are identified. For this reason, the military should be integrated fully into the National Risk Assessment Process, and both the Ministry of Defence and Cabinet Office should not just take each other ‘into account’. These SLAs might also provide a useful way of stress-testing or providing redundancy for existing business-continuity plans by other departments, agencies and emergency services which, it has been argued by many commentators, often fail on the day despite being given the all-clear beforehand, usually because they are not robust enough and do not have cross-area plans.

Finally, as a result of the approach taken to the military contribution to date, the appropriateness of the framework for authorising military contributions to homeland tasks has not been assessed. In many instances, the armed forces and their assets will need to be deployed as quickly as possible, particularly as the pace, scale and frequency of risks increases. While the pre-authorised deployment and movement of assets in relation to counter-terrorism is a welcome step, it probably does not go far enough, as their actual use still requires ministerial authorisation. Furthermore, this approach has not been taken for other civil contingencies yet. In fast-moving situations where a comprehensive picture of what is happening is unlikely to be available to senior decision-makers for some time, this could hamper the response. Arguably, the Military Assistance to Civil Authorities (MACA) framework is too restrictive and should be revised, based on a programme of experimentation and exercises, which explores greater levels of military contribution to domestic crises. Currently, exercises test existing ability, rather than actual requirements and capabilities that can be required or should be developed. The army could take the lead in amending this.

One area of existing policy which will always remain relevant is the fact that, in all but the most extreme circumstances, operations in a domestic context should be civilian-led. The military, when involved (whether in the present ad-hoc, reactive way, or under more formalised arrangements), should be subordinate to (operating under the authority, and in support of) the civilian power. Preparations for the 2012 Olympic Games have improved

the command relationships between the armed forces and civilian powers. In addition, as the response times and command-and-control capabilities of the police in particular improve, the likelihood of the military working under the control of the police in a larger number of circumstances increases; protocols need to be established for this transition, and for managing any elements of the military contribution to domestic events, which will not fall under civilian command-and-control, but need to be co-ordinated with the overall response effort.

High-Priority Risks for which the UK is Underprepared

The realistic prospect of a Mumbai-style attack in the UK arguably acted as a step-change in how the government perceived the role of the military in a domestic context, at least in relation to armed assault situations. Despite ongoing efforts to upgrade the emergency services to meet this possibility, the response outside London – or in the event of an attack exceeding the small planning assumptions that exist at present – could not be met by civil organisations, and therefore remains a high priority.

There has been no thorough review of tasks in relation to the military's role other than in the context of a Mumbai-style attack. However, the National Risk Assessment does identify the following situations as ones that would exceed the capability and/or capacity of emergency responders:

- Chemical attack or incident
- Biological attack
- Flooding across multiple regions, particularly coastal ones
- Full pandemic (limited role for military, but potentially scope for assisting with mass fatalities).

In addition to these 'flash' events, 'slow burn' events, such as heat waves and snow falls which disrupt supplies, the ability of emergency responders to move and can result in large numbers of fatalities, are also high priorities.

Areas for a Greater Military Contribution

Over the past six years, a significant amount of investment has gone into improving the capability of Category 1 responders, both individually and collectively – the latter by improving interoperability between different agencies.³ However, both evidence from recent crises and analysis of emergency responses to potential events nonetheless indicate that there are two categories of capability that will be useful to the civil power: increasing capacity, and extending the number of specific or niche capabilities provided by the military on a guaranteed footing (in addition to existing roles, such as Explosive Ordnance Disposal and the Technical Response Force).

Capacity

While there is not usually a problem with the capabilities of the emergency services,⁴ there is a significant problem with *capacity*. This is particularly so when there are simultaneous events, or events cutting across different areas. Emergency service resources are quickly overwhelmed, particularly as they often lack a reserve element with which they can scale up or surge.⁵ For this reason, high-readiness bulk manpower, with flexible attitudes of mind and a mission command philosophy, will be a useful contribution from the military for multi-area crises.⁶

An alternative approach that could be used (though the two are not mutually exclusive) is for the military to free up civilian personnel rather than to substitute or replace them. This was undertaken during the recent riots; the army undertook policing tasks at critical infrastructure sites to increase the ability of the police to deploy greater numbers for public order duties.

Niche Areas

Closely related to the issue of capacity is understanding: developing situational awareness or a common operating picture during a crisis, to identify both the scale of the event and to be able to identify and task different assets in a timely and co-ordinated way. This is particularly difficult in fast-paced events, such as the Cumbria shootings, when no real-time picture could be developed of the shooter's movements, because the police relied on reporting from the public that was always out of date. It is also difficult in the context of diversionary or displaced attacks, as identified in the Breivik attacks in Norway recently. Compared to civilian organisations, the military has a large number of sophisticated intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets (including unmanned ones), greater experience in dynamic and real-time intelligence fusion, and greater experience in using this picture to task diverse resources to achieve a common objective. For this reason, military provision of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets in support of civil powers will be a priority. Emergency services will also find it useful to draw on the army's ready-made internal command-and-control capability, as embodied in its regional structure, which should be retained in the multi-role brigades.

Urban search and rescue is the most limited capability in civil powers. This is a growing priority and one which the military could invest in.

In providing transport and logistics at scale, the emergency services know that it does not take much to block or strain their activities – including events such as heavy snowfall and flooding (where there were significant challenges in moving patients and transporting high-volume pumps around the UK, respectively). The ability of the army to provide flexible transport and logistics in extreme conditions, drawing on a wider range of platforms,

is considered to be a future priority by civilian organisations. Closely related to this is the utility of military premises being used as mobilisation centres.

Specialist engineering will be a future priority, particularly given the risk of cascade failure in critical infrastructure and the growing risk of system and structural failure, including for structures such as bridges. The armed forces have been adept at building improvised barriers and structures in previous homeland crises; this skill set should be furthered.

Chemical and biological detection and decontamination capabilities will be increasingly important, given the ease with which materials and knowledge can be acquired in these areas.

Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance support, including through air platforms will also be important (although the RAF is likely to take the lead in providing capabilities, the Army Air Corps also has much to contribute). The absence of a direct link between police/emergency services control and air intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms was a deficiency in the 2007 Gloucestershire floods, and remains so now. The link was improvised in 2007, but a bespoke, built-in arrangement must now be made available.

In addition to providing guaranteed capabilities in these areas, the army could also increase its investment in training for emergency responders. The involvement of civilian representatives in the Initial Command and Staff Course (Land) week and CAST (UK Operations) is a limited start, and the former in particular is primarily geared towards familiarisation only. Examples of best practice include the exchange between the Department of Health/NHS and the military – so that hospitals and paramedics can learn from the experience of Medical Emergency Response Teams and injury treatment in Afghanistan – and the use of military facilities by ambulance for hazardous area response training. These initiatives could also be extended to other areas.

Enabling a Greater Military Contribution

To enable a greater contribution, the military will need to do a number of things.

The military will need to invest more in training people to operate and lead in a homeland context. (This is also a lesson from Bloody Sunday.) The need to maintain currency and competence for homeland and resilience operations has been underestimated previously, but the domestic environment is increasingly complex and demanding and requires collaboration with a wide range of actors.

It will also need to extend and deepen engagement with civilian organisations beyond the existing Joint Regional Liaison Officer (JRLO) system/network.

There needs to be an increase in joint training, exercising and experimentation with civil responders to develop shared protocols (particularly important for fast-paced events such as Mumbai-style attacks) and a common language and culture. For example, there are differences in how the military and emergency services define strategic/operational/tactical levels and infrastructure, which causes confusion.

The military needs to develop joint planning mechanisms and processes with emergency responders. At the moment, capability provision is based on civilian requests to the military, but these requests are interpreted differently by the military and civilian organisations. For example, in the context of 2012 Olympic planning, the police requested helicopters for tactical insertion, but differing interpretations of 'tactical insertion' meant that the wrong helicopter was allocated initially. Electronic countermeasures are another area in respect of the Olympics where confusion has emerged. For this reason, joint Military Working Groups have been established; these have been a real game changer.

The military will need to use reservists for specified homeland tasks, utilising existing civilian skill sets (where they exist) to meet the niche capability requirements outlined above. As part of this:

- The Directorate for Counter Terrorism and UK Operations in the MoD is already engaging with other departments and agencies to identify where existing vacancies in civil services and other posts related to emergency response could usefully be filled by reserves. The army should link in with this work and possibly undertake a similar exercise of its own. The virtue of having a reservist in a civilian post is the greater flexibility provided by military terms and conditions of service for operating in difficult contexts, so the individual should be able to be rapidly transitioned to military terms and conditions of service in response to a crisis
- There is a risk with the MoD's ongoing work to implement Future Reserves 2020 that all of the additional funding is used to recruit reservists, with the possibility that none (or very little) will be left over for funding the training, development and operation of the reserve forces including in the homeland. The chief of the General Staff might be able to use his greater autonomy following the Levene Report to change/stagger the recruitment profile to ensure the Territorial Army is 'operationalised' for homeland tasks.

Reservists should be viewed as part of the 'Whole Force Concept', and it is possible that industry could provide services such as logistics in 'steady state' periods with employees being transitioned to reservist terms and conditions of service during a crisis, or always being contracted under the

‘Sponsored Reserve’ category. The potential contribution of industry has not been explored in great detail yet, notwithstanding Future Reserves 2020 implementation work.

Finally, the military must improve readiness and mobilisation for homeland tasks.

In many ways, these steps will address the failings of the previous Civil Contingency Reaction Forces (CCRFs).

Each of these steps would be assisted by:

- Developing a national resilience concept that is not just predicated on a bottom-up approach and involves the military
- Developing common doctrine between the military and civilian responders; the military could spearhead this.

As part of this, the army should also develop a better understanding of – or potentially even adopt – the Cabinet Office guidance for emergency response and recovery, which is used by civilian responders at present.

Potential Risks and Challenges Associated with a Greater Military Contribution

In addition to the challenge posed by the different cultures and languages that exist between the military and the emergency services, the following risks will need to be managed with an increased military contribution.

Despite investment to try and improve interoperability between the police, Fire Service and Ambulance Service, significant challenges remain, including within individual services themselves. This is not only technical; the lack of a regional structure for the emergency services will pose challenges for effective engagement, and different structures in Scotland make the picture more complicated. The police, fire and ambulance boundaries are not coterminous at all. This is likely to be compounded by the reporting line between individual forces and local authorities, as the latter lack a national perspective. (However, in the case of the police, the formation of the National Crime Agency and development of a national policing requirement after the 2012 Olympic Games should allow a more holistic approach to homeland security and resilience by different police forces and also draw in Local Authorities. On the other hand, policing and crime commissioners are likely to result in a more insular, siloed approach rather than developing national common standards for systems, processes and so on.)

The development of ‘super garrisons’ will create a perception that the military is being distanced from certain regions. While what really matters

is the maintenance of the command-and-control framework and effective tasking of forces, this perception will need to be managed. The possible knock-on effects for deployment times, recruitment into reserve units and potential loss of knowledge of local areas should also be investigated.

Operating in a domestic context brings with it greater levels of public attention and scrutiny. Some emergency responders, notably the police, have become risk averse over many years because of media reporting, public inquiries, and health and safety legislation. The army could well face the same challenges and can learn from the experience of the police service and others in this area. Liability under health and safety and other regulations will need to be explored.

Previous concerns about deploying the army domestically because of a lack of forensic training/skills have been addressed: as result of operations in Afghanistan, many personnel have a good grounding in forensics and the army should investigate whether and how these should be maintained post-2015. However, a related challenge will be when the military deploys in response to a particular domestic crisis and the situation involves or shifts to one of public order. The army will need to investigate how to manage and train for this transition or component, including the legal right of personnel to make arrests and the need to change tactics, techniques and procedures.

There is a risk that the army will lose its expeditionary and war-fighting capability if it becomes overly focused on homeland security and resilience tasks, though there is significant overlap between the capability requirements of UK operations and urban war-fighting abroad (as identified by Exercise *Urban Warrior*).

As the Total Support Force concept is taken forward and contractors increasingly provide logistics and other support functions, what effect will this have on the ability of the armed forces to provide these capabilities in a domestic context? Will private contractors be required, able and/or willing to respond to homeland crises as part of their contractual agreements? How the army constructs and writes contracts, particularly given its greater autonomy in this area following the Levene Report, will be important.

Conclusion

It is important for defence to determine the capabilities required to undertake homeland security and resilience tasks, because these tasks are very likely to remain (if not continue to increase) in political priority. This is evident in the National Security Risk Assessment.

The challenge defence faces generally, and the army and other services specifically, is that the first principles relating to the use of the military in a domestic context are still evolving and being considered. The strategic

and policy framework is arguably out of step with political direction and guidance and is too restrictive. There is also a mismatch between a growing supply opportunity from the army and the demand from other departments and agencies; this reflects both a poor cost regime and the emphasis placed on a bottom-up approach to resilience, with relatively little attention being given to national-level requirements and the military role at this level (despite the vehicle provided by the National Risk Assessment).

This context makes it difficult to identify capability priorities. Nonetheless, the army can prompt for national policy and strategic frameworks to be revisited, notably by providing an evidence base through experimentation with emergency responders. It can also undertake immediate efforts to:

- Develop common doctrine and protocols with emergency responders
- Increase joint training, exercising and experimentation with civil responders beyond ICSC(L) and CAST (UK Ops)
- Develop joint planning mechanisms beyond the JRLO function
- Undertake training to improve the capacity of civilian organisations.

This greater involvement in preparation will often be cost neutral.

Moreover, there is a body of evidence which suggests a number of areas for investment so the army will be better placed to undertake domestic operations whatever the eventual national policy and strategic framework. These include:

- Preparing soldiers to operate in the homeland as high-readiness bulk manpower to assist with capacity issues faced by emergency responders
- Continuing investment in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets (including intelligence fusion) to provide situational awareness and a common operating picture for emergency responders
- Providing a command-and-control framework on a regional basis, which emergency responders can plug into
- Developing urban search and rescue capabilities
- Providing transport and logistics at scale
- Providing specialist engineering skills in relation to critical infrastructure and structures
- Developing chemical and biological detection and decontamination capabilities with greater capacity.

Readiness and timeliness of deployment will need to be improved. This will be easier if assets for homeland security and resilience tasks are held at contingency. Risks such as greater scrutiny, potential liability and unexpected transitions to public order tasks will need to be managed.

Notes and References

1. The main focus of this paper is on areas where the army could look to make a greater contribution, though much of the analysis can also apply to the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. The purpose is to prompt new thinking within the army as part of Exercise *Agile Warrior*.
2. A radical way to provide a military contribution in line with this bottom-up approach might be to develop a national guard concept in the UK.
3. This paper does not address the potential domestic role for the military in the PREVENT strand of the UK's Counter Terrorism Strategy. See Mark Phillips, 'Redefining the Military's Role in Domestic Security', in Michael Codner with Michael Clarke (eds.), *A Question of Security: The British Defence Review in an Age of Austerity* (London: I.B.Tauris, January 2011), which begins to explore this area.
4. Armed response is an area where gaps exist, particularly outside London, as is urban search and rescue, as discussed below.
5. The system of special constables in the police can be regarded as something of an exception to this.
6. Mission command because this encourages decision-making and risk-taking at the lowest level possible, which is necessary in situations where commanders cannot hope to have a comprehensive picture of a situation until much later (as was the case in the recent Cumbria shootings, where the Silver and Bronze commanders had to tell front-line officers to use their judgement – but these officers were not educated to deal with complex situations of this kind and were not comfortable making decisions).

III. Urban Operations: How the Military Can Contribute to Achieving Effect in the Urban Environment

The British Army has started a process of experimentation known as Exercise *Urban Warrior* as part of its broader force development process, to identify whether it is able to meet the demands of operating in urban areas in the future and, if not, how it might do so.

The context for this work, notwithstanding likely political reluctance for the military to operate in urban environments given the high risks involved (in terms of embroilment, with implications for casualties and fatalities on the part of the intervening force, adversaries and non-combatants; but also in terms of failure to achieve strategic effect, despite relative tactical success, as demonstrated by Mogadishu), is the ongoing trend of urbanisation. Demographic shifts to cities mean that these locations will become pivotal points for influencing national, regional and global risks, not least as cities attract extremists, terrorists and organised criminals, and are the nexus point for different cultures, ethnicities, trade flows and supply chains. Adversaries desire to operate in cities at present – and will do so in the future – precisely because of their complexity, which negates the typical advantages of Western armed forces. Despite the likelihood of political reluctance, the military must therefore be prepared to operate in urban areas, given the growing strategic significance of these locations.

The results of recent experimentation have identified that ‘the Army is not ready, in both preparedness and capability terms, for the demands of future urban operations’.¹ To date, the focus of this experimentation has been on how to improve the ability of forces – and in particular a multi-role brigade – to operate in cities at the tactical level, particularly with respect to war-fighting. However, this approach has two related flaws. First, ‘although war fighting capabilities drive the development of urban operations, non-war fighting low-level operations are more typical in cities, with most operations concerning the enforcement or maintenance of order or public safety in fragile urban environments’.² Secondly, although past case studies have argued that insufficient troop strength prevented success in urban areas, while force ratio still has benefits for a number of roles such as encirclement and direct engagement with the population, the benefits of greater numbers will remain elusive given the size – and, indeed, the continuing growth – of modern cities.³ Land forces in the UK are also reducing in size as a result of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) and related exercises, which inevitably reduces the size of the force that can be deployed, particularly in a context where there are simultaneous operations in different parts of the world.

These factors have prompted the army to consider how limited force elements can generate mass in the urban environment for a broader range of purposes, and in particular:

1. How the army can harness the population to help achieve its goals
2. How the army can stabilise an area with a small footprint.⁴

In other words, the focus is not just on direct military means and size of deployment but on how to harness other factors – such as citizens, political actors and technology – to amplify the effect the military has directly, and the overall effect it is trying to achieve.

This approach itself prompts two further questions. What overall effect are military elements contributing towards? What do ‘influence’ and ‘stabilisation’ mean in urban areas, and how can the military make a viable contribution to these tasks? Here it is important to have a more sophisticated appreciation of the strategic purpose for which forces will operate in cities:⁵

[A]lthough most studies focus on the tactical level, which is where fighting takes place, urban operations are rarely narrow technical processes. Not only are they shaped by diplomatic, economic and humanitarian objectives, but also treating them as merely one of a range of tactics or environments ignores the fact that urban operations could themselves become a strategic risk ... in other words, the tactical emphasis is a necessary but not sufficient condition for understanding.

It is also important to understand more fully how cities function:⁶

[T]he value of nodal analysis, and the mapping and modelling of cities and the critical dependencies within them, is needed ... a change in one of the elements underpinning a functionally important city could set in train a cascade of reflexive changes in others.

This also implies that different effects can be achieved over different timescales, which in turn raises the question of how long military forces can or should be deployed for, or whether other actors should assume a greater role than they might have hitherto.

The strategic purpose for which forces might be deployed will vary, and a detailed exploration of possible scenarios is beyond the scope of this paper. Rather, the focus is on how urban areas function and what this means for the army’s ability to deliver capability in a way that can be expected to contribute to achieving strategic objectives. Recognising that tactical operations are likely to have significant strategic impact, the purpose is to delineate what capability space the army can and should feasibly operate in within urban contexts.

The following analysis suggests that land forces will need to:

1. Develop a better understanding of the human ‘architecture’, the infrastructure and the terrain of cities, and of how these elements interact to underpin their activities. A challenge is that people and infrastructure will be in a constant state of flux
2. Know their limitations and manage expectations. The purpose of the army should be to manage violence through the surgical use of force, so that other actors can deliver services in a more orderly environment. Land forces must resist the temptation to take on too much – or build capabilities for the wide range of tasks that will inevitably arise – because this will be unsustainable and many are rightly the preserve of other actors. However, given that different tasks will arise at short notice and require a wide skill set, the Whole Force Concept should be used to supplement military capabilities
3. Strike an appropriate balance between (and sequence) persuasion, coercion, destruction and reconstruction tasks for the purpose of managing violence. None of these activities will be sufficient by themselves to achieve effect in an urban area.

Overall, the army’s planning process will need to become more attuned to the strategic impacts that operating in cities can have, including by drawing in specialists who understand local communities, infrastructure, and the second or third order consequences of possible actions and targeting.

Developing a Better Understanding of Urban Environments

Urban areas are difficult to characterise.⁷ Although they can be conceptualised by generic features relating to infrastructure, terrain and people, these constituent elements will vary from city to city: each city will be at a different stage of development, have varying geographies,⁸ and comprise a different mix of communities. Each of these constituent elements can also evolve rapidly.

For example, analysis of the intervention in Iraq identifies that it was a mistake to dismantle the indigenous security forces immediately (many Iraqi officers were removed because they were illiterate, even though they were competent and had good community knowledge). A potential lesson from the intervention is that local structures should therefore be used by intervening forces in the future, and that external actors should not go into an area with preconceived notions and impose structural and cultural contexts on other communities. However, future areas of operation are likely to be characterised by an absence of pre-existing structures – or at most semi-structured organisations – even in functions traditionally considered vital to the working and existence of a state, such as security forces and social services, so this would not be a viable approach. Commanders and individual

soldiers may need to deal with alternative forms of political authority and power, and will therefore need to identify the networks and relationships that underpin the functioning of cities.

The importance of developing an understanding of how urban areas function cannot be underestimated. Knowledge regarding 'physical and social infrastructure, power relationships, sources of economic health, and much else pertaining to a town or city and its relationship to the areas around it is as crucial to [a force's achievement of] objectives as knowing the enemy'.⁹ This understanding is important for determining both what effects should – and can – be achieved as part of a campaign plan and how to engage with the local population effectively to aid the achievement of those effects. It is also important because cities are very intense environments which place immense stress on individuals, and experience from police officers shows that individuals cope well with the 'overload' of cities if they are familiar with them.¹⁰

Understanding of urban environments can be developed in three ways, none of which are mutually exclusive:

1. To increase awareness of the issues that affect a force's ability to operate in cities (notwithstanding the vignette above) in a generic sense, while recognising that this general knowledge will have to be adapted rapidly by deploying or deployed forces to the particular circumstances they face. Developing general knowledge will be a function of:
 - Training and exercising through a range of scenarios and simulations
 - Individual experience from a range of operations, accumulated over time
 - Incorporating lessons learned from policing, planning studies and disasters in urban areas into relevant doctrine, training and exercising¹¹
 - Recruiting indigenous people
 - Drawing on knowledge from non-governmental organisations.
2. In relation to a specific urban area, in advance of a known deployment. An interesting avenue which has not been explored extensively to date is the ability to be in a location 'virtually' during pre-deployment preparations. Simulations can contribute to this, aided by open source information such as Google Street View. The advance deployment of overhead intelligence will also help but will not be sufficient, as overhead intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance does not capture the full complexity of operating on the ground in cities due to electronic interference and obstructions to the line of sight, and

it cannot be assumed that strategic tasking will make these assets available prior to a crisis. In addition, land forces can engage with diaspora populations; recruit indigenous people (possibly through the Whole Force Concept); and, ideally, draw on other human intelligence [HUMINT] assets in that locality (though the presence of these assets cannot be assumed, as seen in the context of the UK's intervention in Libya in 2011) and the knowledge of NGOs.

3. In a specific urban area, once a force has been deployed. Again, the deployment of overhead intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance will help. Signals intelligence (SIGINT) also provides a valuable source of warning: disruptive behaviour can be detected by monitoring communication traffic movements; for example, shifts from mobile phone usage to Blackberry Messenger (as seen during the riots in London and other parts of the UK in 2011). However, neither of these approaches will be sufficient. It will be vital to develop a HUMINT capability rapidly: the key factor affecting situational awareness in urban areas is the lack of HUMINT,¹² despite the fact that this potential intelligence source is multiplied given the number of people residing in cities.¹³ This capability should be developed in conjunction with other government departments and agencies, and draw on non-state sources such as NGOs.
4. The lack of HUMINT can be attributed to two factors. First, the fact that it is difficult to build trust, confidence and legitimacy while simultaneously conducting hard interventions, which suggests that the appropriate sequencing of different operational activities will be required. Secondly, and drawing on the experience of the UK's community policing model, lack of HUMINT is because the degree of personal contact and sustained presence required in an area to encourage information flows is high. A HUMINT capability that is based on good links with the population could in turn provide opportunities to influence.

Headquarters, as well as individual soldiers, will need the ability to perform three broad tasks:

- Plug into local structures which are community-based and therefore provide a link to populations, where these exist
- Access and interact with key interlocutors and individual networks, where local structures do not exist. These 'nodal points' provide access: forces might not need to have contact with everyone to get a perception of what is actually going on
- Change the perceptions of local communities, which will cause changes in behaviour, including by establishing legitimacy and being clear about what they are able to deliver and in what timescales. As part of this, a strategic narrative is vital, as is understanding that this

narrative will be interpreted by different communities in different ways and tailoring it accordingly. Lessons could be drawn from the public relations and marketing sector for this purposes. The fall of Tripoli in 2011 demonstrates the importance of 'preparing a city' through messaging, while Germany has deployed a mobile printing press in Afghanistan to good effect.

There is a question as to how relevant information and intelligence from other government departments which land forces can draw on might be; it is often politically inappropriate to deal with factional leaders, cartels and 'extremist groups' that provide social services, but the value of 'state-centric' diplomacy is likely to decrease in the context of urban environments. The less other departments and agencies can conduct this sub-state engagement effectively, the more the army will need to develop rapidly an ability to do so.

There are of course risks involved in establishing relations with existing local structures, diaspora communities and key individual networks, whether before or during a deployment. For example, groups or individuals may have their own agenda and use external forces to increase their capacity; key leaders might tell external forces what they want to hear; individuals and groups may have criminal elements which external forces are unaware of; by associating with external forces that have poor reputations, a negative perception of those forces can be induced immediately; and allegiances can change quickly, so individuals and groups might not maintain traction with communities.¹⁴ Therefore, land forces must also be able to advance relationships with (individual members of) communities, not just self-appointed leaders or groups. Social media might provide opportunities in this context, where a locality has the infrastructure to support this.

The army should consider establishing groups of specialists for these engagement tasks, possibly using the Whole Force Concept to allow the rapid insertion of individuals into HQ formations and units. It is likely that individuals with non-military backgrounds, for example neighbourhood police, members of SOCA or the gendarmerie, will be able to forge relationships with civilian communities more easily and in a shorter space of time.¹⁵ There would likely be a force protection obligation or requirement for these non-military individuals.

Delineating the Army's Role in Urban Environments

The preceding analysis centres on the importance of understanding different communities in urban environments. A key challenge in this respect is that the army has not tended to undertake 'needs analysis' from the perspective of indigenous people. A common weakness is that the armed forces 'fail to account for scenarios in which the primary focus is the non-combatant

one and the adversary is an obstacle rather than an objective',¹⁶ particularly where it is difficult to distinguish 'non-combatants' from 'combatants'. In the future, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs might be a useful frame of reference in each area of operations, and needs analysis should be included in the army's planning process.

Undertaking a needs analysis is likely to identify that communities expect the delivery of services such as food, clean water, sewerage and health. A number of considerations should be borne in mind in this respect:

- There is an issue about extraction. If a force seeks to legitimise itself based on the delivery of certain (unrealistic) expectations, it is likely to become entangled. A better approach would be to legitimise something local – for example, an organisation with a better ability to deliver services such as food and water – so that the force can extract itself, rather than be relied upon for a longer period of time. This is particularly important if an organisation already has legitimacy in the eyes of a community; lack of co-operation with that organisation will tarnish perceptions of the force
- In some areas, communities would prefer the continuation of informal and customary justice and its associated structures, but these may not meet law of armed conflict or political requirements
- As mentioned previously, it takes time and long-term investment to gain public trust. However, the longer a force has a presence or stays, the greater the expectations are on that force to deliver a wider range of services, even if that force is not well equipped to deliver them. The force itself could be tempted into fulfilling these functions, for example through Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), particularly in the absence of other actors, but these projects could have negative effects over the longer term (in terms of sustainability).

In other words, local perceptions of 'security' and 'stability' are likely to be very different to those of the land force, and there are differences in time scales. In urban areas, the army will be working to more aggressive timelines, and will need to achieve quick wins in the human environment. How can this be achieved? Land forces will need to be realistic about their own ability to deliver, limiting their ambitions to what is achievable and maximising their advantages; manage the expectations of different communities in line with this (as part of the strategic narrative and their engagement process); fill capability gaps through dialogue and rapid planning with other partners, including non-state actors and other agencies; focus on building legitimacy, including through ongoing engagement and by outlining an intention to deliver an environment in which indigenous people will be able to 'own' the longer-term plan and process (this is 'virtual mass').

The focus of land forces should be on managing violence – taking away the adversary’s monopoly of violence – as a way of harnessing the population: people do not tend to support what a force is doing, but support a force because, if they do not, they will lose what that force provides and the costs to them will be greater.

Achieving Quick Wins in the Human Environment in Urban Areas

Delivering an environment that individuals and communities regard as stable or orderly (from their cultural perspective) requires a mix of activities, predicated on the understanding developed beforehand.

In urban areas, there are three types of action with ascending reliance on military force: operations to support a population, operations to stabilise a volatile situation and combat operations. Influence over civilians is a pervasive theme across each of these.¹⁷

Ongoing engagement to develop understanding should help persuade communities of the army’s purpose and the benefit land forces can provide to them. The army must be trained to interact with the public more, as good interaction is a force multiplier (a lesson that should be well-established from Northern Ireland). As part of this, land forces should identify which parts of a population have the most sway with others – in other words, which are the centre of gravity; a general rule of thumb is that you can focus on 15 per cent of the population rather than 100 per cent, but you need to know who the 15 per cent are that hold decisive influence over the rest. Land forces must also be able to respond to misinformation and rumour effectively and in real time (social media cannot be controlled but can be responded to, for example). At the moment, information is not incorporated fully into the planning process and lags behind the pace of operations.

However, a persuasive approach has limits: ‘while it may be an efficient means of shaping certain environments, it is also slow and is perceived as a weakness by many adversaries’.¹⁸ In addition to persuasion, and drawing on lessons from public order policing, land forces should recognise that:

- Kinetic action remains a very effective means of communication
- Tactical skills are necessary in cultures that respect only force (Somalia is an example of this). Therefore, influence must be backed up by coercion
- The focus of coercion must be to tackle the small minority of ‘hard disruptors’ that exist in urban areas with surgical, kinetic force. This achieves surprise, and surprise is an excellent force multiplier.

The interdiction of individuals, through a surgical raiding strategy, can build up the confidence of the wider population. This is important

because, based on police experience in relation to gangs and organised crime, 5 per cent of the population is usually malicious and has a disproportionate effect on others. Failure to deal with this disruptive element can encourage malicious behaviour amongst a larger group, as demonstrated by the riots throughout the UK in 2011.¹⁹ This approach also recognises that as political authority is reconfigured away from state-centric structures in cities, and as cities are (and will be) composed of multiple competing institutions, overlapping jurisdictions and networked organisations, control of entire cities may mean less than land forces might wish – as opposed to control of particular areas or influence over certain groups within cities.

Two enablers are required for the effective use of surgical, kinetic force. First, responsibility and discretion need to be pushed down to front-line soldiers: individual soldiers need greater discretion to use coercive force very quickly, which means squashing the chain of command rather than referring decisions to others. Decentralised command and control is vital, as the police learnt during the G20 protests. One risk is that all actions are likely to be recovered and available to the media or social media; this could affect the culture and risk appetite of the army, Ministry of Defence and government.²⁰ A further risk is that different individuals or units will adopt different approaches to the same task, undermining the overall strategic narrative and public perception and confidence in the deployed force. Secondly, it is difficult to identify individuals in cities unless a force has had sustained presence and engagement, or has been able to develop a HUMINT capability rapidly.

It is worth noting that, as cities and populations increase in size, and as individuals become 'super empowered', the risk posed to land forces (even if only conducting surgical strikes) becomes greater. To ameliorate the risk, the army will need to have mutual support arrangements between units – because a benign environment can become dangerous, shifting quickly from operations to support a population, to stabilise a volatile situation, to combat – though how units and individuals will be tasked and co-ordinated for this purpose in the context of decentralised C2 (command and control) will be a challenge. There are potential lessons to be learnt from mutual support arrangements between UK police forces. Furthermore, given the large number of civilians that will be present, the need to be able to control them will be crucial, so land forces should learn from and develop public order policing skills. As part of this, the army will need to exploit the technology it has available that is difficult for adversaries to neutralise; as evidenced by operations in Basra, air flanks, precision strikes of key nodes, and the use of armoured vehicles and dismounted armour for infantry (which still allows manoeuvre) are all valuable.

In addition, land forces could make use of:

- Siege tactics, including concrete barriers and T-walls. For example, the siege of Basra allowed land forces the opportunity to engage with the population, check people, let individuals know what was happening, and so on. However, a number of analysts have questioned how useful sieges are today, and how useful they will be in future operating contexts. They argue that 'urban avoidance' or 'siege warfare' are not as tenable as many think, because physical sieges do not prevent information flows, and because, while sealing off an area is relatively easy, this does not solve the problem of controlling what goes on inside that area²¹
- Non-lethal weapons systems as part of their approach to surgical strikes, to bridge the gap between minimal and lethal force (particularly if there are crowds)²²
- Deception techniques, such as camouflage (which is prevalent in urban areas), multi-spectral close combat decoys to give the impression that assets exist when they do not, distracting noise, diversionary activities and efforts to overwhelm the information flows to an enemy.²³

However, overwhelming the information flows to an adversary and conducting strikes against key nodes are both destructive techniques. They therefore raise the challenge of reconstruction. Individuals and communities are likely to have relied on certain infrastructure, and would expect it to be reconstituted rapidly. The army will need a capability to enable this reconstitution by others (possibly using the Whole Force Concept). If this does not happen, the land force could lose influence and support. Where the force makes use of precision strikes against key nodes, these strikes will need to take into account the issue of interdependence between different infrastructural elements, and therefore the risk of cascade failure or interruption; the army will need to draw in specialists who understand these second- and third- order consequences as part of the planning and targeting process.

Conclusion

Urbanisation means that cities have become – and will remain – pivotal points for influencing national, regional and global risks, not least as these locations attract extremists, terrorists and organised criminals, and are the nexus point for different cultures, ethnicities, trade flows and supply chains. Despite the likelihood of political reluctance, the military must therefore be prepared to operate in urban areas given the growing strategic significance of these locations.

Recent experimentation has shown that the army is not ready, in both preparedness and capability terms, for the demands of future urban operations, but this experimentation has been focused on war-fighting

capabilities rather than on the non-war-fighting, low-level operations that are more typical in cities; has not necessarily taken into account the reduced footprint that will characterise UK land force deployments in the future; and has not delineated the army's role in urban environments.

To be able to delineate its role and operate effectively with a small footprint, the army needs to develop methods for understanding the physical and social infrastructure (including interdependencies), power relationships and sources of economic health in cities. This understanding can be developed generically prior to deployment, including by incorporating lessons learned from policing, planning studies and disasters in urban areas into relevant doctrine, training and exercising; recruiting indigenous people; and thorough education. In advance of a known deployment, or rapidly during a deployment, the army will need to establish ways of constructing a HUMINT capability; this is a significant weakness. A further benefit of these activities will be to reduce the stress of operating in the intense environments of cities: individuals cope well with the 'overload' of cities if they know areas well and are familiar with them.

This understanding is likely to identify that communities expect the delivery of services that the army is not equipped to deliver, either because of lack of capabilities or because land forces will be working to more aggressive timelines. The army will need to be realistic about its own ability to deliver, limiting its ambitions to what is achievable and maximising its advantages; managing the expectations of different communities in line with this; and filling capability gaps through dialogue and rapid planning with other partners, including non-state actors and other agencies.

The primary focus of the army should be on building legitimacy, including through ongoing engagement and by outlining an intention to deliver an environment in which indigenous people will be able to 'own' the longer-term plan or process ('virtual mass'). The best means of securing this will be through managing violence as a way of harnessing the population.

To manage violence in cities, the army will need to strike an appropriate balance between, and sequence, persuasion, coercion, destruction and reconstruction. None of these activities will be sufficient by themselves to achieve effect in an urban area. They will require capabilities to undertake the following tasks:

- Engaging (key) local actors
- Beefing up and amplifying existing organisations and infrastructure
- Exerting influence backed up by coercion, through the use of surgical, kinetic force against particular disruptors in cities. This must be enabled by decentralised command and control and intelligence

- Exploiting technology which affords protection and precision, including armour (mounted and dismounted), air flanking and strikes against key nodes, non-lethal weapons and deception techniques
- Acting as an enabler for the rapid reconstitution of infrastructure by others.

Overall, the army's planning process will need to become more attuned to the strategic impacts that operating in cities can have, including by drawing on specialists who understand local communities, infrastructure, and the second- or third-order consequences of possible actions and targeting.

Notes and References

1. British Army Directorate of Force Development, 'AGILE WARRIOR 11 Summary of Insights', June 2011, p. 20.
2. Alice Hills, *Future Wars in Cities: Rethinking a Liberal Dilemma* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2004), p. 91.
3. See Sean J A Edwards, *Mars Unmasked: The Changing Face of Urban Operations* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Arroyo Center, 2000), p. 41. The exponential growth of cities also suggests that there are some limits to the lessons that can be drawn from previous operations in urban areas, for example in Sadr City.
4. This does not exclude the ability to fight in cities, but is nonetheless a broader concept.
5. Alice Hills, *Future Wars in Cities*, p. 5. Also note that conflict or intervention in a foreign city could provoke a response in the UK, given the presence of diaspora populations that maintain a link through various means, including media coverage, social media and remittances, to their home communities.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 225.
7. The 'understand' demands of future operations were also explored in the first iteration of British Army Directorate of Force Development, 'Exercise AGILE WARRIOR', June 2011. See AGILE WARRIOR Work Package 4 Report, 'Determine the "Understand" demands for Continuous Modulated Engagement and deployed Brigade operations and recommend the optimum structures to meet them', 21 February 2011 (UK RESTRICTED) and Mark Phillips, 'The Understand Demands of Future Land Operations' in 'Exercise Agile Warrior and the Future Development of UK Land Forces', RUSI Occasional Paper, May 2011.
8. Some cities are located on the coast, suggesting an important role for littoral manoeuvre and amphibious capability.

9. Scott Gerwehr and Russell W Glenn, *The Art of Darkness: Deception and Urban Operations* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Arroyo Center, 2000).
10. It should also be noted that fighting in urban conflict is so intense compared to other areas that soldiers tend to burn out much faster. Therefore, substantial second echelons will usually be necessary to maintain tempo and give a respite to exhausted troops.
11. See Hills, *Future Wars in Cities*, pp. 223 and 249. Looking at examples of public order policing and disaster response in different urban areas, at home and abroad, will indicate interdependencies between infrastructure, and how individuals behave in non-stable situations.
12. See Edwards, *Mars Unmasked*.
13. See Gerwehr and Glenn, *The Art of Darkness*. There is an issue surrounding the accuracy and trustworthiness of the information provided from HUMINT sources, though arguably the size of the population in cities means that multiple opportunities for corroboration would exist.
14. In particular, the army must recognise that conflict often presents a 'business opportunity' for many individuals and groups.
15. In relation to Home Office forces, there might be scope for including this requirement in the forthcoming national Strategic Policing Requirement, and for the army to form an active partnership with the police by encouraging police officers to become part of the reserves.
16. *Ibid*.
17. Hills, *Future Wars in Cities*, pp. 91–93.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 206.
19. Reference HMIC and Home Affairs Committee reports.
20. On this topic, see Mark Phillips, 'The Army's Approach to Risk Management on Operations' in 'Exercise Agile Warrior'.
21. See Gerwehr and Glenn, *The Art of Darkness* and Hills, *Future Wars in Cities*.
22. However, experience from Northern Ireland suggests that individuals can build tolerance to non-lethal weapons, and it also suggests that the use of non-lethal weapons can lead to crude methods of population engagement and management; therefore these weapons cannot be a substitute for teaching soldiers how to interact with the population.
23. Using social media to deceive an adversary is likely to be counterproductive.

IV. Achieving an Integrated Army: The Future of the Reserves

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has undertaken extensive work in recent months to close the gap between the ambition for the armed forces outlined in the Strategic Defence and Security Review (Future Force 2020) and the resources available to meet that ambition. This has involved an examination of the best mix of manpower to undertake future tasks and operations. As part of this, the prime minister announced that the government would assess whether the reserve forces are 'properly structured for the type of conflict we envisage undertaking in future, so that we make best use of the skills, experience and capabilities of our reservists while at the same time moving towards a more efficient structure'.

The UK has never had a coherent policy for the reserve forces.¹ Reservists have never been attributed formally to the Defence Planning Assumptions and Military Tasks, and as a result their use has tended to be reactive and ad hoc. Their development has also languished: in the absence of identifying how the reserves should contribute to defence outputs, it was difficult to specify force development and generation requirements. The Future Reserves study (FR20) was therefore intended to be an open-minded, fundamental review of the role and place of the reserve forces in the Future Force 2020.

FR20 called for a greater role for reservists across all defence tasks and, as part of this, outlined a significant rebalancing of the future structure of the armed forces by 2020. This rebalancing affects the land force in particular, partly because of the size of the Regular Army and Territorial Army (TA) compared to the other services, but also because the Royal Air Force and Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAAF) have already made significant progress in recent years by integrating chains of command, being collocated, having regular commanders direct reserve output and using reservists to meet defence tasks. The Royal Navy and Royal Naval Reserve have also been moving in this direction. The army will have to undertake a similar transformation as a result of FR20: the ratio of regular to reserve personnel will be 70:30 by 2020 which, with an expected total land force of 120,000, means a further reduction in the size of the Regular Army of approximately 10,000 from 2015, on top of the reductions already resulting from the SDSR and the MoD's own 'three-month exercise'. By 2015, the Regular Army will be around 90,000 strong, and by 2020, 82,000. The reserve component will be required to provide 30,000 trained and deployable members by 2020; the net effect will be for reservists to deploy for much longer periods than they have hitherto.

Why Rebalance the Army?

Many have interpreted this as another cost-saving measure and perhaps even as cynical compensation for cutting regular numbers, but the drivers are in fact two-fold.

First, as a result of reductions to the Regular Army announced in the SDSR and follow-up work such as the three-month exercise, as well as the need for Future Force 2020 to be sustainable in the long term in the context of a defence budget which will not increase by the required level after 2015,² it was always inevitable that the army would have to rely increasingly on non-regular forms of manpower. Indeed, this is also a codification of how the TA has been used in operations in recent years: regular forces have not been able to meet the demands placed on them and have therefore needed to rely on other manpower, with this trend likely to continue in the future. It is also the case that the emphasis on the reserve will not result in immediate cost savings: a period of significant upfront investment is required to increase their capability through improved training and equipment before they will provide the government with a cost-effective means of contributing to Future Force 2020.

Secondly, and more importantly, the future character of conflict will demand greater specialist skills. It has been difficult to develop these skills in regular structures because of the continuous demands of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past decade (and combat operations in Afghanistan will continue until 2015). Although the army recognises that it has become mission-specific and bespoke as a result of these operations, it will nonetheless be expensive and take a significant lead time to develop specialist skills in areas such as cyber, culture, linguistics, police, intelligence and others. There is also the question of whether the Regular Army is best suited to providing these skills, as opposed to providing more general, organised manpower for a range of different tasks. Reservists may already have specialist skills from their civilian lives, but the MoD and army have tended to be poor at exploiting these to date.

FR20 is therefore right to call for a rebalancing. Old assumptions that the Regular Army will only need to be reinforced or augmented by other sources of manpower (usually when the Defence Planning Assumptions are exceeded), or that alternative manpower should provide specialist skills on an infrequent basis, no longer hold. Non-regular forms of manpower have become – and will remain – integral to achieving defence outputs.

However, a key gap in FR20 is the lack of clarity regarding the proposed roles for Territorial Army manpower. What these roles are, and whether non-regular manpower is suited to them, will affect the success of the rebalancing. The army has started to explore this question as part of the Army 2020 redesign work.

Lessons from Other Countries

Lessons for the UK from the US Army Reserve Component

The most useful lessons are:

- The importance of clearly identified, focused and resourced roles/tasks for the reserves
- The fact that reserve forces are most useful in the context of recurring or enduring tasks (whether as individuals or units)
- The importance of building within the reserve those capability packages that can be sustained at higher levels of readiness in an inactive duty status and deployed with a minimum of pre-deployment training
- The need to manage individual mobilisations outside of home units to meet operational demands
- The value of a force generation process that is flexible and able to pull together individuals to form 'non-standard units' that are specifically constituted for missions, drawing on the unique skillsets held by reservists and others
- The fact that some capabilities do not require a separate or dedicated unit structure.

The US Army is able to use reserve units to provide whole combat and combat support capabilities because of the size and scale of its reserve component. The scale of the US Army's reserve component also means that readiness issues can be managed more easily. These characteristics differentiate it from the UK's equivalent force; the size and scale of the TA will make it difficult to develop reserve units of a size able to sustain high-end capabilities.

- Unless the TA is increased in size and its basing changed, only sub-units are likely to be able to provide capabilities. These will tend to be in the combat support and combat service support functions
- The army needs to build opportunities to integrate individual reservists and small reserve units into regular structures for operations both at home and abroad where there are specific capability requirements, or for reservists to provide whole capabilities if the army is willing to accept any risk in relation to readiness. This risk would have to be managed by changing mobilisation and training requirements
- It should be stressed that the size and scale of the US Army's

reserve component means that reserve units undertake most training independently of their regular counterparts. This is in contrast to the Total Force approaches of other countries, which place emphasis on the need for joint and integrated training between regular and reserve components

- The UK can learn from the US Army's Force Generation Process (ARFORGEN). Although ARFORGEN relies on a size and scale of both the active and reserve components which the UK cannot match (and for the homeland relies primarily on the National Guard structure), the overall approach effectively integrates reservists into a range of military tasks both at home and abroad. A similar approach could also be used within the proposed British Army structure of responsive and adaptable forces
- The greatest obstacle to a Total Force policy is assured access to the reserve component. This is a function of legislation, which should be managed, and if necessary changed, to improve reserve readiness and mobilisation. It is also a function of the relationship between defence and the private sector
- A single, integrated personnel management system needs to underpin a Total Force approach.

An assessment of best practices from countries such as the US, Australia and Canada identifies the following as important factors to consider:

- All reserve forces must have clearly defined roles and tasks. It is best if these roles and tasks are ongoing or recurring
- An integrated force development process for the regular and reserve forces should be developed which includes integrated regular/reserve formations, chains of command and training. The regular force should define what training levels the reserves will meet, oversee that training and determine the required readiness levels. This is a step-change from the definition of integration used by the MoD – 'an intelligent and dynamic relationship that enables reserve forces to share assets and resources, where appropriate, with regular forces, and yet maintain a distinct volunteer ethos'³ – which implies that 'sharing' is 'integration' and also does not focus on defence and security tasks or outputs to be achieved
- The need for common occupational, skills and training standards for both regular and reserve personnel and for the same equipment to be used in both the regular and reserve components
- The reserves should build capability packages that can be sustained at higher levels of readiness in an inactive duty status and deployed with a minimum of pre-deployment training. This points towards

- non-complex platforms and systems, and specialist capabilities that draw on civilian skills that are not held within the regular component
- The integration of both individuals and sub-units into regular structures plays a role; the balance between the two will differ from task to task:
 - The demand for particular specialist skills from the reserves is likely to be higher than the demand for general duty manpower or the provision of 'platforms' unless the scale of reserve forces is such that units are designated (and able) to provide a certain scale of formed capability at high readiness⁴
 - Individual reservists are able to contribute unique and specialist skills that, when integrated with regular units and other departments and agencies or combined to form a specialist team/unit, can meet the bespoke requirements of future operations. In this sense, the term 'augmentation' does not capture the full contribution of reservists to the regular force
 - Generally, it will be easier for individuals than reserve units or sub-units to deploy quickly in response to urgent requirements. Individuals can have higher readiness levels depending on their personal circumstances and existing skill sets. It would be valuable for defence to assess and record civilian qualifications and skills which could contribute to defence outputs, and perhaps also to recruit people specifically on the basis of these skills and qualifications
 - Even at lower readiness levels, it will be difficult for reserve units to maintain full-spectrum capabilities where the complexity of modern systems is high and, as a result, the levels of training and use required to maintain proficiency are substantial. Contracts with industry might help to overcome this and to develop and maintain expertise in cyber, ISTAR and other technical areas
 - Reserve sub-units could, however, maintain capabilities in less technically complex areas, such as combat support and combat service support, more easily. Moving these to the reserve will depend on the willingness of the regular force to accept risk against readiness; there would likely be a demand for improved readiness by changing mobilisation times and increasing training days. The RAF and Royal Navy have been better at integrating regular and reserve elements than the army, but the Multi-Role Brigade concept now represents a real opportunity
 - Alternatively, sub-units could easily perform 'low-intensity' tasks. There are notable examples of this in the maritime domain in other countries
 - Units primarily have administrative and training (that is, force development) value
 - Industry could help meet the requirement to maintain high-

technology capabilities at appropriate readiness. Existing mechanisms such as Sponsored Reserves have readiness requirements included within contracts, though their extension to capability areas beyond the support area is dependent on the threat environment and the level of risk both government and companies are willing to accept.

- Personnel management, policies and training standards need to be common across the regular and reserve components. This improves readiness and allows individuals to move between different categories of service. There is virtue in harmonising policies and terms and conditions of service, but an integrated personnel management system would be more useful.

Lessons for the UK from Canada's 'Total Force' Approach

- The need for an integrated force development process and chain of command
- The need for clearly defined roles, missions and capability outputs for all aspects of the reserve force
- The value of common occupational, skills and training standards for both regular and reserve personnel
- The value of using the same equipment in both the regular and reserve components
- The value of common training standards in ensuring that the readiness of the reserve forces will be high
- The need to align benefit and compensation levels between regular and reserve forces
- The value of unit organisation for training and administration purposes in land environments
- The utility of individual and platoon-level augmentation of regular forces in land environments, except where there are unique capabilities not available in regular components that need to be developed within specialist units.

As the army approaches the task of defining in detail the roles and tasks, two considerations should be borne in mind:

- Achieving a balance between an operationally effective reserve component that is integrated with the regular forces and one which 'connects with the nation' and undertakes homeland tasks will be challenging

- In determining the balance between formed units and the use of individuals, the reserves should build capability packages that can be sustained at higher levels of readiness in an inactive duty status and deployed with a minimum of pre-deployment training. This points towards non-complex platforms and systems, specialist capabilities that draw on civilian skills that are not held within the regular component (and can be combined at unit level as necessary), and the use of the reserves on enduring tasks where deployment rotations provide certainty about training timelines, in order to increase the ability of reserve units to undertake more complex tasks.

Lessons for the UK from Australia's Reserve Forces

- The value of conducting reserve and regular force training to the same standards
- The utility of defining readiness requirements for all components of the reserve forces. It is possible to have high-readiness reserves, but these are difficult to generate
- The value of flexible terms and conditions of service that allow individuals to move between different categories of employment at different times during their careers. At the very least, policies and compensation and benefit levels should be brought into line between regular and reserve components to ease any transfers. The MoD's work on the New Employment Model should continue and underpin a flexible force generation process
- The need to define the specialist functions the reserve should provide
- The value of assessing and recording civilian qualifications and skills which can contribute to defence outputs
- The potential of encouraging regular forces to transfer to the reserve
- The potential for using different mixes of manpower to achieve a capability
- The potential for industry to provide new and innovative forms of manpower.

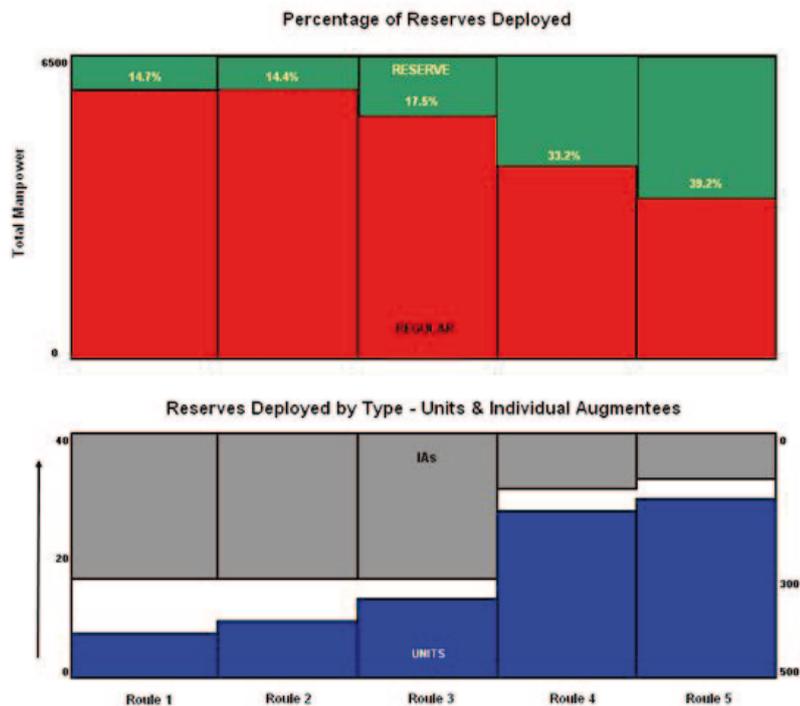
Overall, the army must remember that what is required is adequate force development and an intelligent and flexible force generation process that meets the specific requirements of different tasks by effectively integrating regular and non-regular manpower in bespoke ways, rather than identifying a precise, fixed structure for reserve forces per se. The use of individual reservists versus formed reserve units will vary by task.

The Army 2020 work to date recognises this, noting that reserves will provide:

- Specialists (such as doctors, cyber experts and linguists)
- Capabilities that do not require significant collective training to retain their readiness (principally in the support area)
- Combat arms, principally for resilience and regeneration, but useable in formed bodies on low-risk, straightforward tasks given adequate notice.

In addition, as a generic model for the proportion and type of reserve formations deployed on operations as part of an integrated army, Army 2020 proposes the following:

Figure 1: Percentage of Reserves Deployed



This model shows that greater numbers of individual reservists will be deployed in the initial stages of any operation, but that as the operation progresses, and reserve units can be trained with higher skills and on more complex tasks in pre-deployment training, reserve units will make up a greater proportion of the deployed force.

Challenges to Achieving an Integrated Army

There are a number of challenges with this direction of travel. Revolutionary in vision and strategic in nature, the evolutionary timetables of FR20 and Army 2020 imply that significant challenges will be faced.

It is clear the reserve will have to be integral to defence structures and outputs and must be integrated with regular components, but this will involve significant cultural change – requiring leadership – as well as organisational and structural change. A not-insignificant proportion of the Regular Army has traditionally adopted a less-than-optimistic view of the TA, describing its members as ‘weekend warriors’ and the organisation itself as ‘Dad’s Army’.

Closely related to this issue of culture is confidence. What level of risk will the army be willing to take in relying on non-regular manpower to provide (possibly entire) capabilities or services? The challenge will be in ensuring the reliable and ready deployment of those components with regular counterparts. The Regular Army will need to feel confident about relying on reservists to provide what will in effect become core capabilities. In this respect, FR20 is honest about the current state of the reserve components: particularly in the land environment, very few are trained and deployable (approximately 14,000 out of over 30,000). A ‘training surge’ to make the entire component operational, with associated upfront investment, is proposed. However, while FR20 allocated £1.8 billion over a ten-year period to improve the state of reserves forces across defence, this funding is not guaranteed. Moreover, the majority of funding allocated in the latest planning rounds seems to be allocated to recruitment drives (through marketing campaigns and similar), which will not actually improve the state of the reserve, per se: there is a growing worry that little money will be left over in coming years for the provision of adequate training and equipment to the TA. It should also be noted that the Regular Army has often divested the reserves of resources in the past and, with greater autonomy over how it manages its budget across the Defence Lines of Development following the Levene reforms, it must not do so henceforth. Lessons from the land component in other countries suggest that the Regular Army should define what training levels the reserve should meet, oversee that training, and ensure that training is undertaken jointly between regular and reserve components.

There are other challenges in ensuring this confidence in the ability of the reserve to meet the demands that will be placed on it, including mobilisation time for reservists. Improving this will likely require changes to legislation and liability to allow routine use. More routine use and longer deployments will also pose potential challenges for recruitment, retention and employer support. It is not clear how increased liability and use will affect the willingness of existing TA members to continue their service, or how it will affect the army’s ability to recruit new people. There have always been well-documented problems with recruitment and retention in relation to the reserves. FR20 should go some way towards addressing these problems by being clearer about roles. Welfare is also a unique issue for reservists, who suffer worse mental health compared to regulars. The reasons for this are not primarily due to traumatic experiences on deployment but a wider range

of factors, including a lack of support and understanding from family, civilian and employer networks. Reservists' families themselves also receive little support. Innovative solutions will need to be found to address these issues in order to sustain the proposed force numbers; to what extent this is a task for the army, rather than the MoD overall, is a question that needs to be answered.

This situation could be made more difficult by the employer dimension: commentators have pointed out that there is very little, if any, culture of employer support in the UK compared with countries like the US, and a senior executive has already commented that 'the army likes to rehearse lots of arguments about improving the life experience of employees, but this is a big "ask". Small and medium sized businesses [in particular] will suffer badly if they suddenly lose small numbers of staff'.⁵ On the former point, the army should identify opportunities for reservists to develop additional formal skills that will be beneficial in their civilian life to overcome this scepticism.

As part of the Army 2020 work, some thought has been given to this issue. The initial thinking is twofold: to establish a framework of strategic partnerships with private- and public-sector employers and to include within procurement contracts a bias in favour of those companies that can demonstrate support to the TA. However, more work urgently needs to be undertaken in this area and a more creative approach is required. For example, previous research has shown that there is a clear willingness on the part of many companies (of different sizes) to share the training of staff with the armed forces in the future, and an interest in exploring the possibility of developing joint employment contracts or career planning with the armed forces.⁶

What underpins the willingness to explore joint training and career planning is the overlap between the technical and professional skills that companies develop in their staff and those skills that the armed forces develop in their personnel. In other words, there is mutual benefit for the private sector and defence to work together. The UK could draw on the proven US Army Reserve 'Employer Partnership' model. Under this scheme, the army reserve partners with corporations, industry associations, state agencies and local police departments. The reserve has signed 1,190 Employer Partnership Agreements with the medical community (for doctors and nurses), the truckers association (for drivers), companies such as McAfee (for cyber-security specialists) and defence companies such as Boeing (for engineers). The intention is to reduce competition for recruitment and use complementary skills developed in civilian and military life to mutually benefit both the employer and defence. For example, common or joint curricula can be developed with a company and the training (and associated costs) shared. The challenge here is to work with the companies to align employer and military training cycles. Any joint contracts or career plans should include readiness requirements.

Conclusion

While the potential for maintaining operational effectiveness in the land environment exists as a result of FR20 and the Army 2020 proposals for integrating the army, achieving this will ultimately depend on Regular Army confidence in the ability of reservists to provide capabilities. To create this confidence, the Regular Army must itself play a key role in ensuring a successful rebalancing. However, there are other variables which will affect confidence in the reserve and its capability and readiness, notably longstanding challenges with recruitment and retention (which could be made more difficult because of proposed increases in liability), challenges regarding employer support, and the funding that is needed to actually operationalise the TA and sustain its operational capability once upskilling has been completed. The reality is that the reduction in the Regular Army is very steep; if the reserve cannot be operationalised well and in a timely manner, there will be a fundamental loss in quality and capability, and this is a big risk.

Notes and References

1. See Mark Phillips, 'The Future of the UK's Reserve Forces', RUSI Occasional Paper, April 2012 (public version of a private report dated May 2011) for further detail. Parts of this chapter are based on the Occasional Paper.
2. The government has announced (though not committed to) a real-terms year-on-year increase of 1 per cent from 2015, but to meet the ambition of Future Force 2020 this figure should be closer to 4 per cent.
3. Ministry of Defence, 'Reserves Review Planning Document', RR001, 29 April 2008, p. 2.
4. As an example in the homeland context, it is worth noting the conclusions of the 2009 Strategic Review of Reserves in relation to UK operations. Civil Contingency Reaction Forces (CCRFs) were established to structure the reserve contribution to homeland security and resilience tasks. However:
 - The CCRF requirement did not see an increase in liability; it was a supplementary task for existing reserve forces, and largely focused on the TA
 - CCRFs were seen as an administrative burden
 - No clear requirement had been placed on defence to support resilience
 - There was no clear statement of output
 - The mechanism for mobilising CCRFs for UK operations was complicated and torturous
 - Perhaps more importantly, reserves were used as a pool of disciplined manpower to work alongside civil authorities or undertake unskilled tasks, but the real requirement lay in logistics management and other specialist skills in addition to some general duties. The CCRFs did not target reservist skills but simply produced a pool of manpower.

The review therefore abandoned CCRFs and declared all reservists available for homeland tasks. This analysis clearly points to the need for an adequate and intelligent force generation and tasking process.

5. James Blitz, 'Army Restructuring Faces Big Challenges', *Financial Times*, 15 June 2012.
6. See Mark Phillips, 'The Future of the UK's Reserve Forces'.