

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE TOP LEVEL MESSAGES

SECTION 1 - OPERATIONS

AFGHANISTAN

Top Line:

British forces are in Afghanistan to prevent Afghan territory from again being used by terrorist organisations, including Al Qaeda (AQ) as a base from which to plan attacks on the UK and its allies. The presence of NATO forces is preventing AQ or the Taliban regime from returning while Afghanistan's security forces are trained to take over the tasks for themselves. We do not seek a perfect Afghanistan, but a stable Afghanistan, able to maintain its own security and prevent AQ from returning.

Context:

- On 23 June 2011, President Obama announced: "Starting next month, we will be able to remove 10,000 of our troops from Afghanistan by the end of this year, and we will bring home a total of 33,000 troops by next summer, fully recovering the surge I announced at West Point. After this initial reduction, our troops will continue coming home at a steady pace as Afghan Security forces move into the lead. Our mission will change from combat to support. By 2014, this process of transition will be complete, and the Afghan people will be responsible for their own security".
- In response, the Prime Minister David Cameron said, "The surge by the US and international partners, supported by an increase in the number of Afghan army and police, has reversed the momentum of the insurgency and created the right conditions for security responsibility to begin to transfer to the Afghans from July."

Supporting Lines:

- The Prime Minister and President Obama discussed Afghanistan during the State Visit in June 2011 and have been in close contact since. The National Security Council will now consider the detail of President Obama's announcement, and the Government will make a substantive response in due course. It would not be right to speculate on what that might be.
- It is vital to Britain's security that AQ is denied the ability to operate freely from within Pakistan or be allowed to return to Afghanistan. Pakistan is now robustly tackling the terrorist threat within its own borders particularly in the vital border regions. A more stable and secure Afghanistan and Pakistan will help ensure a safer Britain and world.
- The UK is part of a UN mandated NATO-led international mission in Afghanistan supported actively by 60 countries, of which 48 are providing troops. Several Islamic countries are part of the mission.
- UK and NATO allies and partners in Afghanistan are resolved to see the campaign through to a successful conclusion. The international community has a clear, realistic, and achievable strategy, and a properly resourced campaign plan to deliver it. At the heart of the strategy is a process of transition from the international community and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to the Afghan Government, with the continuing engagement and support of the international community.
- ISAF strategy, endorsed by NATO, involves protecting the civilian population from the insurgents, supporting more effective governance at every level, and building up the Afghan

National Security Forces (ANSF). The ISAF coalition wants to transfer security responsibility for districts and provinces to Afghan control as soon as they are ready. This process of transition was discussed at the Lisbon Conference (November 2010), along with the NATO long-term commitment to Afghanistan.

- The Prime Minister, during his visit to Afghanistan in early December 2010, set out the three priorities for 2011: maintaining the momentum that has been created through the military surge; beginning the process of transition to Afghan forces leading security operations; and accelerating the Afghan-led political process of reintegration and reconciliation.
- UK troops working alongside US, Danish, Estonian and Afghan forces continue to make progress by driving out the Taliban and extending the authority and influence of the Afghan Government in Central Helmand. This is allowing the ANSF, with ISAF support, to protect the population, and the international community to help the Afghans extend governance. But we must be realistic: Helmand's security situation remains complex and there will be more tough fighting ahead as we consolidate gains.
- The Prime Minister is clear that there will not be British troops in a combat role or in the numbers they are now in Afghanistan by 2015. Of course, there could be some troops in a training role as part of a wider diplomatic relationship in the longer term, as we have with other countries. The bottom line is clear: we don't want to be fighting in Afghanistan a day longer than necessary, and we believe that we have the right strategy to achieve this.

Key Facts:

- UK commitment: The enduring UK force level in Afghanistan is 9,500, out of a total ISAF force of around 130,000 personnel from 48 troop contributing nations.
- Development: In 2010, the UK contributed £5 million to the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Finance Fund.
- Security: There are now over 159,000 Afghan national army and 125,500 Afghan national police. This is on schedule to meet the October 2011 growth target to deliver 305,600 ANSF. Of the 14 districts in Helmand Province, 6 were under Afghan Government control in 2008. By June 2010, this had risen to 12.
- Drugs: Tackling the drug trade is a major priority for the Afghan Government and its international partners. The UK is supporting the Afghans to deliver their National Drug Control Strategy, including by co-ordinating the International Community's contributions. As a result of this work, the number of poppy-free provinces has risen from 8 to 20 (out of 34) since 2005.
- Education: There are currently 6.6 million children attending school, up from 1 million in 2001. 37% of school attendees are girls – up from virtually none under the Taliban when girls were not allowed to go to school. In Helmand, there are now 135 schools open, up from 34 in 2006.

LIBYA

Top Line:

British Forces are protecting Libya's civilian population as part of NATO's Operation Unified Protector, under the full and unambiguous authority of the United Nations (UN) Security Council. Colonel Gaddafi rejected the UN's call to stop violence against his own people and to give them the right to determine their own future. The UK and its coalition partners, including Arab partners are enforcing United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1973, which authorises all necessary measures to protect civilians, including carefully targeted operations against Libyan military forces. This operation has the clear backing of Parliament.

Coalition forces are continuing to target the military hardware and associated infrastructure that Gaddafi is using against his own people.

Supporting lines:

- UNSCR 1973 is not about regime change, the objective is to protect civilians
- It was made clear that if Gaddafi did not comply with UNSCR 1973, it would be enforced through military action.
- Coalition actions have saved thousands of lives in Misratah and elsewhere in Libya and have prevented Gaddafi from regaining power over Libya by force.
- Coalition forces will maintain the pressure on the Gaddafi regime until the goals mandated by the UN and agreed by NATO and its partners are all achieved: Gaddafi has ceased attacking his own people, his forces have been returned to their bases, there is full and unhindered access for humanitarian organisations.
- Gaddafi is harming his own people and is increasingly isolated. He should stop attacking his people and allow them the choice of how they are governed.
- Over 2,000 UK personnel are deployed in the operation to enforce UNSCR 1973.
- From the Royal Navy, HMS *Ocean* is providing a highly mobile base for Army Apache attack helicopters, adding a further layer of precision attack at the time and place of our choosing.
- The Royal Fleet Auxiliary shipping, currently *Fort Rosalie*, has provided the necessary afloat logistic support.
- HMS *Liverpool* continues with its embargo operations and HMS *Bangor* has replaced HMS *Brocklesby*, providing a vital and ongoing mine-hunting capability to the mission.
- Royal Navy vessels have played a key role in NATO's enforcement of the maritime embargo, which has seen over 1,400 shipping movements investigated, 109 boardings, and eight vessels turned away from Libyan ports.
- RAF Tornado and Typhoon aircraft based at Gioia del Colle in southern Italy continue to launch operations against the Gaddafi regime's forces and have been at the forefront of coalition strike operations. Typhoon has performed extremely well, complementing the Tornado in what is a very effective ground attack partnership. The Typhoons alone have flown the equivalent of 24 times around the world in this operation so far.
- The Brimstone precision guided missile offers NATO a munition with outstanding accuracy. Its hit rate is easily in excess of 90%, and its precision allows such a small warhead to be used that it has an extremely low risk of collateral damage.
- In total, Royal Navy, Army Air Corps and RAF operations have so far damaged or destroyed over 500 regime targets, including some 240 tanks, AFVs, artillery and rocket systems, and over 150 infrastructure targets including bunkers and ammo stores.
- VC10 and Tristar air-to-air refuelling aircraft and E3D Sentry and Sentinel surveillance aircraft continue to support the operation.
- After a three month extension to her 37 years of service with 51 Squadron RAF, the Nimrod R1 has returned from its final mission providing signals intelligence support to the operation in Libya. The R1 is to be taken out of service in accordance with a decision made as part of the 2007 planning round.

SECTION 2 - POLICY

TRANSFORMING DEFENCE – SDR AND DEFENCE REFORM

Top Line:

The reduction of the fiscal deficit is the Government's top priority and that means bearing down on public expenditure – including spending on Defence. As set out in the Strategic Defence and Security Review, the Armed Forces and Ministry of Defence will see their budget and staffing reduced, although less than many other parts of the public sector. But the UK will retain the world's fourth largest defence budget, highly effective Armed Forces and a robust set of military capabilities.

The Defence Reform Unit's Review contains a package of measures to make Defence organisation and processes simpler and leaner. Designing, developing and implementing the new ways of working will be a big challenge, particularly when the Department is undertaking operations in both Afghanistan and Libya. Despite the challenge, delay will not make things easier and the Department will be pushing forward quickly with the Defence Transformation programme. Under the leadership of the 2nd Permanent Secretary and Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, this programme will draw together and co-ordinate all the main change programmes in Defence.

The Defence Transformation Programme will reset the way Defence works for the next generation, and meet the uncertain future which was described in the National Security Strategy and the Strategic Defence and Security Review. It is expected that the Department will complete the first stage of changes in the autumn, with the announcement of new top level organisational structures. Other changes will take longer.

Supporting Lines:

- The financial savings required cannot be achieved without an impact on people and jobs. People and associated costs account for a substantial proportion of the budget. The SDSR outcome includes reductions by 17,000 military personnel and around 25,000 civil servants (5,000 in Trading Funds and 20,000 elsewhere).
- The Secretary of State launched the Defence Reform Unit's Review in August 2010 under the leadership of Lord Levene to look at a root and branch reform of the MOD (everything other than the front-line capabilities covered by the SDSR). The Secretary of State published the Defence Reform Unit's Report on 27 June 2011, and has accepted its recommendations.
- The report contains a package of measures, with 53 detailed recommendations on governance and accountability, the roles of front line and joint commands and the centre, support services and personnel. The key recommendations are to:
 - Strengthen top level decision making through a smaller Defence Board, chaired by the Defence Secretary;
 - clarify the responsibilities of senior leaders, to strengthen individual accountability;
 - make the Head Office smaller and more strategic, responsible for high level balance of investment decisions, setting strategic direction and a strong corporate framework, and holding to account;
 - empower the Single Service Chiefs to perform their role of running their Service more effectively, with greater freedom to manage, as part of a much clearer framework of financial accountability and control;
 - strengthen financial and performance management throughout the Department, making clear that everyone is responsible for ensuring future plans are affordable;
 - create a 4 star-led Joint Forces Command, to strengthen the focus on joint enablers and on joint warfare development;
 - create Defence Infrastructure and Defence Business Services organisations, as announced in the Spring, to ensure enabling services are delivered efficiently, effectively and professionally; and
 - manage and use senior military and civilian personnel more effectively, with people staying in post for longer, and more transparent and standardised senior career management.
- Transformation is grounded in the coherent long-term strategy set out in the Strategic Defence and Security Review. It is the vehicle for directing, co-ordinating and driving forward the implementation of these changes. At its core is implementation of Defence Reform recommendations and the MOD-owned aspects of the Strategic Defence and Security Review. It also embraces the centrally driven change initiatives inherited from the previous government, which remain essential to achieving our financial targets, including our Efficiency programme,

the refreshed Defence Transformation Portfolio of major change programmes, and Defence Acquisition reform. All of these are being taken forward within overarching work to change behaviours and improve ways of working. Transformation will provide the means to coordinate this work and learn lessons across Defence.

The purpose of all this activity is to deliver the following key Defence objectives:

- Ensure a secure and resilient UK and to shape a stable world by working across Government and with key Allies and partners.
- Maintain flexible, agile and battle-winning Armed Forces, with the right equipment, capable of operating across the globe.
- Support Service personnel and their families, as well as Reserves, veterans and civilian staff.
- Deliver a simpler, more effective organisation that provides value for money and lives within its means.

BUDGET

Top Line:

The Spending Review (announced on 20 October 2010) set out the resources allocated to Defence for implementing the SDSR. The Spending Review was closely aligned with the SDSR throughout.

The Department has recently initiated a three month exercise to take forward the work needed to balance Defence priorities and the budget over the long-term. This is part of the work to ensure we match our assumptions with our spending settlement. It will inform the next planning round and help the department to build up to a sustainable Defence programme

It is too early to give a robust estimate of the anticipated costs of the operations in Libya. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has confirmed that the net additional costs of operations in Libya will be fully met from the Government's Special Reserve.

Supporting Lines:

- The Government has committed to bringing down the national deficit by reducing public expenditure. Defence is not immune from the UK's general financial situation. Despite these cuts, the UK expects to continue to have the fourth largest military budget in the world (and, on some measures, the third largest) and to meet the NATO target of spending 2% of UK GDP on Defence.

Key Facts:

- By 2014/15, the budget will reduce by around 8% in real terms compared to 2010/11.
- The cost of operations is additional to the Defence budget and is met from the Government's Special Reserve. In the last financial year, 2009/10, over £4 billion was spent in support of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. A further £4.6 billion is estimated to be spent this financial year. The costs of operations in Libya will also be met by the Government's Special Reserve.

FUTURE RESERVES 2020 STUDY

Top Line:

As part of the SDSR announcement on 19 October 2010, the Prime Minister commissioned a review of the Reserve Forces to ensure that MOD makes the most efficient use of Reservist skills, experience and capabilities. Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Nicholas

Houghton KCB ADC Gen, will lead the review, supported by Julian Brazier TD MP, who has been appointed as his deputy. The Study is known as the Future Reserves 2020 Study (FR20). MOD is expected to announce its findings in Summer 2011.

Supporting Lines:

FR20 is organised into three phases. Phase One looks to develop a common understanding of the context in which Reserves will be used in future and define the strategic principles around which the balance between Regular and non-Regular manpower should be designed. Phase Two will focus on Reserve Force structures needed to complement the Regular Force and meet operational requirements. Later, in Phase Three, the Study will develop a detailed concept and outline plan for implementing new single-Services Reserves' structures.

SECTION 3 - EQUIPMENT AND LOGISTIC SUPPORT

Top Line:

Success in Afghanistan is the top priority for Defence and the Government is fully committed to ensuring that the campaign is properly resourced, funded and equipped.

Supporting Lines:

- Significant improvements have been made in the equipment provided to UK Armed Forces on operations, and Operational Commanders now have a wide range of helicopters, protected vehicles, weapons, remotely piloted air system (RPAS) and other key equipments at their disposal.

Key Facts:

Afghanistan Operations

- Over £4.9 billion has been approved through the Urgent Operational Requirement (UOR) process on equipment to meet emerging threats and requirements for Afghanistan since Operation HERRICK began.
- On 10 June 2010, the Prime Minister announced up to an extra £67 million for equipment in support of the Counter-Improvised Explosive Devices (C-IED) campaign.
- On 7 July 2010, the Secretary of State announced £189 million of funding from the Treasury Reserve as a UOR. It is being spent on:
 - £158 million for equipment such as ground-based surveillance and communications systems to make bases more secure;
 - £19 million for personal equipment, including Osprey body armour and helmets, light and heavy machine guns, combat shotguns, and more night vision equipment;
 - £12 million for better protected logistics support vehicles.
- On 7 December 2010, the Prime Minister announced that Reaper remotely piloted aircraft hours in Afghanistan would be doubled, giving troops increased air support to ground operations and the C-IED campaign.

Protected Vehicles

- On 26 June 2011, it was announced that the new, upgraded Warrior Theatre Entry Standard (Herrick) – TES(H) – Infantry Fighting Vehicle is now operational. Over 70 vehicles have been modified by BAE Systems as part of a UOR. The tracked vehicles have been given around 30 new improvements under the Warrior TES (H) programme worth around £40 million.
- Deliveries of Protected Mobility Vehicles to Afghanistan continue. These include Mastiff, Ridgback, Jackal, Wolfhound and Warthog. Over £2 billion for more than 2,000 new Protected Mobility vehicles has been approved since 2006.

UPDATED MONTHLY – JULY 2011 VERSION

- In October 2010, Wolfhound, the 'heavyweight' in the Tactical Support Vehicle (TSV) fleet became operational. Combining the protection and firepower of a Mastiff with a flatbed for cargo, Wolfhound joins Husky and Coyote in carrying essential combat supplies such as food, water and ammunition to troops on frontline patrols. The original order was boosted by 30 more vehicles in June 2010, bringing total contract value to £160 million. On 17 October 2010, an order for a further 30 Husky vehicles was announced in a £36 million contract (bringing the total value to around £220 million).
- Over 100 Warthog vehicles have been bought to replace Viking. 2 Royal Tank Regiment were the first to benefit from the Warthog's outstanding manoeuvrability, greater protection and firepower during Herrick 13.
- On 30 November 2010, the Government announced a £180 million contract to buy the next generation Light Protected Patrol Vehicle (Foxhound). The first vehicles are scheduled to be delivered for training later in 2011.

Counter-IED (C-IED)

- In June 2010, the new Talisman Counter-IED system was unveiled. Bought as a UOR, worth more than £180 million, the suite of vehicles clears routes of IEDs and mines. Each Talisman suite consists of Mastiff protected patrol vehicles; Buffalo Mine-Protected Vehicles with rummaging arms; JCB High Mobility Engineer Excavators; T-Hawk Micro Air Vehicle and a Talon tracked Remote Control Vehicle. Operated by the Royal Engineers, its capability improves our ability to manage the IED threat, and protects vehicle convoys delivering supplies to Forward Operating Bases.

Personal protection

- In September 2010, the first layer of a new, multi-tiered pelvic protection system was introduced for troops in Afghanistan to help mitigate the effects of IED blasts. The three-tiered system of clothing and armour consists of special protective underwear, detachable armoured groin protection and trousers. Deliveries of the second tier of pelvic protection began in February 2011. The third, trouser, tier has completed user trials and is expected to field later this year.

Helicopters

- Upgraded Lynx Mk9A helicopters, with their powerful engines, are providing sustained capability in theatre at altitude and during the heat of the Afghan summer, providing a year-round light helicopter capability for the first time. They complement the support Chinook, Merlin and Sea King helicopters as well as the Apache attack helicopter in the theatre fleet.

ISTAR

The Reaper RPAS programme has now provided over 20,000 hours of armed over-watch in support of UK and ISAF forces in Afghanistan. The UK's Reaper RPAS continue to provide high quality, persistent armed Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) support to UK and ISAF forces in Afghanistan. On 6 December 2010, the Prime Minister announced that funding will be made available to enable further increases to Reaper capability in future.

- The Future Force 2020 will include strategic surveillance and intelligence platforms capable of providing wide area coverage as part of our broader ISTAR capability. The Nimrod R1 will be replaced with the American-built RC135 Rivet Joint aircraft. UK crews are already training with the US Rivet Joint fleet in preparation for the introduction of 3 x Rivet Joint aircraft in 2014 and commenced co-manned deployed operations on USAF Rivet Joint aircraft in June 2011.
- The Government has taken the difficult decision to take Sentinel out of service post Op HERRICK. At the time Sentinel was envisaged, no assets in Defence could provide similar capabilities. However, at present, Defence has the use of a number of other platforms which can mitigate, to a degree, the loss of the platform.
- Once Sentinel is withdrawn from Service, the loss of this platform will be mitigated through a range of other capabilities which include JSF, Air Seeker and the SCAVENGER programme.
- The Sentry E3D AWACS continues to provide wide area surveillance and the command and control of our assets deployed in support of operations in Libya. The E3D can also contribute

towards a maritime counter-terrorism capability, counter-piracy, counter-narcotics and long range SAR operations.

Tornado GR4

- The Tornado is making an important contribution to operations in Afghanistan and Libya and has recently passed the one million flying hours mark. Tornado GR4 offers commanders a reactive, scalable, and precise ladder of effects that cannot be provided by other air platforms. In Afghanistan it routinely provides de-escalatory 'shows of presence' and 'shows of force' to deter or disperse insurgents without the need to resort to direct attack. Both in Libya and Afghanistan, the Tornado is also providing pre-planned close air support, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, armed overwatch and a life-saving response – often all in the same mission.
- As a result of the SDSR, it was decided to reduce the size of the Tornado force by 2 squadrons. XIII Squadron, based at Royal Air Force Marham, and 14 Squadron, based at Royal Air Force Lossiemouth disbanded on 1 June 2011.

Typhoon

- Typhoon is playing a vital Air Defence role in the UK, Falkland Islands and operations in Libya. It is capable of being deployed in the full spectrum of air operations, from air policing, to peace support, through to high intensity conflict.

Nimrod R1/Air Seeker

- The collection and exploitation of electronic signals, and dissemination of intelligence thereby gained (SIGINT), is an essential and enduring capability requirement for both standing and contingent military tasks. The Nimrod R1, which had provided this capability since 1974, retired from service following a 3 month extension in June 2011. The original decision to take the R1 out of service was taken in 2007 and is not a result of the SDSR.
- For the UK, the loss of the Nimrod R1 can in part be mitigated through the use of our maritime and other assets, and access to US support via a bilateral agreement.
- On 19 March 2010, the MOD signed a bilateral agreement with the US Government to procure three RIVET JOINT aircraft and associated training and ground systems to replace the Nimrod R1 aircraft.
- The bilateral agreement with the US will sustain the UK's airborne signals intelligence capability and safeguard UK personnel core competencies until the RIVET JOINT aircraft enter service with the RAF in 2014.
- 83 personnel will complete training in 2011; by ISD, a total of 116 UK personnel will have been trained.
- UK crews commenced deployed operations on co-manned USAF Rivet Joint aircraft in June 2011.

Strategic and Tactical Lift

- On 19 April 2011, the first future strategic (transport) and tanker aircraft (FSTA) arrived in the UK for trials at Boscombe Down.
- FSTA aircraft in service with the RAF will be known as Voyager.
- The RAF's Air Transport Force is being rationalised as quickly as possible to consist of only the most modern and capable aircraft types - with A400M joining the RAF's fleet of seven C17 aircraft and Voyager. The UK will gradually withdraw legacy fleets such as the C130 Hercules, Tristar, VC10 and existing Comms Fleet Aircraft as soon as new capabilities are introduced.

Joint Combat Aircraft: Lightning 2

- To meet the UK's Joint Combat Aircraft requirement, the Government remains absolutely committed to the US led Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) programme, which will provide a world-beating aircraft, able to operate from both the sea and land, ideally suited for our future capability needs. The UK plans to transition to a combined fast jet fleet of JSF, named the Lightning 2, and Typhoon aircraft in the medium to long term, and will assess the balance between the two platforms in future Defence reviews.

- The UK now plans to buy the more capable Carrier Variant JSF, which offers advantages in terms of range, payload and through-life costs over the Short Take Off and Vertical Landing (STOVL) variant. The UK plans to deliver the Carrier Strike capability from around 2020.

Equipment, Support and Technology for UK Defence and Security

- On 20 December 2010, the Government launched a Green Paper marking the formal consultation on Equipment, Support and Technology for UK Defence and Security. Led by the MOD and Home Office, it covers a range of issues including national security, working with other countries, exports, small and medium-sized enterprises and cyber security. This is the first time these key issues have been considered together from both a defence and security perspective. A White Paper, to be published later in 2011, will set out the Government's approach in the defence and security domains over the next five years.

Independent Review of single source pricing regulations - the "Yellow Book"

- In January 2011, the MOD also announced the appointment of Lord David Currie as chairman of the independent review of single source pricing regulations. The review should complete this year and will analyse the purpose and role of how the MOD procures non-competitively tendered goods and services.

Type 45 Destroyers

- The first Type 45, HMS Daring, entered service on 31 July 2010. The second in class, HMS Dauntless, was formally commissioned into the Royal Navy on 3 June 2010, and is now in service conducting Basic Operational Sea Training. Sea Viper was fired from her in September 2010, representing the first firing of the missile from a Type 45 platform. HMS Diamond (Ship 3) was accepted off contract in September 2010 and is currently undergoing sea trials. Dragon (Ship 4) is now undergoing her first set of sea trials. Defender (Ship 5) was launched on 21 October 2009 and Duncan (Ship 6) on 11 October 2010. Both are currently being fitted out on the Clyde. .

Submarines

- The first in class of the new Astute Submarines, HMS Astute, has completed her first set of rigorous sea trials and has now been commissioned into the Royal Navy. She will now undergo further trials before she is declared operational. Ambush was named on 16 December 2010 and launched in January 2011. Artful and Audacious are under construction at Barrow.

Ice Patrol Ship

- On 21 March 2011, HMS Protector was named as the temporary replacement for HMS Endurance, the Antarctic and South Atlantic ice patrol and survey vessel.

Air Defence

- RAF air defence assets including Typhoon aircraft, radars and command and control systems, are held at continuous readiness 24/7, 365 days of the year to guarantee the security of UK sovereign airspace and NATO-monitored airspace.

SECTION 4 – PERSONNEL AND MEDICAL

Top Line:

The Government recognises the need to ensure our Armed Forces, veterans and their families have the support they need, and are treated with the dignity they deserve. The commitment to rebuilding the Covenant sets the tone for Government policy aimed at improving the support available for the Armed Forces Community.

Supporting lines:

THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

- On 16 May 2011, the Government published a new tri-Service Covenant, “The Armed Forces Covenant” which sets out the enduring, general principles that will govern the relationship between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces Community and sets the tone for Government policy aimed at improving the support available for serving and former members of the Armed Forces and their families.
- The Secretary of State for Defence stated that “the Armed Forces Covenant does not need to be a long and detailed charter. It should be a simple and timeless statement of the moral obligation that we owe.”
- An amended Armed Forces Bill will enshrine in law the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, that members of the Armed Forces Community not suffer disadvantage as a result of their service and that where appropriate they should receive special treatment. These principles will be written into law for the first time as the Prime Minister pledged last year.
- The Armed Forces Bill already sets out a requirement for the Secretary of State for Defence to lay before Parliament an annual Armed Forces Covenant report on how well the Government is meeting its obligations to support the Armed Forces community.
- The Government published on 16 May 2011 “The Armed Forces Covenant: Today and Tomorrow” which details the current actions being taken forward to deliver the covenant and future commitments being implemented over the coming months and years.

COMMITMENTS AND PRIORITIES

The coalition programme, published in June 2010, stated the Government would work to rebuild the Military Covenant by:

- Ensuring that Service personnel’s rest and recuperation leave can be maximised [**delivered**];
- Changing the rules so that Service personnel only have to register once on the Service register;
- Including Service children as part of proposals for a pupil premium [**announced on 9 December 2010**];
- Exploring the potential for including Service children as part of proposals for a pupil premium [**delivered 13 December 2010**];
- Providing university and further education scholarships for the children of Servicemen and women who have been killed on active service since 1990 [**delivered. Scheme launched April 2011**];
- Providing support for ex-Service personnel to study at university [**announced for implementation in September 2011**];
- Creating a new programme, ‘Troops for Teachers’, to recruit ex-Service personnel into the teaching profession [**announced on 24 November 2010 by the Department for Education - scheme launching in 2011**];
- Providing extra support for veteran mental health needs [**being taken forward as implementation of the Murrison study**];
- Reviewing the rules governing the awarding of medals;
- Including Armed Forces pay in plans for a fair pay review [**the final report of the Hutton Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector was published on 15 March 2011 and MOD, like other Departments, has been asked to set in place plans on their response to the report, covering military and civilian workforces, by July 2011**];
- Ensuring that injured personnel are treated in dedicated military wards; and
- Looking at whether there is scope to refurbish Armed Forces’ accommodation from efficiencies within the Ministry of Defence.

NEW COMMITMENTS ANNOUNCED ON 16 MAY 2011 INCLUDE:

- An increase in Council Tax Relief to 50 per cent for those deployed on eligible operations;
- A new fund of £30 million Community Covenant Grant to support the scheme over four years;
- An additional fund of £3 million per year to support state schools with significant numbers of Service children (in addition to the Pupil Premium);
- Launching a veterans' information service to provide support on health issues including mental health;
- Launching a Veterans' Card to ease access to commercial discounts or privileges and to consider how this could be expanded to include Service families;
- A meeting chaired by Ministers with key stakeholders to explore ways to improve access to housing;
- Working to ensure Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments are not required to be used to pay for social care;
- A guarantee that veterans suffering serious genital injuries receive three cycles of IVF.

MEDICAL SUPPORT

Top Line:

The support to personnel injured on operations is of an excellent standard. All Armed Forces personnel are supported by dedicated and comprehensive medical services, including mental health support.

Supporting Lines:

Seriously Injured personnel

- Operational casualties whose injuries are serious enough to require further treatment back in the UK are aeromedically evacuated as a matter of priority. The Queen Elizabeth NHS Hospital in Birmingham, which opened in June 2010, is the primary reception hospital for military patients evacuated to the UK from overseas. The new facilities offer injured soldiers the best possible care in a Military Ward, subject to clinical need.
- Patients requiring further rehabilitation care (including prosthetics) can be referred to the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DMRC) at Headley Court in Surrey. DMRC has 96 established in-patient beds with a further 14 beds being brought into use as a sensible contingency.
- Birmingham hospitals and Headley Court have the ability to manage increased casualty numbers, including mobilising additional military medical staff and providing extra bed spaces.

Retention of NHS Waiting List Position

- Previous waiting times will be taken into account when families relocate.

Prosthetics

- Recent Service leavers who have lost a limb while serving will, where clinically appropriate, be entitled to receive from the NHS equivalent standard prosthetic care to that provided by Defence Medical Services. Dr Andrew Murrison MP is leading a review to examine NHS prosthetic services for veterans now and for the future.

Mental Health

Service Personnel

- The MOD provides mental healthcare for those Armed Forces personnel who need it, primarily through our 15 military Departments of Community Mental Health across the UK (plus centres overseas), which provide out-patient treatment. In-patient care, when necessary, is provided in specialised psychiatric units under contract with the NHS
- In May 2010, the latest phase of a King's College study into the effects of deployment on the mental health of personnel confirmed the continuing low incidence rate of probable PTSD for the UK Armed Forces. Alcohol misuse and common mental disorders were the most prevalent mental health problems. Service personnel are generally no worse off as regards mental health disorders compared with available data for the civilian population. Deployment on operations was associated with a small increase in symptoms of PTSD in Reservists, and Regular personnel in combat roles were more likely than those in support roles to report probable PTSD. The number of times that a member of the Armed Forces deploys to Afghanistan or Iraq does not increase their risk of developing common mental health disorders.

Veterans

- The NHS is responsible for delivering veterans' healthcare, with priority treatment for Service-related conditions, subject to the clinical needs of all patients.
- MOD complements NHS services by providing a Medical Assessment Programme (with a similar service for Reservists) and by funding treatment provided by the mental health charity Combat Stress for war pensioners with mental health conditions caused by service.
- In England, Armed Forces Champions in Strategic Health Authorities and regional Armed Forces Networks are bringing together the NHS, Service charities and others, to meet the needs of the Armed Forces community in their area.

Dr Andrew Murrison's report, 'Fighting Fit: a mental health plan for servicemen and veterans'

- The MOD is working closely with the Department of Health to take forward the recommendations in Dr Andrew Murrison's independent report, 'Fighting Fit', including:

For Service personnel:

- An enhanced mental health assessment for serving personnel that will be used in medical examinations during service and prior to discharge. A three-month trial started in May 2011, with wider roll-out to follow in the autumn.
- Service personnel, who have mental health issues while serving or identified at the release medical as requiring specialist opinion will be allowed continued access to the military Departments of Community Mental Health (DCMH) for up to 6 months after discharge.
- A website for serving personnel, dependants and veterans will be trialled in selected areas.
- The MOD is working closely with Kings College London on a two-year study, funded by the US military, starting this autumn, of a possible screening tool for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

For veterans:

- Creating a Veterans' Information Service (VIS) that will contact ex-Service personnel 12 months after they leave the Armed Forces to give them information, guidance and

support on health and wellbeing issues should they want it. A trial will take place during 2011, with rollout scheduled for early 2012.

- Increasing the number of mental health professionals in England (from 15 to 30) to conduct veterans' outreach work from Mental Health Trusts. The Department of Health is working with the NHS Armed Forces Networks and others to finalise arrangements that are due to come on stream during 2011.
- A, free, dedicated 24 hour support line for former and serving personnel, their families and veterans (0800 138 1619), funded by the Department of Health and operated by Combat Stress and Rethink Mental Health was introduced in March 2011. .

PAY AND ALLOWANCES

The Government is determined that members of the Armed Forces should receive a remuneration package commensurate with the vital role they play. The outcomes of the SDSR and the Spending Review will have far-reaching consequences in reducing Defence expenditure, although the full impact on pay and allowances is not yet clear. It is critical that change in these areas does not impact on our ability to attract, recruit and retain high calibre individuals.

- The tax-free Operational Allowance for Armed Forces personnel serving in qualifying operational theatres was doubled on 6 May 2010.
- On 21 March 2011 the Government announced that it had accepted in full the 2011 Armed Forces' Pay Review Body recommendations, which were implemented from 1 April 2011. As part of the Government's Emergency Budget, on 22 June 2010, the Chancellor announced a two-year pay freeze from 2011/12 for public sector workers, including Service and Civilian personnel. The Government however, stated that all those earning £21,000 or less should receive a minimum increase of £250. The AFPRB recommended an increase of £250 for Armed Forces' personnel earning £21,000 or less, inclusive of X-Factor. Additionally, the AFPRB recommended targeted measures for specific ranks or trades, and an increase to the Daily Food Charge and some accommodation charges. Eligible Service personnel will continue to receive an increment each year.
- Reductions in the Service Personnel allowances package (totalling £250 million of the £880 million spend) were announced on 20 January 2011. The announcement was a result of the requirement set out in the SDSR to reduce expenditure on Service and Civil Service allowances.

PENSIONS

The Armed Forces Pension Schemes (AFPS) are widely recognised as good quality pension schemes which compare favourably with other public and private sector schemes. The AFPS are designed to reflect the special features of Service life, provide adequate retirement income and protection for dependants, and encourage retention as a key part of the overall remuneration package for Service Personnel.

Supporting Lines:

- In 2010 the Government invited Lord Hutton to conduct a fundamental structural review of public service pension provision.
- Lord Hutton's Independent Public Service Pensions Commission published its final report on 10 March 2011. The report recommended a number of significant changes to public service pension provision aimed at ensuring that public service employees will have continued access to good quality, sustainable and fairer defined benefit pension schemes.
- The review recommendations covered all public service pension schemes, including the AFPS.

- The Government has welcomed the findings of Lord Hutton's final report and has accepted the recommendations as a basis for consultation with public sector workers, trades unions and others
- The Commission's findings include the recommendation that the future model for pension provision should be a Career Average Revalued Earning (CARE) pension scheme, which provides a defined benefit pension based on a percentage of the salary earned each year.
- The Commission has set out that the introduction of new pension schemes should be achieved before the next general election in 2015 but Lord Hutton has noted that for some schemes, including the Armed Forces, a longer timeframe may be required due to the scale of the change.
- The MOD will work to ensure that the AFPS continue to reflect the unique role that Service Personnel fulfil and that any new pension scheme remains a valuable component of the total remuneration package.

REDUNDANCY

Following the SDSR, the shape and size of the Defence workforce (both military and civilian) must be addressed. The UK's Armed Forces are being restructured to meet current and emerging threats and so are undergoing some changes including a reduction in the combined size of the Royal Navy, the Army and the RAF by some 17,000 by 2015. Some of this reduction is being achieved through measures such as slowing down recruitment but the Department estimates that up to around 11,000 redundancies will be required. The outcome of the SDSR will also result in a reduction of the number of civilian personnel by around 25,000 by 2015.

The Armed Forces redundancy programme will reduce the number of Service personnel while maintaining a satisfactory balance of skills, experience, ability and seniority in rank throughout the Armed Forces to enable delivery of operational requirements.

- A compulsory redundancy programme has been developed under the terms of Armed Forces Redundancy Scheme 2006 (AFRS 06) and AFRS 10, broadly aligning with the Armed Forces Pension Schemes 05 and 75.
- The Royal Navy, the Army and the RAF have published comprehensive documents for their personnel, detailing the branches and trades from which they are seeking to make redundancies in this first tranche. Although these are compulsory programmes, applications are sought. All three Services will run up to four redundancy tranches and the released documents only cover the first tranche. Members of the Services will be informed through their chain of command if they are to be made redundant in this first tranche in September 2011.
- Decisions on those selected for redundancy (from the identified redundancy fields) will be made by the single Services, and may include non-applicants as well as volunteers.
- Transition of those selected for redundancy will be managed through the appropriate resettlement package.
- All tranches will be complete by March 2015.

For the civilian workforce, the Department is committed to achieving the necessary reductions without recourse to compulsory redundancy wherever possible although this eventuality cannot be ruled out. The reductions will be managed by a range of measures including natural wastage, restrictions on external recruitment which have been in place for some time, and a Voluntary Early Release Scheme (VERS) which was open for applications in spring 2011. Letters notifying individuals of the outcome of their VERS application were sent on 30 June 2011.

- The TUs were consulted prior to the launch of the scheme.
- The compensation payable is determined in accordance with the rules of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme (and equivalent arrangements for members of other pension arrangements – such as Teachers, Burnham Lecturers and NHS grades).
- It is unlikely that these measures alone will be sufficient to achieve the full reductions required and further action is currently being considered which may include a further early release scheme(s) and/or more targeted schemes.

RECRUITMENT

The Armed Forces depend on high-quality young people wanting to join the Services for rewarding and exciting careers. Despite the reduction in the overall numbers of Service personnel, the Armed Forces are still recruiting and training to replace those personnel who leave the Services at the end of their contracts.

ARMED FORCES COMPENSATION SCHEME (AFCS)

- The AFCS provides compensation for injuries, illness and death arising from Service since 6 April 2005. War pensions are paid to veterans with injuries caused by their service prior to this date. The AFCS covers all serving and ex-Service personnel and may provide a tax-free lump sum for pain and suffering, the size of which reflects the severity of injury or illness that has been sustained. There are 15 tariff levels with associated lump sum awards ranging from £1,200 to £570,000. The AFCS also provides a bereavement grant to survivors of Service personnel who die as a result of their service.
- For serious injuries and illness, the AFCS also provides an income stream known as the Guaranteed Income Payment (GIP). This is in addition to the lump sum and is a tax-free, index-linked monthly payment from discharge until death. The GIP is an enhancement to an individual's ill-health pension, paid to recognise that the injury or illness was sustained as a result of service. The scale of the payment is based on the severity of the injury, and age and salary on discharge.
- The Scheme was reviewed under the independent chairmanship of former Chief of the Defence Staff, Admiral the Lord Boyce. The Review report, published in February 2010, found that the Scheme was fundamentally sound, but that adjustments were required in some areas.
- The MOD has now implemented all 69 recommendations from the Review. The changes to the Scheme, which were launched on 9 May 2011, include: an increase, which averages in excess of 25%, to all lump sum payments, except the top award which was recently doubled to £570,000; an increase to the maximum award payable for mental illness from £48,875 to £140,000, in order to accurately reflect the impact of the most serious mental health conditions; and an increase to all Guaranteed Income Payments (GIPs) which are paid to those who are seriously injured. A GIP is a monthly tax-free, inflation proof income stream which is payable from discharge, for life. The increase reflects the lasting effect of more serious injuries on future promotion prospects and on the ability to work to age 65.
- The Review also saw the establishment of an Independent Medical Expert Group (IMEG) to advise on the appropriate levels of compensation for several specific injuries, including mental health. The Group's first report was published on 9 May 2011. The IMEG will continue to look at how we can compensate properly for hearing loss and mental health problems this year. Its findings will be published in the next year.

HOUSING

The MOD recognises the importance of providing decent living standards in maintaining morale on the front line and, despite the current financial challenges, continues to invest and target efforts on the most pressing accommodation issues. Military accommodation

arrangements continue to represent good value for money for members of the Armed Forces, with charges well below market rates. Significant progress has been made on accommodation and will continue, within the financial constraints which now exist. Establishing the new Defence Infrastructure Organisation shows the Government's commitment to improving the way estates and infrastructure services are delivered to give the Armed Forces the best possible facilities in which to live, work and train. The MOD has committed to undertake a detailed review of the approach to accommodation to better meet the needs of Service personnel for affordable and good quality housing during and after Service. Accommodation forms part of a review into the Terms and Conditions of Service.

- Armed Forces Home Ownership Scheme (Pilot). An MOD £20 million, 4-year pilot shared equity scheme was launched in January 2010. The scheme is eligible to full-time permanent members of the Armed Forces who wish to remain in the Forces, and who have between 4 and 6 years' service, to buy a property in England. Up to January 2011, the scheme attracted 518 applicants assessed as being eligible in principle. Of these, 181 are ready to be invited to speak to a financial adviser and 82 have completed.
- Extended Eligibility for Priority Status to Affordable Housing Schemes. Armed Forces personnel with over six years service are entitled to keep their priority status for 12 months after leaving the Armed Forces to help them buy a house through the affordable home schemes across all areas in England, Scotland and Wales. This has been extended to include bereaved spouses and partners of Service personnel. In England, between April 2009 and May 2010, there were 774 completions.
- Housing Adaptation Grants. Seriously injured personnel in receipt of AFCS or War Pension Scheme (WPS) payments can access substantial grants to adapt their home for their disability. AFCS and WPS lump sum payments are not considered to be income when means-testing for Housing Adaptation Grants.
- Disregard to compensation payments. AFCS lump sum payments are not considered to be income when assessing for affordable housing.
- Local Connection. Previously, Local Connection legislation meant that service leavers received no recognition for having lived and worked in an area when applying for social housing. This has been amended in England and Wales, and the change in Scotland came into force from 1 April 2011.
- Priority Housing for Injured Service Personnel. Ex-Servicemen and women who are seriously injured have priority for specially adapted social homes.
- Service Families Accommodation. The vast majority of UK Service homes are now at the top two standards (of four) for condition¹, with families no longer required to live in properties at the lowest standard, although some still choose to do so.

EDUCATION

- Free Further or Higher Education. Service leavers with six years' service, and who have previously been members of the Enhanced Learning Scheme, can apply for funding to cover tuition fee expenses for an additional qualification. This is up to and including degree level courses.
- School Place Allocation. The School Admissions Code is designed to recognise the needs of Service children.
- Special Educational Needs (SEN). Local authorities and schools have received guidance reminding them of their obligation to ensure continuity of support.
- Troops to Teachers. As part of the Schools White Paper, released in November 2010 by the Department for Education, the Government announced plans to develop a 'Troops to Teachers' programme which will sponsor Service leavers to train as teachers.

¹ We refer here to Standard for Condition, not Grade for Charge.

WELFARE

The welfare needs of Service personnel and their families remain a key priority. Any changes proposed to Terms and Conditions of Service will take into account the impact on welfare support. The Government remains committed to providing the best possible support to deployed personnel and their families through the Deployed Welfare Package.

- Operational Welfare. The Deployed Welfare Package is kept under constant review to ensure it meets the needs of both the Service person and their dependants. Free phone calls are available for 30 minutes per week. Wi-Fi access has been extended in operational areas, texting and internet facilities have been improved in Forward Operating Bases and the Families Welfare Grant doubled.
- Post. MOD and the Royal Mail continue to operate the Enduring Families Free Mail Service (EFFMS) for friends and families to send packages of up to 2 kg to named personnel in Afghanistan and Iraq plus HM Ships in support.
- Improved access to welfare services. The Government is launching an Armed Forces Community Covenant scheme, which will encourage local authorities, the private sector and the voluntary and community sector to provide targeted support for their local Armed Forces community. This should provide a better level of access to the support provided by public service providers. The first 4 local authorities are launching Community Covenant schemes in June 2011 and we hope that other authorities will soon follow suit.
- Rest and Recuperation. On 22 July 2010, the Government announced steps to maximise Service personnel's rest and recuperation.

DMC Secretariat & New Media
Please direct any queries to 020 7218 9228