

Achieving Effect

Annual Chief of Defence Staff Lecture

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What I would like to do is to pull together some thoughts on force: the effects that our Armed Forces have to have in their operational theatres; the skills we need; developments in our role, the way we operate and our strategy; and the need to move towards effects-based campaigning by undergoing Transformation and developing a Network Enabled Capability.

Let me start with the use of force. In 1775, speaking on conciliation with the United States, the philosopher Edmund Burke said that,

The use of force alone is but temporary. It may subdue for a moment, but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again: and a nation is not governed, which is perpetually to be conquered.

This is perhaps a blinding glimpse of the obvious – and you could find instances of Burke being wrong – but he does put his finger on the persistence of military effect, or lack of it. Nowadays, given that ideally, other levers must first be used – be they diplomatic, economic, political, social or humanitarian – when we do have to apply the threat of using force, or force itself, we have to be clever, light on our feet and we have to gain asymmetric advantage. It's worth emphasizing here that the asymmetric approach to warfare is not just the prerogative of the terrorist or the underdog, but I will come back to that again when I discuss Transformation. And the military effect we achieve must be increasingly precise, if we are not to



Admiral Sir Michael Boyce. Photo courtesy of MoD

derail such progress as we have made on the other strands of non-military activity – and thereby require to 'subdue again'.

Of course, generating the required military effect isn't new – effects-based warfare has been around since Joshua, gaining asymmetric advantage since before the longbow and multi-stranded approaches to strategy since well before the time that Drake singed the King of Spain's beard, whilst Her Majesty led Phillip 2nd up the garden path! But developing a military contribution to a joined-up, cross-governmental approach focused on producing the desired outcome or effect, when faced with legacy systems, legacy C2, legacy capabilities and legacy thinking is anything but simple. Although some commentators insist that the world has now moved on from the post-Cold War era, in a way we have not taken all the steps to leave that era behind, as we are

often prisoners of our own experience – and certainly hostage to many decisions taken in that era. Because we drag the legacy of the past behind us, be that old platforms and systems, Cold War thinking, post-colonial adjustment, or orthodoxy, we can find it difficult to tackle 'the revolution in military affairs' or 'the paradigm shift' in the agile and precise way we want to or need to. This can leave the MoD open to accusations of equivocation, obfuscation and uncertainty. And that is before we even consider policy decisions regarding engagement, conflict or exclusion, set against a complicated background of national and international frameworks, laws and organizations. So even though we are working hard at being even more 'joined-up', there is still room for improvement and it is small wonder that we often end up dealing with today's symptoms, rather than addressing the causes of conflict.

So, how do we go about avoiding subduing 'for a moment' and removing 'the necessity of subduing again'? With long-term and intractable problems such as Israel and Palestine, Kashmir, the Great Lakes, Indonesia – and of course Iraq – it is difficult to see how. Over the last year or so, our Armed Forces have been heavily involved in a wide range of supportive, preventative, and offensive operations, sometimes simultaneously in the same country. In some cases, we are still there; in many cases we have been able to extract ourselves, but it doesn't mean that we may not have to go back.

So to try to answer my own

question, I would like to lean on some of our experiences, to cover something of what we've been up to, and to provide a backdrop for some of my later comments, but I will do so in terms of the effect achieved. Some of our successes may appear to be of an ephemeral nature, but the value of our Armed Forces' contribution in general has been immense. As you would hope, we've pulled some good lessons out of operations over the last year or so, but at the same time, we've also tried hard to avoid any particular successes leading to dogma enshrinement. Just because it worked last time, doesn't mean it will the next. In other words, we must not fall into the trap of fighting the last war and we need to keep the context in mind. But let me give you a selection of lessons in effects terms.

Lessons

Firstly, the importance of high level strategy *with* direction, so that our troops on the ground are not only in the minds of their commanders, but in tune with the political effect required of them. I can think of no better example than the continuing Operation Fingal. The UK-led contribution to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan was an unprecedented accomplishment in the time it took to get up and running and an unqualified success in extremely testing and unusual circumstances. ISAF had to operate in a city where the infrastructure was all but destroyed and to assist an administration whose institutions were rudimentary and

whose authority was tenuous. Nevertheless, ISAF made an immediate impact in Kabul and was welcomed by the population. By the time the UK handed over command of ISAF after the initial first phase, the Loya Jirga and the election of the Transitional Authority had been completed. Another major lesson we learned was that delivering a political-military solution of that nature requires ongoing leadership at the strategic level, and a correspondingly higher level headquarters formation than the number of boots on the ground would normally entail, because of the political delicacy of the effect required. That effect will now be sustained through ISAF 3 from February under the German/Netherlands High Readiness Force headquarters, which incidentally is breaking new ground outside a national or UN framework, as it uses NATO to assist in the force generation and planning process for an operation at some distance from the NATO area of operations.

Secondly, logistic reach and sustainability was vital on Operation Barras in Sierra Leone, enabling us to deploy forces rapidly into theatre from the UK, take down the West Side Boys and extract forces and hostages expeditiously. The after effect of the application of precise force had a profound impact on West African perceptions of UK's strategic intent in the area and reinforced the peace process.

Thirdly, the need for robust rules of engagement was demonstrated on Operation Jacana in early summer

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2002, where our Royal Marine Commandos were judicious in their return of fire, despite being fully justified to have been more robust – because, with an eye very much on future peace-making, they were alive to the need not to jeopardize the successful ISAF effect and the Loya Jirga process. Incidentally, running both a peace-support operation and a warfighting operation in the same country at the same time was something we would not normally countenance – an example of not being chained to dogma.

Fourthly, we are fully aware of how we can generate other effects – an economic effect, for example – through military action. We can see this in play in the offensive maritime interdiction operations in the Northern Gulf being conducted by our Armilla patrol in Operation Resinate, where the coalition has all but closed down Iraqi oil smuggling over the last six months. Similarly, we can help alleviate humanitarian catastrophe under the acknowledged primacy and expertise of non-governmental organizations and other government departments; or provide emergency fire cover, as 19000 of the Armed Forces have done extremely effectively on Operation Fresco recently.

Next, the impact of information operations on Operation Bessemer, the UK contribution to Task Force Harvest in Macedonia fifteen months ago, effectively shaped the battlespace. As planned, we were in and out of there in thirty days. The operation was a

confidence building measure to convince the Albanians to give up arms under an amnesty, monitored by the international community, to demonstrate their acquiescence to a political process. The military liaison teams provided independent verification of arms collection and incidents, which avoided escalation of any violence through the rumour mill. The effect of gaining control of the rumour machine built confidence in the process (*the required political effect*) and had the consequence of preventing other forms of violence spiralling out of control. The Macedonian elections held successfully this September owe more than a little to that operation.

And finally on an equipment lesson – support helicopters. Once the Cinderellas of the battlefield trying to keep up with the insatiable demands of artillery and forward operating base resupply, support helicopters have been a vital factor in both manoeuvre and the manoeuvrist approach, enabling not just vertical envelopment, but also reinforcing the perception of reach, speed of reaction and reassurance to local populations undecided on whether to follow the local warlord or the writ of law.

From what I have been saying, I am sure you can appreciate that the effects we can generate are not just military in nature and that the lessons we are learning are about the broader aspects of the use of force in the context of a broader strategy. I am sure there will be plenty more, and not all of them will be good!

The trouble is that Edmund Burke is often right about having to subdue again (in one form or another). Tackling the causes of conflict needs a long-term view and is by necessity multi-stranded, and the military strand may be the only vital response that we can make politically, even if the political end state is not immediately militarily deliverable. But problem countries and conflicts pull you in and that is why a containment strategy is so difficult. And once in, we can expect to remain engaged. So, as we are seeing with Afghanistan this year, winning the peace takes time, requires considerable resources and substantial international leverage to even start managing the outcome. It will be the same with any collapsing state. But early engagement can make a major difference, as we are hoping to achieve through an internationally supported integrated security and development plan in Nepal.

Skill Requirements

But what skills do our Armed Forces need to generate the required effect and what really is the future role for a regional power with global responsibilities?

Well, one skill our Armed Forces have to have is to be able to operate in a complex environment. The UK operates within international law and the international system where the template is not entirely perfect – as the coalition found with intercepting and boarding the North Korean and Cambodian flagged 'SO SUN' under the Missile Technology Control Regime,

unfortunately not signed by North Korea or Yemen. Nonetheless, the 'SO SUN' was carrying SCUD missiles to a country with a known Al Qa'ida problem. But the international system does provide the international community with a series of acceptable norms and touchstones. For instance, the existence of the internationally sanctioned law of the sea (UNCLOS) and the right of relatively free passage is vital to the prosecution of expeditionary operations, unlike basing or overflight rights, which require agreement. But many regimes and individuals wish to break down, constrain or limit the international system to further their own interests, whilst others wish to use it as a weapon. So the context in which our Armed Forces operate can be murky. This is further complicated by international structures, for instance malpositioned borders, which are always complicated by natural resources, often based on treaties between ex colonial powers, and with local difficulties such as delineating the left (or was it the right bank?) of some river channel (as with the international border between Venezuela and Guyana, set on the basis of a survey by a Royal Engineer officer in the early 20th century). Furthermore these borders are actually less important in a world which is simultaneously globalizing and reverting to tribal, religious or ethnic groupings, often giving rise to the very tensions, extremism and violence that we seek to mitigate. And going to arbitration isn't always the solution, as ICJ rulings are

not to every nation's taste – as we saw over Nigeria's initial reaction to the recent Bakassi peninsular ruling.

Secondly, if we are to exert the greatest leverage and maximize the effect of our lean Armed Forces, we need skill at tackling the causes, as well as the symptoms of any conflict. To do that, we need the imagination to shape events. Shaping events, in as far as it is possible at all, should, ideally, be our national strategy where enlightened self-interest coincides with a worthwhile moral cause. Of course, discriminating between enlightened national self-interest and international altruism is difficult, particularly if other countries perceive there to be not-so-altruistic, new colonial, political or economic interests involved! So, if we wish to tackle causes of conflict by shaping events under the heading of enlightened self-interest, we will have to take risks and incur expenditure under circumstances where traditionally the UK military would not initiate anything. But if we do, we have to do it properly – as we did in Sierra Leone. At the time of our intervention there under Operation Palliser, there were many cries of 'why Sierra Leone?' But following the hard work on Operation Silkman – where our forces retrained the Sierra Leone army, made it democratically accountable (a key task of our training teams in many countries in which they operate), integrated bush fighters and supported the UN mission (UNAMSIL) in stabilizing a problem country – there were successful elections in May this year. So our

approach was vindicated! That does not mean that we can say 'been there, done that', because the other problem countries in the region, particularly Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire, are in a parlous state. But stability in Sierra Leone, achieved through shoring up a country rather than dealing with immediate military symptoms, is vital and we must maintain the effect if we are not to go back again.

But how do we decide when to take risks? This brings me to my third requirement – defence diplomacy. Defence diplomacy provides me with a directed telescope, as well as keeping me abreast of routine events, bilateral relations, commanders' thinking and possible flashpoints. Assessment of risk or likely causes of conflict is enabled by the DAs, the military missions and the training teams, who allow us to get in early and draw the heat from the fire – or warn. Sending a gunboat worked in the 19th century, but nowadays coercive demonstration can be risky. (You could put a £27 million airframe over a group of farmers protesting at the forcible eradication of their opium crop, but you might not want to, just in case of a personal Stinger missile or a lucky magazine of Kalashnikov.) If we are unable to shape particular circumstances before they worsen, by tackling the causes or pre-empting events, then we must be in a position to react – decisively.

Finally (though more than just a skill), if we are to be effective, we must maintain credible operational capability and we must be Fit To Fight. And when

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not fighting, we must be able to conduct the full range of tasks we are called upon to undertake totally professionally, effectively and in a very grown-up-way. Therefore our forces have to be fully trained, equipped, sustainable, adaptable, agile, responsive and deployable, able to operate anywhere in the spectrum of conflict, at home or abroad, with or without allies.

All this is easy enough to say, but difficult to do; and I recognize that there are other views on how we do business, which brings me on to what I believe our role should be and some of the reasons for developing the way we operate – both because of attitudes to our military strategy of 'early in, early out' which we do because we have both the political will and the military responsiveness to generate 'early effect', and because of the changes in strategic context brought upon us by the global war on terrorism. And also because of our increasingly joined-up method and our evolving effects-based approach to new threats.

The UK's Role

Firstly, we aspire to be, or we aim to be, 'a force for good' in the world. It is true to say that we are still learning this role, so I would add the caveat 'where possible'. Being a 'force for good' in the world can lay us open to accusations of being self-indulgent from some quarters. But that aside, why be a 'force for good'? Well, the impression made by democratically accountable armed forces is a very powerful one, particularly if their intervention is

supported by the country concerned or authorized by the UN. What we are achieving is 'responsible engagement by example' and international credibility, as befits a permanent member of the Security Council. We are actually making a difference in the world. I have mentioned the military delivery of a democratic process through integrating previously hostile forces in Sierra Leone – and in this context, it is worth remembering the work still being done by the British Military Mission in South Africa. Apart from integrating previous ANC forces into the South African National Defence Force, we have been able to offer our expertise to their peacekeeping mission in Burundi and develop their MoD by attaching civil servants to help them gain democratic accountability. We are achieving similar effect with our British Peace Support Training Centre in Kenya helping African peacekeeping forces generate (sub-Saharan) African solutions to African problems — absolutely in line with the G8 New Programme for African Development (NEPAD). All good 'force for good' stuff!

So what's in it for us? Well, the speed of our political-military response means that we can generate early effect by operating at a higher tempo, and with consequently higher leverage than other nations; it gives us inherent leadership of the mission, at least in the early stages, and we have considerable experience in setting up the framework for change or operating as framework nation in coalitions; it gives us serious regional leverage; in national terms, it

supports UK's international investments; and it gives psychological support to our eight million or so expatriates abroad.

Secondly, we aim to be 'early in, early out'. However, this phrase and others such as 'punching above our weight' (actually I prefer the term 'punching first', because it fits with our desire to get early effect, which is of far greater military and political value) do not always earn us plaudits or win us friends, either because our effect has not been sustained and we have left it to others to carry on with where we left off; or we have been accused of grandstanding and posturing to maintain leverage with the US and/or Europe. Well, 'early in, stabilize/make the difference, early out' is our *desired* strategy and that is what we have *largely* tried to do, as on Task Force Harvest in Macedonia. So we will have to tough out any carping at us, decide what causes we espouse; and then we will have to be consistent – my third point.

Aiming to be consistent in the face of the changed strategic context should be evident in the stance we have taken against international terrorism and WMD. This stance has tied us into politico-military campaigns that will last decades because of their diffuseness – in other words not just a single terrorist with a bomb and a simple aim, but many of them, spread widely across the globe. We have moved from state-sponsored violence and conventional warfare – that we 'understood' and that we were trained for – to the spectre of

such destructive potential vested in an individual or small group that we really do have to reconsider the way we do business. In short, we have to be able to deal with the symptoms and at the same time tackle the causes; and meeting this challenge is only in part a military responsibility. We can never relax our guard. So Burke may be right after all.

But in a way we have endured this sort of change before, not only in the Cold War in terms of the immediacy of the threat, but in terms of its duration. And duration calls to mind the campaign against international slavery that followed Wilberforce's anti-slavery bill in 1833, which lasted over seventy years. It involved largely Royal Naval expeditionary operations, coercion, punitive raids, humanitarian relief, bravery and dogged determination – but it only succeeded in reducing slavery to an acceptable level, rather than eradicating it. It is highly unlikely that we can eradicate terrorism altogether. The challenge is more to eradicate it as a force for strategic effect. Much the same can be said for WMD.

And, to close this part off, apart from being durable, we should also remember that the military contribution to the global war against terrorism, WMD and drugs is enough to keep the Armed Forces fully occupied for a long time. The complexity of these problems means that we are having to develop and we must reinforce strong and effective linkages and coherent strategies across the breadth of government, that go beyond mere

'amicable convergence'. For instance, we have a national drugs strategy which includes the military strand. As a result, you will find the Armed Forces operating in the source areas influencing decision making, as in Afghanistan and in conjunction with the transitional administration in Kabul; or in the transit areas on maritime interdiction of the drugs routes; or with airborne reconnaissance operations against go-fasts in the Caribbean; or in a coastal patrol or monitoring role close to our shores. Other government departments are fully engaged and, to give you a flavour, the US Joint Inter Agency Co-ordination Group for drugs includes nineteen agencies or departments, but nonetheless it must be understood that getting multi-stranded aligned responses to problems remains a tricky one.

Developing Our Military Strategy

But what of recent developments in our strategy? You can see our effects-based approach in some of our SDR New Chapter thinking, where we aim to prevent terrorism emerging by deterring states from harbouring or supporting terrorists, or coercing them to stop doing so. We have to disrupt terrorist groups or destroy them; we have to stabilize, as on ISAF / TFH; find & strike in all environments; and deter & coerce through SF / TLAM / precision weapons. And we need to underpin these military effects with defence diplomacy and knowledge superiority, backed by the capability for rapid decision and precise

engagement, focused on the sensor-to decision maker-to shooter information flow. But we need other capabilities too.

In taking this forward, we have learned much from the Exercise Saif Sareea 2 we did in 2001 and from subsequent operations: we need enablers for high tempo, expeditionary ops, as well as greater reach, more deployability and sustainability; we know that we can expect more small scale ops, at long range with little or no infrastructure; and we know that there will only be fleeting opportunities to engage, so we will need robust and effective command, control, communications and computers, intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (or C4ISTAR including UAVs), the ability to operate in all weathers and round the clock – and we need to allow for this in our resourcing and programming.

But in tackling the causes, we cannot ignore dealing with the symptoms when they manifest themselves at home, so we have freshened up thinking on MACA, as we are a principal supporting force in HMG's overall approach to civil defence; we contribute to the Civil Contingencies Secretariat and other cross government co-ordination; we have reassessed the posture for reserve forces; and have developed strategies and tactics to deal with rogue aircraft and shipping.

But we have to go further and we need to translate other strands of current thinking into our own practical capabilities. From my perspective, there are two major areas which will help us

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to develop faster: Transformation and the development of a Network Enabled Capability.

Transformation

So what is Transformation? You could think of it in terms of the evolution of joint operations. Initially, joint operations aimed to deconflict naval, military and air forces as individual components in a joint plan. At the next level, with increased liaison, understanding and the development of doctrine, tactics, techniques and procedures, high levels of interoperability between maritime, land and air components can be achieved at the seams – for instance in amphibious or air/land operations. Transformation means fully integrated operations and fully integrated battlespace against the background of complex new threats such as international terrorism and WMD. Transformation is based on strengthening joint operations and organizations; evaluating new concepts of operations and developing innovative solutions to operational problems; and equipping forces for future integrated operations by capitalizing on robust scientific and technological development and procurement.

Apart from the US, who are setting the pace, this is not just for the UK. Allies, and especially NATO, will need to develop readily available forces instead of in-reserve forces, and will require far closer co-operation and higher levels of interoperability through common education, doctrine, training, and equipment. Simple deconfliction in

space and time will not be enough, as military forces will need to be closely integrated to synchronize effects. The joint approach has to be taken much further. As well as being the way to fight at the operational level, *integrated joint operations are our asymmetric advantage*, so we should use our ability to synchronize effect, our reach, our C4ISTAR and our precision capability as a matter of course – but I do not underestimate the difficulty of achieving this across the Alliance, as I expect Transformation to advance at different rates and maybe even in different directions in NATO. Fighting in close coalitions previously involved putting liaison teams or liaison officers into parallel headquarters to ease the information flow and to clarify commander's intent. In the future, this will be less important than the ability to link C2, share data and ease information flow through supporting technology and command procedure, if we are to meet the compressed timelines required for synchronizing effect and integrating operations. So the way we exercise C2 and the way we enable it through information will be crucial.

Network Enabled Capability

Crucial to effects-based campaigning, the Network Enabled Capability intends to link sensors, decision makers and weapons systems so that information can be translated into synchronized military effect. Through this we aim to enhance our military capability by allowing existing and planned systems to work together better, enabling

improved exploitation of information which will get us inside the enemy's decision action cycle by operating at a higher tempo. The Network Enabled Capability shares the tenets of the US network centric warfare concept, which places the network (a system of systems) at the centre of the capability. This is compatible with our aim to provide a coherent network.

Many of the equipment components for a baseline Network Enabled Capability exist, or are in our equipment plan – sensors such as ASTOR and WATCHKEEPER; strike assets such as JSF or the Future Rapid Effects System; and networks such as BOWMAN, Link 16/22 and the Defence Information Infrastructure.

The Network Enabled Capability will enable us to: *Sense* – through multiple diverse sensors; *Understand* – by building a shared perception and awareness of the battlespace; *Develop intent* – through a dynamic distributed decision making process; and *synchronize effects* – through the co-ordination of all forms of effect to achieve a shared objective. High tempo operations will result.

Future Operations

Consequently we need to consider future foreign and security policy carefully to ensure that future military capabilities remain balanced, and that we are able to cope with a range of threats. Against this aspiration, resources remain limited, despite the recent welcome additional £3.5 billion for defence over the SR02 period. So we

may need to take risk against those scenarios for which there is a longer warning time, as we perhaps have to concentrate on numbers of smaller scale expeditionary operations. It goes without saying that we need forces with reach that can be rapidly deployed, sustained and that pack a punch. The future Carrier and JSF are obvious examples of this capability, and so is the Future Rapid Effect System. We need to watch and analyze, think decisively, deploy quickly, get in early, achieve the effect required, not get stuck, recover and reconstitute. There is obviously a risk in this approach, but it fits well with the British way of warfare, it keeps us focused on alliances and multinational engagement – and it suits our free booting heritage!

Our aspirations towards effects-based operations and associated planning were trailed in the SDR New Chapter in the summer and we now are looking at effects-based campaign planning at the strategic or operational level. But we are also now examining how we can introduce effects-based planning into MoD's policy planning process. We also recognize that the focus of our capabilities must change too – particularly as the effects we need to achieve might not be deliverable by some of our platforms. So, our configuration and posture has to change. Thus, legacy capabilities will have to be judged ruthlessly against this utility in future operations. We will have to reprioritize in favour of critical capabilities – all of which will further the evolution of the effects-based

approach. We thus may have to have a smaller number of some platforms and greater investment in enablers and precision weapons.

So there will be some hard choices to be made, if we wish to maximize our asymmetric capability and if we want to fight cleverly. We've got to get the right kit, we've got to be properly trained, we've got to have reach, we've got to be sustainable and we have to think more and decide faster. But, of course, we won't do this without our people, who must continue to be the right sort of people. They are fundamental to all this and they understand what they do is 'in order to' do something, to deliver an effect, so I think that changing to effects-based campaigning won't be quite as difficult as it first looked.

Conclusion

So it is probably worth finishing with the fact that, amongst all this Transformation, change to Network Enabled Capability, new thinking and so on, ultimately – if we are to succeed – there is a seam of gold running through our people which I will not have changed. This seam is made up of the sort of verities that have always been part of our people's character and which make them the best, which make them win:

- Physical and mental robustness;
- An ability to handle fear and danger;
- The importance of leadership;

- The need to depend on colleagues for survival; and
- A willingness to do things that are contrary to every natural instinct because of a blinding commitment to others.

Finally, and while on this higher plane, having started with Burke, perhaps I should end with one of his more well used quotes as a warning to us all:

'It is necessary only for the good man to do nothing for evil to triumph'

– and we are all 'good men' aren't we! ■