

Strategic Command Conference 2021: Sharpening the UK Defence's Edge in the 2020s

26 May 2021

Hybrid Conference at IET London & C+

Held against the backdrop of the substantial financial settlement for Defence but also a deteriorating security situation and the broader impact of the pandemic, the UK Strategic Command Conference will be the first major RUSI gathering in the wake of the recently released Integrated Review and Defence Command Paper. A key theme of the Review is the need to enhance integration, which the Integrated Operating Concept (IOpC) 2025, published on 30 September 2020, describes as being: across government; within the military, and with allies and partners. This strategic integration task is the central role given to UK Strategic Command, and the government Paper places Strategic Command at the heart of the plans for modernising the UK Armed Forces. The Conference offers the first major opportunity to consider the Integrated Review and what that means for the integration of the different parts of the UK's armed forces in line with the IOpC.

The Conference will consider how the UK will approach the integration challenges and opportunities of persistent campaigning, at home and overseas, above and below the threshold for fighting. It will consider how multi-domain integration might be achieved within a military instrument that assumes it will routinely be more active in the homeland as well as abroad in what the IOpC calls the 'Operate' environment, rather than its traditional focus on pure 'Warfighting'. It will also reflect on the implications of a move towards 'information warfare' as Defence seeks to transform through investment in 'sunrise capabilities' at the expense of those described as 'sunset'. The Conference will address questions about how Defence can integrate across government in support of national interests, and work with allies and partners who are facing similar challenges of an increasingly dynamic operating environment.

0930 - 0945 **Admin**

Speaker: Paul O'Neill, Senior Research Fellow, RUSI

0935 - 0945 **Welcome**

Speaker: Dr Karin von Hippel, Director General, RUSI

0945 - 1005 **Opening Remarks**

Speaker: General Sir Patrick Sanders, Commander, UK Strategic Command

1005 - 1030 **Keynote Address**

Speaker: Sir Stephen Lovegrove, UK National Security Advisor

1030 - 1055 **Break**

1055 – 1225 **Panel One: Integration as a response to the Threat**

This Panel will examine the concept of integration in response to today's threats. It will consider the integrated threats posed by adversaries, notably Russia, before looking at the UK approach as described in the Integrated Operating Concept (2020) and Defence Command Paper, Defence in a Competitive Age (2021). The Panel will then look at the issues with such an approach and how it can be delivered.

Chair: Dr Louise Tumchewics, Resident Fellow, Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research

Speakers: Professor Katarzyna Zysk, Deputy Director and Head, Security Policy Centre, Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies

Air Marshal Ian Gale, Director General Joint Force Development, UK Strategic Command

Dr Sean McFate, Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council, Professor of Strategy at the National Defense University and Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, US

1225 - 1310 **Lunch**

1310 – 1440 **Panel Two: Integration within the Military and across Government**

This Panel considers two aspects of integration: integration within the military and across government. It will first examine how the UK plans to integrate its own armed forces, and then how the United States is approaching the same subject. The panel will then consider integration with wider government, and what that looks and feels like for government partners. Finally, it will consider some of the practical issues commanders will face operating in the integrated environment that is envisaged.

Chair: Dr Imogen Parsons, Acting Director, Terrorism and Conflict Group, RUSI

Speakers: Lieutenant General Rob Magowan, Deputy Commander, UK Strategic Command

Lieutenant General Dennis Crall, Director, Command, Control, Communications and Computers / Cyber; Chief Information Officer Joint Staff, J6, US Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Lindy Cameron, Chief Executive, National Cyber Security Centre, UK

Professor Anthony King, Chair of War Studies, University of Warwick

1440 - 1505 **Break**

1505 - 1635 **Panel Three: Integrating with Allies and Partners**

This Panel explores the third strand of integration, that of integrating with allies and partners. NATO is central to UK defence policy, hence the ability to integrate with the alliance at the strategic, operational and tactical level is crucial. Part of the bedrock of UK security and the most important bilateral relationship, the Panel will consider integration with the United States under the Biden Presidency. The Panel will also explore integration from the perspective of Sweden, a hugely important partner in the

Joint Expeditionary Force that has carved a unique security path that engages its whole society and from which much can be learned.

Chair: **Lieutenant General Charles Walker**, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff Military Strategic Operations, UK MOD

Speakers: **Sarah Tarry**, Director of Defence Policy and Capabilities, NATO.

Heather Conley, Senior Vice President for Europe, Eurasia and the Arctic Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

Lieutenant General Michael Claesson, Chief Joint Operations of the Swedish Armed Forces.

Brigadier Mark Pullan, Director DDA Implementation Group, SHAPE.

1635 - 1655

Closing Remarks

Speaker: **General Sir Nick Carter**, Chief of Defence Staff, UK