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CUTTING THE CLOTH: AMBITION, AUSTERITY AND THE CASE FOR RETHINKING UK MILITARY SPENDING

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Executive Summary

- The 2015 UK general election returned to power a government with ambitious plans for equipping the British Armed Forces and procuring a replacement nuclear weapons system but no commensurate commitment to maintaining or increasing military spending. Given this imbalance of ambition and austerity, something has to give. The 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) provides an opportunity to rethink UK military spending in line with a greater long-term commitment to preventing, rather than suppressing, armed conflicts abroad.
- As of 2015, the UK spends over £35 billion per year on its military. This is 2.0% of gross domestic product (GDP) or about 5% of total government expenditure. Military spending declined rapidly as a share of GDP under the outgoing Coalition Government from 2.5% of GDP in 2010, reflecting fiscal austerity as well as the withdrawal from Afghanistan. Despite a major increase in development spending, defence spending still represents 72% of the UK's internationally oriented spending and puts a particular squeeze on the UK's now tiny diplomatic budget.
- Higher military spending means that the UK is an outlier from its peers in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), European Union (EU) and other democracies worldwide. With few exceptions, these 76 or so countries show a remarkable convergence of military spending, with an average spend of about 1.4% of GDP. This is far below the minimum 2.0% spend promoted by NATO, and especially the 3.5% currently spent by the US.
- The UK has a robust system of alliances that mean that it would never act alone in defence. Even following considerable reductions since 2009, NATO still spends half of the global military budget; four times more than China and ten times more than Russia. Despite their dependence on the US, whose security interests are increasingly oriented elsewhere, European NATO members alone still commit and deploy three times the military resources of Russia.
- Sustained high military spending commitments by the UK, France and US reflect their atypical histories as maritime imperial and nuclear powers with the ambition to exert military influence almost anywhere in the world. This is quite different to the conceptions of territorial defence that most states follow. Sustained recent evidence (Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya) suggests that focus on such expeditionary operations may be increasingly unrealistic and ineffective.
- Drivers of the UK's still high commitment to military spending include: inflated perceptions of security threats to the UK, its region and overseas territories; the huge capital costs of nuclear weapons, a blue water navy and expeditionary forces; a perception among politicians that UK influence is tied to possession of strategic weapons; and the lobbying power of the world's second largest military industrial complex.
- Within the coming SDSR the option to do more with less is tempting but unrealistic. There are significant tensions between the Conservative Party's manifesto commitments to fiscal austerity and military re-equipment. Aspiring to do less militarily with less money is the most realistic option and may well boost UK and global security. Unlike in 2010, most of the contracts for military procurement over the new term of parliament have not yet been issued.
- Reducing military spending can only be a part of rethinking the UK's commitment to protecting national, international and human security. Five recommended steps towards this include:
 - Coordinating UK Government analysis and expenditure towards conflict prevention;
 - Getting serious about defence and deterrence;
 - Recommitting to the UN and multilateral peacekeeping;
 - Rethinking the focus on expeditionary forces and equipment;
 - Transforming military industries to peaceful production.

1. Introduction

The British Parliament and government elected on 7 May 2015 have an historic opportunity to reshape the defence and security policies of the United Kingdom. With neither the re-elected Conservatives nor the main opposition political parties apparently willing to consider a real terms increase in funding to the British Armed Forces, the time has come for a radical rethinking of what the British people and government want and expect their military to do. New thinking is also needed on how the different parts of government can better coordinate British resources to advance national, regional and global peace and security.

Defence is rarely a major electoral issue or vote-winner in the UK and this general election campaign was little different. All the major party manifestos dealt with defence and foreign policy as an afterthought. Yet the UK remains deeply embedded in a series of foreign wars partly of its own making, and security crises in Ukraine, Libya and the Islamic State borderlands of Iraq and Syria have encroached rapidly towards the Euro-Atlantic 'zone of peace' since 2014. Critical questions also loom over the renewal of the Trident nuclear weapons programme and the commissioning of two new aircraft carriers that recommit the UK to a military power-projection strategy even as the blowback from recent interventions is reaching British shores.

This report poses four important questions that the incoming government – as well as the wider parliament and public – will need to ask itself as it conducts a Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) in the latter part of 2015: How much does the UK spend on its military and its international commitments? How does this spending compare with its NATO allies, European peers, other democracies and the rest of the world? Why does the UK commit more of its national resources to its military than most similar states? And can the UK square its strategic ambitions with austerity and declining real terms defence budgets?

Its aim is to explore the options for reducing UK military spending in the next parliament as part of a fundamental rethinking of the way the UK conceptualises its own security and thus allocates its resources to the three Ds: defence, diplomacy and development. It forms part of Oxford Research Group's commitment to moving UK foreign and security policy from a conflict management or containment approach to one of proactive conflict prevention.

Note on Military Expenditure Data

Unless otherwise indicated, the data used in this report on military expenditure is sourced from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Military Expenditure Database 2015, which provides the most authoritative and comprehensive figures on military spending for 174 countries from 1988 to 2014. SIPRI data is internally consistent but may differ from information compiled by other organisations, for example in whether costs of military pensions or paramilitary forces are included. Any errors in compiling, aggregating or presenting this data are the author's own.

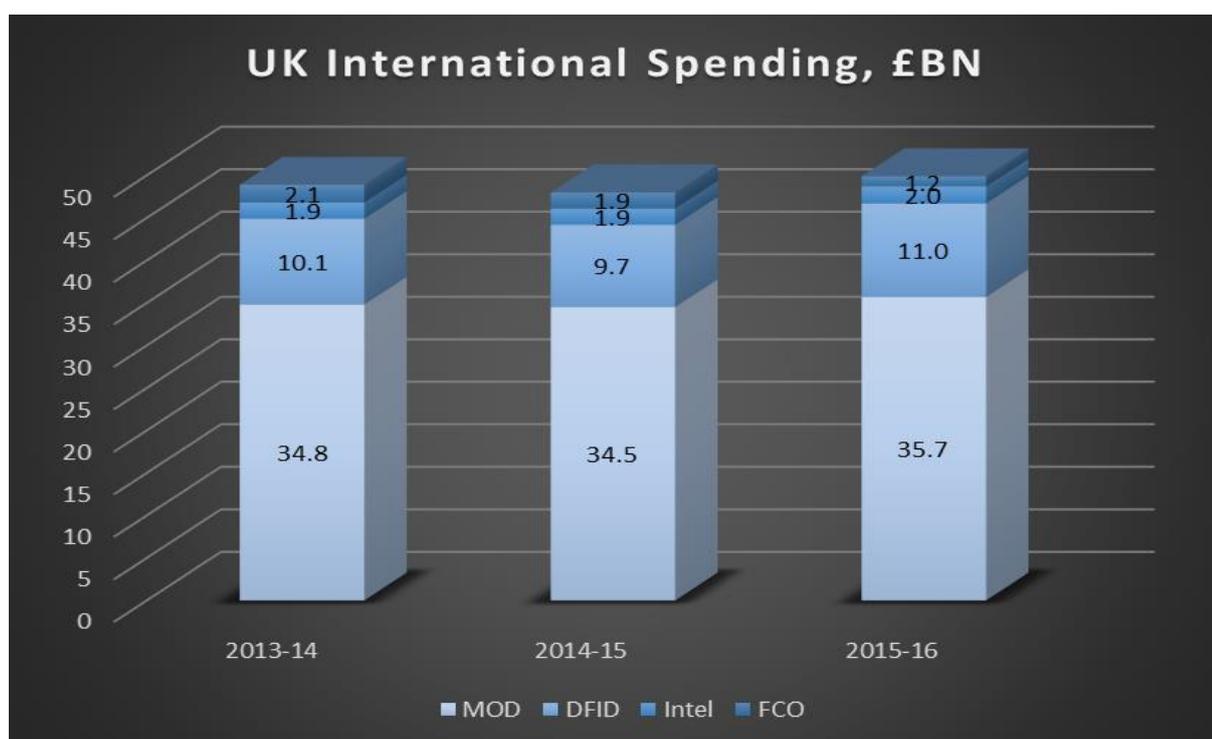
For more information on the sources and methods for SIPRI data please see http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/resultoutput/sources_methods

2. How Much Does the UK Spend on Security and International Affairs?

Three government departments (ministries) essentially constitute the UK’s commitment to international and human security. These are: the Ministry of Defence (MOD), which manages the armed forces; the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), which manages British diplomacy; and the Department for International Development (DFID), which manages UK overseas development aid. Additional to them, and more opaque, are the intelligence services (MI5, MI6 and GCHQ), which report to the Cabinet Office’s Joint Intelligence Committee and have a shared budget that covers internal and external secret intelligence functions. These are the tools with which the UK government fashions its role in international affairs.

Breakdown of budgetary allocations to departments over the last three years demonstrates the predominant allocation of government resources to defence (about 72% of total spending on international policy), with a growing share for development and intelligence (about 22% and 4%, respectively, in 2015/16) and a dwindling share for diplomacy (just 2.4% by 2015/16).

Figure 1 – UK International Spending, 2013-2016



Sources: UK Budgets, 2014 and 2015 – Departmental Expenditure Limits
 Figures for 2013-14 and 2014-15 are estimates; 2015-16 is planned expenditure, including Special Reserve in defence.

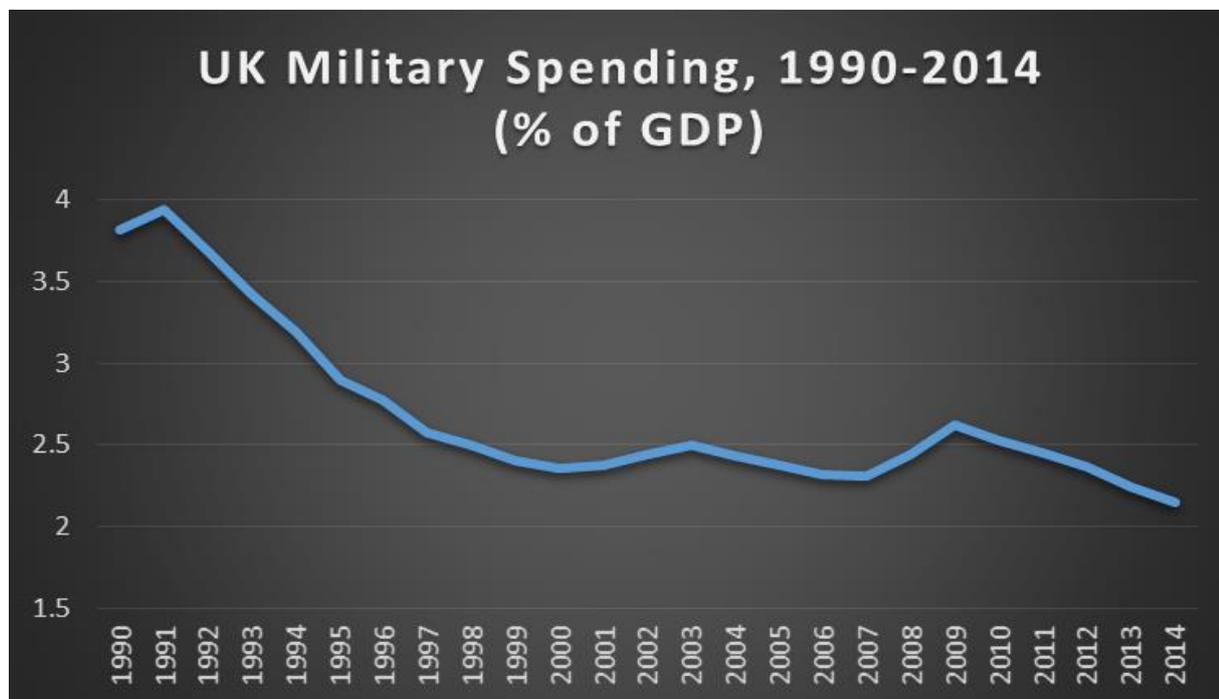
This matters because the balance or imbalance of resources helps to determine how Britain recognises and responds to foreign and security policy issues. The huge preponderance of military resources over diplomacy and development is likely to determine how, when and where the government views its ability to manage peace and conflict.

In hard figures, the UK is allocating £35.7 billion to the MOD in the current (2015-2016) financial year out of a total of about £49 billion spread across the three international departments and at least some of the intelligence budget. Most of the rest is development aid; only £1.2 billion is allocated to diplomacy.

The MOD is the third largest ministry by expenditure (after Health and Education) and accounts for almost 5% of total government spending. As a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP, a measure of the national economy), the UK expects to spend almost exactly 2.0% on defence in 2015 (estimates vary slightly) or just less than this in the 2015-2016 financial year.

Spending on international development has been set at a minimum of 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI, an alternative measure of the national economy) since a private members bill passed through Parliament in March 2015. The three main parties all supported this commitment in their 2010 manifestos. The UK is currently the world’s second largest bilateral development assistance donor.

Figure 2: UK Military Spending, 1990-2014



Source: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database 2015, <http://milexdata.sipri.org>

While the total sum dedicated to the military has held more or less constant since 2008, its size as a share of GDP has declined annually since a peak of 2.6% in 2009. The current figure is the lowest share of GDP the military has received in modern British history but the reduction is within the long-term trend of post-Cold War military restructuring and should be seen in the context of fiscal austerity since 2010, the 2012-2014 withdrawal from a major war in Afghanistan, and accelerating GDP growth since 2013.

3. How Does UK Military Spending Compare with Other Countries?

3.1 UK Military Spending in the NATO Context

In as much as defence captured the headlines during the 2015 general election campaign, it concerned the UK's capacity and assumed commitment to meet the 2.0% of GDP contribution to defence suggested by NATO as the minimum that member states should make. Hosting the NATO Summit in Wales in September 2014, Prime Minister David Cameron urged other member states to increase their military spending to reach this level. As of early 2015, barely any European states had risen to this challenge and the UK's own expenditure plans foresee military expenditure falling below this symbolic threshold for the first time.¹

With a five-yearly SDSR due immediately after the May 2015 general election, neither the Conservatives nor Labour committed to a specific overall allocation to defence during the campaign. Only the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and two Northern Irish parties (the Democratic Unionist Party and Ulster Unionist Party) pledged to meet this 2.0% target.

Actual NATO spending commitments vary hugely from under 1% of GDP in Iceland, Luxembourg, Lithuania and Hungary to the 3.5% of GDP that the largest and richest member state, the USA, contributes. There has always been a major difference between what the US, on the one hand, and the European states and Canada are willing to spend on defence. As Figure 3 shows, this is not a new phenomenon. In the late Cold War, the US contributed roughly twice as much of its GDP to its military as most of its European and Canadian allies. The gap only briefly narrowed in the 1990s as the US contracted its spending more sharply than its allies in response to the post-Cold War peace dividend.

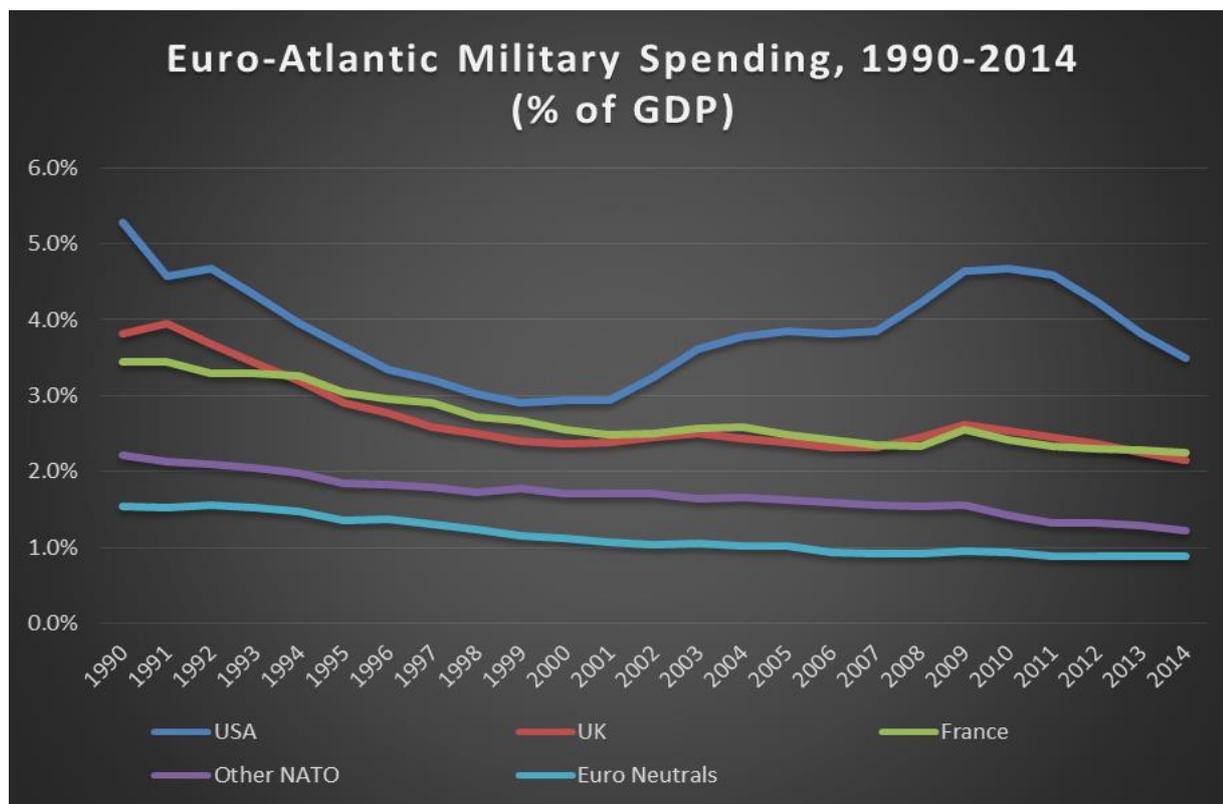
This relationship changed radically from 2001 under the George W. Bush administration as the US rearmed in pursuit of regime-changing 'wars of choice' well beyond NATO's traditional operating space and more aggressive containment of North Korea, Iran and Russia. Between 2001 and 2010, US military spending vaulted from 2.9% to 4.7% of GDP, while most of the rest of the alliance continued to decrease its spending from about 1.8% to about 1.5% of GDP. The six Western European states outside the alliance² also cut their spending by a proportionate amount, from about 1.2 to 1.0% of GDP over this period.

In the context of a major recession and widespread austerity measures, military spending in most NATO member states reduced at a more accelerated rate between 2010 and 2014, reaching about 1.25% for the non-nuclear members. Figures for 2015 (not yet available) are likely to show a stabilisation in spending in Europe in response to the crisis in Ukraine, while an essentially flat US defence budget decreases proportionately to about 3.4% of GDP.

¹ Denitsa Raynova and Ian Kearns, 'The Wales Pledge Revisited: A Preliminary Analysis of Spending Decisions in NATO Member States', ELN Policy-Brief, European Leadership Network, February 2015.

² These 'Euro Neutrals' are Austria, Finland, Ireland, Malta, Sweden and Switzerland. All but Switzerland are members of the EU, as is Cyprus, which uniquely is neither a NATO member nor neutral.

Figure 3: Euro-Atlantic Military Spending, 1990-2014



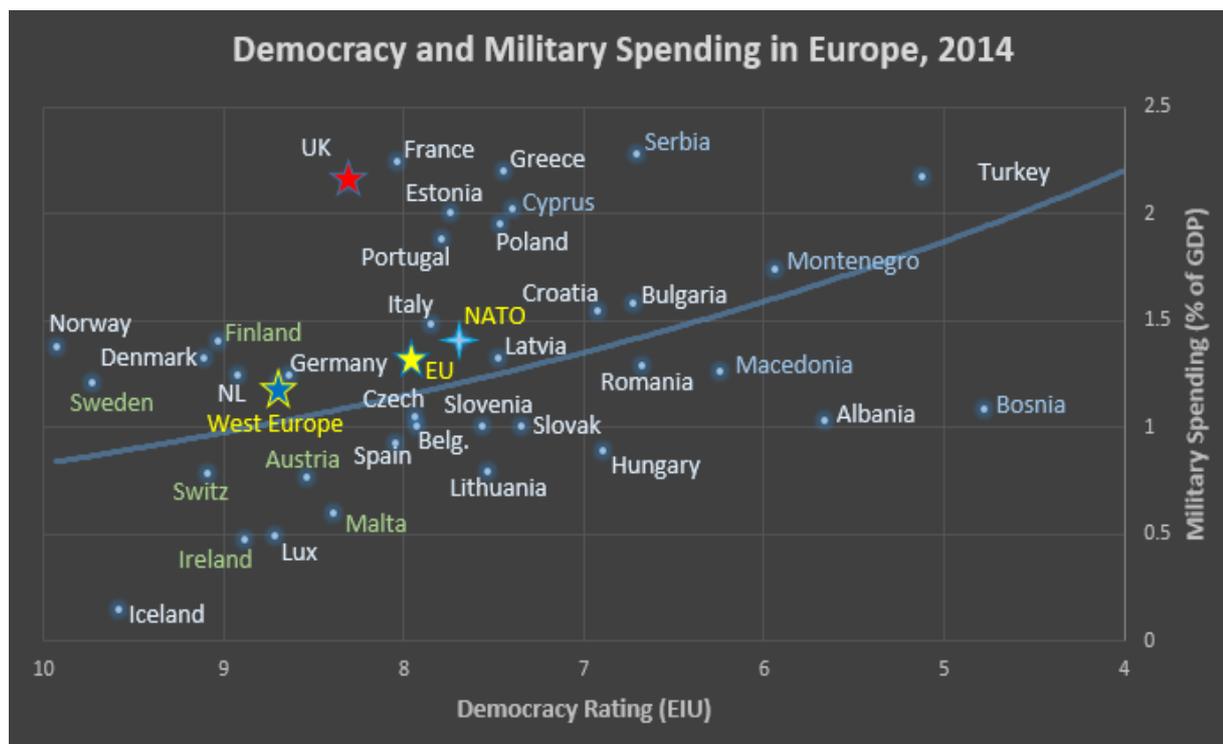
Source: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database 2015, <http://milexdata.sipri.org>

Within NATO there are four higher spending outliers to this general trend. Two are Greece and Turkey, which have their own security dynamics in the Eastern Mediterranean. The remaining two are the UK and France, NATO’s other two nuclear-armed states and, until the 1960s, the world’s two major colonial powers. As Figure 3 shows, the UK and France traditionally lie almost half way between the US and the rest of Western Europe in terms of their spending commitment to their militaries. Since 2001, France has conformed largely to the European trend of slightly declining expenditure while the UK has vacillated between following the US and European trends.

3.2 UK Military Spending in the European Context

Another way of looking at the UK’s commitment to military spending is by correlating military expenditure with standards of democracy. Figure 4 plots this relationship for 37 western, central and southern European states in 2014 and shows a clear correlation between higher levels of democratic culture and lower levels of military expenditure. As before, the UK, France and Greece were the biggest outliers, spending far more of their GDP on the military than would be predicted from their relatively high standards of democracy. EU, European NATO and wider European (if one excludes Russian and the former Soviet states) averages were clustered close together with military spending around the 1.3% to 1.4% of GDP mark.

Figure 4: The Correlation of Military Spending to Democracy in Europe (2014)



Sources: Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2014; SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, figures for 2014.

The higher the score on the X axis, the higher the standard of democracy. Countries labelled in white are NATO members. Countries in green are constitutionally neutral. Countries in blue are other non-NATO states. Non-NATO ex-USSR states not included.

However, if we look at the UK and France within the geographical or geopolitical context of their ‘neighbourhood’ in North West Europe³, they have been outliers to an even greater extent. On average, other Western European states now spend around 1.2% of GDP on the military, slightly more than Canada (1.0%). Spending in most of these states is static or falling slightly. Seemingly, these states take a different view of their strategic context and role to the UK and France.

This is also telling if we compare figures for the ‘militarisation’ of western European states as presented in the annual Global Militarization Index.⁴ Figure 5 indicates that the UK has demilitarised since the Cold War but at a lower rate than any of its region’s other six largest states. Whereas it was the least militarised major state in Western Europe in the early 1990s, by 2013 it was second only (and only very slightly) to France as the region’s most militarised major state.⁵ The UK’s performance is

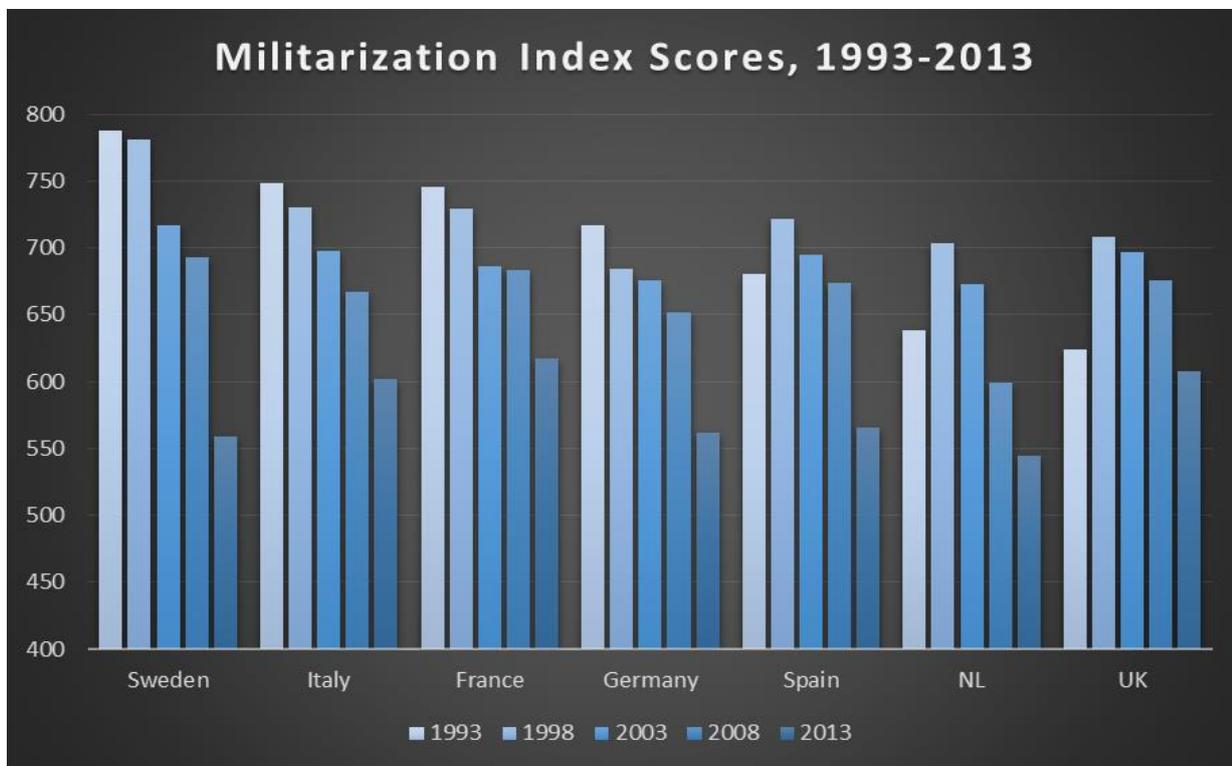
³ These are the 1952-1999 European members of NATO (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, UK) minus Greece and Turkey, plus the six Western European neutral states listed above.

⁴ Compiled annually by the Bonn International Center for Conversion, the GMI uses indicators of military spending, relative size of security forces, and possession of heavy weapons systems to depict “the relative weight and importance of the military apparatus of one state in relation to its society as a whole”.

⁵ Current (figures for 2013) data ranks several smaller Western European states above the UK and France, (i.e. more militarised), largely due to conscription or reserve forces policies. These are Finland, Portugal, Norway, Denmark and Switzerland.

particularly notable in comparison to Sweden, Italy and Germany, which retain powerful militaries and military industries but have rather less ambitious commitments and ambitions beyond Europe.

Figure 5: Militarization of Major Western European Countries, 1993-2013

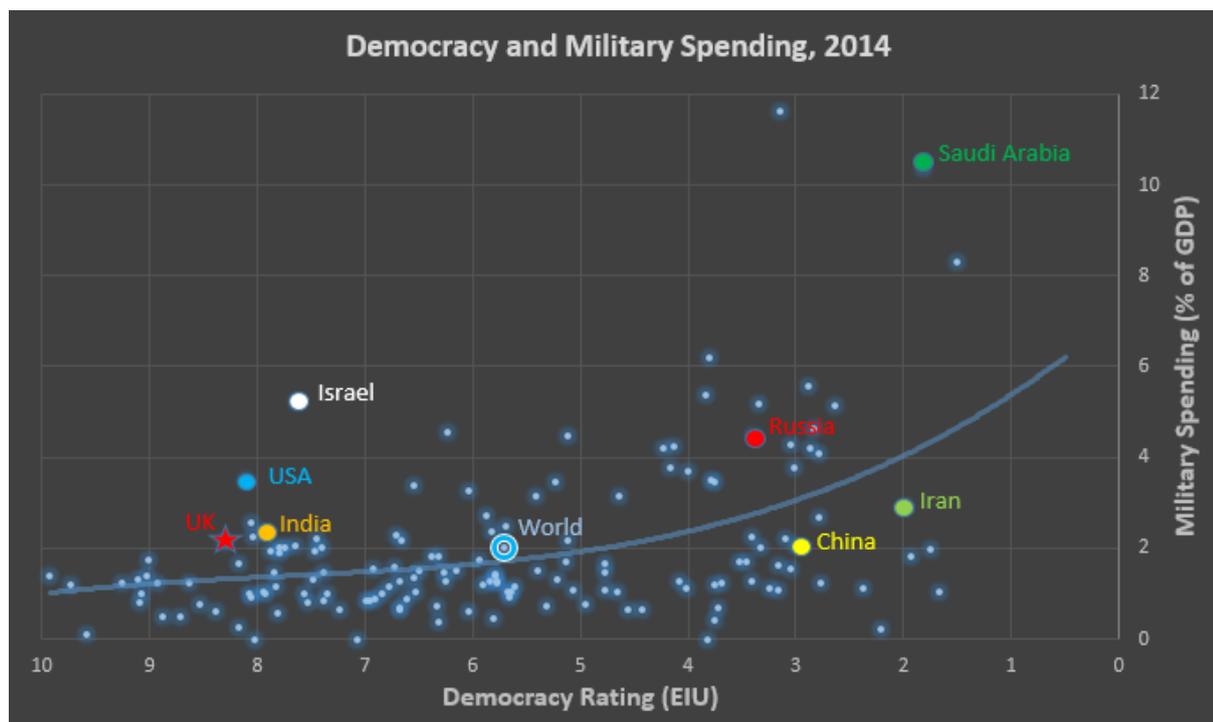


Source: Global Militarization Index, Bonn International Center for Conversion, 1994-2014. <http://gmi.bicc.de/index.php?page=ranking-table>

3.3 UK Military Spending in the Global Context

A similar exercise in correlating global military expenditures with standards of governance at the global level shows the UK as less of an extreme outlier, particularly compared to the US (3.5% of GDP in 2014; averaging over 4% in the previous decade) and Israel (5.2% in 2014). Indeed, using US military spending commitments as a benchmark for assessing UK or European spending is, at best, arbitrary since these diverge so radically from those of other democracies and the US aspires to do far more with its military than to defend itself and the North Atlantic. As Figure 3 shows, US military spending has also been far more erratic over the past decades than most comparable states.

Figure 6: The Global Correlation of Military Spending to Democracy (2014)



Sources: Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2014; SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, figures for 2014. Military spending figure for Iran is an estimate from 2009-2012 data. Democracy Index scores above 6.0 are considered flawed and (above 8.0) full democracies.

If one looks outside NATO to the defence spending commitments of other democracies in Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia and Oceania, there is limited divergence from a 1.0% to 2.0% of GDP norm despite an enormous divergence of strategic contexts.⁶ Such states range from major G20 members like India, Japan, Brazil, South Korea, South Africa, Australia and Argentina to smaller states like Ghana, Jamaica, Uruguay, Serbia and Mongolia. The overall average (unweighted mean) for these 48 non-NATO democracies worldwide was 1.4% of GDP in 2014, almost the same as for the 26 NATO democracies.⁷ This compares to a global average of about 2.1% of GDP for all types of state.⁹

In strategic terms, how much the UK spends on its defence relative to its potential adversaries matters much less in terms of share of GDP than in absolute terms. Russia may spend more than twice as much on its military as a share of GDP (an erratically rising 4.5% in 2014) than the UK but

⁶ Israel (5.2%), Namibia (4.6%), Colombia (3.4%) and Singapore (3.3%) are the most notable exceptions, each from the less liberal or 'flawed' end of the democratic spectrum.

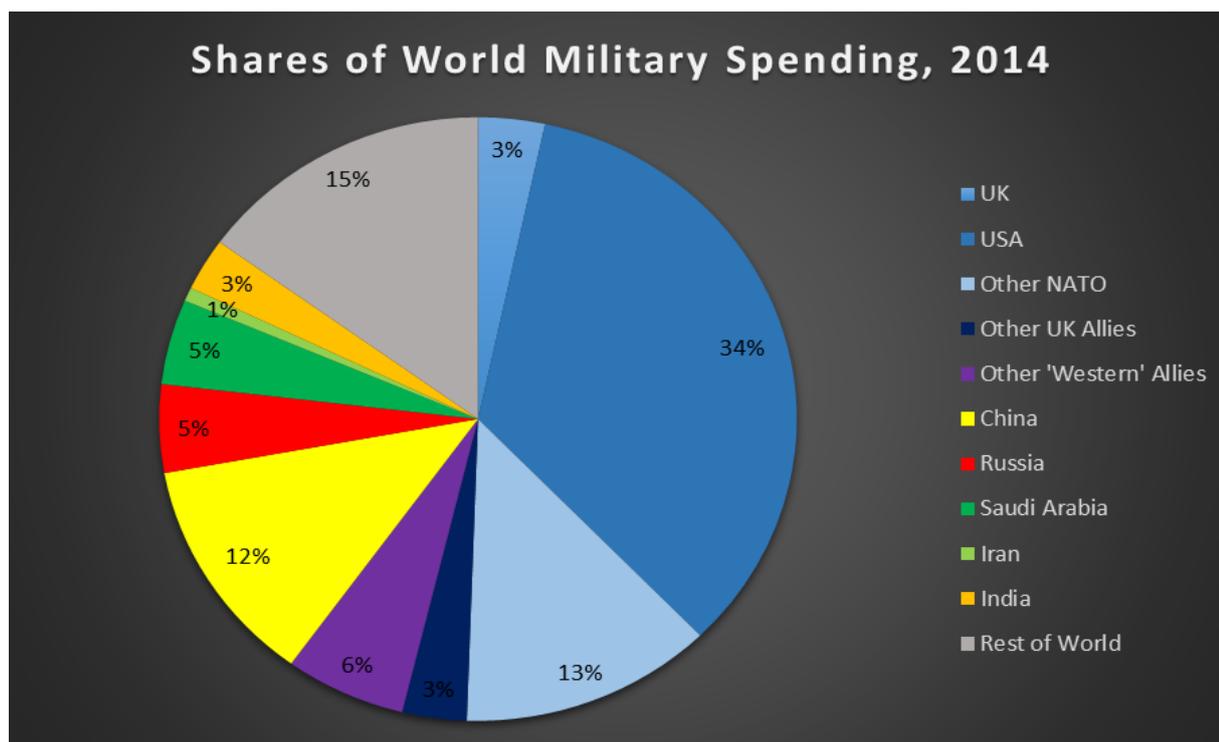
⁷ Democracy is here defined by the EIU Democracy Index rankings of 'full democracy' and 'flawed democracy' for which there is military spending data from the SIPRI database. Only two of these states (Costa Rica and Panama) have no armed forces or military budget. Using the 'Free' category used by Freedom House in its Freedom in the World 2014 index produces equivalent figures from 39 non-NATO states. According to SIPRI data, only eight (Israel, Namibia, Colombia, Singapore, South Korea, India, Serbia and Lesotho) spent more than the UK on their military as a percentage of GDP in 2014. Freedom House does not rate Colombia or Singapore as Free.

⁸ NATO has 28 member states but neither the EIU nor Freedom House rated Albania and Turkey as democracies or free in 2014.

⁹ The global figure is a looser estimate given that there is no reliable data for some of the world's highest proportionate military spenders (e.g. North Korea, Eritrea, Syria, Sudan).

this works out as only about 40% more in actual terms because of its smaller economy. China now spends the same as the UK in proportionate terms (a constant 2.1% of GDP since 2001) but much more in actual terms because of its much larger and faster growing economy. Countries like Iran, Syria and Argentina, which might conceivably come into conflict with the UK, have far smaller economies and would have to stretch and sustain their military spending above 10% of GDP to come near to matching current UK military resources. None is currently anywhere close.

Figure 7: Shares of World Military Spending, 2014



Source: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database 2015, <http://milexdata.sipri.org>

Moreover, the UK would never act alone in defending itself.¹⁰ As a member of NATO it is part of the world’s largest collective defence organisation with a \$900 billion annual budget that represented just over half of all the world’s military spending in 2014. Including the UK’s other affirmed allies in the EU and Commonwealth, the UK can count on almost 54% of the world’s military resources.¹¹ If we stretch the ‘Western’ alliance to include the allies of the US and France, this stretches to over 60% of total world military resources.¹² By comparison, China accounted for about 12% of global military spending in 2014. Russia and India accounted for less than 5% and 3%, respectively. Given differential rates of economic growth, military expenditure in China and India at least may be expected to increase as a

¹⁰ An exception to this may be defending UK Overseas Territories such as the Falkland Islands, which are not covered by NATO collective defence arrangements.

¹¹ Neither the EU nor Commonwealth is a collective defence alliance, although it is not conceivable that the UK would not act in defence of any of the non-NATO members of the EU such as Ireland or Sweden. Commonwealth allies alluded to here are the Five Powers Defence Agreement allies (Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Singapore).

¹² US allies include treaty allies such as Japan and South Korea, as well as Major Non-NATO Allies. These do not include, for example, Saudi Arabia, Colombia, Ethiopia or the UAE, with which the US has close working military relationships. French non-NATO treaty allies are mainly African states.

proportion of world total and relative to NATO spending. However, for the next decades there is no conceivable rival to the extended NATO alliance.

4. Why Does the UK Spend so Much on its Military?

In the context of its status as a high-spending outlier from European and democratic norms, and as an integral part of the world's most powerful and robust defensive alliance, the question becomes not so much why does the UK now spend so little on its military, but: why does the UK still spend so much?

4.1 'A New World Disorder' - The UK Strategic Context

Part of the answer to this question lies in perceptions of the UK's strategic context as presented in the British media: the threats supposedly posed to UK national interests by hostile states or radical non-state groups. In May 2015 these look rather different to the beginning of 2014, let alone 2010 when the last National Security Strategy and defence policy were drawn up. Four physical or military threats particularly occupied journalists and defence policy-makers in the run-up to the election and policy reviews:

'Violent Extremism' – The rapid expansion of the activities of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in 2014 and its apparent success in attracting disaffected European Muslims and inspiring pledges of allegiance from Nigeria to the Philippines have eclipsed the long-term threat previously associated with al-Qaida and its affiliates. Under Operation Shader, since September 2014 RAF Tornado jets and Reaper drones have been bombing ISIL targets in Iraq and conducting reconnaissance flights over Syria, while the Royal Navy has bolstered its presence in the Persian Gulf.

The threat to the UK from ISIL expansion is rather opaque. Unlike al-Qaida factions in Afghanistan and Yemen it has not shown much interest in attacking the 'far enemy'. The official assumption is that British 'foreign fighters' currently with ISIL in Syria or Iraq will return to the UK and launch terrorist attacks. Attracting Western, Israeli and Iranian military intervention appears to be part of ISIL's strategy to rally Sunni resistance. Indeed, the movement grew out of the Iraqi resistance to the US and UK invasion of their country and the key mobilising factor for many western Muslims drawn to ISIL appears to be anger at their countries' and their allies' use of force in Muslim countries or regions such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, Palestine and Chechnya.

Russian Expansionism – The Russian annexation of Crimea and destabilisation of eastern Ukraine since spring 2014 has been viewed as the most overt and direct conventional threat to the security of Europe since the end of the Cold War. Russia has stepped up probing operations by bombers and submarines into the airspace and waters of countries from the Baltic to Cornwall, repeatedly forcing the RAF to scramble interceptors and, in November 2014, an air and sea hunt for a submarine off Scotland. At the NATO Summit in Wales, the UK committed about 1,000 troops to a NATO Rapid Response Force to reinforce defence of the Baltic States. Four RAF Typhoon interceptors were deployed to Lithuania in May-August 2014 and again from May 2015.

Like ISIL, the revived Russian hostility to the West is both a response to Western policies and calculated to provoke an escalation that legitimises its own aggression and authoritarian policies. As in Georgia and Moldova, Russia's aim in Ukraine is to stop that divided country from joining NATO or

the EU, further impinging on what it views as its strategic space. Flights by 1950s-built nuclear bombers down the British coast pose no credible threat to the UK, although the RAF's lack of any long range maritime patrol aircraft since 2011 certainly leaves the British coast vulnerable to submarine incursions. Even without US support, European NATO states already have triple or quadruple the number of military personnel as Russia in Europe and outspend Russia three-fold.¹³ Powerful military industrial lobbies in both NATO and Russia seem very comfortable with the idea of a renewed major conventional weapons confrontation that justifies the acquisition of such new systems as aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines and fifth generation fighter aircraft.

Defending the Falklands – The MOD has maintained a strong (and expensive) tri-service presence in the Falkland Islands and Ascension Island ever since the 1982 occupation by Argentine forces. Populist rhetoric by the current Argentine government and repeated (failed) attempts since 2013 by the Argentine Air Force to buy newer combat aircraft have stoked fears of a renewed Argentine invasion. The UK announced plans to reinforce Falklands defence infrastructure in March 2015 in response to unconfirmed reports that Russia was offering to lease Argentina Cold War-surplus long-range attack aircraft.

While it is possible that a rearmed Argentina under a populist government would seek to occupy the islands in the absence of a credible British deterrent force, this is highly unlikely at present given Argentina's financial constraints, much reduced naval and air capabilities, well entrenched democracy and close ties to the US. Britain's refusal to negotiate with Argentina on any aspect of Falklands sovereignty tends to fuel Argentine resentment and rhetoric. The permanent presence of British fighter aircraft, naval vessels and submarines in the South Atlantic has increasingly rallied the rest of Latin America to support Argentina's claim.

Nuclear Proliferation – The UK maintains a long-term commitment to oppose the proliferation of nuclear weapons technologies to states outside the Western alliance. This is largely a matter of intelligence and diplomacy, particularly in the P5+1/E3+3 process to constrain Iran's development of nuclear technology. The reinforcement of Royal Navy deployments and facilities in Bahrain and the Gulf may also be part of a strategy to put pressure on Iran. The UK is not involved in the Six-Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear weapons. Nor has it seriously opposed nuclear weapons development by Israel, India or Pakistan.

Retention of a British 'independent nuclear deterrent' is often justified in response to a threat of 'nuclear blackmail' by a nuclear-armed challenger state. It is hard to see how such a threat would be realised against the UK other than in an act of nuclear terrorism, which would be almost impossible to retaliate against with nuclear weapons. Why the UK would be more vulnerable to such nuclear pressure than any of the 184 countries that do not possess their own nuclear weapons is not clear.

¹³ According to figures from the IISS Military Balance 2015, European NATO states (including Turkey: 511,000) had about 1,988,000 regular military personnel in 2015. Russia had 771,000 regular military personnel, of which perhaps three-quarters are deployed in its Western and Southern Military Districts (i.e. European Russian). The Russian military also looks east to Japan, Alaska and the Pacific, and southeast to China and Central Asia. Just over 60,000 of 1.4 million US regular military personnel are currently deployed in Europe.

In addition to these four main security issues, several others have grabbed headlines and political responses in 2014-2015, eliciting expectations of responses by the military, although they are not matters of conventional defence.

Cyber Security – The presumed North Korean cyber-attack on Sony Pictures in November 2014 and reports of Russian capacity to hack European cyber systems as part of its more aggressive external policy have focused attention on cyber-defence. How exactly the UK defends itself against such attacks is confidential. When they would be considered to constitute a breach of NATO defences is not yet clearly defined.

Illegal Migration – The dual surges of illegal migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean and English Channel in early 2015 have prompted EU leaders to threaten a military response against traffickers in Libya. The Royal Navy sent an amphibious vessel (HMS Bulwark) with helicopters and two patrol vessels to join the EU's Operation Triton in late April.

Military leaders are sceptical about the legality, value and means of attacking traffickers and many analysts point to the push factors from repressive and conflict-affected countries such as Eritrea, Somalia and Syria, the impact of climate change, and the pull factor of the huge economic disparities between the EU and its southern neighbours. The combination of these factors suggests that a military response will be ineffective in curbing illegal migration and may have unintended consequences.

Natural Disaster or Pandemic – The 2014-2015 Ebola fever epidemic in West Africa provoked the UK to deploy up to 700 MOD personnel to Sierra Leone to assist the local health ministry with containment and treatment. Military personnel are better resourced to respond to this scale of emergency, although they are not necessarily cheaper than nor as skilled as civilian health workers or disaster relief teams.

Regardless of some sensationalist British headlines, the strategic context of 2015 is challenging but not existentially threatening to the UK. Russian muscle-flexing is certainly worrying to Baltic allies but unlikely to escalate in a conventional military sense against a NATO alliance that outspends Russia tenfold. ISIL should best be seen as a local response to the deep crises of governance and exclusion in Iraq, Syria, Libya and Nigeria, and as an international response to the humiliation felt by many Muslims over the 'War on Terror' attacks and occupations. The Falkland Islands are no more threatened now than at any time since 1982 but will likely require garrisoning as long as the UK boycotts dialogue with Argentina. No state poses a credible threat of using nuclear weapons against the UK. Migrant flows to the EU are tiny in relation to overall population and, like epidemics, are a humanitarian issue better dealt with through long-term development and resilience-building rather than securitised responses.

4.2 'National Ambition' - UK Expeditionary Force Structure

The second part of the answer to why the UK spends more than most of its allies and neighbours on its military lies in history and what Chief of Defence Staff Gen Sir Nicholas Houghton described in a December 2014 speech as "national ambition and a nation's appetite for risk".¹⁴ Put simply, the UK

¹⁴ Annual Chief of Defence Staff Lecture by General Sir Nicholas Houghton GCB CBE ADC, Royal United Services Institute, 17 December 2014. https://www.rusi.org/events/ref:E545211393622E#.VUoKx_IViko

(as France) has an enormous historical legacy as a global power – military, economic and directly colonial – and from this come high ambitions and an unbridled appetite for risky foreign entanglements. Despite the shedding of Empire in the decades after 1947, and an expectation of a relative decline in global influence in the decades ahead, the UK continues to think strategically in terms of global reach and full-spectrum (air, land, sea, submarine, cyber) capabilities.

Unlike peers such as Germany, Italy, Brazil, Japan, India or even Russia and (so far) China, the UK expects its military to be able to exert influence almost anywhere in the world. Current maritime commitments alone include the North Atlantic, Mediterranean, Caribbean, South Atlantic, Persian Gulf, Horn of Africa and potentially across the Indian Ocean to Southeast Asia. Thus what defines the British Armed Forces from virtually every other military (bar France and, on a truly global scale, the US) is a force structure that prioritises expeditionary operations, rapid strategic deployments and a blue water navy. The core assumption of the current Future Force 2020 structure is that the armed forces will be used not for territorial defence but for interventions (the assumption is of multiple, simultaneous operations) far from home.

This emphasis on force-projection requires a very different kind of equipment and budget to be effective: aircraft carrier battle groups, amphibious warfare platforms, nuclear-powered submarines, ocean-going tankers, strategic transport aircraft, in-flight refuelling, strike aircraft, reconnaissance assets, and special operations forces as well as a network of military bases and basing agreements. This is inherently expensive and is reflected in the £163 billion ten-year MOD Equipment Plan, which constitutes about 40% of total planned military expenditure from 2014 to 2024.

Table 1: MOD Equipment Plan, 2014-2024

Equipment Type	Budgeted amount (£Bn)	New and upgraded systems
Submarines	40.0	Completion of 7 Astute-class 4 Vanguard-class replacements Trident II nuclear warheads and missile systems Upgrades to Clyde naval bases and missile storage facilities
Ships	18.2	Completion of 2 aircraft carriers 13 Type-26 frigates (Global Combat Ships) 4 tankers 3 ocean patrol vessels
Combat Aircraft	17.9	Upgrade of Typhoon fighters 48 F-35B Joint Strike Fighters
Info. Systems & Services	16.9	Includes cyber warfare capabilities and communications
Land Equipment	15.4	589 Scout SV armoured fighting vehicles Upgrade of Warrior armoured fighting vehicles Upgrade of Challenger 2 tanks
Air Support	13.8	22 A400M Atlas transport aircraft Remainder of 14 Voyager in-flight refuelling tankers 3 Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance aircraft
Weapons	12.6	Mostly anti-aircraft and anti-ship missiles
Helicopters	11.1	Mostly upgrades and servicing

ISTAR ¹⁵	4.9	Includes unspecified Special Forces equipment
Naval Bases	3.1	Upgrades to 3 Royal Navy bases
Other	3.5	Mostly Joint Supply Chain
Contingency	4.6	
Total	163.0	

Source: The Defence Equipment Plan 2014, MOD, 13 January 2015.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-defence-equipment-plan-2014>

The expeditionary forces concept is also based on the assumption that the UK military – alone, or with allies, almost never under UN command – can uphold national and global security by effectively deterring, managing or resolving conflict far from home. The evidence on this from the last two decades is, at best, mixed. Against the more distant tactical successes of Sierra Leone and, perhaps, the Balkans, there is the strategic stalemate of Afghanistan and the catastrophic failures of Iraq and Libya. In order for collective European defence to be effective and credible, there is a need for UK forces to have rapid deployment and joint operational capabilities, but at present this is not the main focus of envisaged expeditionary structures.

The concentration of resources in the defence equipment plan on expeditionary capabilities means that by 2020 the British Armed Forces will have the exquisite technology to deploy some forces rapidly to almost anywhere in the world but not necessarily the force in depth to make much of an impact when they get there. That is, British expeditionary forces are only likely to be of much use if they deploy as junior partners providing niche capabilities to a larger ally. Under foreseeable circumstances, outside Europe this ally can only be the United States. This was the crux of US criticism of declining UK military spending ahead of the election campaign.¹⁶ There is, then, an in-built assumption to the current force structure that the UK's strategic interests follow those of the US.

Providing a basing infrastructure to service this level of ambition is also problematic for financial and, at times, ethical reasons. Like the US and France, the UK has a number of widely dispersed overseas territories that it both needs to defend and requires in order to project its military power. The former notably includes the Falkland Islands. The latter notably includes the Cyprus sovereign base areas and Diego Garcia, both controversially severed from former colonies at independence. Gibraltar falls between both categories. Garrisoning these outposts cost the MOD £310 million in 2012-2013 with another £280 million promised to reinforce the Falklands over the decade from 2015. This is about 1% of the overall defence budget. Basing costs in such non-UK territories as Brunei, Bahrain, Qatar and the UAE may be met by host governments but such agreements insinuate the MOD in protecting some regimes that British politicians would find it hard to square with notional British values.

4.3 'An independent nuclear deterrent' – Path Dependent Policy

Distinct from the high costs of the expeditionary force structure is the UK commitment to an "independent nuclear deterrent". The UK is one of only five Nuclear Weapons States (NWS) officially recognised under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT, 1968). It is the only one that buys in critical

¹⁵ Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance.

¹⁶ Con Coughlin, 'US fears that Britain's defence cuts will diminish Army on world stage', Daily Telegraph, 01 March 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/11443204/Britain-is-becoming-a-friend-who-cant-be-trusted-says-top-US-general.html>

elements of its nuclear arsenal from abroad (the US). The current system comprises four Trident ballistic missile submarines operating continuous at-sea deterrence (CASD), meaning that at any time one nuclear-armed submarine is constantly on patrol well outside UK waters with the potential to launch a nuclear strike against a target anywhere in the world.

The envisaged like-for-like replacement of the Trident system is envisaged to cost between £18 and £26 billion between 2016 and about 2030. However, the lifetime operating costs of Trident II will add about another £2 billion per year over 30-40 years plus perhaps another £15 to £20 billion for protection, upgrading and eventual decommissioning. That means that the overall cost of renewing the UK's nuclear weapons is expected to be between £93 and £126 billion at current prices over about 45 years. This breaks down to an average annual cost of between £2.1 and £2.8 billion or about 7% of the total defence budget at 2015-2016 levels. The peak spending on nuclear weapons would likely be significantly higher during the main construction phase in the 2020s.

Whether possessing nuclear weapons is in any way a deterrent is a subject of enormous controversy. The debate centres on whether any state would ever actually use nuclear weapons in its defence. Clearly, possessing a large nuclear arsenal did not deter an Argentine attack on UK territory in 1982. Nor has it deterred al-Qaida, ISIL or prevented major terrorist attacks on the US, Russia, France and the UK.

The leadership of the four largest British political parties¹⁷ all appear to believe that British global influence depends on the remaining in the exclusive NWS club. Yet there is, for example, no requirement for the UK to be nuclear-armed to keep its permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Indeed, to the majority of the world's states – which have made treaty commitments to renounce nuclear-weapons – the UK's moral authority is compromised by its nuclear status. There is also a rising question of domestic moral authority given that the absolute majority of voters in Scotland, where the UK's nuclear weapons are based, voted for a party that explicitly opposes renewing Trident.

4.4 'Employment and innovation' – Defence Industry Interests

A final answer to why the UK spends so much on its military is also related to path dependency and powerful interests. Spending on military production is self-perpetuating as the domestic arms industry has developed a powerful lobbying capacity to push for sustained high spending on research, development and manufacturing.

Unlike most countries, the UK has historically been able to develop and procure most of its military equipment domestically via a large military industrial capacity. Higher military spending is thus quite easily translated into job retention or creation. Something like 10% of UK manufacturing industry and tens of thousands of skilled workers are estimated to be devoted to military production. That these jobs are particularly clustered in urban areas like Glasgow (shipbuilding), Barrow-in-Furness (submarines), Bristol (aerospace) and Birmingham (armoured vehicles) makes it particularly difficult for the left-leaning parties that win many votes in such areas to consider cutbacks on procurement of major conventional weapons.

¹⁷ By share of UK vote, i.e. Conservative, Labour, UKIP, Liberal Democrats.

The British and multinational companies that build the UK's military equipment clearly have a substantial interest in maintaining a high level of military spending, devoting as much as possible of this spending to the equipment budget, and in promoting positive relations between the UK and arms-importing states. Through advertising and sponsorship, such companies exert a large influence on the British media and security think tanks that frame the debate on security threats, policy and spending. Rather than specific threats, belief in the strategic imperative of preserving these ever-larger companies' capacities at times seems to guide procurement and spending priorities.

In order to maintain British military industrial capacity in the face of falling procurement budgets, there may be pressure to increase arms exports. This could either divert production or subsidise the development and unit costs of systems developed for the British military. Either way, the unintended consequence of reducing UK military spending could be to increase the flow of UK-manufactured arms to unstable or authoritarian countries. France, Sweden and Italy all face similar pressures on their own industries. Industrial transformation to alternative goods thus needs to be part of any effort to demilitarise the UK in order to retain jobs and skills and prevent proliferation.

5. Can the UK Balance Ambition and Austerity?

Militaries are large and enormously complicated institutions, often with deeply entrenched values and perspectives. Restructuring them is a long, difficult and potentially dangerous undertaking that is very likely to extend over more than one parliamentary term. Yet the British Armed Forces are not monolithic or immutable. Indeed, because they are dependent on fast-changing high technologies and tasked with responding to evolving challenges, their ability to adapt is also endemic. Since the end of the Cold War they have already undergone very significant reductions and restructuring in line with government perceptions of global threats and responsibilities.

In the run-up to the 2015 general election and SDSR, the choices facing a financially squeezed MOD were most often characterised as between nuclear and conventional forces or between buying cutting edge new equipment and retaining existing manpower. These are real political choices. As Malcolm Chalmers has shown, the current MOD Equipment Plan is only compatible with a greatly reduced size of armed forces, especially the British Army, unless the defence budget expands after 2015.¹⁸ Similarly, the still hazy sums for Trident II constitute a huge share of capital spending at a time when the demands of equipping conventional expeditionary forces sit heavily on the MOD, particularly in terms of fitting, equipping and sustaining two full-sized aircraft carriers.

However, the fundamental choice need not be either/or. Just as the major political parties ducked the funding issue while arguing that they would commit to retaining nuclear forces and substantially equipped conventional forces, the UK government could commit to nuclear disarmament as well as a fundamental rethinking of force structures from expeditionary warfare to national and European defence. Aspiring to do more with less is not a realistic option but doing less with less is. Evidence from the last three parliamentary terms suggests that doing less might even contribute substantially to UK security.

¹⁸ Malcolm Chalmers, 'Mind the Gap: The MoD's Emerging Budgetary Challenge', RUSI Briefing Paper, March 2015.

Unlike in 2010, when most of the big equipment items were already committed to ahead of the SDSR, in 2015 only 32% of the £163 billion 2014-2024 Equipment Plan has been pre-committed by early 2015. This is to the credit of the Coalition Government, which did much to improve MOD procurement practices and planning through the reformed Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S). Thus, two-thirds of planned new equipment or support costs could in theory be cancelled without penalty by the new government. This includes almost all of the £35 billion or so allocated to renewing Trident and subject to approval at the ‘main gate’ decision point foreseen for March 2016. Table 2 shows the rapidly declining levels of capital spending over the rest of the parliament committed through contracts already awarded, from 53% in the current financial year to 24% in the final year of this government.

Table 2: MOD Contractual Commitments under Defence Equipment Plan 2014-2024

Level of Contractual Commitment	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Total
% of budget committed	69	53	40	31	28	24	23	21	20	17	32

Source: MOD Defence Equipment Plan 2014, 13 January 2015, p.10

Other major equipment acquisitions which were largely or only partially contracted at the end of the 2010-2015 parliament include the Type-23 frigate or Global Combat Ship, of which 13 have been proposed, and the F-35B Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter envisaged to fly off the two new aircraft carriers, of which only eight and some components have been ordered so far. There is also the question, revised in 2010 and 2014, of what level of fit and readiness should be accorded to the two aircraft carriers. This is a multi-billion pound question given that the carriers will cost £6.2 billion, their strike fighter aircraft something above £5 billion, and their annual operation and sustainment perhaps also in the billions.

Curiously given the revived activity of Russian vessels and submarines in the North Atlantic, four years after the decommissioning of the Nimrod aircraft there is still nothing in the equipment plan for maritime patrol aircraft. Even with all the planned new frigates procured, deploying even a single carrier battle group beyond the Northwest Atlantic would mean there would be barely any major vessels available to protect British waters. This is perhaps a further indication of the last SDSR’s focus on expeditionary forces at the expense of traditional territorial defence.

6. Conclusion: The Opportunity of 2015

The 2015 general election campaign saw a fragmentation of political party support from the mainstream parties to new, fringe and nationalist parties with some new and old ideas about what defence and security should mean to the UK and its place in the world. The Conservative-led parliament and government elected in May 2015 has an opportunity to bring these ideas together through the next SDSR and to rethink the way the UK commits its resources to upholding national, international and human security. This must happen in the understanding that UK national interests, of which peace and security is the highest responsibility of any government, are indivisible from global interests.

Reducing spending on the armed forces can be a part of this, phased through the new parliament and beyond, but it can only be part of the solution. Five steps towards the new government refocusing the UK's resources from a doomed policy of trying to contain conflict overseas to one of proactive conflict prevention might include:

i. Coordinating analysis and expenditure towards conflict prevention

The last two governments made some progress towards coordinating government foreign and security policy and conflict analysis across Whitehall, including through the establishment of a National Security Council (NSC). Yet the NSC is still a very weakly resourced body and has slim resources for doing real strategic thinking about how the UK can commit its resources long-term to preventing conflict overseas and upholding human rather than narrowly defined national security. There remains an enormous imbalance of resources between the MOD and other departments, the FCO in particular, which helps to condition the policies and responses that the UK makes towards conflict and crises.

One way to mitigate this, and to maximise the use of the UK's resources, would be to think in terms of an overall envelope of funding for Britain's international influence to be spread between defence, development, diplomacy and intelligence. Currently this envelope is around £49 billion, or 2.75% of GDP. This could be overseen by a single minister, perhaps the prime minister or a deputy prime minister, through a restructured NSC. This would allow for the development of clearer strategy for managing long-term risks and the coordination of 'hard' and 'soft' power approaches. At a minimum, this should entail some commitment to reallocating resources from the military to diplomacy.

ii. Getting serious about defence and deterrence

The delineation between defensive and offensive postures is one frequently obfuscated in strategic debates¹⁹, yet the negative security and ethical consequences of many recent British and NATO foreign military interventions are increasingly obvious. Getting serious about defence does not mean spending more on the military. Rather, it means rethinking how the military contributes to the defence of the people and territory of the UK and its allies, particularly in Europe. This is much harder to do if the military is structured and equipped to fight multiple distant wars.

Getting serious about deterrence means taking a rational approach to the contemporary strategic environment and whether possession of certain hugely expensive and massively destructive weapons systems is actually likely to deter attacks on the UK. If use of such weapons is not credible, or if their cost is greatly disproportionate to their influence, then there is a clear case for disposing of them.

A re-evaluation of NATO's basic role and its relationship with non-aligned EU member states such as Sweden, Finland, Ireland and Austria can also be fundamental to rethinking collective defence and deterrence in Europe. This has particular relevance given the new uncertainties over the UK's future relationship with its EU allies. Stretching NATO's role to fighting wars in Afghanistan and Libya in the last decade has stimulated new, unconventional challenges to European security while undermining its perceived capability to defend Europe, and thus its deterrent value.

iii. Recommitting to the UN and peacekeeping

¹⁹ For a discussion see Stuart Parkinson, Barnaby Pace and Philip Webber, *Offensive Insecurity: The Role of Science and Technology in UK Security Strategies*, Scientists for Global Responsibility, September 2013.

While recommitting to national and regional defence, the UK can simultaneously commit to a more genuine internationalism through the United Nations. The extended commitment of NATO to aggressive 'peace support operations' well outside the North Atlantic since the 1990s has been detrimental to the role and authority of the UN as the world's only truly multilateral security institution. Other than in Cyprus – a frozen conflict largely a legacy of British decolonisation – the UK has not committed any significant forces to UN-run peacekeeping operations since the mid-1990s. Despite the UK paying 6.68% of the UN's peacekeeping budget (about £312 million in 2014-2015), only 0.3% of UN peacekeepers are currently British.

The UK should lead by example in recommitting its armed forces to serve under UN command, starting by matching at least the battalion-level commitment of EU allies Italy, France, the Netherlands and Spain. South Africa provides a positive example of how a powerful demilitarising state can apply its capabilities and niche expertise to boosting regional and UN peacekeeping capacities. EU operations have similarly boosted UN or African capacity at critical points. Committing to the primacy of UN-led mediation is also crucial and the UK should explore ways of expanding and improving UN conflict prevention diplomacy.

iv. Rethinking expeditionary forces structure and equipment

The current UK military forces are structured first and foremost to be able to launch multiple overseas interventions, often of an offensive character. As with operations in Sierra Leone or off Somalia, there may be times when such capacities are beneficial to UK, international or local security. Yet the political imperative to 'project power' and use force to solve international disputes has frequently and increasingly resulted in tactical stalemate and strategic defeat regardless of the qualitative superiority of British troops and weapons.

The coming reviews of the National Security Strategy and defence policy (SDSR) are opportunities to rethink the role and structure of the armed forces in relation to the threats they face and the likely impact of military interventions and aggressive power projection. An unrealistic level of ambition, relative to both financing and impacts, in the last SDSR put a heavy emphasis on equipping and maintaining go-anywhere expeditionary forces at enormous cost. Reorienting the armed forces towards a more defensive structure will almost certainly provide major savings in the equipment budget in the short and especially long term.

v. Committing to transform military industries to peaceful production

If the UK is to reduce its military spending over the long term there is likely to be a knock-on effect to employment in military industries unless the UK further boosts its arms exports. Indeed, given the concentration of export markets in the Middle East and North Africa, if the UK were to apply a more ethical approach to its arms sales then the impact on this major **sector** of its industrial research and manufacturing sector would be even greater. This would affect some of the most highly skilled members of the industrial workforce.

It is thus crucial that efforts to reduce military spending and procurement over the long-term should be matched by efforts to transform high-tech industries from military to civilian production. Investment in research and production of greener power generation technologies is one obviously beneficial alternative. Developing more efficient transport infrastructure might be another. Clearly, such investment in transformation will have a financial cost in the short term but could be self-sustaining in

the longer term as well as environmentally beneficial. Reducing the influence of the military industry lobby is also likely to have a welcome and sobering impact on the development of future security policies in the UK.

Appendix - Political Party Commitments on Defence and Development spending

Defence and international affairs were minor issues in the 2015 general election campaign. Not all of the parties articulated clear positions on defence and development spending and no party made spending promises on diplomacy. The following attempts to summarise the manifesto commitments of the ten parties that will take seats in the 2015 Parliament. It excludes Sinn Féin, which refuses to take its four seats in Westminster.

Conservative Party

The Conservative manifesto made the most detailed statement on defence, including a full-scale Trident replacement, maintaining the size of the regular armed forces and bringing two aircraft carriers into service, but no forward commitments on overall spending. A lower-level spending commitment was made to invest at least £160 billion in major new equipment 2015-2025, funding the equipment budget at 1% above inflation until 2020. It supports maintaining development spending at 0.7% of GNI and non-specific commitments to “assist the poorest in adapting to” climate change.

Labour Party

The Labour Party refused to make specific commitments on defence spending ahead of the post-election SDR, which it said must specify requirements well before the Spending Review specifies its financial means. On defence, it supports some form of Trident renewal and increasing UK arms exports. On development, it supports the 0.7% of GNI commitment. On combating climate change, it endorses support from richer to poorer countries.

Scottish Nationalist Party

The SNP is opposed to renewal of the Scotland-based Trident system but its defence spending commitments are otherwise focused on increased transparency and retaining or increasing spending on military industries (especially ship-building and -fitting) and bases in Scotland. Figures in the Scottish Government’s 2013 white paper on independence had proposed a spending commitment of about 1.7% of an independent Scotland’s assumed GDP on defence. The SNP supports maintaining UK overseas development aid at 0.7% of GNI, strictly excluding defence-related spending.

Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democrats proposed to link future defence spending commitments to a thorough SDR in 2015 and thereby to establish a Single Security Budget uniting Defence with “security agencies, cyber defences and soft power interventions”. They supported maintaining expeditionary armed forces, a reduction in the scale of Trident replacement (expecting a small cost saving), and greater restrictions

on UK arms exports. The current development budget and commitments to combating climate change in poorer countries were specifically endorsed.

Democratic Unionist Party

The DUP committed to spending at least the proposed NATO minimum of 2% of GDP on defence.

Plaid Cymru

Plaid made no manifesto commitment on defence spending. It opposed Trident renewal and proposes a Welsh veto on deployment of Welsh units in foreign military interventions. It supports maintaining a 0.7% share of GNI for overseas development aid.

Social Democratic and Labour Party

The Northern Irish SDLP usually aligns with the Labour whip in the UK Parliament. However, it made a clear commitment to not renew Trident and to reallocate funds from this to welfare, health and education.

Ulster Unionist Party

The UUP committed to supporting a minimum 2.0% of GDP spend on defence and renewing Trident. It opposes any reduction in strength of the regular armed forces.

UK Independence Party

UKIP supported spending 2.0% of GDP on defence in 2015/16 and spending an additional £1 billion per year thereafter on priority military equipment. It proposed increasing the armed forces to 2010 manpower levels, renewing Trident (possibly with less than four submarines) and commissioning the two aircraft carriers. It proposed to reduce foreign aid spending from 0.7 to 0.2% of GNI and merge DFID into the FCO.

Green Party

The Green Party made no specific commitment on defence expenditure but does oppose Trident renewal. It committed to increasing development spending to 1.0% of GDP (sic) by 2020 and supported some form of 'climate debt' reparations to countries that have retained forests or not extracted fossil fuels.

About this Report

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Photo:

HMS Illustrious crew prepare to lower the aircraft carrier's White Ensign during her decommissioning ceremony on 28 August 2014. Source: Dan Kitwood/Getty Images



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