



Editorial Notes

by Bill Kincaid
Editor, *RUSI Defence Systems*

On the 3rd of this month, MoD published two important documents: the Green Paper on Defence¹ and a reply to Bernard Gray's report of last Autumn.² The first does not attempt to answer fundamental questions but it "opens discussion and sets out our emerging thinking ... where possible it seeks to begin to build consensus". No doubt it will focus minds for the Strategic Defence Review (SDR), but of greater interest to readers of *RUSI Defence Systems* is the second document on acquisition reform. Unsurprisingly, there is a sense of *déjà vu* – much of the introduction and aims could have been written for previous initiatives.

However, some measures are encouraging: for example, an SDR every Parliament, and publishing the affordability of the defence programme every year. Other measures may look good superficially but raise questions about implementation: for example, the measure to provide contingency funding to deal with cost growth – this would just treat the symptom, not the cause. Inevitably there is the usual (cf. Smart Acquisition and the Defence Industrial Strategy (DIS)) drive towards a more active and transparent relationship with industry. We haven't made much progress over the last dozen years, so how will we achieve it now? And little or no mention of culture change, without which serious improvement will not happen.

It is of course vital that we do reform acquisition. We do know what we have to do. So let's now do something new and **implement** it.

The UK's Looming General Election

It would appear that, whichever party wins the Election, defence funding will take a significant hit. Although it can be argued that a nation at war must fully fund that war, the public, of course, may well not support a large increase in defence funding in the run-up to the Election, and certainly won't without a strong case made by politicians. Can this case be made? Antonia Cox concludes that it can. But will it?

Bernard Gray has identified a huge hole in the budget and this will keep growing until 'frictional' and other waste is dealt with on a long-term basis. The RUSI Acquisition Focus discusses the huge financial shortfall in the defence programme, how it originated and what the next government might do about it. It concludes bleakly that a coherent set of defence changes cannot be anticipated because so much money is already committed.

In 2007, before the current financial crisis, Professor Andrew Graves made a strong plea in this publication³ for greater emphasis on manufacturing, as opposed to the service economy. He returns to the subject in this issue and explains why the run-down in manufacturing over the last couple of decades has been disastrous for this country. This is an important issue. The defence industry is a significant part of the whole manufacturing sector, but it seems that politicians have been happy to allow Lord Drayson's DIS of 2005 to wither. All for the lack of a little money. Money is scarce right now, but we have previously had many years of plenty with little to show for it.

It is interesting to compare the contraction of the British defence industry with what is happening elsewhere and Guy Anderson follows his examination of the defence industries in Russia and China with a look at the Indian scene.

Decision-Making

Bernard Gray's report on acquisition is an important re-statement of many of the things that were said in previous reports over the last few decades, but never implemented. David Faddy examines Gray's report and brings out some aspects which have not been discussed by others. Chief amongst them is a further waning of scientific influence, with the replacement of the Chief Scientific Adviser with a financier as Chairman of the Investment Appraisal Board. Faddy also infers that there were no scientists or engineers in Gray's team – on a major investigation into the acquisition of equipment. This is all of a piece with the year-on-year reduction in the research and technology (R&T) budget over two or more decades. We know (and the DIS pointed this out) that future military capability is closely linked to R&T spend in the previous two decades. We seem to be in danger of sleep-walking into incapability.

The politicians' excuse for all this now is to say that there is no money. But of course there is. It is a matter of priorities. Not only that, but Gray has identified that up to 30% of the budget for new equipment is wasted. This is close to my estimation⁴ in 1999, but politicians and officials have done nothing about it.

One of the weaknesses of the Gray report is that it is process and organisation centred, as is all the thinking on acquisition in the MoD. But unless the culture is changed (as recommended

in Smart Acquisition in 1998 and in DIS in 2005), changes will have little effect on delivery. It is this myopic examination of, and fiddling with, process and organisation rather than culture change that is the problem.

And decision-making is at the heart of this. As time is money, could MoD not do more to reduce costs? But to do so we need to procure faster with fewer delays; two articles – one from the US by Lieutenant General Stephen Speakes and DeAnna Haggett, and the other from UK by Stu Olden from BMT – suggest ways in which this might be achieved. In addition, should we not make clearer decisions about what we can afford – as Bjoern Siebert's examination of A400M perhaps suggests?

Infantry Capability and Burden

In this issue, we have a major section on infantry equipment that includes debate over small arms tactical use and calibre, and an examination of protective technologies for use by both mounted and dismounted infantry, all by independent analysts. The capability versus burden balance for the dismounted soldier is a recurrent theme and a major factor in articles from the defence industry on rifle-mounted gunfire location (Ultra), manpack electronic warfare (Roke Manor Research) and intelligent textiles (from ... Intelligent Textiles Ltd). The US Army's Chief Scientist, looking further ahead, discusses the many technologies that will, in the future, help to balance capability and burden.

Sea Blindness and MDA

There has been some UK comment on the nation's "sea blindness", due to maritime activities being out of sight of both the population and the media – at least in comparison with operations in Afghanistan – and out of sight means out of mind. But this is not just a UK problem. At the 19th International Seapower Symposium, attended by navy leaders from 101 countries last October, this was a well-recognised issue. Vice Admiral Bruce Clingan, recently Commander of the US Sixth Fleet, and Dr Susanne Wirwille look at the challenges of achieving global maritime security, while Edward Lundquist provides another US view. Maritime security will not be achieved without the full contribution from many organisations in many countries.

Logistics

Logistics may no longer be the Cinderella that it once was, but it is still strategy and tactics that command the column inches. Nevertheless, continuing operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere demonstrate the key role of logistics. General Ann Dunwoody, Commanding General of the US Army Materiel Command, describes the renewed focus in the US on the whole life cycle by integrating research and development, acquisition and logistics communities. Peter Tatham and Major David Worrell of the UK Defence Academy conclude that the principles of lean thinking can be applied, not just in an industrial setting, but in a volatile environment like counter-insurgency operations.

Air/Land Integration

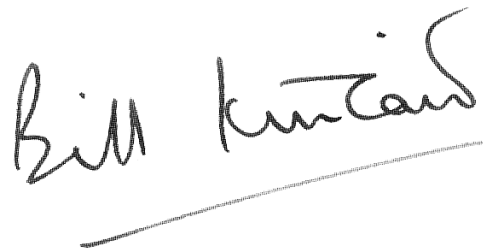
We continue our series on air/land integration with an article from the UK's Director of Capability Integration (Army), who describes lessons learned and looks at remaining challenges, not least of which is air space management. Air/land integration is also one of the subjects that the UK's Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Dalton, tackles in the RDS Military Interview, saying that we are now back to where we were in North Africa in 1942 when air/land integration was at its peak. He also looks at a number of other issues, including the next election, unmanned systems, airworthiness, gold-plating and helicopter numbers.

Comment and Debate

Those who read Jim Storr's paper⁵ on whether digitisation was dead, together with half a dozen commentary articles, will be interested in the continuing debate. David Lynam, who was closely involved in land digitisation for many years, strongly disagrees with Storr and says that land digitisation and network-enabled capability (NEC) have made tremendous strides during the last half-dozen years. Professor Richard Harper provides a view on the human dimension in digitisation.

Unmanned vehicles have been discussed extensively in recent issues. In this issue Elizabeth Quintana and Olivier Grouille from RUSI comment on various aspects of unmanned ground vehicles arising from two recent books.

Debate is an essential aid to improvement. No doubt there is plenty of debate within MoD, even if some of it is of the "my mind is made up" variety. But MoD remains suspicious of entering debate with those outside its laager wagons. Open debate is essential and the pages of *RUSI Defence Systems* are open to all who have constructive ideas about defence systems, their acquisition and their operational use.



NOTES

- ¹ MoD, *Adaptability and Partnership: Issues for the Strategic Defence Review*, 3 February 2010
- ² MoD, *The Defence Strategy for Acquisition Reform*, Cm 7796, 3 February 2010
- ³ *RUSI Defence Systems*, Volume 10 No 1, June 2007
- ⁴ Bill Kincaid, *Dancing with the Dinosaur*, pages 183–188, UK Defence Forum, 1999
- ⁵ *RUSI Defence Systems*, Volume 10 No 2, October 2009