About this publication

This publication introduces the Ministry of Defence’s (MOD’s) Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC). It is aimed at those persons inside or outside of Defence seeking an overview of our organisation, activities, responsibilities and key outputs.

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“DCDC is the MOD’s independent think tank.”

Secretary of State for Defence, September 2014
Introduction

The Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC), is the Ministry of Defence’s (MOD’s) think tank. Created as a result of the 1998 Strategic Defence Review which recognised that Defence needed a clearer long-term, truly joint, vision of the way in which we expect our forces to operate. We help inform Defence strategy, capability development, operations and provide the foundation for joint education.

Located at Shrivenham, we are part of the Joint Force Development (JFD) construct within Joint Forces Command but are functionally responsible to the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff (VCDS) who sets our priorities and outputs. Since 2013, DCDC has also been the Swedish Concepts and Doctrine Centre with Swedish officers serving in the Centre and our work informing the Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters.

We are a joint, multinational establishment, with staff drawn from all three Services, the Civil Service and our partner nations. We work routinely with NATO, the European Union, the United Nations and a global network including other government departments, non-governmental organisations and industry.

Our outputs and responsibilities include: the Strategic Trends Programme which provides the long-term strategic context for policy-makers; concepts which outline how our Armed Forces and Defence may operate in the future; doctrine which provides guidelines for commanders based on best practice and operational experience; and oversight of the legal content of operational law training. We also support strategy development via our close relationship with MOD policy-makers and via the Chief of the Defence Staff’s (CDS’) Strategy Forum, which we deliver. Our work underpins strategic force development in the MOD, joint force development within JFD and command-level force development within the Commands.
Vision and mission

"To be a leader in innovative and respected Defence thinking."

"To produce outputs that inform Defence strategy, capability development and operational activity."

""
Many MOD activities, projects and policies have implications for decades to come. The MOD needs, therefore, to think about the future.

Our Futures Team, in collaboration with its global network, considers what the future might look like in 20 to 30 years’ time and publishes its thoughts and findings through its Strategic Trends Programme.

The output of the work is primarily through its two major publications: *Global Strategic Trends* and the *Future Operating Environment*. *Global Strategic Trends* looks out 30 years and examines those phenomena that could have a strategic impact on the future. The *Future Operating Environment* looks out 20 years and is designed to inform UK Defence and security policy-makers of potential characteristics of the future operating environment.

*Global Strategic Trends* and the *Future Operating Environment* inform colleagues in UK and Swedish Defence organisations, particularly those working in the capability, policy and strategy development areas, about potential changes that could have an impact on their areas of work. These products are especially useful in the preparation of Strategic Defence and Security Reviews and respective National Security Strategies.

Beyond its work within the MOD, the Futures Team also contributes to cross-government thinking about the future and works closely with international partners.
The Concepts Team write the future operating concepts that look beyond current policy and financial horizons to articulate the likely ways in which we may operate out to a 20 year time frame.

Working closely with the Futures Team, engaging with academia and a multinational network of allies and partners, these concepts provide an intellectual underpinning for capability insights that inform future force development.

Following a Strategic Defence and Security Review and working with MOD policy-makers, the team also produces the Defence Joint Operating Concept, which sets out how the UK Armed Forces will be generated and employed over the next ten years.

The single-Service components of the team also produce the maritime, land, and air and space higher-level keystone doctrine, describing how we operate in each environment today. Together with the operating concepts, this work, and numerous studies and research papers done in parallel, inform Defence and serve as a basis for the ongoing professional education of our most promising future commanders and staff officers.
The Joint Doctrine Team is responsible for writing and maintaining a range of operational-level UK and NATO doctrine publications. These include thematic, functional and environmental doctrine. Tactical doctrine, which deals exclusively with procedure (rather than philosophy or principles), is the responsibility of the Joint Forces Command and single-Service Warfare Centres.

The team engages with a range of cross-government experts such as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development as well as international organisations such as the United Nations. As recent experience has shown, many civilian and military organisations and agencies are involved in UK national and coalition/alliance operations.

We need to achieve maximum coherence and interoperability with, and between, our closest allies and partners. NATO is the institution best placed to help us achieve this and is becoming increasingly important as we ‘put NATO at the heart of UK Defence’. Where possible, we will adopt NATO doctrine (Allied joint publications) rather than producing our own national doctrine (joint doctrine publications). Where we cannot, we will make sure that we remain compatible. UK specific ‘best practice’ will be preserved through a smaller number of remaining joint doctrine publications and supplementary UK elements within the NATO publications.
We provide support to Defence policy and strategy formulation as well as developing and promoting strategic thinking and leadership skills. Key outputs include:

- producing a range of short papers and think pieces in support of VCDS, the Chiefs and Defence Strategy and Priorities;
- providing secretariat support to CDS’ Strategic Advisory Panel which sits three times per year; and
- delivering CDS’ Strategy Forum, run in partnership with the Oxford University ‘Changing Character of War Programme’.

The Strategy Forums bring together hand-picked individuals from inside and outside Government to tackle pressing strategic and policy issues from a challenging perspective. Recent events have considered:

- Strategy in Defence;
- Making the Most of our People; and
- Deterrence for the Twenty-First Century.
We are supported by our own team of in-house lawyers, one from each of the three Services. They are specialists in International Law and have an operational background.

Our Legal Team is responsible for ensuring that all DCDC outputs are legally sound. They also have a key role in assuring Law of Armed Conflict training provided to Service personnel, for which Director DCDC is the senior responsible officer.

The team are responsible for some notable legal products, including Joint Service Publication 383, Joint Services Manual of Armed Conflict and Joint Doctrine Publication 1-10, Captured Persons which is the UK detention doctrine.

Our Legal Team participates in national and international debates concerning developments in, and approaches to, International Law. They also provide specialist advice on international weapons law, notably writing the mandatory legal reviews of weapons and methods/means of warfare.
The Analysis and Research Team provide the empirical evidence and scientific basis for our products. The team ensures that we maintain our status as a professional body of knowledge for the MOD and that such knowledge we build is relevant, retained, maintained and exploited.

We gain this knowledge by accessing the current and appropriate developments in the social sciences, science and technology, and by delivering analysis and experimentation to support conceptual and doctrinal development.

The team are also responsible for providing analysis advice, engaging in a wide range of experimentation activities, including: red teaming; synthesising operational lessons; identifying trends; developing thought-provoking insight; and challenging thinking.

This work is further supported by networks of appropriate experts and academics producing well informed, widely-sourced and peer-reviewed research. All of this supports our outputs, enabling better decision-making for UK Defence and security.
Our global network

Fundamental to our success is our ability to produce research which tests and challenges established thinking and stimulates debate. Helping us to achieve this, we benefit from the input of a broad range of contributors both domestically and from across the globe including:

- academia;
- defence;
- government departments;
- charities;
- industry;
- allies and partners; and
- non-governmental institutions.

We actively maintain our network through a comprehensive programme of engagement and by supporting others in their work. Through this we are able to openly challenge and be challenged in a collaborative way that ensures our work takes a wider perspective.
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