

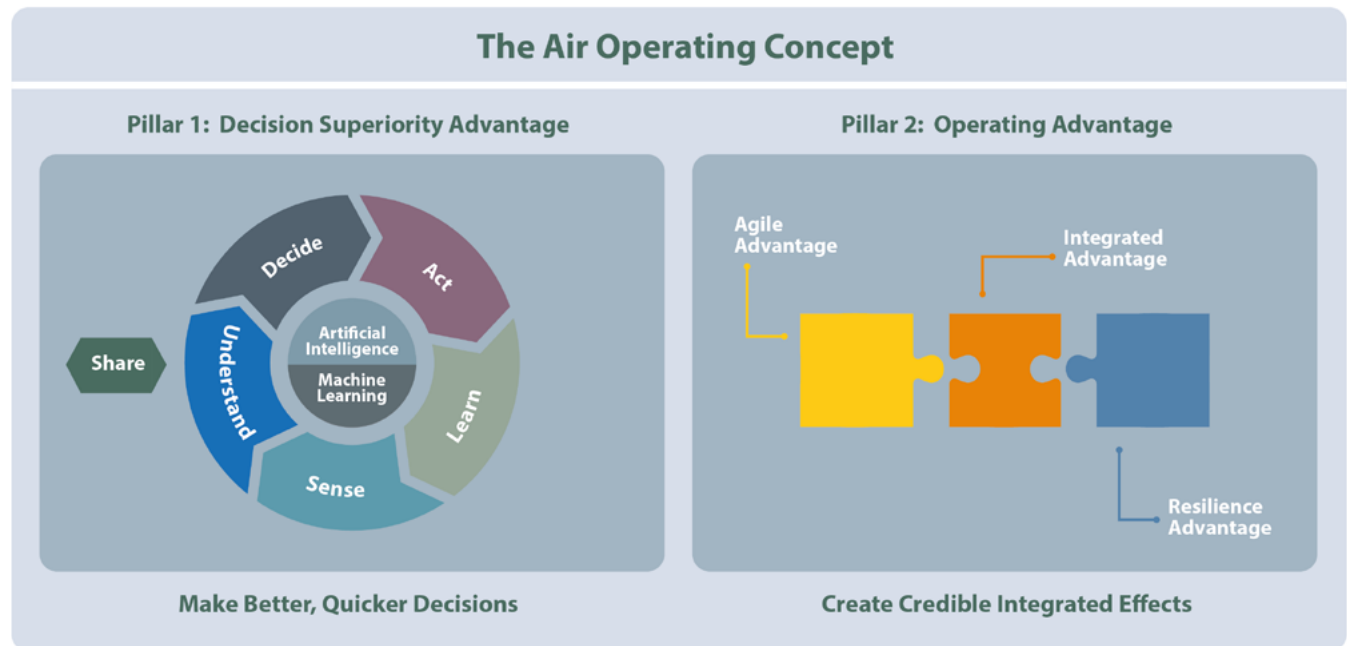
# The Air Operating Concept

## Executive Summary

Defence's role is to protect the UK and help it prosper, to defend its overseas territories, people and strategic interests, and when required, to be its first responder to international crises. **The RAF's significant contribution** is using the four roles of air power (control of the air, attack, air mobility and intelligence surveillance & reconnaissance), enabled by air command and control, to create kinetic and non-kinetic effects. When integrated effectively with the other operational domains and with allies and partners, these effects are powerful and critical to our success.

Air power gives the Government the political choice to act globally, rapidly, decisively and when required, lethally. Air power capabilities provide the freedom of action for all operational domains to operate by protecting our airspace and gaining access to that of our adversaries.

**The demands on air power are the highest they have been for decades.** Air operations may need to be conducted concurrently across the UK and globally as part of integrated NATO action within the Euro-Atlantic region, and in the High North and the Indo-Pacific with partners and allies. Achieving the roles and effects of air power will be increasingly challenging in the future operating environment with threats becoming increasingly potent, hybrid and immediate. With UK operating bases now within range of our adversaries' weapons and their willingness to use hybrid and novel attacks, we must expect to be attacked and we need to be prepared.



**Success** within this contested and volatile future means **retaining or regaining control of the air** to protect our interests and capabilities from interference or attack while continuing to create credible and coherent integrated effects across multiple domains using air power. Without control of the air, our air power effects are degraded or denied with significant consequences for wider Defence.

The **Air Operating Concept** describes how the RAF will succeed in the future operating environment through an evolution of its culture, capabilities, organisation and operations to deter our adversaries and avert conflict, or win in armed conflict when required. Our activities will be driven by our **Decision Superiority Advantage** (making better, quicker decisions than our adversaries)



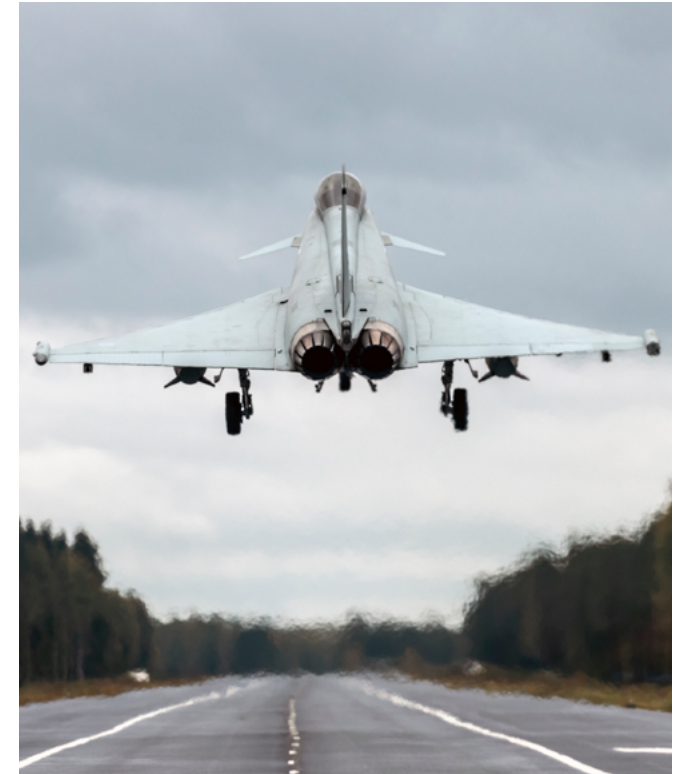
and delivered by the **Operating Advantage** of our **Agility** (using tailored and flexible responses from varied locations), **Integration** (working seamlessly with other domains, allies and partners) and **Resilience** (being able to endure in a protracted fight) to fly, fight and win. The RAF will concentrate first on the ambitions that will directly improve deterrence and core warfighting capacity. To be effective, conventional deterrence must be credible, so by evolving our approach we will present our adversaries with multiple operational challenges which will undermine their cohesion and deny their ability to respond coherently and effectively. This will **deter** them from challenging or attacking the UK, its people, its interests, partners and allies. But if they do

attack, we will be prepared to **defend** against them, and then fight to **defeat** them. Our culture underpins the way our people feel, think and behave and is key to how we operate, fight and adapt to change. We will develop our culture to ensure we have the **operational mindset** to prevail on operations and in warfare, employing **mission command** and effective empowerment to unleash the potential of our skilled people.

The RAF's approach to operating and warfighting will focus on **Agile Combat Employment (ACE)** and **Dynamic Force Employment (DFE)**. These enhance survivability and resilience whilst changing the dynamics of the strategic environment by delivering persistent global presence using pulsed activities.

We will evolve our enabling and supporting concepts, plans, strategies and activities throughout the RAF and wider defence, including: integrated air and missile defence; cyber and electromagnetic activity; resilient logistics and support; implementing a whole force People Strategy; risk management and active empowerment; adaptation and innovation; and relevant training and exercising.

The Air Operating Concept provides the impetus for follow-on work within the RAF and with the other operational domains, partners and allies. The RAF's evolution will allow us to contribute credibly and significantly to the Defence



Command Paper's commitment to strengthening the UK's defence and security by being prepared for warfighting and persistent engagement and keeping pace with the significant and evolving threats posed by our adversaries.