



## UK Maritime Power



Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 0-10, *UK Maritime Power* is the UK's keystone maritime doctrine. It provides the intellectual and practical foundation for understanding and employing UK maritime power in an increasingly complex security environment.

### Strategic context

As an island nation, the UK's relationship with the sea is fundamental to its prosperity, security and global influence. Maritime power is defined as: 'the ability to apply maritime military capabilities at and from the sea to influence behaviour and events.' This encompasses not merely naval vessels, but the full spectrum of maritime capabilities including aviation, amphibious operations, uncrewed systems, cyber capabilities, and critical infrastructure such as ports, undersea cables and energy platforms.

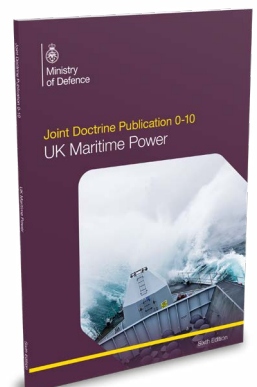
JDP 0-10 shows how recent conflicts, particularly in Ukraine, have demonstrated the continuing importance of maritime operations even in land-focused warfare, whilst highlighting the transformative potential of autonomous systems, digital networks and artificial intelligence in creating a 'hybrid navy' for the 21st Century.

### Core capabilities and attributes

UK maritime forces provide unique operational advantages through six key attributes: access, mobility, versatility, persistence, lift capacity and poise. The principle of freedom of navigation allows these forces to project national influence whilst remaining uncommitted, exploiting opportunities and countering threats with exceptional responsiveness. Maritime forces contribute across all four instruments of national power – diplomatic, information, military and economic – protecting the £700 billion of trade flowing through UK ports annually.

### Fighting power and command

The doctrine articulates fighting power through three interrelated components: conceptual (doctrine and intellectual frameworks); moral (ethos, values and motivation to fight); and physical (platforms, systems and personnel). Command and control embraces both mission command – empowering subordinates with intent and freedom of action – and directive command, recognising that maritime operations often involve dispersed forces operating with limited communications across vast areas, requiring commanders to balance centralised planning with decentralised execution.



## Strategic priorities and employment

Four priority outputs shape UK maritime strategy: maintaining the continuous at sea deterrent through ballistic missile submarines; homeland defence of UK territory and Overseas Territories; conventional maritime strike capabilities focused on the North Atlantic; and persistent global engagement to strengthen partnerships and compete below the threshold of armed conflict.

Maritime forces fulfil critical roles including sea control and denial, power projection ashore through strike warfare and amphibious operations, protection of critical national infrastructure, countering threats from piracy and organised crime, and supporting humanitarian operations. The publication emphasises that modern operations are inherently joint, requiring integration across the maritime, land, air, space, and cyber and electromagnetic domains.

## Contemporary challenges

The doctrine addresses emerging challenges including climate change impacts on maritime routes and resources, contested interpretations of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, protection of undersea cables carrying \$10 trillion daily in financial transfers, threats to strategic choke points, and adversaries employing sub-threshold actions and anti-access/area denial strategies to challenge freedom of navigation without triggering armed conflict.

JDP 0-10 provides the doctrinal bedrock for joint commanders, officials, allies and industry partners. It integrates lessons from history with future-focused transformation to ensure the UK maintains maritime advantage in an era of great power competition and technological disruption.

### Want to read more about UK maritime power?

The full edition of JDP 0-10 is designed to be a simple and concise explanation of UK maritime power, written at the OFFICIAL classification to access the widest possible audience. JDP 0-10 should be of value to joint commanders and staff, single-Service warfare branches, other government departments, partners and allies.



### Find out more about joint operational-level doctrine at the links below.

[gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

[defnet](https://defnet.org.uk)

[Defence Gateway](#)

