



THE ROYAL NAVY TODAY, TOMORROW AND TOWARDS 2025



Projecting maritime power to **protect** and **promote** our nation's interests



The Royal Marine Commandos - The UK's specialist amphibious force.





FOREWORD BY THE FIRST SEA LORD

This document sets out my intent for the future of our Service.

It details why and how I see the Royal Navy¹, including the Royal Marines and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, developing in the challenging years ahead and what that means for our people, capabilities and force structure. It also forms an integral part of the MOD's Strategy for Defence. Together these documents describe the path towards the Royal Navy of 2025; an operationally versatile navy able to project maritime power to protect and promote our nation's interests worldwide.

As an island nation, our security and prosperity directly stems from our ability to access the sea. This is why the Royal Navy's ability to apply maritime power will continue to have such value in meeting the UK's defence

and security needs. In an age of uncertainty the Royal Navy must remain ready to respond to emerging international crises and working with our sister services and alongside allies and partners, provide an enduring maritime presence where our national interests are vulnerable.

As we move forward we should remember that the Strategic Defence and Security Review is the start of a journey towards Armed Forces that are supported by modernised, rebalanced and affordable Defence structures. This will enable the Royal Navy to meet the challenges we reasonably expect to face in the future with the capacity to deal with an unpredictable operating environment.

Why "Towards 2025"? Three primary reasons: Firstly, it takes time to build maritime capabilities such as warships, submarines and aircraft; secondly it takes time to train and grow the skilled

people who operate them; and finally, 2025 is likely to be the aiming point for the next Defence Review. If we are to deliver the Royal Navy the Nation requires in 2025 we need to start our preparations today.

The Royal Navy has an enviable and unrivalled reputation for success based upon inspiring leadership, dedicated people and a Fleet correctly sized for its purpose. In meeting the Nation's defence and security needs, we must continue to provide political options, strategic military choice and operational success. I look to your support in the delivery of this intent.

1SL/CNS



A Type 45 Destroyer leads a multinational task group in a training exercise.

¹Throughout this document the title "Royal Navy" refers to all organizations that form the Naval Service.

THE ROYAL NAVY, TODAY, TOMORROW AND TOWARDS 2025

The Royal Navy will protect **Britain's interests, citizens, territory and trade** by being ready to defeat our nation's enemies with a deployable maritime force; one able to conduct decisive combat operations **at sea, from the sea**, on land and in the air alongside our sister services. With our allies and partners we will promote international maritime security and deter threats to our peace, prosperity and way of life.

The **sea is our home**, it is our environment.

We are the Nation's **professional experts and leaders** on defence and security in and from the maritime environment. Our ships, submarines, naval air squadrons and commando units will, by design, training and a strong team ethos, excel in the fast changing, complex, inter-connected world of the 21st century.

The Royal Navy's unique ability to exploit the access provided by the sea will ensure our place as a key component of the Nation's Defence.

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this strategic-level document is to provide a head mark for the future Royal Navy as part of the MOD's Strategy for Defence (SfD). It will be relevant to those serving within the Royal Navy, those in the wider maritime community and all those with a stake in UK maritime power and its contribution to Defence.

THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

2. **The UK's role in the world.** As the Prime Minister said in the foreword to the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), "Our country has always had global responsibilities and global ambitions... we should have no less ambition for our country in the decades to come". The UK is an open, outward-facing nation that depends on trade and has

people living all over the world. It has international responsibilities and is dependent on a stable global market for the raw materials, energy and manufactured goods which underpin our prosperity and our way of life. In order to protect interests at home the UK must project influence abroad². To do so requires the ability to project power overseas and to use the UK's unique network of alliances and relationships – principally with the United States but also as a member of NATO and the European Union. The National Security Strategy (NSS) is clear; the UK must maintain the capability to act well beyond our shores and work with allies to have a strategic presence wherever we need it³.

3. **The Sea.** The sea will endure as the indispensable medium for over 90% of the UK's trade and can enable or deny access to areas of strategic national interest. Human activity in the coastal

^{2 & 3}A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy, Cm 7953, dated October 2010 - Foreword

seas is expected to expand, driven by the need for energy in the form of oil and gas, access to fishing grounds, and minerals from the seabed. Conflict at sea between state and non-state actors may therefore emerge as a result of competition for these scarce resources. In addition, the majority of nations now claim 12 mile territorial seas and 200 mile exclusive economic zones. For weak states, unable to effectively patrol these large areas of sea, this represents an increase in ungoverned space in which smugglers, criminals, pirates and terrorists can take sanctuary and where resources can be illegally exploited.

THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

4. The NSS is designed to mobilise the whole of Government behind the protection of the Nation's security interests. In an age of uncertainty the NSS aims to: **use all our national capabilities to build Britain's prosperity, extend our nation's influence in the world and strengthen our security.** The NSS directs the national security effort towards delivering two clear objectives:

- To **ensure a secure and resilient UK**, by protecting our people, economy, infrastructure, territory and way of life from all major risks that can affect us directly. This requires both direct protection against real and present threats such as terrorism and cyber attack, resilience in the face of natural and man-made emergencies and crime, and deterrence against less likely threats such as military attack by another state; and
 - To **shape a stable world**, by acting beyond our borders to reduce the likelihood of specific risks affecting the UK or our direct interests overseas. This is achieved by applying all our instruments of power and influence to shape the global environment and address trends that contribute to instability.
5. **Defence Policy.** To counter the global threats identified by the NSS the SDSR directed the MOD to adopt an 'Adaptable' security posture. This means Defence must focus diplomatic, intelligence and military capabilities on preventing international

crises, while retaining the ability to respond should prevention fail. Ultimately the Armed Forces exist to apply military force as part of a coordinated overall national security response.

THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ROYAL NAVY

6. The SDSR recognised the enduring importance of maritime power for Britain as an island nation and directed the Royal Navy to retain and develop a powerful, adaptable maritime warfighting force; one that is able to conduct, command and sustain operations from the sea, on land or in the air. Alongside allies and partners, or as an independent nation, the ability to deliver military power from the maritime without necessarily becoming embroiled in land based commitments will continue to have great strategic utility in the uncertain years ahead. In times of peace or crisis the Royal Navy must continue to provide political and military leaders with a range of options to counter the threats identified in the NSS.
7. The implication is that the Royal Navy must be able to **project maritime power** to **protect** and **promote** our nation's interests. This will require a navy that is **operationally versatile** and **interoperable** in all environments as part of a joint, multi-national and multi-agency force. There is an imperative to be **forward deployed, preventative in approach** and **culturally aware** to build trust and make sense of an increasingly complicated world. The Royal Navy must innovate to be able to **adapt more quickly** than its adversaries and must be supported by **lean, effective, equipment and manpower structures.**
8. In deciding **'what the Royal Navy will do'** and **'what the Royal Navy will be'**, success rests firmly upon the quality of the Royal Navy's **people**: well led, committed, confident operating in the maritime environment and expert in handling risk. The Royal Navy will continue to invest in high end technology but it is **people** that will deliver the battle winning edge.

WHAT THE ROYAL NAVY WILL DO – THE ROLES

9. The SDSR is unequivocal on the need to retain a **nuclear deterrent** as the ultimate means to deter the most extreme threats. It will remain the Royal Navy's responsibility to deliver the Continuous At Sea Deterrent (CASD) on behalf of the Nation.

10. In addition the Royal Navy has three mutually supporting core roles: **Warfighting, Maritime Security** and **International Engagement**. Royal Navy warships are **mobile UK sovereign territory** with the ability to flex across all three roles. These roles are not just options for the employment of maritime power; instead they are interdependent in scope and will often be conducted concurrently. The unique characteristics of the maritime environment enable swift, low profile military deployment, sustained presence and the ability to switch rapidly between military, diplomatic and humanitarian tasking.

11. The 3 core roles of the Royal Navy are:

- **Warfighting.** When the diplomatic and economic levers of power are unable to protect our vital national interests the military provides Government with the means to threaten or use force. The successful ability to **project** military power is directly dependent on access and the capacity for destruction that underpins coercion, deterrence and intervention. Therefore, as the Nation's professional experts in maritime defence and security, the fundamental role of the Royal Navy is warfighting at sea and from the sea in support of national objectives. By providing assured and operationally versatile warfighting capabilities the Royal Navy is able to fight either

independently or as part of a joint or multi-national integrated force.

- **Maritime Security.** Providing security in the maritime domain is required to **protect** UK citizens, territory, and trade from terrorists, criminals, piracy, state sponsored insurgents and unlawful restrictions on freedom of navigation. This responsibility covers the UK's territorial waters, 14 Overseas Territories, 3 Crown Dependencies and trade on the high seas. In an interconnected world maritime security is vital to the UK's economic prosperity. The Royal Navy delivers maritime security through a deployed presence focussed on those areas of the world where the UK's national interests are significant and vulnerable. Maximum effect is achieved by taking a preventative approach, leading and working with partner Navies. This requires command and control and sufficient platforms which have the capability to conduct maritime interdiction operations whilst remaining self sustaining, resilient and interoperable with other nations.
- **International Engagement.** The unique access provided by the maritime environment gives the Royal Navy unique opportunities to **promote** UK interests. Persistent maritime presence develops trust and stable relationships between states, reassures allies and develops strategic understanding. Direct engagement assists in security sector reform, the building of a partner nation's maritime and security capacity, the rescue of UK nationals from a crisis zone and delivery of humanitarian aid and disaster relief. Engagement is a powerful tool in delivering longer term conflict prevention in support of a cross Government approach.

THE ROYAL NAVY'S 3 CORE ROLES

WARFIGHTING

Conduct, or be ready to conduct, warfighting at sea and from the sea.

MARITIME SECURITY

Protect the free, safe and lawful use of the sea where it is vital to UK prosperity and security.

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Promote UK interests by developing international partnerships.



WHAT THE ROYAL NAVY WILL BE THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS

A navy founded on quality people.

An operationally versatile navy, capable of contributing to diplomatic, humanitarian and military operations at sea, on land and in the air.

An interoperable navy, able to operate with the Army, RAF, Government agencies and international allies.

A deployed navy, constantly working to promote and protect the UK's national interests.

An information oriented navy, ready to use information as a weapon and tool.

An agile, learning navy, able to swiftly update its doctrine, concepts, tactics and training to keep pace with a changing world.

A navy of sufficient size to fulfil its commitments, with a Fleet of effective ships, submarines and aircraft scaled at a suitable level to meet government policy objectives.



12. The following distinctive characteristics define what the Royal Navy is and will be; they are to be used as direction for those planning, developing and delivering current and future capabilities. To excel across all the roles the Royal Navy will continue to be a fighting force that is:

- Built on a foundation of **quality people** with the highest standards and values who are trained and educated to maintain the fighting edge; able to operate in and from the sea with a strong team ethos, cohesion and identity. The sailors and marines of the Naval Service are unique in their ability to adapt to a wide range of operational roles at sea, on land and in the air. It is people, supported by strong leadership at every level, who will deliver the battle winning advantage; as such the Royal Navy remains dedicated to keeping people at the heart of its strategic planning.
- An **operationally versatile** navy capable of contributing to all operations at sea, on land, in the air and across the seams of those

environments as an integral part of a Joint force. Flexible, multi-role units at high readiness will be used to achieve military effect at home and overseas as part of Britain's forward defence. Working as single units, or in a task group construct, the Royal Navy will provide early and persistent presence and offer political options and strategic choice throughout all stages of a crisis; including diplomatic, humanitarian and military tasking. When required, the Royal Navy will take the lead where land based access, basing and over flight permissions are not assured or where a footprint on land is not acceptable.

- An **interoperable** navy, able to operate with our sister services, allies, international partners and other Government agencies and departments. Crucial to achieving this will be our continued commitment to alliance and coalition partnerships to ensure that the Nation's broader interests are protected. Specifically, the Royal Navy will reinforce our pre-eminent security and defence relationship with the United States whilst intensifying the partnership with France.



- A **deployed** navy, not just an insurance policy but working constantly to promote and protect the UK's national interests by concentrating effort on the highest priority geographical areas; a visible symbol of Britain's role in the world. A navy which has an enduring presence at home and at distance from the UK for influence, the maintenance of stability and deepening trust and understanding. Surges in maritime power will be conducted by a multi-role, scalable Task Group whose objectives will be to reassure, deter and, if necessary, coerce and intervene.
- An **information-oriented** navy. Technological innovation will continue to be important in the provision of all maritime capabilities. In addition to investing in ships and aircraft the Royal Navy will embrace emerging information and surveillance technologies and improve our expertise at using information as a tool and a weapon. Understanding the information and the cyber domains will complement the cultural situational awareness gained by being forward deployed.
- An **agile** navy. An organisation that continues to learn, exploits current operational knowledge to develop future requirements and can react swiftly to the changing demands of an uncertain world. Relevant doctrine, training and world class equipment will ensure the Royal Navy's continues to enhance its strategic utility. Fighting capabilities must continue to be underpinned by strong relationships with Defence partners enabling effective, value for money basing and support.
- A **navy of sufficient size to fulfil its commitments**, able to conduct the broad range of maritime defence and security tasking mandated by government policy. Successfully delivering these tasks requires a wide spectrum of capabilities provided by a Fleet of effective ships, submarines and aircraft scaled at a suitable level.



MOVING FORWARD THE CHALLENGE

13. The Government has made it clear that dealing with the UK's economic deficit is one of its top priorities. In this respect Defence must play its part in bringing the Nation's finances back into balance. Therefore, the Royal Navy will be required to deliver operational success whilst Defence is undergoing a period of change. To meet this challenge the Royal Navy must drive forward and refresh its maritime doctrine, concepts, force generation and force development; keeping continuous improvement at the heart of its culture. In support of the front line, affordable structures that work for the Royal Navy and Defence are to be developed – establishing Centres of Specialisation and streamlining personnel structures are examples of this approach.



DELIVERY OF THIS VISION

14. Detailed guidance to deliver the Future Navy of 2025 is contained within the Navy Command Plan. In summary, in addition to maintaining CASD, the Royal Navy will deliver its three core roles by: fulfilling its maritime standing commitments⁴, conducting maritime operations⁵ and projecting influence and responding to emerging crisis with a Response Force Task Group (RFTG). All these activities will be underpinned by a credible combat capability. The roles of maritime security and international engagement will be enhanced by continuing to develop a cross government approach, offering international leadership and working with allies and partners to gain understanding, regional insight and trust.

15. In terms of capability development a key waypoint is Future Force 2020, details of which are described in the Naval Forces section of SDSR⁶.

Of note, from now through **to 2020** the RFTG will achieve its full strength and be capable of landing and sustaining a Commando Group ashore with associated maritime force protection, operational support shipping and enablers. By **2020** and into **2025** the Royal Navy will build on existing capabilities with the introduction of new Wildcat and Merlin Helicopters, the Queen Elizabeth Class carriers and the Joint Strike Fighter. These last two capabilities will deliver Carrier Strike as part of Carrier Enabled Power Projection (CEPP). To replace ageing platforms the Royal Navy will be preparing for Trident successor, introduction of the Type 26 Global Combat Ship, new multi role minewarfare, hydrography, offshore patrol vessels, Fleet Tankers and Support ships.

16. In support of these front line forces the Royal Navy will have: implemented the key recommendations

Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carrier.



⁴For example: in home waters, the Falklands and Caribbean.

⁵For example: in the Gulf region.

⁶Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review CM 7948 dated October 2010 – page 21.

from Defence Reform, optimised its infrastructure, reduced naval personnel numbers to c.29,000 and

implemented a New Employment Model for service personnel operating within a Whole Force Concept.



An artist impression of the Type 26 Global Combat Ship reference design.



The Maritime Afloat Reach and Sustainability (MARS) programme will introduce a new series of modern vessels commencing with fleet replenishment tankers from 2016.

SUMMARY

17. This document provides high level strategic direction for the development of the Royal Navy. In order to meet the NSS objectives of ensuring a secure and resilient UK and helping to shape a stable world the Royal Navy must project maritime power to protect and promote our nation's interests. The strategic ways to achieve this end state have been defined by the roles and distinctive characteristics required from the Future Navy. More detail, including

a description of the means to implement the ways, is contained in the Navy Command Plan which provides a clear line of sight from today, through tomorrow, to 2025. Importantly this direction is an integral part of the MOD's Strategy for Defence and is therefore a pragmatic, policy compliant and above all achievable head mark for the future. Everyone in the Royal Navy has a part to play in its delivery.







As an island nation, our security and prosperity directly stems from our ability to access the sea. This is why the Royal Navy's ability to apply maritime power will continue to have such value in meeting the UK's defence and security needs. In an age of uncertainty the Royal Navy must remain ready to respond to emerging international crises and working with our sister services and alongside allies and partners, provide an enduring maritime presence where our national interests are vulnerable.