

## Written evidence submitted by Mr London

### Opening Comments.

*The question surrounding procurement (armoured vehicles) has been problematic for decades & its resolution cannot be achieved without pragmatic reform. The Government, with cross-party effort, has to determine what the nation requires of her Armed Forces (AF) within the particular context of a long-term foreign policy; it is impossible to create anything of value with an insufficiency of funding & materiel. Army manpower & suitable systems are well below a critical mass when measured against the aspirations of SDSR 15, thus an Armoured Division is unrealistic. NATO, EU, Op BARKHANE, UN, routine training & work programmes are diverse commitments but necessary for effective & capable AF. Calls to support civil authorities & the FCO occur with limited forewarning.*

*The AF have a deep funding crisis, especially for big-ticket items: RN carriers; F35 programme; Type 45 resilience; submarines; MPA programme; replacement/upgrade of war-fighting systems. Legacy systems were neglected for decades, whilst the focus was on the extended campaigns in Iraq & Afghanistan; UORs were needed to cope with critical shortfalls in personal equipment & systems necessary for the topography, climate & style of campaign. The many decades of operational experience have rarely translated into effective reviews to match aspirations & funding.*

Does the Army have a clear understanding of how it will employ its armoured vehicles in future operations? *Any deployment is slow without a sufficiency of logistical assets to support the armoured force, which is aggravated by weight factors. There is a long-held presumption that legacy systems need to be replaced like-for-like with a European focus. Since the 90's, the European road/rail networks have deteriorated below the former NATO standards, & the AF deployments were beyond the anticipated NATO region.*

Given the delays to its programmes, will the Army be able to field the Strike Brigade and an armoured division as envisaged by the 2015 SDSR? *Pronounced geopolitical changes have occurred since 2015, with budgetary priorities eviscerating the Army's aspirations. Russian coercion & military action in NATO's area of interest has re-focused military requirements but, with broader national issues at play, SDSR aspirations are doomed to failure.*

How much has the Army spent on procuring armoured vehicles over the last 20 years? How many vehicles has it procured with this funding? *UORs for the Iraq/Afghanistan campaigns were operationally specific to make-good chronic deficiencies. SDR 97 precepts did not anticipate extended campaigns before implementation. The Iraq/Afghanistan campaigns were not effectively funded to cope with the extended commitments, & the AF were required to maintain their routine commitments whilst annual savings/efficiency measures were demanded by the Treasury.*

What other capabilities has the Army sacrificed in order to fund overruns in its core armoured vehicles' programmes? *Too much was sacrificed to fight the Iraq/Afghanistan campaigns, removing any ability to achieve SDSR aspirations. The dichotomy is that the AF are not a fire & rescue service equipped to deal with pre-determined local scenarios. Politicians rarely consider/realise the long-term implications of decisions, often through lack of personal experience; blame is easy to apportion, whereas an appreciation & understanding of effects is all too easily ignored.*

How flexible can the Army be in adapting its current armoured vehicle plans to the results of the Integrated Review? *This pre-supposes a known outcome to the Review. Without a clear long-term foreign policy concept, the AF can only focus on the latest Review or political direction. Each new deployment accelerates equipment erosion & is worsened by extreme climate, local conditions & the adversary. Annual funding only matches known knowns.*

By 2025, will the Army be able to match the potential threat posed by adversaries? *This pre-supposes the Review's outcome is known, & the AF being given the opportunity to plan & prepare accordingly. Based on experience, the evolving geopolitical situation & an increasingly harsh financial set of circumstances - No! For over 20 years aspirations have never matched AF manning, capabilities & funding.*

Is the Army still confident that the Warrior CSP can deliver an effective vehicle for the foreseeable future? *It would be sensible to retain proven capabilities until the Review has concluded. Whole-life costs are false assumptions taking no account of equipment loss or unforeseen damage; total losses remove a whole-life cost.*

To what extent does poor contractor performance explain the delays to the Warrior and Ajax programmes? *AF contract design has ponderous layers of influence & liable to adjustment, generating further cost & delay.*

Should the UK have a land vehicles' industrial strategy and if so, what benefits would this bring? *Another industrial strategy would not change today for tomorrow but add costs & delay. Re-generating a home-grown industrial base would be prudent &, if fused with national needs & export potential, real value could be attained e.g. off-road vehicles would complement emergency service capabilities, reducing the need for AF assistance to civil authorities.*

What sovereign capability for the design and production of armoured vehicles does the UK retain? *There is an over-reliance on foreign industry with pronounced implication to cost & guaranteed availability. Others cannot provide guarantees of delivery, this has been evident when UK operations were considered politically unacceptable.*

Does it make sense to upgrade the Challenger 2 when newer, more capable vehicles may be available from our NATO allies? *CR2 is highly capable. The Army has an insufficiency of logistics/maintenance to support current systems. By retaining an armoured capability there must be a sufficiency of support: there is not.*

What other key gaps are emerging within the Army's armoured vehicle capability? *Agility, deployability, potency & availability. The Army is at a comparable horse-tank debate (post WWI). Future systems should be focused on unmanned aviation/ISTAR/anti-armour/artillery capacity to generate power with agility. Without significant & new funding, 'going light but potent' seems to be the only reasonable choice, though unpopular with allies.*

Has the Army learned from previous failures such as FRES to ensure new vehicles are acquired effectively? *A systemic procurement failure has developed over decades, without any clear political consensus to long-term ForDefSy planning; the failures have transcended the MoD, civil service & ministers.*

#### Focused Comments.

*This inquiry is considering the Army's procurement problems; until the Review has concluded, procurement decisions should be postponed. There is need for a systemic review to re-focus the UK's geopolitical needs to match an increasingly complex & disorderly world; a submission to the Integrated Review elaborates on this point. The key question to be resolved is - what does Government require of the AF in the coming decades? The AF do not have an effective global capability, more so when other Departments absorb increasing amounts of taxpayer's money. The ongoing inter-Service rivalry needs to be resolved. MoD funds tilt towards ambitious gold-plated projects, leaving crumbs for others to best use. The Integrated Review has a value, only if focused on a long-term well-funded vision, that fuses Government effort & cross-party support.*

#### Strategic requirements to focus, define & match needs against capabilities.

**Primary.** UK (& BOT), 5 Eyes (5E) & NATO. *Generate a Coastal Force with the amalgamation of Coastguard, Customs, Border Force, police with RN patrol vessels: aviation overwatch (initially from training units). Corvettes/airships/drones procured to create a capable GIUK Gap/EEZ & BOT capability - additional funding (2021) EU funds.*

**Secondary.** *Indo-Pacific region to enhance AUSCANZUK with periodic deployments; joint procurement/production & maintenance capabilities to generate overseas sales.*

ForDefSy-AF Reforms. *Refocus, review, reform capabilities to generate agility, deployability & potency with unity of effort.*

**Space, cyber & intelligence capacity.** *5E focus on CRINK (China, Russia, Iran, N. Korea).*

**MoD budget.** *Progress to 3% of GDP/minimum budget based on pre-Covid era.*

**Army & RM.** *Transform structures to generate Combat Regiments  $\geq 2000$ , Col command - each to be powerful, self-sufficient, agile, with powerful follow-on capabilities: strategic-air deployed forces with maritime support.*

**Refocus aviation.** *Space/AD/strategic aviation (RAF). Helicopters/crews (Army/RM - RFC). FGA & MPA (RN).*

**Personnel.** *Remove ageism: open to full retirement & use experience, qualification & competences to seed technical/specialist/Coastal Force capabilities. Simplify structures & ranks/reduce starred ranks.*

**Logistics.** *Just-enough-just-in-time fails - especially at critical moments; generate/fuse/enhance home & external markets.*

**Procurement.** *Fuse whole Government procurement effort.*

**Logistics/support.** *Regenerate military hospitals (NHS hospital expansion); expand aero-medical evacuation to provide AF sufficiency & FCO availability to BOT/other emergencies (Aid/EU/NHS £)*

28 August 2020