

Written Evidence from the Human Security Centre

Background

The Human Security Centre (HSC) is an international, independent, not-for-profit foreign policy think-tank based in London. The HSC adopts and promotes the concept of human security as a central pillar of foreign policy in the twenty-first century. We submit this evidence in view of our experience of engagement with UK foreign and defence policy.

The evidence author, Dr Rowan Allport, is an HSC Deputy Director who leads the organisation's Security and Defence team. He has written extensively on UK and global defence matters.

This submission will seek to address the questions raised in Part 1 of the inquiry's terms of reference – *What is the UK's ambition for the Navy's role over the next 20 years?*

Executive Summary

- The UK will continue to face 'traditional' naval challenges including competitor states' submarines, anti-ship missiles launched from sea, land and air, and naval mines, as well as lower-level challenges including piracy.
- Emerging threats include a greatly enhanced ability of hostile forces to strike vessels in port, both in the UK and at forward operating bases, utilising precision strike systems including cruise missiles and uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs).
- Threats to seabed assets include not only data cables, but also the gas import pipelines and electricity interconnectors on which the UK depends.
- New technology is enhancing the ability of hostile actors to track Royal Navy and allied vessels on and below the surface using space, air, land and sea-based sensors.
- Technological developments ranging from UAVs to additive manufacturing are increasing the already substantial advantage an attacker holds relative to the defender.

- The UK's opponents enjoy an ever-broadening array of attack options both above and below the warfighting threshold as a result of information, technology and communications advances.
- Falling barriers to entry for the development and acquisition of capabilities ranging from precision conventional strike systems to biological weapons will make hostile state and non-state actors more capable than ever.
- The UK must begin to consider how it might take forward its maritime priorities should US losses and post-war requirements resulting from a conflict with China limit Washington's ability to project power globally for an extended period.
- The Royal Navy has a broad array of standing commitments and commitments to NATO.
- The UK's pivot to the Indo-Pacific is modest, with the NATO region remaining the maritime priority.
- Addressing the threats the Royal Navy faces will require a combination of traditional platforms fitted with contemporary technology, and new systems – many of the latter will be uncrewed.
- Cooperation with allies serves to enhance the UK's influence but is also necessary to cover capability gaps and shortfalls in mass.

Question 1: What naval threats is the UK likely to face and what standing commitments, including for NATO and UK Overseas Territories, does the government intend the Navy to undertake? In particular, what is the implication of a tilt to the Indo-Pacific?

Threats

1. It is of limited utility to classify any group of challenges the UK's security will face over the next decade as 'naval threats' in the pure sense of the term. Instead, there will be cross-domain threats encompassing some or all of the five domains (air, land, sea, cyber and space) that may have a naval component and/or implications for the naval realm.

2. While 'classic' navy-on-navy engagements are a possibility – for example, the use of surface ships to destroy hostile submarines, such actions would integrate the remaining four realms in support. For example, a hostile naval force seeking influence or control in an area of UK and allied interest may be supported by air (e.g., via maritime patrol aircraft and helicopters), land (e.g., via coastal anti-ship cruise and ballistic missiles), space (with satellites providing communications and targeting data) and cyber (e.g., through disrupting opposition command and logistic systems and gathering intelligence) assets. While naval platforms retain a political and emotional symbolism, they are – now more than ever – part of an integrated force.
3. The UK is likely to face a series of critical naval threats over the next 20 years.
 - a. *Traditional challenges.* UK forces are well-versed in the threat such as those posed by submarines, mines and air-attack – including by anti-ship missiles – as a result of experiences during the 20th Century. The challenges posed by new generation submarines – particularly of Russian design – is clear, particularly in the critical North Atlantic and the High North/Arctic region. Sea denial efforts using mines have manifested in post-Cold War conflicts in Iraq, Libya and Yemen, and dozens of states from great powers downwards retain stockpiles. Anti-ship missiles ranging from early Cold War weapons to hypersonic cruise missiles and anti-ship ballistic missiles continue to proliferate. Competitor states will utilise sea-based strike systems and amphibious capabilities to influence events ashore in regions of interest to the UK. All of these threats will challenge not only UK and allied forces but also the free use of the global common by merchant shipping. Managing these challenges must be accomplished alongside non-warfighting missions including humanitarian support, counter-narcotics, counter-piracy and efforts to prevent illegal fishing.
 - b. *Strikes against the homeland and naval facilities.* After decades of relative security away from main operating areas (with terrorist attacks as the primary concern), it is no longer possible to be confident of the safety of either the UK homeland in general or naval assets in port specifically. The UK is within range of Russian conventional precision strike systems such as the 3M14-Kalibr ship/submarine-launched cruise missile and Kh-101 air-launched cruise missile which could be used to target ships and submarines at locations such as HMNB

Clyde, HMNB Devonport and HMNB Portsmouth, including Trident-carrying vessels. Missiles¹ and uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs) can be deployed from hostile ships disguised as commercial vessels offshore or land-based units, with even small UAVs able to inflict ‘mission kills’ on ships in harbour by striking vulnerable but difficult to repair components of the ship such as radar emitters.² In the near future, uncrewed underwater vehicles (UUVs) could also be utilised to penetrate harbours for reconnaissance and attack purposes. Conventionally-armed cruise and ballistic missiles threaten Royal Navy forward operating locations such as HMS Jufair in Bahrain and the British Defence Singapore Support Unit.

- c. *Surface Surveillance.* The ability of an adversary to keep track of – and therefore target – surface assets continuously through the use of military and civilian systems including aircraft, surface ships, submarines, UAVs, uncrewed surface vessels (USVs), uncrewed underwater vehicles (UUVs), seabed sensors, land-based radar (including over-the-horizon systems) and satellite imagery (including through the use of synthetic aperture radar) is increasing rapidly. Notably, China is incorporating such systems into a wider reconnaissance-strike complex designed to defeat US and allied forces.³
- d. *Subsurface surveillance.* The ability of peer and near-peer adversaries to track submarines is also likely to increase over the next two decades – particularly if both truly autonomous UUVs become available in large numbers and it becomes possible to exploit quantum technology to track vessels underwater.⁴ This and similar efforts could threaten the viability of the UK’s nuclear deterrent.
- e. *Seabed Infrastructure tampering.* The recent Integrated Review and Defence Command Paper committed the UK to build a Multi-Role Ocean Surveillance

¹ Scott, M. (2010) ‘Deadly new Russian weapon hides in shipping container’. Reuters, 26 April [Online]. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-weapon-idUSTRE63P2XB20100426> [Accessed 30 May 2021].

² Sherbinin, A and Kuzma, R (2020) ‘How Drones Could Mission Kill a U.S. Destroyer’. *Proceedings*, US Naval Institute, May 2020 [Online]. Available at: <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2020/may/how-drones-could-mission-kill-us-destroyer> [Accessed 30 May 2021].

³ Kaushal, S. and Markiewicz, M. ‘Crossing the River by Feeling the Stones: The Trajectory of China’s Maritime Transformation’. RUSI Occasional Papers, October 2019, pp.43-45 [Online]. Available at: https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/20191014_crossing_the_river_by_feeling_the_stones_web.pdf [Accessed 30 May 2021].

⁴ Hambling, D. (2017) ‘China's quantum submarine detector could seal South China Sea’. *New Scientist*, 22 August [Online]. Available at: <https://www.newscientist.com/article/2144721-chinas-quantum-submarine-detector-could-seal-south-china-sea/> [Accessed 30 May 2021].

Ship to, amongst other tasks, support the protection of critical national infrastructure at sea. Recent years has seen considerable attention given to the threat Russian submarines pose to undersea data cables.⁵ To this must be added gas pipelines and electricity interconnectors. The UK is dependent on gas imports from Norway, with the country providing 60% of Britain's supplies.⁶ The UK imports over 8% of its electricity via undersea cables.⁷ While Russia currently only has a small number of submarines and surface vessels capable of interfering with these links, Moscow's options are likely to broaden considerably as it acquires smaller, cheaper, more numerous and harder to detect UUVs.

- f. *An accelerating 'attackers' advantage' against surface ships.* At present, systems including UAVs and anti-ship missiles are generally more economical to deploy than the systems required to counter them – a reality which results in a 'cost-exchange ratio' which favours the attacker. Royal Navy surface ships – both current and planned – have been noted as lacking the 'magazine depth' (i.e. the number of 'shots' the ship is capable of firing) to deal with persistent attacks via the use of defensive missiles such as Sea Viper and Sea Ceptor. Currently, the UK lacks any anti-ballistic missile capability. There is also extremely limited scope for UK platform losses for both military and political reasons.⁸ This situation is unlikely to be reversed unless and until technologies including effective direct energy weapons (partially negating the issue of limited missile numbers) and economical, mass-produced uncrewed (and so to some extent expendable) systems are available at scale. Neither is likely before 2030 – and possibly not within a 20-year time horizon.
- g. *Broadening threats that will increase the number of 'points of failure' relevant to the naval realm.* As already noted, homeland and forward operating bases are vulnerable to attack by both complex weapons and less sophisticated systems which leverage commercial-grade technology, as well as cyber-attacks and other

⁵ 'Russia a 'risk' to undersea cables, defence chief warns' (2017). BBC News, 17 December [Online]. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-42362500> [Accessed 30 May 2021].

⁶ 'Energy and marine resources' (2021) Royal Norwegian Embassy in London [Online]. Available at: <https://www.norway.no/en/uk/values-priorities/energy-marine-res/> [Accessed 30 May 2021].

⁷ 'Record-breaking 2020 becomes greenest year for Britain's electricity' (2021) National Grid ESO, 11 January [Online]. Available at: <https://www.nationalgrideso.com/news/record-breaking-2020-becomes-greenest-year-britains-electricity> [Accessed 30 May 2021].

⁸ The UK lost two destroyers, two frigates, a landing ship, a landing craft and a civilian transport ship during the Falklands War, with many other ships damaged. Similar destroyer/frigate losses today would represent a loss of almost a quarter of the escort fleet.

non-kinetic approaches. Additionally, anti-satellite weapons and cyber-attacks threaten to disrupt UK and allied space-based communication and surveillance capabilities. A recent exercise undertaken by US forces in the Pacific featured the People’s Republic of China initiating a biological attack designed to disrupt the operations of US ships and bases in the region.⁹ National infrastructure may also be targeted, hampering a war effort materially, politically and psychologically.

- h. *Proxy actors.* Commercial entities – for example, private port operators acting as proxies for nation-states – may seek to hamper allied maritime operations by supplying intelligence to hostile actors (e.g., Chinese law makes it mandatory for Chinese firms to cooperate with state intelligence) and/or denying access to support facilities either directly or through pressuring host states.¹⁰ Armed proxies, perhaps operating under the guise of a differing motive to their sponsors, may provide more aggressive but still deniable avenues to exert influence.
- i. *Political warfare.* The majority of adversaries will seek to ‘win without fighting’, and in doing so look to keep aggression below that which will trigger a warfighting response. This will entail the use of power to undermine the UK’s economic, diplomatic, political and social resilience and cohesion. Traditional media, alternative media and social media all provide outlets for information warfare operations targeting allied forces – including naval forces – and the wider population. Social media also allows for the collection of data from individuals and the targeting of personnel and their families with customised propaganda. This will aim to undermine morale, promote division and ultimately craft a narrative favourable to its author’s goals.
- j. *Falling barriers to entry for key capabilities.*
 - Moderately industrialised nations such as Iran are now able to indigenously develop, manufacture and deploy capabilities of a quality and scale that can threaten a major power. The September 2019 Iranian attack on a Saudi oil refinery featured domestically developed cruise missiles and

⁹ Kitfield, J. (2021) ‘We’re going to lose fast’: U.S. Air Force held a war game that started with a Chinese biological attack’. Yahoo News, 10 March [Online]. Available at: <https://news.yahoo.com/were-going-to-lose-fast-us-air-force-held-a-war-game-that-started-with-a-chinese-biological-attack-170003936.html> [Accessed 30 May 2021].

¹⁰ Tanner, M.S.(2017) ‘Beijing’s New National Intelligence Law: From Defense to Offense’. Lawfare, 20 July [Online]. Available at: <https://www.lawfareblog.com/beijings-new-national-intelligence-law-defense-offense> [Accessed 30 May 2021].

UAVs,¹¹ and the January 2020 Iranian strike on US forces in Iraq included precision-guided ballistic missiles.¹² Such capabilities will impact the naval realm in the context of both vessels at sea and their forward support bases.

- Such systems are increasingly available to non-state actors. Iran has already transferred anti-ship missiles, other missile types and UAVs to both Hezbollah in Lebanon¹³ and to Houthi rebels, with multiple vessels being disabled as a result.¹⁴ The ease with which such systems can be manufactured – including in large quantities – by both state and non-state actors will only accelerate as additive manufacturing and other dual-use technologies proliferates.¹⁵ Countering proliferation will prove challenging.
- This trend extends to space-based sensor capabilities that have naval applications, with cubesats and low-cost launch systems allowing non-peer competitors access to capabilities that were previously the realm of the great powers. Even where these are not available to a hostile actor directly, it would be easy for them to receive such data from allies (and far less likely to leave a trail than regular weapons transfer) or acquire from a commercial source.
- Cyber warfare already has a low barrier to entry. Going forward, it is likely that commercial technology will increase the accessibility of other weapons of mass effect. Notably, CRISPR gene-editing technology presents new avenues for the creation of biological weapons;¹⁶ and laser uranium enrichment may provide a new pathway to nuclear weapons.¹⁷

¹¹ ‘Saudi Arabia oil attacks: Weapons debris ‘proves Iran behind them’ (2019). BBC News, 18 September [Online]. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-49746645> [Accessed 20 May 2021].

¹² Trevithick, J. (2021) ‘Everything New We Just Learned About The 2020 Iranian Missile Attack On U.S. Forces In Iraq’. The Drive, 1 March [Online]. Available at: <https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/39527/everything-new-we-just-learned-about-the-iranian-missile-attack-on-al-asad-air-base> [Accessed 30 May 2021].

¹³ Brown, M. and Simkin, M. (2006). ‘Hezbollah missile hits Israeli warship’. ABC Australia, 14 July [Online]. Available at: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2006-07-15/hezbollah-missile-hits-israeli-warship/1802124> [Accessed 30 May 2021].

¹⁴ ‘Yemen's Houthis attack Saudi ship, launch ballistic missile’. (2017) Reuters, 30 January [Online]. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-saudi-idUSKBN15E2KE> [Accessed 30 May 2021].

¹⁵ Walsh, D. (2017) ‘Additive Manufacturing: The Next Great Challenge to Missile Defence’. RUSI Nuclear Reactions blog, 24 July [Online]. Available at: <https://www.nuclearreactions.rusi.org/single-post/2017/07/24/additive-manufacturing-the-next-great-challenge-to-missile-defence> [Accessed 30 May 2021].

4. While there is any number of permutations of naval-related scenarios the UK could become involved with over the next 20 years, we would like to take this opportunity to alert the committee to the potential implications of a major conflict between the US and China – perhaps over Taiwan – for British security. It is unclear to what extent the Royal Navy would become directly involved in such a war, but there are major secondary points to consider.
 - a. Any conflict between the US and China would necessitate the transfer of much of the US naval presence in the Atlantic and other theatres to the Pacific. As such, the UK and other non-Pacific allies would likely be expected to provide ‘backfill’ to cover for their absence.
 - b. Regardless of the outcome of such a conflict, it is all but inevitable that the US would suffer heavy losses. Whether the post-conflict demands of the Pacific required the policing of a ceasefire or the US being forced to establish a new defensive perimeter after being effectively pushed out of the Western Pacific, it is highly unlikely that the US would be able to return to maritime operations in Europe or other locations around the world at scale for some years. It is therefore important that thought be given now to how the UK could take forward its maritime and wider defence priorities with only very limited US material support at sea for an extended period – perhaps as long as a decade.

Standing commitments

5. The most recent publically available full list of the standing commitments of the Royal Navy we have been able to identify dates from November 2016, and lists these undertakings as follows:¹⁸

UK and Home Waters Activity

- Continuous at Sea Deterrent (CASD)

¹⁶ Cropper, N. (2020) ‘CRISPR is Making Bioweapons More Accessible’. American Security Project, 29 April. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.americansecurityproject.org/crispr-is-making-bioweapons-more-accessible/> [Accessed 30 May 2021].

¹⁷ Snyder, R. (2016) ‘A Proliferation Assessment of Third Generation Laser Uranium Enrichment Technology, *Science & Global Security* Vol 24, no. 2 (2016): pp.68-91 [Online]. Available at: http://scienceandglobalsecurity.org/archive/2016/05/a_proliferation_assessment_of.html [Accessed 30 May 2021].

¹⁸ House of Commons Defence (2016) ‘Committee Restoring the Fleet: Naval Procurement and the National Shipbuilding Strategy’ (HC 2015-2017 221) Appendix 3 [Online]. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmdfence/221/22113.htm> [Accessed 30 May 2021].

- Fleet Ready Escort (FRE)/Towed Array Patrol Ship (TAPS)
- Marine Enforcement
- Mine Counter Measures (MCM) Support

Overseas Activity

- Antarctic Patrol
- Atlantic Patrol Tasking North
- Atlantic Patrol Tasking South
- Falkland Islands Patrol Task
- Gibraltar Squadron
- Joint Expeditionary Force (Maritime)
- Gulf
- Standing NATO Response Force (NRF)
- Royal Marines and Amphibious Capability
- Operation ATALANTA

The Royal Navy is also tasked with the continuous provision of a Carrier Strike Group, as well as the amphibious-orientated Littoral Response Group (North) operating in and around European waters, with Littoral Response Group (South) deploying in the Indo-Pacific from 2023. A pair of River-class patrol vessels are also to be deployed to the Indo-Pacific, with similar vessels already based in Gibraltar, the Caribbean and the Falkland Islands. The addition of a Multi-Role Ocean Surveillance Ship will enhance the Navy's role in protecting ocean floor infrastructure.

6. The 2021 Defence Command Paper pledges the following naval capabilities to NATO:¹⁹
 - regular naval patrolling
 - high readiness forces, including our Carrier Strike Group and Littoral Strike Forces, ready to respond to threats within 30 days
 - a nuclear deterrent declared to the defence of NATO Allies

¹⁹ Ministry of Defence (2021) 'Defence in a Competitive Age', p.28 [Online]. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974661/CP41_1_-_Defence_Command_Plan.pdf [Accessed 30 May 2021].

- a suite of high readiness warfighting capabilities aligned with our commitments to the NATO Readiness Initiative and NATO Defence Planning Process

The Indo-Pacific tilt

7. It is acknowledged that the UK's 'tilt' towards the Indo-Pacific will be limited, with the Integrated review noting that "The precondition for Global Britain is the safety of our citizens at home and the security of the Euro-Atlantic region, where the bulk of the UK's security focus will remain". This sits beside an acknowledgement that "Russia will remain the most acute direct threat to the UK".²⁰
8. The naval assets the UK has and plans to commit to the Indo-Pacific permanently do not represent the core of the Royal Navy's capabilities. While useful for persistent engagement and forward presence missions and lower intensity operations, neither the two River-class vessels about to be sent to the region nor their planned Type 31 replacements are 'high-end' vessels with significant independent warfighting capabilities. The Bay-class landing ship that will lead the planned Littoral Response Group (South) can be described similarly, although it may be accompanied by capable escort ships. Instances of deploying major task groups such as the current Carrier Strike Group 21 to the Indo-Pacific will remain infrequent. It should be noted that the deployment of carrier groups to the region is not a relic of the Empire: the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s saw the deployment of such task groups East of Suez, with 1997's Exercise Ocean Wave – led by the carrier HMS *Illustrious* – described as seeking to demonstrate:

*"the UK's continued commitment to the Asia-Pacific region after the handover of Hong Kong. It underlines our interest in promoting regional peace and stability, protecting the freedom of international trade, and supporting co-operation and joint working between military forces in the Asia-Pacific region."*²¹

²⁰ HM Government (2021) 'Global Britain in a Competitive Age', p.14 and p.26 [Online]. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/975077/Global_Britain_in_a_Competitive_Age_the_Integrated_Review_of_Security_Defence_Development_and_Foreign_Policy.pdf [Accessed 30 May 2021].

²¹ HC Deb 24 February 1997 vol 291 cc102-5W [Online]. Available at: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1997/feb/24/ocean-wave-97> [Accessed 30 May 2021].

9. The core of the UK's maritime power will remain in Europe as part of Britain's homeland defence and NATO commitments. Providing current shipbuilding plans remain on target, the limited increase in the permanent Indo-Pacific presence should not have a significant impact on current Royal Navy standing tasks.

Question 2: What naval forces (vessels, capabilities and bases) are required to combat these threats and to deliver these standing commitments? What are the implications of cooperation with vessels from allied nations, for example allied vessels participating in carrier strike groups?

Forces required

10. The forces required to combat the threats and meet the standing commitments include the following.
- a. *Legacy capabilities enhanced with contemporary technology:* Despite claims of a transition from the industrial to the digital age, the requirement for platforms that a sailor from a century ago might recognise will not be disappearing over the next two decades. However, there will be enhanced by a digital backbone that will enable the whole to become greater than the sum of its parts via cross-domain operations. At present, the higher-end Royal Navy capabilities include aircraft carriers (Queen Elizabeth Class), anti-submarine warfare frigates (Type 23 with towed array sonar), anti-air warfare destroyers (Type 45), attack submarines (Trafalgar and Astute-class) and ballistic-missile submarines (Vanguard-class). Plans in train to sustain surface-ships focused on anti-submarine warfare (Type 26 frigates) and anti-air warfare (Type 83 destroyers),²² attack submarines (SSN(R)) and ballistic missile submarines (Dreadnought-class) reflect the continuing need for such platforms at the high-intensity end of the spectrum. Presence, engagement and lower-end combat capabilities are to be the domain of the Type 31 frigate which will replace the Type 23 general purpose variant frigates and the Batch 2 River Class patrol vessels in at least some of their forward-deployed roles.
 - b. *Novel capabilities and platforms:* Evolving threats will require innovation. Detection avoidance, enhanced mobility, autonomous systems and low-cost systems capable of generating mass and enduring attrition are all critical. In

²² The Type 83 remains at the concept stage, and is may have a broader tasking than the current Type 45s.

certain instances, it may be necessary to replace legacy systems. While the UK is retaining elements of its amphibious landing capability – including the Albion and Bay-class landing ships – traditional amphibious operations are likely to become increasingly challenging in the face of coastal defence systems post-2030. The planned Multi-Role Support Ship will almost certainly not feature traditional well-decks to support large landing craft, and instead will focus on the delivery of more nimble light forces by air and sea. This change is reflected by a shift within the Royal Marines towards fielding smaller forward-deployed formations. In other instances, new capabilities will likely need to act in a support role. UUVs and USVs cannot replace their crewed counterparts but can provide affordably and mass of platforms for sensors and weapons. Nevertheless, such systems must not be used as a mask to cover capability reductions. Notably, plans for the Royal Navy to replace its current mine-countermeasure (MCM) force for Hunt and Sandown-class vessels with autonomous vessels overlook that without dedicated crewed MCM vessels, they will have to be deployed either from land or – more likely in wartime – from ships such as the planned Type 32.

- c. *Secure homeland and forward operating facilities*: All naval forces require basing facilities that are broadly secure to conduct maintenance, repairs, resupply and provide leave for crewmembers. Solving the issue of the vulnerability of basing facilities from attack will require significant investment in intelligence and defensive capabilities by the UK. At a minimum, the threat from UAV swarms to critical areas of ships must be addressed. Allied forces, including the US, face similar challenges and it cannot be assumed that they will field adequate resources to support the UK.

Cooperation with allies

11. Cooperation with allies at sea is an integral part of Royal Navy operations and adds to the UK's ability to influence events. With regards to carrier strike, this approach should be seen as both a virtue and in some circumstances a necessity. With regards to the current (2021) Carrier Group deployment to the Far East, the carrier is supported by a surface escort of two Type 45 destroyers and two Type 23 frigates – a force that would be defensively adequate in most circumstances. However, the US Navy Arleigh Burke-class destroyer accompanying the group provides a ballistic missile

defence and Tomahawk missile land attack capability the Royal Navy's surface ships lack. The Royal Netherlands Navy's De Zeven Provinciën-class frigate accompanying the forces provides useful additional mass to defensive capability, with a focus on air defence.