



# THE BRITISH ARMY 2011

A BALANCE OF CAPABILITIES FOR AN UNPREDICTABLE WORLD

## THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE p11

Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP,  
Secretary of State for Defence

## TRANSFORMING THE ARMY p13

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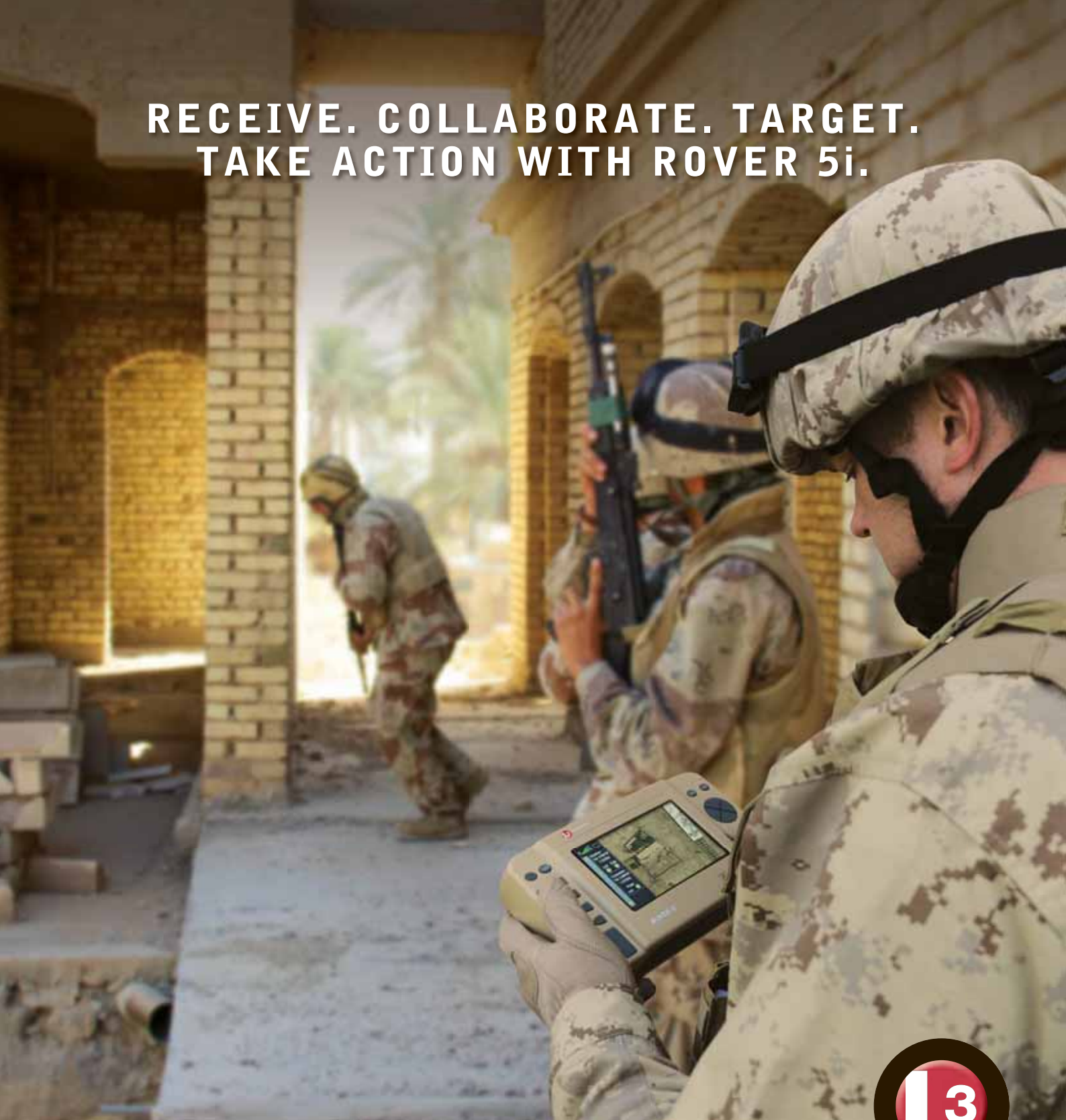
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All responsibility for errors and omissions is, of course, entirely mine.

Chris Donnelly

20 June 2011

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# THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE



**Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP,  
Secretary of State for Defence**

**M**uch has happened since the publication of the last Army Journal in November 2009.

The coalition government, now in office for more than a year, has had to take difficult decisions to deal with the economic plight of the nation. The economy is the basis of our national security, and without a strong economy we cannot have a secure United Kingdom. The first challenge facing the Ministry of Defence and the Army, therefore, is to maintain their contribution to the defence and well-being of our country at a lesser cost.

The situation in Afghanistan has improved considerably, though it continues to be a complex and demanding campaign in which our Forces are

making a tremendous contribution to the success of the international effort. Their heroic endeavours are recognised by the nation and by the international community alike. The challenge for the coming months is to be able to hand over command to stable and effective Afghan National Security Forces. I do not underestimate the magnitude of this task. It will take great determination and ingenuity, not only on the part of the Army, but of the whole government. This is a goal worthy of our utmost efforts and I am confident that this is possible by the end of 2014.

However, this is at a time when the world is becoming more, not less, volatile. The past 18 months have seen a series of unforeseen events demanding our engagement. As I write, the crisis in Libya continues to unfold. Instability is growing in Pakistan and in several other countries important to the UK's national security. It is likely that there will be further calls on our Armed Forces and we can be sure that, despite our best efforts at foresight, at least some of these situations will take us by surprise.

It is clear that, if we are to meet these demanding challenges, we have to be prepared to change. Change has been with us constantly since the end of the Cold War, but it has taken us a long time to amend our structures, procedures, and habits of thinking that developed during the Cold War years. Indeed, some of these are still with us. However, the National Security Strategy (NSS) and the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) have set us on a new path – to develop Armed Forces that are continuously adaptable, capable of meeting the nation's commitments, and of dealing with unforeseeable circumstances in a rapidly changing world; capable of exploiting opportunities for advancing our national interest, as well as protecting us against new and old threats; and capable of contributing to the health of the economy and of our changing society.

I realise that this is a tough challenge, but I am confident that it can be done. We can learn from the experience of others and from a study of past experience, but much of our effort will be pioneering. There is no single source of wisdom and knowledge. It is important that we open ourselves to ideas from our whole extended community, from inside and outside government, from industry and academia, and from all ranks within our Armed Forces.

To that end, I welcome this publication and the contribution it makes to the debate on how we should move forward to identify the Army's needs to 2020. Not everyone will agree with the ideas and opinions expressed in the essays, but they are ideas that need discussion and exploration. We stand today at the beginning of a process of change, not at the end. How well we meet this challenge will largely determine the place that our country will hold in tomorrow's world. ■

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# TRANSFORMING THE ARMY

## Meeting the demands of the 2020s



General Sir Peter Wall KCB CBE ADC Gen,  
Chief of the General Staff

The Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) has offered the British Army a transformational opportunity – one that will allow us to shape Land Forces fit for the demands of the 2020s. And transform we must; the world is becoming increasingly interconnected, complex and unpredictable and the UK requires an Army that can continue to secure the Nation's interests around the world. But in undertaking this journey, the Army must surmount a number of hurdles and challenges. We have to: take the Afghan Campaign to a militarily successful conclusion; succeed in coping with whatever the unexpected throws at us; implement the design for Future Forces 2020 while managing the inevitable financial constraints through successive planning rounds; and, above all, recruit, educate, train and retain people with the right talent and military spirit. In our history we have negotiated equivalent challenges with aplomb, so I am confident that we shall do so over the coming decade.

Afghanistan remains the UK's main effort in Defence and it is the Army's overriding preoccupation. This could not be more important to us. The 2014 timeline that has been declared in the Lisbon Summit for transition of the combat role to the Afghan security forces now gives us a very clear programming mark against which to work out what has to happen successfully between now and then. This will see us transitioning to an Afghan lead for security, and of course an Afghan lead for governance, which is already evident in many parts of that country.

The challenge of the campaign in Afghanistan is one of the few certainties that we will face in the next three or four years. Another certainty is the inevitable unpredictability of world events. In a period of economic stringency, there is a natural tendency to want to reduce the impact of uncertainty, and particularly so on the back of what some have seen as the awkward experiences of the enduring campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. The SDSR has identified some ways of achieving this: a greater focus on conflict prevention through the enhanced funding of international development; the use of soft power as an influence tool; and greater burden-sharing within alliances and coalitions. But **wars pick us – we don't pick them** – and, despite these policies, this is likely to continue. Absolute Discretion in the employment of force does not sit easily with the reality of world events.

The Arab Spring is but the most recent example of the global impact of events that we might prefer to be more localised. The National response to events such as those in Libya – the promotion of our values and our natural aversion to humanitarian crisis, oppression and potential genocide – means that, to a greater or lesser extent,

we will continue to get involved in unpredictable ways. The lessons from Libya, and wider developments in the Middle East, go much further than simply the need for specific resources on a given day to do a Non-combatant Evacuation Operation or to enforce a 'no-fly zone'. They are about unpredictability and the difficulty we in the United Kingdom face in standing back when our values are challenged and our national (and international) interests are threatened. Libya is but the latest reminder of the need for balanced capability at readiness if UK is to fulfil its aspirations around the world.

To deliver this balance, the Army has to transform from its current Afghan-centric focus to something that gives us a more versatile military capability, able to meet each new contingency. In common with a number of other Armies, we have been forced to put some aspects of our war-fighting capability on hold as we have become absorbed by the challenges in Afghanistan. As we regenerate a broader war-fighting capability and develop our future force design, we must retain the levels of sophistication we have learnt in Iraq and Afghanistan. Combined Arms Manoeuvre remains a part of our repertoire, but it has to be modernised – incorporating, for example, the cyber and space domains and geared to match hybrid adversaries.

## “We, the Army, must continue to study our profession, learning lessons from operations and from experimentation”

As we transform, we also need to adjust our thinking to a more expeditionary psyche. The nature of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have led us to adopt a post-expeditionary, campaign posture, with sophisticated garrison infrastructure such as Camp Bastion, with hard-wired facilities, ample power and sufficient bandwidth. We must become comfortable once again with the uncertainty and austerity of the early days of a new campaign and able to adapt rapidly to an emerging situation. The older generation within the Army will be familiar with this, from operations like the initial deployment to Afghanistan in 2001 or the invasion of Iraq in 2003. But the younger generation – those who are the Army's future – have been brought up since 2004 within a rather different habit.

This psychological transition will be accompanied by a change in lifestyle. In the post-Afghan era, we are likely to find ourselves focused more on contingency soldiering: based predominantly on the UK mainland, developing our ability to meet new contingencies, to deploy on a variety of tasks and operations at short notice. This will require a renewed focus on education and training, developing more capacity in the UK and using some innovative training opportunities overseas. We will want to make more effective use of simulation and synthetic environments for learning as well as training, while at the same time enhancing whole fleet management, selective use of contractors and greater use of off-the-shelf equipment appropriately amended to enable us to produce more affordable training and equipment solutions.

The emerging Whole Force Concept will see more emphasis on the use of Reserves and contractors. The Future Reserves 2020 Review will be a key element of this; the Army must build upon the experience of the last 10 years, where many of our Reserves have deployed on operations alongside Regular counterparts, in order to deliver a more usable, sustainable and fully integrated Army, with a properly resourced offer to the Territorial soldier.

We face challenges regarding our equipment. The Army currently has an excellent suite of equipment, but it is specific to the demands of Afghanistan. If we look at our core equipment programme, it is a different story. This programme has tended to be a budget regulator for the whole of Defence, as witnessed by comments in the recent National Audit Office report on the procurement of armoured systems. This is something that we and the wider MoD must address aggressively and innovatively in the next two years if we are to have an equipment programme that meets our needs into the next decade.

What of the wider resource challenge? The government has made it very clear that there is a strategic goal to restore economic balance, within which Defence must play its part. Strong defence does, after all, rely upon a strong economy. We face a budget that is reducing considerably over the early years of the coming decade, after which we will certainly require a real-terms growth in the latter part of the decade if we are to resource Future Force 2020.

The cornerstone of this transformation, and our ability to prevail in increasingly complex operations, is talented and motivated people. We must be able to attract such people; we must be able to educate them better; and we must provide sophisticated, appealing, satisfying training that is relevant. We have to sustain our peoples' inclination to volunteer and to keep volunteering. Key to this will be how we shape the Army's 'offer' to our people. We all want challenging and rewarding careers in a professional, well-equipped and highly trained organisation that is world class. We want to be in an organisation that is valued by society, attuned to the changing character of conflict and relevant to the evolving needs of the Nation and our allies. That is a big challenge. If we can deliver that we will, I am sure, have the people that we need.

This is the challenge that I see ahead as we progress down the path of transformation. I am confident that we have the professional acumen to get there, subject to a reasonable share of an appropriate Defence programme, having rounded off our military contribution to Afghanistan successfully.

At the heart of this journey will be the need to think laterally, challenge convention and deal with novel situations. We, the Army, must continue to study our profession, learning lessons from operations and from experimentation. We will continue to engage with others, actively encouraging those not bounded by a military mindset to test and contribute to our thinking. We will encourage debate. This excellent collection of essays contributes significantly in this regard. I am grateful to the editor, Chris Donnelly, for once again delivering a first-class publication that will inform a wider audience of the issues currently facing the Army, as well as stimulating and provoking our own thinking. ■

*This foreword is adapted from the opening address at the RUSI Land Warfare Conference 2011*



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# EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION



**Chris Donnelly CMG TD, Editor,  
Director of the Institute for Statecraft**

In his foreword, the Secretary of State lays great emphasis on the challenge of change that the Army faces today, change that will affect everyone involved, whatever their rank or role. The challenge he puts before us has four elements:

- to understand how the world is changing and how we can advance UK Interests within the budget constraints identified;
- to work out how the Defence and Security community can optimise its capacity for change so as to stay fit for purpose in this new, unpredictable world;
- to identify what the Army's role in this should be;
- to implement the necessary changes whilst undertaking major military campaigns.

This will not be easy, indeed it will be painful, not least because we will face the problems common to all reformers: what to retain and what to discard? Is it better to go for incremental change, or to be radical? Is it enough to try to do things *better*, or *differently*?

The Secretary of State has also made it clear that the UK is still committed to maintaining its international position. The Armed Forces must therefore:

- Continue to provide strategic reach and influence, and exploit opportunities to advance UK interests
- Protect against old and new threats
- Do all this on a much-reduced Defence Budget.

In this volume, we set out to address the implications of these contrasting, but by no means contradictory, requirements. As we are at the beginning of a process of transformation, the aim in this volume has been to identify questions, not provide answers.

In the first section, *National Security*, our essayists look at the future character of conflict, contrasting these with the traditional Principles of War, addressing changes in the governance of defence and security due to the creation of the NSC, and the consequent need to identify our national interests and improve our strategic thinking. The section closes with a reminder that we can do little without allies.

**“The transformation we must contemplate may be better described as revolutionary, rather than evolutionary”**

Section two, *Current Operations*, looks at progress in Afghanistan, reminding us of the traditional principles for Campaign success and the changing factors shifting the balance of importance between kinetic and non-kinetic operations. The importance of learning from our past and current experience is also highlighted. Other contributions look at practical and technical aspects of current and future operations, tracking developments and trends.

Section three, *Transformation*, addresses key issues of change, opening the debate on how the Army will need to transform in the wake of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) and in the light of the ongoing MoD reform programme. The changes in train affect the governance of the Forces, their organisation, manning and equipping so profoundly that the transformation we must contemplate may better be described as revolutionary rather than evolutionary – or, better still, as discontinuous evolution, rather than continuous evolution, because “revolution” has overtones of destruction, whereas this transformation must be constructive.

The final section, *Our People*, concerns itself with the Army's most important component. How the Army looks after its people, and how society in its turn supports them, is the foundation on which the transformation challenge will succeed or fail. Equally, the essayists note that the Army has a much to offer society in return – indeed it can make a significant contribution to the Prime Minister's vision of the “Big Society”. This is a factor often neglected. Soldiers do more than just fight, and the military is not just a cost to the nation. It is also a readily available and very practical tool to help solve society's problems. ■