

## **NON-CLASSIFIED**

### **UNITED KINGDOM**

The United Kingdom Armed Forces continue to experience a high operational tempo, 21.4% of regular forces were deployed on operations and other military tasks in the final quarter of 2006/7<sup>5</sup>. The UK currently has 7,800 forces serving in Afghanistan, approximately 7,000 personnel supporting Operation TELIC in Iraq and 140 forces supporting NATO in Kosovo and Bosnia. Only last year it also handed over command of EUFOR in Bosnia. A further 300 forces support the UN in Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Georgia, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Nepal. In 2006/7 some 4,500 UK personnel continued to be stationed or deployed in support of the security and defence of the UK's Overseas Territories. The UK is: a major contributor to the NATO Response Force (NRF); the Framework Nation for HQ ARRC; and a lead nation for, and major contributor, to EU Battle Groups (and is committed to contributing an EU Battle Group in 2008 and 2010).

The Army total strength at end 2006/07 was 110,530 of which approximately 24% were undertaking operations or other military tasks. Army troops deployed on operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Kosovo, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone and supported a variety of worldwide UN operations. Both Iraq and Afghanistan are, in UK terminology, medium scale operations being continually sustained.

UK land forces exceed the current NATO usability targets of 40% deployable and 8% sustainable. The reported land forces strength, including 7,500 Marines, for 2006 is 112,600, of which 74,570 (66.23%) are deployable and 26,120 (23.20%) sustainable. In the short to medium term, further adjustments to army and marine strengths will maintain similar levels of deployability and sustainability.

The Royal Navy (RN) total strength at end 2006/07 was 39,440 of which 19.7% were undertaking operations or other military tasks. The RN maintained the continuous at sea deterrent and the integrity of UK territorial waters and economic zones. It contributed to wider UK security through supporting commitments in Iraq, the Gulf, the North and South Atlantic, and to the NATO Response Force Maritime Component, and sustained the national strategic deterrent. During the deployment of 3 Commando Brigade in the second half of the year the Naval Service provided the bulk of personnel in Afghanistan. Aircraft from the Fleet Air Arm supported coalition activity in the Gulf and ISAF operations in Afghanistan.

The Royal Air Force (RAF) total strength at end 2006/7 was 45,710 of which 16.8% were undertaking operations or other military tasks. The main areas of overseas commitment for the RAF continue to be the Gulf, Afghanistan and the Balkans. The Harrier, Nimrod, Support Helicopter and Air Transport fleets in particular were heavily committed in supporting operations in Iraq and Afghanistan throughout 2007.

The UK's 2006 defence expenditure, at 2.33% of GDP, is above the 2% figure contained in 2006 Ministerial Guidance. The proportion of that expenditure planned for

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<sup>5</sup> The UK reporting year runs from April 1<sup>st</sup>.

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procurement of major equipment, 22.37% in 2006, also exceeds the NATO 20% benchmark.

For more information go to -

<http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/CorporatePublications/AnnualReports/MODAnnualReports0607/>

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