



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Overseas Territories

The Ministry of Defence's Contribution



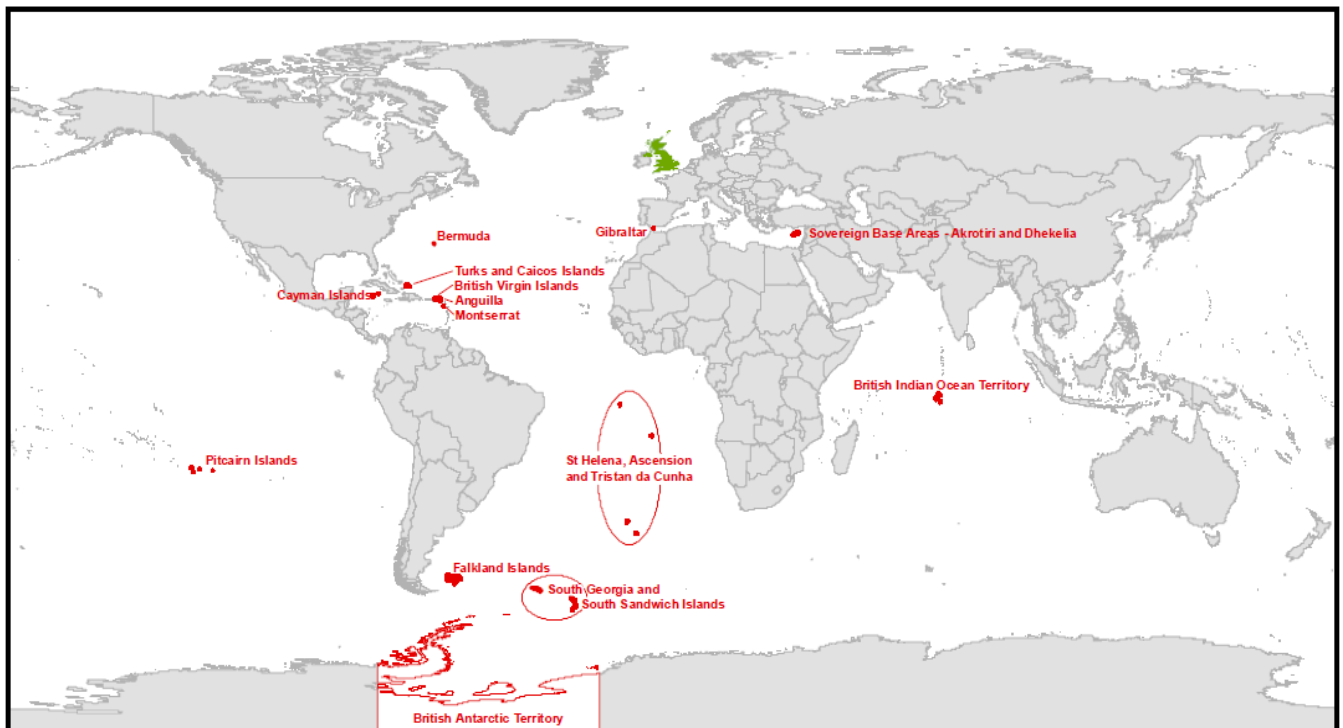
Directorate-General Security Policy

THE BRITISH OVERSEAS TERRITORIES consist of fourteen territories which fall under the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom. All the Overseas Territories have permanent resident populations of Overseas Territory citizens, except the British Indian Ocean Territory; and the British Antarctic Territory, and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, which have research stations. The Sovereign Base Areas on Cyprus have a resident population of Cypriot nationals.

The Overseas Territories (listed alphabetically) comprise:

- Anguilla
- Bermuda
- British Antarctic Territory
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- The British Virgin Islands
- The Cayman Islands
- The Falkland Islands
- Gibraltar
- Montserrat
- The Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie & Oeno Islands
- Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha (including Gough Island Dependency)
- South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
- Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs) Akrotiri and Dhekelia (on Cyprus)
- The Turks & Caicos Islands

In total, the Overseas Territories comprise almost 13,500 nautical miles (nm) of coastline and 480,000 nm² of land mass (as against 11,000 nm and nearly 72,000 nm² for the UK and Crown Dependencies). Together with their territorial seas, fishing zones and Exclusive Economic Areas, this constitutes a sizeable – but important – defence responsibility.



Map of the British Overseas Territories.

Section 1 – The Military Task

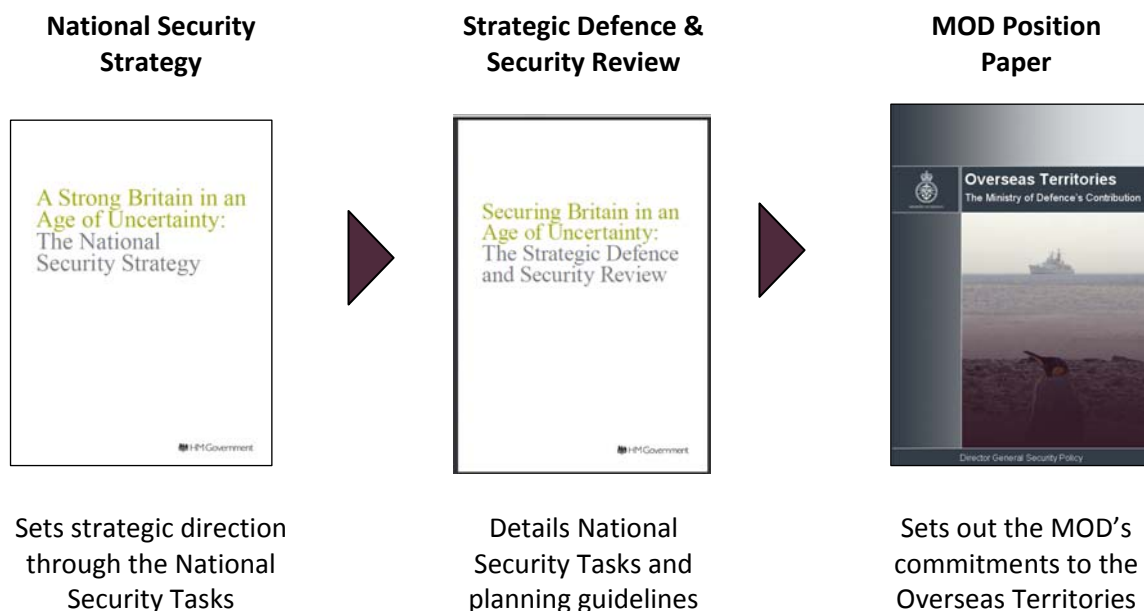
The Ministry of Defence (MOD) contribution to the Overseas Territories is expressed by means of one of our core Military Tasks:

“Defend the United Kingdom and its Overseas Territories... Providing security for the Nation and its Overseas Territories, safeguarding its citizens and their way of life remains the most important responsibility of Government and Defence.”

This Military Task contributes to the **National Security Strategy (2010)**, which sets out the UK’s strategic security objectives, ensuring a secure and resilient United Kingdom and shaping a stable world.

In order to meet these objectives, the National Security Strategy identifies eight cross-cutting National Security Tasks, including (Task 6) the protection of the Overseas Territories. The **Strategic Defence and Security Review (2010)** specifies that the UK will require an independent ability to defend the Overseas Territories militarily, and reiterates the National Security Task:

- ***Help resolve conflicts and contribute to stability. Where necessary, intervene overseas, including the legal use of coercive force in support of the UK’s vital interests, and protect our overseas territories and people.***



The Ministry of Defence prioritises National Security Task 6 as a **Standing Commitment**. This paper, ***Overseas Territories: The Ministry of Defence’s Contribution***, sets out how the MOD will deliver that commitment over the period 2012-15, in support of the National Security Strategy.

Section 2 – Context

The UK's relationship with the Overseas Territories spans a range of issues, including good governance, security and development. The MOD's specific interest is the defence, security and safety of the Overseas Territories, together with other key tasks such as Search and Rescue, and Hydrographic Surveying and Charting.

The National Security Strategy and the conclusions of the Strategic Defence and Security Review both reaffirmed the MOD's commitment to providing security for the Nation and its Overseas Territories as the most important responsibility of Government and Defence. This is reflected in Defence Policy through Military Task 3: Defending the United Kingdom and its Overseas Territories. That territory includes land territory, airspace, and maritime zones. The maritime zones of the 14 Overseas Territories amounts to some 2.3 million square miles (excluding British Antarctic Territory), and the security of these zones contributes directly to the resilience of trade and tourism, as well as enabling the Overseas Territories to exploit, or in some cases preserve, the economic potential of marine and sub-sea resources.

Our defence and security responsibilities extend to the citizens of the Overseas Territories and to their Flagged Vessels. Indeed, nine of our Overseas Territories operate shipping registers, and, as members of the Red Ensign Group¹, along with the UK, account for more than 2,600 British Flagged vessels which, at a combined gross registered

tonnage (GRT) of 46.8 million a year, are the sixth largest combined register in the world.

In support of wider economic development, Government Departments are investing heavily in the Territories that need the most assistance, including building an airport on St Helena, significant redevelopment work in Montserrat, and work to restore the principles of good governance and sound financial management to the Turks and Caicos Islands. A Joint Task Force, comprising military and civilian personnel from the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force and Royal Fleet Auxiliary, may also be deployed when required, such as that used to complete a series of complex repair tasks to the harbour of one of the world's most isolated communities, Tristan da Cunha, in February 2008.

It is important to remember that the Overseas Territories will frequently be subject to the same strategic trends as the UK mainland. In the period covered by this paper (2012-15), economic pressures will remain significant, so it will be important to ensure that our commitment to the defence and security of the Overseas Territories is delivered as cost-effectively as possible. We anticipate that our relationship with the Territories will evolve further over the years ahead. Wider Defence Engagement - such as capacity building - will also be important in enabling the Overseas Territories to do more for themselves. Indeed, some have already agreed to begin to take on more economic responsibility for aspects of their defence and security.

This paper lays out the MOD's current commitment to the Overseas Territories and begins to shape our requirement for greater shared responsibility.

¹ The Red Ensign Group is comprised of the UK, the Crown Dependencies (Isle of Man, Guernsey and Jersey) and those UK Overseas Territories (Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat, St Helena and the Turks & Caicos Islands) which operate shipping registers.

Section 3 – Defence and Security

Safeguarding our citizens and their way of life remains the most important responsibility of Government and Defence. What this means for individual Overseas Territories is explained below. In turn:

The South Atlantic Islands. It is government policy to safeguard UK sovereignty of the Falkland Islands and the Falkland Islanders' right to self-determination, and the MOD plays a central role in this. The Department retains responsibility for the external defence and security of the Falkland Islands and its surrounding maritime area, which, alongside South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, and Ascension, are overseen by the Commander British Forces (South Atlantic Islands).

The MOD provides a permanent military presence of around 1300 personnel in the South Atlantic, supported by around 50 MOD civilians and 700 contractors, in order to meet its obligations. The Falkland Islands patrol vessel is permanently based in the Falklands, from where she also patrols the waters of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, and of the British Antarctic Territory. This naval presence is complemented by a Royal Navy Frigate or Destroyer, supported by a Royal Fleet Auxiliary tanker, together conducting Atlantic Patrol Task (South).



HRH The Earl of Wessex at a service in Stanley marking the 25th Anniversary of the end of the Falklands Campaign.

The Falkland Islands Roulement Infantry Company (RIC) is a rotational Army infantry unit, and is based at Mount Pleasant. It also deploys to South Georgia and Ascension

Island to provide a visible security presence and statement of UK sovereignty. Similarly based in the Falkland Islands are RAF Typhoon, VC-10 and Hercules aircraft, together with support helicopters. Separately, the Falklands Islands Defence Force (FIDF) operates as the local reservist infantry unit.



HMS Protector arriving in Antarctica for the first time on the centenary of Captain Scott's expedition to the South Pole.

The National Security Strategy confirms the UK's commitment to a continuing ice-patrol capability. During the Austral Summer, the RN Ice Patrol Ship, HMS Protector, provides scientific, hydrographical and humanitarian support to the British Antarctic Survey and other permanent scientific research stations. The ship will also visit the other South Atlantic Islands during her deployments.

Looking ahead, the Ministry of Defence will continue to examine the most appropriate and effective way to deliver security and protection to the population, including working closely with the Falkland Islands Government towards a shared vision for greater economic opportunities available to local businesses.

Ascension Island. The UK retains sovereign rights on Ascension, although the US military have run Wideawake Airfield since 1942. Today Ascension plays a vital role in sustaining British Forces, with Wideawake the key stopover point for the South Atlantic air bridge.

The Caribbean Territories. The primary role of our military presence in the Caribbean is to deliver security and reassurance to the Overseas Territories, especially in disaster relief operations. In Atlantic Patrol Task (North) (APT(N)), a Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship maintains a maritime presence in the Caribbean region all year, enhanced with a naval party (including a boarding party and embarked naval helicopter) as necessary. This is normally supplemented by a Royal Navy frigate or destroyer during the hurricane season between May and November.



HMS Iron Duke pictured off Montserrat.

The Royal Navy will continue to provide a permanent presence in the Caribbean, being well positioned to respond to the full range of foreseeable contingencies, and to deliver initial military assistance in the event of humanitarian disaster. This is important, given that climate change is likely to increase the frequency of serious weather events.

The support offered by the military in the event of disaster can prove vital, as witnessed in the Cayman Islands after Hurricane Ivan (2004), and the Turks & Caicos Islands in the wake of Hurricane Ike (2008). When available, APT(N) ships are similarly able to support third party countries in the event of disaster, e.g. to St. Lucia, when affected by Hurricane Tomas in 2010.



Crew members from HMS Manchester distribute fresh drinking water to locals affected by Hurricane Tomas, September 2010.

APT(N) ships are also available for counter-narcotics tasking, primarily to disrupt and interdict consignments of illicit narcotics trafficked through the region en route from Latin America to the UK and Europe via West Africa and the US.

The Caribbean Territories and Bermuda are also visited by all three Services as part of various adventurous training expeditions.



A Royal Navy Lynx helicopter working as part of the APT(N) commitment to disaster relief and counter-narcotic operations.

Bermuda. The Bermuda Regiment is a battalion-sized, deployable, largely reservist infantry unit which supports the Civil Authority. The elected Government of Bermuda is financially responsible for the Regiment, although the UK retains ultimate responsibility for the islands' security.

Like their Caribbean neighbours, Bermudians are well used to post-hurricane operations, but the Bermuda Regiment also contributes wider operational experience which is not available locally (with Bermuda Regiment personnel having deployed, e.g. as part of the

International Military Advisory Team to Sierra Leone). Looking ahead, the Bermuda Regiment seeks to expand its training remit in the international arena.

Gibraltar. The MOD holds similar responsibilities for the defence and external security of Gibraltar, its residents and its territorial seas. British Forces Gibraltar (BFG) maintains the garrison, which comprises some 900 personnel (including around 600 locally employed civilians). This figure excludes the Royal Gibraltar Regiment (RG), a home service infantry unit of around 270 personnel, the role of which includes security and force protection for the forward mounting base.



The Band of The Royal Gibraltar Regiment at the Ceremonial Guard Mount, outside the Governor's Residence.

The Royal Gibraltar Regiment also provides volunteers for UK military operations; support for regional training initiatives; and will occasionally perform public duties in London.

The RN Gibraltar Squadron contributes to maritime security operations around the strategically vital Straits, and helps assure the integrity of British Gibraltar Territorial Waters; RAF Gibraltar provides Gibraltar with its international airport; and the MOD provides Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) as required, for example by means of Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD). UK military units also use Gibraltar for training purposes, not least for its 30 miles of man-made tunnels inside the Rock. The Territory also supports UK operations directly, eg Libya.

The MOD has begun to transform its property holdings and utilities provision in close co-operation with the Government of Gibraltar, to provide a smaller footprint focused on a forward mounting base (Project Euston).

British Indian Ocean Territory. The MOD stations around 40 military personnel in the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), in order to ensure the territorial integrity and physical security of the islands. The Commander British Forces is also Representative of Her Majesty's Commissioner, and his personnel provide policing (as Royal Overseas Police Officers), and carry out customs and immigration duty roles, as well as supporting the BIOT patrol vessel in enforcing the marine protected area.

Around 2,500 US military personnel and contractors are stationed on the US base at Diego Garcia. This remains a vital part of the Anglo-American defence relationship. Exchanges of Notes between the UK and the USA govern the use of the military base, under which British agreement is required for its use in any US combat operations.

The Sovereign Base Areas, Cyprus. Under the 1960 Treaty of Establishment, the United Kingdom retains sovereignty over the Western Sovereign Base Area (WSBA) at Akrotiri and the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA) at Dhekelia. These are known collectively as the Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs). The SBAs are retained for military purposes, with the status of a British Overseas Territory, and with a resident population of some 10,000 Cypriot citizens.



A Griffin HT2 rescue helicopter from No 84 Squadron, RAF, pictured during a training flight from its home base at Akrotiri.

The SBAs are manned by British Forces Cyprus (BFC) with around 2,700 (mostly Army) personnel. The RAF also has a significant presence, with around 900 personnel. The military are supported by some 300 UK-based civilians and 1,200 locally employed civilians.

BFC is commanded by a two-star officer, who also performs the role of SBA Administrator. This includes the civil administration of the SBAs, although many functions, particularly those relating to Cypriot inhabitants, are delegated to the Republic of Cyprus.

BFC supports UK military operations in various ways, providing a forward mounting base at RAF Akrotiri; two Resident Infantry Battalions (one of which is assigned as a Theatre Reserve Battalion for operations in Afghanistan); communications; and 'decompression' facilities for troops returning from military operations overseas. Akrotiri has been used extensively to support military operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and most recently Libya. It is also poised to provide support to any forward headquarters that might be deployed for evacuation operations, e.g. evacuation from Lebanon in 2006.



HMS Gloucester disembarking evacuated British nationals and dual passport holders from Lebanon. Limassol, August 2006.

The Sovereign Base Area Administration enables the UK to meet its commitments under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee (and supporting agreements). In support of the 2003/4 Cyprus settlement talks, and in an effort to boost the negotiations, Her Majesty's Government offered to relinquish sovereignty over large parts of SBA land (48% by area) no longer required for military purposes. This was conditional upon a comprehensive settlement being agreed and ratified by all parties. With the resumption of settlement talks in 2009, this offer was reinstated.

The Cyprus Review 2011

The Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) 2010 emphasised the fundamental importance of the MOD's "ability to remain adaptable for the future" – and the Sovereign Base Areas provide the UK with a unique contribution to our ability to achieve this goal. In May 2011, and in order to implement the SDSR conclusions, the Defence Secretary announced that a separate review of the British SBAs in Cyprus would be undertaken. On announcing its completion in December 2011, the Defence Secretary confirmed Her Majesty's Government's enduring commitment to the SBAs in Cyprus. The key considerations in affirming this commitment were:

- The SBAs, situated in a region of geo-political importance, remain high priority for the UK's long-term national security interests.
- The SBAs provide an adaptable and capable Forward Mounting Base, the utility of which has been amply demonstrated: for example, the basing of RAF aircraft that participated in operations over Libya, the regular deployment of Cyprus-based military personnel to Afghanistan, and the key role played as a logistic hub for operations in Afghanistan.
- In addition, the SBAs are expected to make a significant contribution to the logistic drawdown from Afghanistan, as well as to wider humanitarian and conflict prevention activities in the region. They also continue to provide excellent training opportunities for the Armed Forces.

This announcement offered a timely opportunity to put the necessary financial support for the SBAs – and access to wider Government expertise – in place. The MOD will continue to work closely with Other Government Departments to ensure we have sustainable plans to support the SBAs, including by means of ensuring that the SBAs are treated equitably with other Overseas Territories.

Section 4 – Wider Defence and Security Support

In addition to safeguarding the Overseas Territories and their populations directly, the MOD contributes to wider government defence and security objectives through:

Securing international support for the defence of the UK and its Overseas Territories; building contributions to and political support for current and future operations involving our Armed Forces (including through enhanced interoperability, as well as access and basing rights); securing access to key technologies and capabilities; building defence capability at affordable cost;

Protecting UK citizens abroad: in contributing to consular protection of British citizens, particularly through developing relationships that support Government assistance in times of crisis, and including through joint contingency planning, evacuations, and maritime security operations;

Influencing in support of UK national interests: defence relations are an important constituent of broader bilateral relationships – both with close allies and emerging and regional powers. They can be particularly important in countries where the military plays a prominent role in government;

Promoting and protecting UK prosperity particularly by promoting UK defence and security sector exports as a coherent and supportive part of our bilateral relationships, in line with our regional stability interests. This is also an important defence contribution to the protection of international trade, energy and shipping routes, on which our mutual prosperity depends;

Understanding other nations' security objectives, capabilities and intent: Defence will contribute to wider information gathering through horizon scanning and early warning;

Building international capacity and capability, both multilaterally and bilaterally. The use of UK defence assets helps to prevent conflict and provide security overseas,

including through security sector reform, arms control engagement, regional stabilisation and maritime security, improving peacekeeping operations, tackling terrorism and proliferation, combating illegal narcotics and piracy at source, and interrupting their trafficking/supply routes;

Deterring threats to UK interests, through maintaining the international profile of our defence capability and our political will to use it if necessary.



A soldier from the Royal Gurkha Rifles at O'Hara's Gun Battery, high up on the Rock of Gibraltar.

The support the MOD provides to these wide-ranging objectives requires the use of the full spectrum of our maritime, land and air forces. By exploiting powers under international, national and co-operating partner states' law, security operations are mounted against a wide range of activities around the world, such as piracy; slavery; people smuggling; illegal immigration; illegal fishing; drug smuggling; arms smuggling; terrorism; the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; and the protection of the environment.

Counter-Narcotics. Counter-narcotics operations are almost always conducted in conjunction with other international authorities and law enforcement agencies. To that end, the MOD works closely in support of SOCA (Serious Organised Crime Agency), which leads UK efforts in disrupting criminal narcotics trafficking worldwide and seeks to expand international co-operation to further reduce drug trafficking to the UK. This means targeting drugs as they leave their production

zones and pass through transit countries on their way to the UK. The Royal Navy plays an important part in narcotics seizures around the world. One particularly well-publicised success was achieved by HMS Manchester which, during a patrol in the Caribbean in October 2010, intercepted a consignment of 240 kilos of cocaine worth some £12 million (UK street value) at the time.



The sea boat of Type 23 frigate HMS Iron Duke comes alongside a speed boat suspected of drug smuggling in the Caribbean.

Together with the US Joint Inter-Agency Task Force (South), Royal Navy ships on standby for disaster relief operations are allocated to disrupt shipments of narcotics from the Caribbean to the US and West Africa before they are shipped to Europe. The UK is also developing the value and effectiveness of similar international co-operation through organisations such as the UN and EU.



Royal Marines aboard Pacific 24 sea boats following a counter-narcotics ship boarding exercise in the Caribbean.

A further example of this collaboration was the establishment in 2007 of the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre (Narcotics) (MAOC(N)) in Lisbon, comprising seven European partner nations, to which the UK contributes expertise from SOCA and the Royal Navy. In addition, in March 2010, the

UK established the National Maritime Information Centre (NMIC) to monitor and help intercept illegal narcotics traders both within the UK and in the Overseas Territories.

Search and Rescue. In the UK, maritime search and rescue has traditionally been co-ordinated by HM Coastguard, while aeronautical rescue has been delegated through the Ministry of Defence to the Royal Air Force. In the Overseas Territories, the RAF has always provided Search and Rescue (SAR) cover in support of the civilian population from the base at RAF Akrotiri, in Cyprus; and across the Falkland Islands.



The crew of a Search and Rescue (SAR) Sea King helicopter working in the Falkland Islands

SAR helicopters were called out 30 times in the Falklands in 2011; and over 2010- 11, MOD Search and Rescue services (comprising 84 Squadron RAF, the SBA Police Marine Unit, and the Defence Fire & Risk Management Organisation) were called out 41 times in Cyprus. It was announced in November 2011 that the Department for Transport will take future responsibility for UK-based Search and Rescue, but this will not affect SAR provision in Cyprus or the Falkland Islands.

Disaster Relief. Both governmental and non-governmental organisations conduct disaster relief operations and humanitarian assistance to relieve human suffering. Military activities may be delivered in conjunction with, or in support of, civilian humanitarian efforts.

The flexibility of maritime forces makes them particularly effective in disaster relief, especially in the early stages, when they may well be the only means available to provide emergency assistance. Royal Navy ships can provide a comprehensive logistics base and refuge offshore, and military helicopters

provide valuable means of transport. A wide range of assistance, such as fresh water, food, medical supplies, temporary shelter, morgues, fuel and electric power can be provided, while other agencies and non-governmental organisations mobilise longer-term assistance.



17 Port & Maritime Regiment delivering vehicles from a Mexefloat platform following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

Hurricanes have the potential to cause widespread devastation, and, given the Royal Navy plays a vital role in assessing the damage caused, it is for this reason, for example in August 2010, that the Royal Navy's assistance was requested, and HMS Manchester and her Lynx helicopter responded (not least to conduct rapid aerial surveying) when Hurricane Earl affected Anguilla, Montserrat and the British Virgin Islands in close succession; when Hurricane Igor passed close to the west of Bermuda a few weeks later; and when Hurricane Tomas, after leaving St Lucia, then passed over the Turks and Caicos Islands.



A Lynx Mk3 helicopter and crew from HMS Iron Duke assist in disaster relief training in Montserrat.

In 2011, RFA Wave Ruler provided disaster relief help at the request of the Governor of the Turks and Caicos Islands. The ship's Royal Navy Lynx helicopter conducted reconnaissance of the islands and then

disaster relief stores were delivered to outlying islands by the ship's crew. The Royal Navy would support Tristan da Cunha similarly, should evacuation be required in the event of a volcanic eruption.

Freedom of Navigation. Freedom of navigation operations provide an enduring strategic benefit to our security by protecting the UK's maritime rights and freedoms, encouraging lawful practice and preventing excessive geographical and/or jurisdictional² claims. British maritime operations (particularly by warships) will themselves generate an audit trail of UK state practice. Freedom of navigation operations influence other states' governments and therefore constitute a form of naval diplomacy. They may be symbolic or coercive. Freedom of navigation operations in peacetime are one means by which maritime forces maintain the freedom of the seas for trade and unhindered access to British Overseas Territories, as well as ensuring that the UN Convention on the Seas (UNCLOS) provisions are respected.



HMS Daring departing Gibraltar, January 2012.

Evacuation of UK Entitled Persons Overseas. As well as the thousands of residents of the Overseas Territories themselves, over 5.5 million UK passport holders live overseas³.

The protection of UK citizens abroad and in the British Overseas Territories is an important task which may at any time require a military-assisted evacuation operation to move entitled civilians to a place of safety.

² For example any assertion that vessels must seek permission from, or notify a coastal state, before entering Territorial Seas.

³ National Security Strategy (NSS), October 2010, paragraph 2.5.

Section 5 – Hydrographic Support

The UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) – an agency of the Ministry of Defence based in Taunton – is responsible for producing and updating nautical charts of the UK Overseas Territories. This activity enables the Overseas Territories to meet their charting obligations under the UN Convention on Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS). Responsibility for the collection of suitable hydrographic data lies initially with the government of the territory concerned, and this is an international treaty obligation for those territories for which the SOLAS convention has been ratified (i.e. all of the Red Ensign Group).

The Royal Navy continues to conduct hydrographic surveying throughout the Overseas Territories – in line with National Security priorities – and has the capability to contribute to both the broader safety of navigation and capacity building tasks. It is recognised that few Overseas Territories will have the expertise and resources to plan and conduct their own bathymetric surveying or hydrographic data collection, but this does not negate the need to ensure the information is collected.

As the risk of maritime accidents increases over time (as a result of seabed movement, the use of larger vessels, and changing patterns of maritime transport), without prioritised and co-ordinated programmes of data collection, UK Government stakeholders will need to work together with the governments of the Overseas Territories to ensure that priorities are identified and, where appropriate, a programme of work is carried out. Each territory will therefore have to be considered individually according to location, needs, resources, policies and government structures, although there may be some opportunities for collaborative projects, e.g. in the Caribbean.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has introduced a voluntary Audit Scheme for its member states to provide a comprehensive and objective assessment of

how effectively they administer and implement mandatory IMO instruments like the SOLAS Convention. This voluntary scheme is likely to be a forerunner to a mandatory audit scheme from 2015. It is expected that the audit scheme will identify where capacity-building activities would have the greatest effect and lead to targeting of appropriate action to improve performance. This initiative provides further incentive for the UK Government to ensure that the Overseas Territories are meeting SOLAS obligations.



HMS Protector at work in Antarctica. The data the ship gathers are processed by UKHO and drawn into charts for use by mariners around the world.

Although the mitigation of risk is a primary concern in this matter, there are of course other opportunities for realising great value from any new hydrographic data collected, for example, in support of environmental protection, planning and management, maritime boundary delimitation, resource exploitation, maritime defence and security, climate change, tsunami and flood modelling, and other aspects of marine science.

Conclusion

As the National Security Strategy makes clear, the United Kingdom's national interests will continue to shift geographically, as will its ability to use longstanding relationships and the traditional institutions of global governance. We will have to work harder, and in different ways, to advance and protect British interests as the world around us evolves. Competition for resources is likely to increase; demand for capacity building continues to grow; and climate change is likely to increase the frequency of serious weather events – and potentially, therefore, the increased need for a military response.



HMS Portland off the Nordenskjöld Glacier, South Georgia.

Whatever the changes that lie ahead, our strategic responsibilities will endure, as will our operational and exercise requirements, together with our commitment to the people and sovereignty of our Overseas Territories. Closer alignment between the Ministry of Defence, Foreign & Commonwealth Office and wider Government, will ensure that Defence assets and activities are allocated in support of, and according to, wider Government objectives. Doing so will also ensure that, during a period of severe resource constraints, we maximise the value of our global Defence Engagement in concert with, and for the continued benefit of, the British Overseas Territories.