



Date: 21 July 2009

FIRST SEA LORD'S HEADMARK DOCUMENT

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Having today taken over as the First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, I want to share with you my thoughts on how I see my responsibilities and where we need to focus our attention in the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and with our civil service colleagues over the coming years. In offering you these thoughts at a time of significant resource challenge, my aim is to provide a narrative to encourage the broadest possible understanding and awareness of the Naval Service's business and to establish shared ownership of how I want our Service to move forward. It is a great honour and privilege to take over the reins and I pay tribute to Admiral Sir Jonathon Band's extraordinary contribution to our Service. Like him, I am determined to lead from the front, work hard to ensure our enduring strengths and values are fully recognised, say it like it is and deliver fully in my duty of care to you all. I also intend to work closely with my fellow Chiefs of Staff in meeting our shared responsibilities to provide balanced military advice to the Government, which includes in these difficult times not only operations, but also the future equipment programme.

NAVAL PURPOSE

We all know how busy, versatile and globally deployed the Naval Service is today; we are doing all that is demanded of us and delivering outstandingly well. We will continue to do so. But we must all understand and be able to articulate the relevance and value of the contribution our Service makes to the United Kingdom since, regrettably, a lack of such understanding within the country as a whole is one of our greatest threats.

We are at a time when the perceived military threats to our shores are low. This is clearly a good thing, but it does not tell the whole story. As a nation our prosperity and freedoms are, more than most, directly affected by what happens abroad and therefore highly reliant on the stability and security of the globalised world. Some things don't change. Geography and history have made Britain a maritime nation with global responsibilities dependent on the free movement of maritime trade. Ours is now a "just enough, just in time" economy in many important areas, energy and food supplies are important examples, where freedom to use the seas is vital in protecting our national interests and securing our way of life. Our maritime forces play the most significant part in protecting that freedom.

At the same time, the world is becoming more competitive and inter-dependent, while resources are limited and the distribution of wealth uneven. This imbalance, made worse by the global recession, is likely to lead to increased tensions both between and within cultures and nations. International governance and the system on which it depends are likely to be challenged through resurgent national interests, terrorism and criminal activities such as piracy, narcotics and people trafficking. As a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council, NATO, and the EU, the UK will continue, I am sure, to fulfil its obligations to play an influential role on the world stage. Our acute

dependence on a regulated trading environment and our vulnerability to its disruption mandates that we do so.

Remember that navies provide strategic effect. The versatility and mobility of the Naval Service affords the Government the principal means by which political and diplomatic leverage can be used as a deterrent. If necessary decisive force can be applied without the need for extended engagement. Our Maritime Strike and Amphibious forces are key assets here and whilst maritime security remains the ageless responsibility of the Service, it would be reckless to discount the prospect of full combat operations within the next 20 years; a timeframe that includes the realisation of the Navy's equipment programme. International frictions will persist. There is much talk of new ways of war in the future; many ideas are gaining traction. They deserve our attention as operations in the future in all environments, be they high intensity or not, will evolve and we must understand any new character of conflict. But I am confident that such changes will continue incrementally and evolution not revolution is our handrail. To this end we must continue to train, equip and prepare for high intensity combat operations with a clear focus on adjusting as future threats and trends evolve.

The ultimate guarantee of our country's security is the nuclear deterrent. Our stewardship of it is a critical responsibility and one we can proudly state we have delivered without break for over 40 years. We must continue to underpin this with absolute professionalism and rigour. We must equally prepare ourselves for the agreed follow on programme that will build the successor to the current submarines.

It is vital that the Naval Service is able to pull its weight in alliances such as NATO and the EU, and that we maintain inter-operability with partner nations and especially with the United States Navy where we must continue to provide a value added contribution. We should also recognise, and be prepared to maximise, the opportunities to develop partnerships with those outside familiar coalitions and Treaty groups. The benefits are obvious; greater capacity, greater trust and greater sharing of intelligence to ensure that our operations are focused as effectively as possible.

But we also need to guarantee our ability to act alone if and when circumstances dictate. Indeed, given the pressure on Defence as a whole, the potential for maritime forces to act swiftly and with precision to prevent conflict arising is brought more sharply into focus. Our proven operational expertise on land, sea and in the air equips us well to think in joint terms at the national level, not only operationally but also when planning. We will work hand-in-glove with the Army, Royal Air Force and other Government Departments to deliver our defence and security responsibilities as efficiently and effectively as we can today and in the future.

The strapline **Deter, Defend, Defeat**, continues to serve our purpose well and this is best achieved in a Naval Service that is **Deployed**.

NAVAL STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Our **People** are central to our output, our development and our future. You are of the highest quality and few navies in the world can lay claim to the range of capability, experience and skills you possess. This is testament to our success on operations and the quality of our **Training**, which is much sought after by foreign navies and is a clear benchmark of excellence. A powerful heritage underpins our strong ethos, values and fighting spirit. As the CINC I spied much **grit, determination and innovation** in all of our environments. I am daily impressed by the talent and commitment of our people, humbled by their bravery under fire and grateful for the tremendous and valuable support we enjoy from families and the public at large. **The morale of the force is strong**. But all is not rosy. The extent of our operations and shortages in some critical manning areas result in a higher tempo than I would like and short notice demand on far too many of you. We must and will continue to focus our attention on the levers that can help alleviate these tensions especially the retention of our trained talent.

Readiness of naval forces is one of our strengths. We are able to exert influence and power whenever required and wherever we are forward deployed. The whole force, other than those in deep maintenance, is either training, on operations, preparing for contingent operations or forward deployed. This is not only very effective but equally highly efficient. We are a **Versatile** and **Agile** force that is adaptable, flexible and resilient across the full spectrum of operations, from international security co-operation, through constabulary and peacekeeping to major warfighting. We aim to be as effective at preventing conflict and promoting regional stability as we are at conducting combat operations. We are also **Global** and **Sustainable**, which allows us to conduct substantial and enduring operations at range from the UK with our integrated logistics support. Whilst these attributes place us in the premier division of navies, there will be challenges to retain this full breadth and depth. We must be on our guard and readily expose the consequences of any consideration of a more minimalist approach.

We are a **Highly Capable Force** with credible battle-winning capabilities utilising modern technology as effectively as we can. We must strive to maintain the technical edge we have over likely adversaries. But we must be aware of the fact that capability is not only about kit; an equal measure of our effectiveness is in the numbers of platforms we have to provide influence and sustain our presence. There are qualities in quantity. The need for a **Balanced Fleet** with a blend of maritime, air, land and underwater assets brought together under a well practised dynamic command structure, which is held at the same readiness as the platforms, is key. Scale is an important consideration and new platforms for tomorrow's possible conflicts need investment today. While there will be inevitable pressures for reductions, I and my Navy Board colleagues will continue to make the strongest possible case for the maintenance and investment in a balanced Fleet.

YOUR ROLE

You have a role.

Continue to deliver excellence in your professionalism across all branches and specialisations. This excellence underpins our reputation as a top quality Navy in our own country and the international community. It is a deterrent in itself to our potential adversaries and is the foundation of the fighting power we ultimately deliver. This professionalism is measured by physical and mental grit, moral courage and fighting spirit as well as technical competence. The team effort that pulls this excellence together remains our trump card - **The Team Works**. I expect all of you, however junior, to take personal responsibility for this reputation and remember that it can easily be dented by unthinking acts of irresponsibility.

Aim High in all you do. We have so much talent and initiative in our midst that I am convinced we can continue to improve on our delivery and enhance our effectiveness and efficiency through greater innovation, more powerful and informed advocacy and bottom-up ideas.

Provide strong, well informed and pro-active leadership. Those in positions of authority, from Leading Hand and Corporal upwards, must know their people, their qualities and their needs. This is one of our greatest strengths and we must ensure it remains so. At senior levels I expect this role and its responsibilities to be uppermost in your minds as we deal with the resource challenges that inevitably lie ahead.

Remain confident. You work for a top class Navy that is Ready to Fight and Win. We have the best people, considerable operational experience, internationally renowned training, and top quality kit. It is my and my Navy Board colleagues' intention to ensure this remains the case.

WAY AHEAD

We must focus on current operations, but at the same time ensure we execute our responsibility and duty to plan for an uncertain future. Defining and then striking the right balance of capability and hull numbers will be a key strand of work as we develop the future shape of the Naval Service.

Given the length of time we expect our ships to be in commission, I am determined that we examine innovative design solutions to ensure that the hulls we develop offer versatility, utility and the very best value for money. We will need credible, high-quality and modern capabilities across all areas and the maintenance of a balanced force structure remains fundamental. Current policy requires that this includes Carrier Strike and the utility a large aircraft carrier brings beyond strike alone, Littoral Manoeuvre with the Royal Marines, versatile surface combatants, along with the Afloat Support and Replenishment ships needed to sustain their reach and presence. The surveillance, land attack and deterrent capabilities of our submarines are the final component of this suite of top level capabilities. These must, in turn, be supported by Mine Countermeasures and Hydrographic Survey capabilities.

I expect that the sophistication of weapons systems and sensors and the complexity of future operations will mean we need to work smarter, not harder. This in turn means that recruiting, training and support must match the operational context. In the near term, the current focus on our manning challenges, specifically retention, must remain the top priority. All of our efforts in driving capabilities count for nothing without the quality people to deliver them.

We can be very proud. From our heritage, our ethos and values and our “fighting spirit” shine through and are enduring. They will always stand us in good stead. Thanks to your success on operations, there are few navies today that can demonstrate such confidence in the execution of their business and the quality of their underlying values. It is the business of all of us to be the guarantors of this tradition and to safeguard it for our successors.

Uncertain times bring opportunities as well as challenges and I am confident that the Naval Service has the capacity and ability to identify and make the most of them. I believe that every one of us, through our experience, imbued by our tradition and commitment, has the qualities needed to meet the challenges of tomorrow. I look forward to working with you all to maximise the unquestionable importance of our contribution to the security of our country and its vital interests at home and overseas.

Be proud. Work hard. Your contribution really matters.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Stanhope". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope KCB OBE ADC
First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff