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DEFENCE AND SECURITY IN AN UNSTABLE WORLD

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Introduction

When I left the Army I had a couple of enduring itches: first I was struck by the general tone of the public narrative about servicemen and women which I felt focused on sympathy rather than respect. While this has a political connotation since it is linked to the public's lack of understanding of the need for the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, it has been exacerbated by the media narrative which delights in highlighting the stresses and strains of military service, and can make a minority view appear much more main-stream than the reality. It is also reinforced by the plethora of charities which have sprung up such as Help for Heroes and my brother's charity Walking with the Wounded. They have been amazingly successful and done a great deal of good, but they have also lodged something in the public consciousness that risks us being seen as victims and liabilities both to society and more particularly to potential employers. Of course, there are a few people who are seriously damaged physically and mentally by their experience and they deserve as much support as they can get. In fact the vast majority of the Service and ex-Service community offer the country a remarkable asset, these are people who have been trained to operate in the most extreme circumstances and, over the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan have proved that they can do it.

There is in my opinion a need to recalibrate this narrative. The work that is being done to encourage employers to take veterans seriously is good as far as it goes, but there is much more that could be done, and the Armed Forces Covenant has always struck me as a rather limp and patronising document which does little more than encourage warm words and photo opportunities. My small part in trying to shift perceptions has been to set up a charity that uses a military approach to conduct disaster relief. Team Rubicon was set up in the US by two ex US Marines after the earthquake in Haiti in 2010. It now has over 50,000 members. We brought it to the UK after the Nepal earthquake; after 2 ½ years we have 2000 members, we have deployed 348 volunteers to 16 international and 3 UK responses with volunteers contributing over 46,500 hours of much needed aid and support. We are currently responding to the Caribbean hurricanes and have sent over 70 volunteers to help in the immediate aftermath of the storms. Ex-Servicemen and women make up about 75% of the volunteers, the rest are first responders or civilians who are up for a challenge, and their willingness to drop everything to help others, to operate effectively in very challenging conditions reminds me, and I hope you, of the potential that our veterans offer to society.

Changing the Intervention Model

My second itch on leaving the Service was a nagging doubt that the model for intervention that I took part in, particularly in the latter part of my career was fit for purpose. And it is this that I would like to concentrate on for the rest of my talk. During 40 years of service I experienced a huge amount of change; of course change is difficult to identify when you are in it and is only really evident when you step back and reflect on experience. For this reason I will start by highlighting 4 milestones from my career which will set the context for my subsequent comments. I will then talk about the threat and the contemporary operating environment before highlighting three areas where I believe we should focus our attention if we are to meet the demands of Defence and Security in an Unstable World. These are: to reconsider how we intervene, to stress the requirement for proper situational understanding, and to emphasise the need for effective delegation.



Belfast

It is early autumn in 1974, the dreary streets of Belfast are once again being soaked by rain. In my mind this is a sepia scene. The terrace rows of houses along St James's Street, just off the Falls Road, stretch down to the roundabout at the start of the M1. On the far side, through the mist you can just see the Village, a stanchly Protestant estate that is also in our area of responsibility. As we patrol down the street women, probably my age and a bit older are shouting abuse at us. Every so often two of them bang a dustbin lids on the ground, if we get too close to them they will spit at us. There are 4 of us, another 4 men are moving down a parallel street and a 'pig' Humber armour car is circling around us to cut off anyone who tries to attack. Despite the high levels of unemployment there are not many men about, internment, which was introduced 3 years ago, means that many are locked up without trial. About 1% of our life here can be intensely exciting, the rest is mundane and repetitive. My fellow platoon commanders and I are a little uneasy about what we are being asked to do, this is after all the United Kingdom.

When we were at Sandhurst our riot control training was born out of the Empire, we were told to threaten the ringleaders (usually a man in a red shirt) over a megaphone that they would be shot if they did not disperse. We have been re-trained for the particular circumstances in Belfast by the Northern Ireland Training Team at Hythe and Lydd Ranges in Kent, this pre-deployment course has been going for the last 2 years, it has changed our behaviour to a degree, but the police cannot enforce the law here, they are too frightened to operate in this part of Belfast, and we are not trained to be policemen. If we are put under pressure by the locals the escalation from baton, to rubber bullet to rifle (under the terms of the yellow card) can be quick, and all the time the enemy can pick his time and position to snipe at us. This patrol will continue over the motorway and, when we get into the Village we will stop for tea and cakes in one of the Protestant houses where we will be welcome. Tonight, when I meet up with my fellow platoon commanders we will wonder briefly whether we are doing the right thing, but this won't bother us particularly. We are of an age where we are red blooded and feel invincible. We believe that we are doing a good job, certainly to the best of our ability, our Riflemen are professional and we are following the orders of our commanding officer, and he after all is the boss that matters.

Germany

It is 1987, the harvest has just been completed on the North German Plain. I am standing alongside my Brigade Commander on a track overlooking stubble fields interspersed with ditches and with hills in the distance. He is briefing the annual Staff Ride from the 1st British Corps while I point out features on an enlarged map that has been propped up in front of the open sided 4 ton trucks, which are being used as a makeshift seating stand. We are looking out over the Water Sandwich, an area of flat land between the Saltgitter Zweigkanal and the River Innerste. This is the principal killing ground in the Corps main defensive position and it is where we will bring the Soviet hordes to a shuddering halt if they have the temerity to attack us. The top brass, there must be 7 or 8 generals sitting in arm chairs which have been brought out from the officers mess and make up in the front row, are listening carefully. I suspect that this mainly to see if my boss performs well (this is a big moment for his annual appraisal) rather than to consider the plan, which they know backwards since they have been fighting this cold war throughout their careers. The Corps and Divisions that they command are extraordinarily well equipped and drilled, they spend all of their time preparing to fight what is termed a high intensity conflict against the Warsaw Pact on a battlefield that will have been swept of all its distractions, even the refugees and prisoners will be taken care of by other people. They are considered masters of their art, but none of them are old enough to have fought in WW2. They have a clear purpose, the threat is real and binds together an Alliance which has been central to the defence of the West since 1949. There are 2 air force officers, three Germans and a Belgium in the audience of 50. None of these will make any contribution to the conversation. The chain of command is all British, based on a strict hierarchy, it is tested regularly in command post exercises, and readiness is verified by no notice call outs called Active Edge. Our secrets are all on paper, they are documented very carefully and stored in cabinets. We take our role seriously and, although we know that the Soviets are able to concentrate considerable mass, we believe that we have the skill, the equipment and the leadership to defeat them. We will never be tested.



Sierra Leone

The Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone are defeated, they are being forced back into the Kono District where the war started. It is 15th October 2001. I have been President Kabbah's military advisor for the last 6 months and I am commanding a large training team and an 'over the horizon' reserve which has its Joint Task Force HQ in Freetown. I am driving down the hill from the Presidential Palace where I have just finished the nightly meeting in the President's parlour. Slightly bizarrely while this was going on we were overlooked by Ainsley Herriot hosting Ready Steady Cook on a wide screen TV just over the President's right shoulder. The sound was turned off! I feel a real buzz, my actions are genuinely helping to make a difference. The President has agreed to a draft paper that I have prepared for him to send to the UN Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG), a Nigerian diplomat called Oluyemi Adeniji, which states that, whatever the UN's position, the Sierra Leone Armed Forces will be advancing to take up positions on all of the country's borders within the next 14 days. There are terms for the RUF, but they have to disarm. We are using the Sierra Leone Armed Forces (closely mentored by British Officers) as a stick to beat the RUF while the 17,500 strong United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) sits on its metaphorical butt, hamstrung by a mandate that does not allow it to take the initiative.

We have had a very tense relationship with UNAMSIL but coincidentally I find that I was at the British staff college with the Force Deputy Commander, a Nigerian called Martin Agwai, and this is a hugely beneficial to help build bridges between key stakeholders. Importantly the SRSG knows the region and the people, he has considerable credibility as a Nigerian, who the other West Africans defer to, and he negotiates (very effectively) with the rebels. He is much better at it than we could ever be, and we (the British) are much more effective as advisors to the Sierra Leoneans, and turning them into a credible fighting force, which the UN mission will never be. The High Commissioner and I are being given considerable freedom by London; who are distracted. The PJHQ have had their eye off us ever since an operation to disarm the Macedonians was launched in late August, and then 9/11 shocked the world. This sucked up all their staff effort and I am hardly ever contacted – it makes life much easier! If I want to get any messages into London by far the most effective way is to do this through the High Commissioner who has a direct link into Jack Straw. If we need to we can get something considered at Cabinet level which would never make its way through the tortuous MOD chain. In Freetown there is a real sense of shared purpose among the British and smattering of international advisers. We all get on, trust each other and know what is happening. It really does feel that we have a chance of building a foundation here for lasting peace. The only slight frustration has been that the newish DfID has been slow to delegate authority to its representatives in country and the international community's coordination of longer-term social and economic investment does not appear to be a priority. In 13 years' time the Ebola virus epidemic will kill 4,000 people, highlighting how little we have actually done to build sustainable human security.

Afghanistan

Camp Bastion seems to grow by the day. The US Marine surge which has been going on for the past month since December 2009 is in full swing. I have been asked to speak to a small group of Riflemen from my regiment who have just completed their training and are about to deploy to Sangin. They are standing at the back of a range in the heat, they look extraordinarily well equipped with uniform that has been specially designed for the conditions, body armour, padding on elbows and knees, a new helmet which looks faintly German, clips for night sights, and an array of weapons some of which I have never seen before let alone fired. They look nervous, not the slightly cocky, self-assured response one sometimes has when senior officers visit in barracks – these riflemen are finely tuned for a fight which they know they will have, and they are nervous. Of the group of 30 I am talking to at least one will be killed and a number seriously wounded over the next 6 months. I have flown down to Bastion from the Headquarters of the International Security Assistance Force in Kabul, a US/NATO led coalition of over 40 Nations where I am serving as the Deputy Commander to a US General. As we conducted the operational planning to exploit the surge in US troops he told me that his hand has been forced by the situation in Helmand Province, it is probably not where he would have chosen to focus his attention but the situation now demands it, the insurgents are gaining the initiative. If I follow the UK line I will explain that the mission in Helmand is making the streets of Britain safer. This has a hollow ring to it. We



are not fighting Al Qaeda here, but locals who resent the foreign intrusion, particularly since it is messing up their ability to grow poppies, their most productive crop. London is engrossed by Helmand, it is where the casualties are happening, it is the source of the vast majority of stories in the media; this feels like a damage limitation exercise. The link to Kabul is recognised, but it is complex and its value is largely seen by the UK as a way of resolving the challenges in Helmand rather than setting conditions for the future of Afghanistan and the Region. I tell them that they are a group of highly professional soldiers, following in a great tradition, fighting for their mates and their regiment. This does feel more like a more credible line, it resonates better and I hope it will help to stiffen resolve in the face of a very challenging enemy. I do feel an enormous sense of pride in these young men and women, many of whom have been recruited recently from disadvantaged areas of UK society, they have proved themselves in training and I am supremely confident that they will do everything that we ask of them in combat.

The Threat

The two immediate reflections on these four snapshots are how much things have changed since the early 70s and how the interpretation of the threat drives everything. I realise that these are blinding glimpses of the obvious, but I do think they are worth a moment's reflection. In the early stages of my career the threat was clear and politically unambiguous. In Northern Ireland there was UK cross party consensus for the 38 years of the campaign which meant that the sacrifice of 1114 British Security Force personnel (of whom 722 were from the Armed Forces) was considered proportionate. The murder of a soldier in the 1980s rarely made the front page of a newspaper. The Cold War, which for many was the conflict that dominated their careers, was an extraordinary, largely theoretical stand-off. The economic policies which 'won' the war were completely disconnected from security policy. Thank goodness our plans were never properly tested, but the threat was real and caused us to keep 55,000 troops permanently based in Germany with an equipment programme that was designed to keep us at the cutting edge of military technology. Indeed our procurement of superior technology was one of the major justifications for our ability to deter the Warsaw Pact since we believed it made up for our deficit in manpower.

My goodness how things have changed! The coalition in Afghanistan was not drawn together by a common interpretation of the threat. Even the British who, after the US, were prepared to take the greatest level of risk with their forces, were not prepared to authorise any movement outside the boundary of their forces in Central Helmand without reference to the very highest level of Government, and then the balance of risk was decided not by the potential benefit to the coalition but by the likelihood of casualties. This made the military commander's ability to counter a highly complex threat extremely challenging and depended entirely on the US willingness to deploy, and manoeuvre, large numbers of their own troops. It was the 'inputs', the limitations from capability or imposed on employment rather than the 'output', the need to create an environment that was sufficiently secure for others to help build sustainable human security, that drove much of our planning.

The inability to achieve consensus on how best to deal with the conflict in Syria illustrates how difficult it is to justify a believable threat politically. Unlike in Helmand it is now hard to explain how direct action could be directly in the interests of security at home. But even so an ideology ferments, thousands of innocent civilians are killed and an exodus of people generates a migration crisis on a scale that has a direct impact on security in Europe. The resurgent threat from Russia, which has caused plenty of comment is not enough to trigger significant investment in Armed Forces. And terrorist attacks at home are treated largely by the intelligence and domestic security communities. Of course there are plenty of other priorities for Government, but their interpretation of the threat today does not provide sufficient justification for investment in the Armed Forces. They do want to be seen to be playing a part in wider global security, but if the risks are high the consequences of playing our part are not sufficiently compelling for the domestic political narrative to justify the blood that will have to be spilt.

This is of course a dangerous position to be in. The threat is not clear, and this reduces the justification for the use of military force. But predicting the future is not easy and there do seem to be plenty of risks which could manifest themselves in unexpected ways. Climate change, competition for resources, ideology, the World is not



in a particularly stable state at the moment, and instability many miles away from our shores will have implications, not least because of the impact this will have on friends and allies who we depend on for our security.

Ensuring that our insurance policy is appropriate and up to date seems to be a responsible course to take. I am too far removed from the nuts and bolts of the current debate to offer any informed comment on the details, but I do believe that we should be careful in assuming that we will not face an unpredictable and compelling threat which causes our political leadership to turn on a sixpence and expect the military to spill its blood with whatever it has in its arsenal. As an aside, and to illustrate the fickle nature of political leadership, I was involved in the military response to the security of the 2012 Olympics. From the very outset it was made clear by the Home Office that there was no requirement for anything other than specialist military support. I detected a philosophical undertone that was actively resisting our participation, as if we were still suffering from the fall-out from the Peterloo Massacre! It was even suggested that we wore London 2012 tracksuits rather than uniforms, a proposal I simply ignored! During the 12 months leading up to the Games the level of support we were required to give grew, actively supported by LOCOG, but always reluctantly by Government. On the 11th July, 16 days before the Opening Ceremony, when G4S waved their white flag and announced that the venue security plan would not work, the volte-face by our leaders was something to behold! I saw then how quickly you can come to be relied on, and how there is some sort of expectation that, when the chips are down you will be able to magic something out of thin air. This will happen again and we have to do our very best to be ready for it.

I conclude that the threat does not, at present, provide sufficient justification for either the commitment and therefore investment in armed forces that are designed to meet it or what may become. So what? I would like to confine myself to three proposals which need not have significant cost implications, but which could help to prepare us better for the shocks of the future. These are: a different approach to intervention, improving situational understanding, and delegation.

What This Means for Intervention

I indicated at the beginning of my talk that I had been frustrated by my experience in the military interventions I had taken part in over the latter stages of my career. We intervene too late, often 'something must be done is the driver. Our approach is culturally insensitive, we are driven by domestic politics, we are too fixed by physical security and our staying power is limited. The current political reaction to this experience has been that we are very reluctant to put our troops in harm's way and if we do the scale and conditions of employment are very restricted. We are keen to develop mechanisms that deploy air power, provide training and elements of operational support, but do not put boots on the ground. This is just a remodelling of the old approach to suit ourselves, and the risk is that we will be caught out when the circumstances suddenly change.

I see a need for a fundamental shift in our approach to the way we address intervention. There is a need for carefully planned international, cross-sector collaboration with individual states which is designed to strengthen social, economic and security frameworks. This is not primarily about physical security, we must now see our Defence in the wider context of Human Security along the lines of the concept as it was defined by UNDP in 1994. The idea that an individual can be free from fear and free from want and thereby aspire to improve his or her lot is a compelling one. The original concept identified the threats to security in seven areas: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political, (this is probably dated and we should at least now add information to this list), and by addressing each of these themes it is possible to provide a much more balanced view on what needs to be done well before intervention is required. But it is still a 'campaign' which needs to have a defined objective, to be planned, resourced and led. To do this requires some significant remodelling of our approach and in particular we have to integrate our efforts better, be more pragmatic about the cultural constraints that will exist, and to change our view on time.

As far as integration is concerned this is not just about Defence or indeed about Whitehall. There has to be a better understanding of the true meaning of multinational operations which places more emphasis on building strategic consensus with contributors and the host or target nation, and which respects the multilateral aspects



of the complex contemporary environment. For us this means a far more sophisticated cross Government approach. If our system requires everything to be driven by money, the pot should not be limited to the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund but should be broadened to include significant amounts of the Overseas Aid and Defence budgets. And it has always frustrated me how little importance is given to the potential contribution that could be made by the private sector, and I don't mean private security, this is all about investing in social and economic regeneration.

With regard to our cultural approach I don't feel that the attempts by Western Military coalitions to understand the populations they are supposed to be protecting cut the mustard. Yes, we have increased the amount of cultural pre deployment training that takes place, yes we will try to train more linguists, but I think this will always risk being superficial – a cultural fig leaf. I think we will always appear rather like Officer Crabtree (the Gendarme in 'Allo 'Allo) no matter how hard we try. My conclusion is that we need to accept whenever possible the priorities (if not the leadership) of the 'host' nation, no matter what pressure this places on our own cultural principles. Why have I been involved in so many elections during my operational deployments, why has the role of women been so high up the agenda when men women and children cannot move freely to buy their food, and how could wheat ever be an alternative crop for subsistence farmers growing the opium poppy?

And then there is time or staying power! I have already alluded to the 38 years that Operation Banner lasted in Northern Ireland, this represented an extraordinary level of all-party political commitment. As a contrast I remember discussing with senior members of the Government in 2010 whether it was reasonable to plan to cease combat operations in Afghanistan at the end of 2014. My reply was that of course it was – we should to be able to transition the responsibility for physical security to better prepared local forces in 4 years, but the defining requirement would be the extent to which the other aspects of human security could be improved, particularly political security and an appropriately stable civil society. The conclusion is that contemporary coalitions have lacked the necessary patience to support the sustainable change required if human security is to be improved. This requires a multinational, multilateral approach that goes with the grain of the environment in which we are operating. If we can set realistic targets for sustained development we will have a far greater chance of success. But be very clear, this approach still requires a foundation of physical security, which may require the application of military combat capability, and if this is to be successful it will have to properly resourced, it will be nasty and it will cause casualties.

Situational Understanding

The highly complex contemporary operating environment drives the need for even more emphasis on what US military jargon describes as situational understanding. As the Duke of Wellington said in 1852: *All the business of war, and indeed all the business of life, is to endeavor to find out what you don't know by what you do; that's what I called "guessing what was at the other side of the hill."* Today we have little difficulty looking over the hill, the challenge is to know what you are seeing, to process it in time and to act decisively with the appropriate response. I am concentrating here on the 'observe and orientate' phases of Colonel John Boyd's OODA loop, where he recognised during aerial combat in the Korean War that the human in the loop was as important as the relative technological capabilities of the combatants. In his case this was driven by the need to react more quickly and decisively than the opponent by making superior judgements about the situation. It was a relatively straightforward engagement between two parties, the F86 Sabre and the MiG 15, but the latter was smaller and more manoeuvrable and was proving to be a challenging adversary. Today there is a great deal more information available. There are countless OODA loops functioning in sequence and in parallel, decision points are unlikely to sit in a neat logical sequence and the consequences of each decision have multiple outcomes. For this reason we have to give understanding what is going on a far greater priority than was the case when I was serving. The speed and complexity of the passage of information is breaking down conventional hierarchies. Of course this is partly about investing in intelligence and in specialist and sophisticated technologies, but just as importantly it is about changing the cultural approach to information by ensuring that there is an ability to collaborate effectively vertically (through the chain of command) and horizontally with partners, stakeholders and other interested parties.



The vertical challenge is how to enable the necessary military hierarchy, which, if plans are to be executed effectively has to limit conceptual and geographical responsibilities. But at the same time an open information environment has to be created which ensures that everyone can get timely access to the information that they need so they properly understand the situation before they decide or integrate their plans with other critical actors. The solution to this challenge will be partly technological. It has to enable open systems architecture, while allowing certain types of information to be protected; it will probably require best practice to be drawn from the commercial sector and it will require a flexible and fast moving approach to procurement, something that always seemed to be a challenge throughout my career. But for me the most important part of the solution is cultural change, importantly I saw plenty of evidence of this on operations: by 2011 British forces in Afghanistan were employing very effective collaborative planning techniques which speeded up operational tempo significantly. General Stan McChrystal introduced a Situational Awareness Room into Headquarters ISAF, a control room with the very latest information technology, where he expected the command team to work together as a matter of routine. The concept was resisted by senior commanders who were more comfortable if they were surrounded by their own staff in their own space. It never really took off, but it was the right idea ahead of its time.

The big issue for me was that the management of information and the desire to achieve a high level of situational understanding on operations was not matched by the same culture at home. As a senior commander my situational understanding was not as good as it should have been. The layers of staff below me would delay issues coming to my attention, until they could be properly presented, ironically when it was too late for me to add any real value to the decision. It was as if the institution was trying to protect me from the complexity and spoon feed me so that I was still able to swallow. But in fact I should have been getting involved early, in part so I had a reasonable working knowledge of what was going on, but also so that I could identify and establish priorities and give early direction when appropriate. I believed at the time that the same challenges existed above me. It is critically important for the success of our Defence and security apparatus to ensure that the decision-making process in the Ministries are as effective as they can be. The contemporary environment makes it critically important to ensure that cross Departmental relationships are supported by a high level of situational understanding and decisions are informed by highly attuned OODA loops.

Delegation

The last point that I would like to emphasize is the need to delegate effectively. This is not something we are able to do well at the moment, but if we were, it could transform our ability to operate and it would help enormously to effectively take account of the demands of human security in the multinational, multilateral environment. In the current circumstances the 'Theatre' level is where the majority of influences and influencers come together. Proper delegation to a representative at this level ensures good situational understanding, allows better coordination and collaboration and the most effective use of the national assets that have been allocated. Interestingly our experience in Northern Ireland provides an excellent example of how well this can work, even if it took a little time to establish. Here the senior military commander was given considerable autonomy, he had his own budget which covered operations, training, logistics and even research. The decisions he made were driven directly by the outcomes he wanted to achieve. He was collocated with the police, and security services who were directly responsible to a Government Minister. And the economic and social programmes that were designed to build sustainable security were implemented close at hand. I found myself in a similar position in Sierra Leone, I sense that it was more by accident than design, but the close working relationship with all the agencies in Freetown, the lack of capacity in PJHQ and our ability to get a cross-sector message up to the Cabinet quickly meant that we were largely left to get on with delivering the strategic intent.

In Iraq and Afghanistan the reverse was the case. All the major influencers were represented in Kabul, it was here, the Theatre level, where they came together and where the effective implementation of a comprehensive operational plan, that was synchronised with the 'host' nation, could be executed. This would have been no easy feat, but it would have been considerably easier if the principal nations (other than the US) who were contributing to the campaign could have subscribed to this approach. But with the Germans far more worried about what was going on in Masir Sharif, the Canadians in Kandahar and the British in part of Helmand it was



never possible to get proper delegated authority to the level where the majority of the multinational and multilateral influences came together. I found it intensely frustrating that the CDS at the time would ring the Brigade Commander in Helmand on most Mondays before OPCOS, but he never rang to find out what was going on across the country as a whole. This meant that the discussions around the Chiefs of Staff's table, and the direction that came out of them were all about a tactical battle without sufficient Operational or Theatre context. I fear that this was also reflected at an even higher level where everything revolved around Helmand, and not the levers that might be pulled elsewhere to create the conditions for strategic rather than tactical success.

So better understanding and investment in the Theatre level is fundamental if we are to increase our effectiveness in the future. One easy way to trigger this would be to remove the PJHQ. I believe that the PJHQ is part of this problem since I have always found it to be an unhelpful additional layer in the hierarchy. While it probably makes the deployment, sustainment and recovery of forces more efficient, it does not add value to the operational chain of command, and is very definitely not at the Operational level of conflict. The reasons are that it tends to be distracted by tactical issues, it has too many areas of interest, and it is detached from the cross Government and strategic multinational debate, adding an extra, unnecessary layer to the Defence chain. From my perspective reconsidering the requirement for the PJHQ would not only offer the opportunity for savings, but it would also provide an excellent catalyst for reframing the British approach to the contemporary security challenge.

Conclusion

I am standing outside the main entrance to the Olympic Park, the airport style security lanes are flowing smoothly as the public enter for the forth morning of the London 2012 Games. There have been no British Gold medals yet and the big news story has been the large number of vacant seats in stadiums. There is something of a holiday atmosphere, the banter between the ticket holders and the venue security staff is light-hearted. A member of the public comes up to me and thanks me profusely for all that we are doing, in his words, to 'save' the Olympics. Returning to my opening remarks this was an extraordinary reminder for me of the gulf in understanding between some of the institutions of state and the public. For the last year we had been told by the Home Office that these were to be the 'Blue' games. The militarisation of the Beijing Games would not be repeated here. The military would not be needed. And now, 16 days after the contract to provide venue security had failed we had mobilised over 20 thousand troops. The public were delighted, whether we deserved it or not the general sense of reassurance that things would be alright now that the Armed Forces were involved was palpable. It made me realise, whatever the politics, the public do respect their Armed Forces, but we need to give them opportunities to do so. They also believe that we can save them when the chips are down, I do hope that this is going to be the case.

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