

Archived Content

Information identified as archived on the Web is for reference, research or record-keeping purposes. It has not been altered or updated after the date of archiving. Web pages that are archived on the Web are not subject to the Government of Canada Web Standards.

As per the [Communications Policy of the Government of Canada](#), you can request alternate formats on the "[Contact Us](#)" page.

Information archivée dans le Web

Information archivée dans le Web à des fins de consultation, de recherche ou de tenue de documents. Cette dernière n'a aucunement été modifiée ni mise à jour depuis sa date de mise en archive. Les pages archivées dans le Web ne sont pas assujetties aux normes qui s'appliquent aux sites Web du gouvernement du Canada.

Conformément à la [Politique de communication du gouvernement du Canada](#), vous pouvez demander de recevoir cette information dans tout autre format de rechange à la page « [Contactez-nous](#) ».



CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE / COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES
CSC 31 / CCEM 31

EXERCISE/EXERCICE

New Horizons

27 April 2005

**The Royal Navy's Future Aircraft Carrier Program – Key to the United Kingdom's
Global Political, Military and Economic Aspirations.**

By /par Lieutenant Commander S P L Staley Royal Navy

This paper was written by a student attending the Canadian Forces College in fulfilment of one of the requirements of the Course of Studies. The paper is a scholastic document, and thus contains facts and opinions which the author alone considered appropriate and correct for the subject. It does not necessarily reflect the policy or the opinion of any agency, including the Government of Canada and the Canadian Department of National Defence. This paper may not be released, quoted or copied except with the express permission of the Canadian Department of National Defence.

La présente étude a été rédigée par un stagiaire du Collège des Forces canadiennes pour satisfaire à l'une des exigences du cours. L'étude est un document qui se rapporte au cours et contient donc des faits et des opinions que seul l'auteur considère appropriés et convenables au sujet. Elle ne reflète pas nécessairement la politique ou l'opinion d'un organisme quelconque, y compris le gouvernement du Canada et le ministère de la Défense nationale du Canada. Il est défendu de diffuser, de citer ou de reproduire cette étude sans la permission expresse du ministère de la Défense nationale

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARG	Amphibious Ready Group
BA	British Army
C4ISR	Command, Control, Computer, Communications, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance.
CAG	Carrier Air Group
CAS	Close Air Support
CMR	Core Maritime Roles
CVBG	Aircraft Carrier, Battle Group
CVF	Aircraft Carrier, Future
CVS	Aircraft Carrier, Anti Submarine
DCA	Defensive Counter Air
ESDP	European Security and Defense Policy
EU	European Union
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FGR	Flexible Global Reach
FNOC	Future Navy Operational Concepts
FNS	French Naval Ship
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HMS	Her Majesty's Ship
HNS	Host Nation Support
HQ	Head Quarters
ISD	In Service Date
JSF	Joint Strike Fighter
MASC	Maritime Airborne Surveillance and Control
MCJO	Maritime Contribution to Joint Operations

MFP	Maritime Force Projection
MOD	Ministry Of Defense
MPA	Maritime Patrol Aircraft
NATO	North Atlantic Treaties Organization
RAF	Royal Air Force
RN	Royal Navy
SDR	Strategic Defense Review
SLOCs	Sea Lines Of Communications
SoSD	Secretary of State for Defense
STOVL	Short Take Off and Vertical Landing
TE	Theatre Entry
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UK	United Kingdom
UKMarSy	United Kingdom Maritime Security
USA	United States of America
VMF	Versatile Maritime Force

The ability to deploy offensive airpower will be central to future force protection operations. But we cannot be certain that we will always have access to suitable air bases. Even when we do, experience has shown that bases may not always be available in the early stages of a crisis, and that their infrastructure is not always able to support the full range of operations required. In these and a range of other operational circumstances, aircraft carriers can provide valuable flexibility. They can also offer a coercive presence, which may for stall the need for war fighting.¹

In its far reaching 1998 Strategic Defense Review (SDR), the British Government set out its stall with regards to how it was to arm its forces for credible deterrence as well ensuring leverage on the world stage up until 2020 and beyond.² In his forward for the SDR, George Robertson, then the Secretary of State for Defense (SoSD), espoused that, by encapsulating policy, strategy, diplomacy, operations, technology, logistics, and procurement as integral parts of the defense process, the SDR provided “Britain’s Armed Forces with a new sense of clarity, coherence and consensus”.³

Seven years down the road after the publication of the SDR, it is clear that the paper was a watershed for the Royal Navy (RN). It discarded the last vestiges of cold war thinking and recast the service as a maritime enabler for joint force projection, emphasizing expeditionary operations in the littoral and power projection ashore. This doctrinal shift was encapsulated in the Maritime Contribution to Joint Operations (MCJO), the overarching framework guiding the RN following the SDR. In 1999, the Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Boyce, stated that the MCJO ‘signaled the full extent of the shift away from anti-submarine operations in the Eastern Atlantic towards littoral operations almost anywhere in the world.’⁴

¹United Kingdom. Ministry of Defense. Strategic Defense Review. (London, HMSO, 1998).

² United Kingdom. Ministry of Defense. Future Maritime Operational Concept. (Portsmouth, Royal Navy Graphics Center, 2004).

³ Strategic Defense Review. 1998...., Forward.

In equipment terms, the boldest decision in the SDR was the replacement of the RN's three current Anti Submarine Aircraft Carriers (CVS) when they reach the end of their planned life in 2013.⁵ They will be replaced by two much larger platforms to be called the Aircraft Carrier Future (CVF).⁶

These new carriers will have to cope with increasingly heavy and more flexible demands and have the capability to deploy and operate aircraft effectively and without Host Nation Support (HNS) in a hostile environment. At the other end of the spectrum they will also have to provide full humanitarian support operations in a civil emergency too.

Already named as Her Majesty's Ships (HMS) Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales,⁷ the projected In Service Date (ISD) for the first of the two hulls is October 2012 and the second is 2015.⁸ They will be equipped with and operate the Short Take-Off and Vertical Landing (STOVL) version of the Lockheed Martin F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF), the yet to be decided on Maritime Airborne Surveillance and Control (MASC) platform, and helicopters in a wide variety of roles that could include anti-submarine warfare, attack and support. At approximately 60,000 tonnes, they will be the largest ships built for the RN and will incorporate advanced and innovative technology, bring much needed prestige and employment to the United Kingdom's (UK) ship building yards and, it is hoped, lay the blue prints for other

⁴BR1806. Naval Staff Directorate. *British Maritime Doctrine*. Edition 2, (London, HMSO. 1999). Forward.

⁵ Jane's Navy International. *Fleet Review: Royal Navy poised to perform another rebalancing act*, vol. 109, no 3, (April 2004), 32.

⁶ Rear Admiral R T R Phillips RN, Nick Hooper, Prof Martin Edmonds, Malcolm Bird, Sir Moray Stewart and others. *British Naval Aviation in the 21st Century*. Bailrigg Memorandum 25. CDISS, (Lancaster University, 1997), Glossary of Acronyms, 4.

⁷ Navy Matters, 'Future Aircraft Carrier – CVF. Part 7'; available from www.beedall.com/fm/cvfl-7.htm; Internet; accessed 06 March 05.

countries to buy into for their own new platforms: France, for example, for its second carrier which will be conventional rather than nuclear and has a promulgated ISD of 2015.⁹

However, albeit a long way down the road in the design procurement process, the actual arrival in service of the two CVF is far from certain. This paper will argue that failure by the UK's Government to acquire CVF will have a detrimental impact on its Foreign and Defense Policies and thus ability to influence and direct world events as it aspires to do as a leading power on the global stage.

So, after a brief look at the UK's carrier history, the paper will outline why, as an Island nation, sea power will remain fundamental to the UK in the 21st century; why the CVF is key to future British Foreign and Defense Policies by explaining the actual roles envisioned for the carrier(s) within a Versatile Maritime Force (VMF);¹⁰ what impact the CVF will have with regards relationships with America, NATO and Europe; and finally, identify the political and economic implication that make the whole CVF project vulnerable to cancellation despite being so far down the road to date.

'Sea Power grants the ability to control geo-strategic terms of war . . . the state which most effectively harnesses sea power wins wars'.¹¹

Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty in 1913, foresaw the possibilities of 'Aeroplane Depot Ships'¹² and instigated the conversion of cruisers,

⁸ Jane's Navy International. Fleet Review: *Royal Navy poised to perform another rebalancing act*, vol 109, no 3, (April 2004). 35.

⁹Ministry Of Defense. 'Future Aircraft Carrier', available from: www.mod.uk/dpa/projects/cvf.htm; Internet; accessed 08 March 2005.

¹⁰ Ministry of Defense. Future Maritime Operational Concept. 2004.

¹¹ BR1806. British Maritime Doctrine, 1999...,180.

colliers and former cross channel ferries into sea plane carriers. Thereafter, realizing the advantages that such platforms brought, ships were built specifically as dedicated aircraft carriers.¹³

From the first experiments in flying aircraft from warships in 1913, the UK went on to harness the potential, inherent flexibility and power of the aircraft carrier. They became crucial to her victory and the subsequent outcome of World War II (WWII). In the Atlantic Ocean, UK carriers proved key in the eventual protection of the trade routes so vital for the sustainability of the allied global war effort, and in the Mediterranean the decimation of the Italian Fleet in Toranto Harbour by aircraft launched from the carriers HMS *Illustrious* and *Eagle* resulted in the rebalancing of naval power in the region.

Whilst no major battles on the scale of those in WWII have been witnessed since 1945, the RN's carriers have continued to operate in distant theatres of conflict in support of the UK's Foreign policy. However, they have not been used in the traditional manner envisaged, namely carrier v carrier, and therefore, the role of these very expensive assets in future policy has had to be clearly defined in order to justify their costs and existence.

Indeed, increasing pressure to reduce the UK Defense budget, coupled with the condensation of Foreign Policy interests, has raised serious questions about the UK's requirement for aircraft carriers at all. With the decommissioning of HMS *Eagle* and *Ark Royal* in the late 70s, the decision was taken to phase out the existing

¹²John Keegan. 'Churchill - Memorandum of 1 Sep 1913'. (London, Weidenfield and Nicolson, 2003).

¹³HMS *Hermes* is recognized as the worlds first being laid down on 15 Jan 1918 and completed in 1924. Humphrey Crum Ewing and Eric Grove. '*Aircraft Carriers: Their current and*

conventional carriers and procure the current CVS in order to specialize in the anti-submarine role, a role seen as crucial for the RN and NATO during the cold war.

But, as the Soviet threat collapsed “. . . it became clear that a new military paradigm needed to be established to compliment the political . . . new world order”.¹⁴ In 1981, John Nott, the SoSD, presided over a defense review that concentrated on the defense of Western Europe, not the USA and the Atlantic. In his SDR, he clearly cited obligations to NATO in Europe as being first in the UK’s order of priorities.¹⁵ Had it not been for the success of HMS Hermes and Invincible in the 1982 Falkland Islands conflict then, it is quite possible that the UK’s global carrier capability would have been lost altogether.

Post 1990, UK Foreign Policy began to realign to a more interventionist profile as demonstrated during post cold war ops such as the 1991 Gulf War and the early to mid 90s’ Balkans conflict. The reprieve of the UK’s carrier ensured that CVS was able to operate in both theatres and thus sent a clear message that the RN would continue to represent the UK’s interests on a global scale. This was captured in the RN’s new doctrinal manual, BR1806, which stated that: “For the first time in over 200 years the UK is in a position to think about politico strategic issues freed from the immediate need to defend its own territory . . . to take full advantage of the potential of maritime power and deploy it in direct support of UK interests wherever in the world”.¹⁶

Prospective Role in Power Projection. Bailrigg Memorandum 35. (CDISS, Lancaster University, 1997). 6.

¹⁴George Bush Snr. “*New World Order*”. Speech to US Congress. 6 Mar 1991, available from www.al-bab.com/arab/docs/pal/pal10.htm; Internet; accessed 12 February 2005.

¹⁵ *The Historical Context: Select Committee on Defense*, available from www.parliament-the-stationary-office.com/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmdfence/138/13804.htm; Internet; accesses 07 March 2005.

¹⁶BR 1806. British Maritime Doctrine, 1991...,161.

But to be honest, the CVS has lacked any real capability due to its size and limited Carrier Air Group (CAG). As a diplomatic tool it has certainly proved useful for showing commitment to coalition operations, but as a power projection asset it has paled into insignificance when compared to the full sized aircraft carrier operated by the United States Navy (USN). Faced by further financial and equipment cuts, the RN's ability to conduct future unitary operations has started to become more and more limited compared to the United States of America (USA), the world's only superpower. Fortunately, the 1998 SDR identified this disparity early and determined a requirement to redress the problem. The procurement of the future carrier(s) was ordered to ensure continued UK influence as a maritime nation.

There are three fundamental reasons why the sea remains critical to the interests of the UK and therefore, its current and future investments to protect its access to it.

Firstly, trade. Britain's dependence on worldwide trade requires it to be equipped and able to defend its interests by the rapid projection of power to areas where conflict threatens to destabilize or damage them.¹⁷ In 2002, UK transatlantic and global sea trade was some £255 billion in export and £300 billion in imports of goods (the equivalent of 20% of UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP)).¹⁸ From these figures it is clear that continued freedom of access and security of Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) are vital to the survivability of the UK, an island nation.

Secondly, ocean resources. They have the potential to generate great wealth and disputes over their control can quickly lead to confrontation; it would be naïve to

¹⁷The Strategic Defense Review, 1998.

¹⁸Department of Trade and Industry, '*UK Trade and Investment*', available from www.dti.gov.uk/ewt/uktrade.htm; Internet; accessed 07 March 2005.

believe that regulation and negotiation alone resolves these disputes. Oil and gas from global land reserves are being burned up at an alarming rate and so offshore installations are becoming increasingly more important to any country. Fish stocks are not unlimited as once thought of either, and high tech harvesting of many species has become unsustainable. This is a problem as the demand of the population for food coupled with inefficiency of agriculture on land has made fishing a preferred way of getting enough protein. Both oil/gas and fish resources have the potential to be future sources of major conflict as stocks of the commodities continue to dwindle and demand nationally and internationally exceed supply. Therefore, with energy and oceans so inseparably linked, they will remain high on the list of national interests, especially for the UK, for the foreseeable future.

Thirdly, continued military access. Britain's previous role as an imperial nation has left it a legacy of close ties with former colonies. Some 10 million British citizens live overseas and there are 14 dependant territories for which Britain is responsible. They range from the tiny Pitcairn with 47 inhabitants to Bermuda with 62,059.¹⁹ The need to project military power to defend these interests or to provide aid to them is an obligation, and an obligation that the UK takes seriously as demonstrated in the Falklands in 1982. Unhindered use of the sea was and still is required to deploy the UK's Armed Forces in support of Government policy and military tasks. Realistically, the UK's only viable strategic lift capability is sea based which thus allows for forces to be poised in a significant proportion of the world via the littoral. This is traditionally called 'Gunboat Diplomacy'²⁰ or leverage.²¹

¹⁹Anguilla, British Antarctic Territory, Bermuda, British Indian Ocean Territory, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Island, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat, St Helena and dependencies (Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha), Turks and Caicos Islands, and Sovereign base areas in Cyprus. Foreign and Commonwealth Office. '*A strategy for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office*', available from <http://www.fco.gov.uk>; Internet; accessed 28 March 2005.

Of note, with an increasingly recognized shift towards the coast, by 2030 it is anticipated that 75% of the world's population could be living within 80 kilometers of the sea. Also, 80% of the world's capitals and 125 cities with a population of over one million are now within 485km of a coastline.²² Couple this with new and improving military capabilities and it can be seen that a major conflict will most likely always have a maritime dimension due to the fact that military power can now be projected from sea deep into a land locked state.

These three factors then have led the British Government to conclude that one of the core fundamentals in the SDR was 'the continuing and vital importance of the sea to Britain'.²³ Having accepted this, the SDR went on to emphasize that 'littoral operations and force projection...will be our primary focus'.²⁴ CVF then will be the UK's pivotal tool for the job.

*The aircraft carrier is an actor that comes on stage in the first act . . . sometimes during the prologue . . . makes an early appearance, generally alone, and takes rapid action once the second act begins.*²⁵

Only an aircraft carrier, as defined in the SDR, can fulfill the requirements of the Government and RN. The recognition of the key role an aircraft carrier can play in

²⁰ 'Colloquial expression for naval diplomacy – the use of naval force in support of diplomacy to support, persuade, deter or compel'. BR 1806. British Maritime Doctrine. 1991...,223.

²¹ 'Disproportionate strategic or operational advantage gained by the use of a form of military power to exploit its geographical circumstances'. *Ibid.*, 215.

²² Peter Hayden. 'The Strategic Importance of the Oceans'. Maritime Affairs. (Spring 2002).

²³ Strategic Defense Review. 1998.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

coercive diplomacy had already been formalized by the US in their 1994 doctrine ‘Forward...from the Sea’.²⁶ This identifies the Aircraft Carrier Battle Group (CVBG) as the corner stone in establishing ‘presence’,²⁷ a term which closely aligns to what the FNOC calls ‘Maritime Leverage’ and incorporates deterrence and global presence as well as coercion.²⁸

The Ministry of Defense (MOD) has identified that the acquisition of the CVF will allow the UK to project power in a similar manner to the US and has stated that ‘[By] placing one of these carriers in international waters off another country it becomes a flexible tool and it focuses the mind of the people we are trying to influence’.²⁹

However, given MOD budget constraints and industry complications, the precise design and set up of the CVF is still being deliberated upon. What is clear though is that the combination of CVF and JSF will ensure such synergy that multiple missions for each aircraft will be flown daily, thereby significantly increasing the CVFs effectiveness and capability in any given environment.³⁰

²⁵ Marine Nationale de France. ‘Operational functions’, available from http://www.defense.gouv.fr/marine/anglais/present/dim/d_missions.html; Internet; accessed 14 March 2005.

²⁶ United States Navy “Forward...From the Sea” Nov 1994, available from <http://www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpulib/policy/fromsea/forward.txt>; Internet; accessed 07 March 2005.

²⁷ ‘The exercise of naval diplomacy in a general way of involving deployments, port visits, exercising, and routine operating in areas of interest to declare interest, reassure friends and allies, and to deter’. Leadmark. ‘The Navy’s Strategy for 2020’. (Ontario: The Directorate of Maritime Strategy, 2001), GL17.

²⁸ Royal Navy. ‘Future Navy Operational Concept’, available from <http://www.royal-navy.mod.uk/static/pages/data/FNOC.pdf>; Internet; accessed 23 February 2005.

²⁹ ‘Defence Staff all at sea over Re-equipping Armed Forces’, *Financial Times*, 23 Dec 2003, archive, available from <http://www.ft.com>; Internet; accessed 21 March 2005.

³⁰ Michael Evans, ‘Sea Lord picks his site for Battle over Navy Cuts’, *The Times*, 16 Jan 2004, archive, available from <http://timesonline.co.uk>; Internet; accessed 12 Feb 2005.

The SDR was ‘a Foreign Policy led strategic defense review to reassess Britain’s security interests and defense needs and consider how roles, missions and capabilities of [its] Armed Forces should be adjusted to meet the new strategic realities’.³¹ In its application of policies, the UK Foreign Office would seem closely related to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan’s view that ‘you can do a lot with diplomacy but, of course, you can do a lot more with diplomacy backed up with firmness and force’.³² For the UK, key lessons learnt from past periods of friction have been that, for your coercive diplomacy to be credible, the capability of the force you send to conduct the coercion must also be credible.

In the ‘Strategy for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)’ paper, the UK government set out eight strategic priorities that require a focus in the coming 5-10 years.³³ All but two are concerned with security aspects in the international domain and seek ‘a world safer from global terrorism and weapons of mass destruction’, along with the need to secure ‘UK and global energy supplies’.³⁴ Through necessity then, further development will be required with regard to the multi-national interventionist principles the Government is espousing, as well as unilateral should the situation warrant it.

Although at pains to acknowledge the role of NATO as ‘essential’ to the UK’s security interests, it is of note that within the FCO’s strategic priorities, NATO is not mentioned once. Instead, it sets out the requirements for ‘an effective European

³¹ Strategic Defense Review.1998..., Introduction.

³² John Lancaster. ‘Iraq is happy with pact on inspections’, Washington Post, 24 Feb 1998, archive, available from www.wpni.com/wp-sn/inatl/longterm/iraq/stories/iraq022498.htm; Internet; accessed 27 February 2005.

³³ Foreign and Commonwealth Office. ‘UK International Priorities: A strategy for the FCO’, available from <http://www.fco.gov.uk>; Internet; accessed 27 March 2005.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

Union (EU) in a secure neighborhood'³⁵ thus indicating a much stronger commitment to the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP).

However, whilst firmly embedding itself in Europe and the future single foreign policy, it must not be forgotten that UK links with the US military are of diplomatic significance in their own right.

The USA is 'an indispensable partner for our security'³⁶ and UK Foreign Policy emphasis's the need for a continued close relationship and ability to work them at the high end of the operational spectrum. An element of this relationship is not only ensuring that the UK armed forces are valued by the US, but also ensuring that they can be interoperable with them. The UK must remain mindful though that the capability gap between the US and the rest of the World is growing and her allies are having to race to keep up with US technology, particularly if they wish to remain able to influence US decision-making, an issue they failed to achieve in the 2004 Iraq War.

Whilst the arrival of CVF is extremely unlikely to fundamentally alter the FCO's policies and strategic priorities, it is possible that it may have subtle effects in the enactment or expression of them. There are three areas where the CVF card may have an influence: the relationships with the US, the relationship with the EU and the potential for a wider world role.

Having made the commitment to purchase CVF, the UK, and possibly France, are likely to be seen as the only two European nations that can significantly contribute to US and coalition power projection in many areas of the world. The danger here is that the UK may find herself being drawn into operations in spheres normally outside

³⁵ Foreign and Commonwealth Office. '*UK International Priorities: A strategy for the FCO*', available from <http://www.fco.gov.uk>; Internet; accessed 27 March 2005.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

her influence or concern, China for example, by dint of being one of only a couple of nation capable of providing what the US needs, or would like, to assist.³⁷

Similarly, by adopting a strategy that ties the UK ever more strongly to the US, it may cause concern over the relationships with other nations, particularly within the EU. Although aware of the need to remain involved with the ESDP, there could be an impression that, by operating a carrier with such close similarities to USN carriers (both design and equipment), the UK is trying to be more aligned to the US's policies, which may have a potential impact on the development of both UK and EU policies.

It is in relations with the EU itself that the CVF may have additional influence to that envisaged by the Foreign Office. On the positive side, there are indications of the potential for closer co-operation, particularly with the French, who have recently announced their intention to acquire a conventionally powered aircraft carrier to support the nuclear powered FNS Charles De Gaulle.³⁸

One of the weaknesses in the UK's plan to only purchase two new aircraft carriers is the continuing need to rotate through refits and the like. This leads to the CVF not in refit or maintenance being permanently 'on duty', whether in port in the UK or on a visit to the Far East for example. By co-coordinating efforts and availability with the French, it may be possible to relieve some of the pressures this would bring. Both the UK and the French Governments have therefore, signed a draft proposal to pool military resources and thus ensure that there is 'one battle ready aircraft carrier at sea at all times' to fulfill international commitments.³⁹ Inevitably

³⁷ 'All at sea', James Meek, *The Guardian*, 21 Jan 2004, archive, available from <http://www.futuregate.co.uk>; Internet; accessed 21 Feb 2005.

³⁸ Space War. 'Thales Seeks British Help to Win French Aircraft Carrier Project', available from www.spacewar.com/2003/031019023126.y154z8yn.html; Internet; accessed 27 February 2005.

such co-operation would require a degree of common approach to foreign policy and would naturally be seen as a cornerstone to the ESDP, reinforcing both Euro-ophile and Euro-skeptics arguments alike.

Given the stated Foreign Policy of ensuring an effective EU, the UK, along with the US, would like the collective European armed forces to take more of a leading role in Europe. CVF will ensure the RN continues to be regarded at the forefront of European navies, but in a manner similar to the capability divide between the US and the rest of the world. However, the major European nations wish to attempt to keep up with the US will probably only result in another divide within Europe. The issues outlined earlier in regard to the US-EU divide would then equally apply to the '2-tier' Europe, again providing a potential influence on a future foreign policy.

The last area of Foreign Policy that may be influenced by CVF procurement is that regarding the UK's wider role in world security and stability. The CVF's enhanced capabilities, and indeed size, will increase the potential 'diplomatic' effect when in a region or off the coast of a particular country. However, the temptation to use this increased coercive capability could mean that the options for its use move up in priority over other non-military options. At the same time, more nations around the globe are developing, or attempting to develop, sophisticated naval capabilities including a desire to acquire aircraft carriers: China for example.⁴⁰ The increased threat from these nations exerting a wider influence at sea is not negligible and the US now appears to be advocating opportunities to adopt a more inclusive policy with

³⁹British Broadcasting Corporation. "UK and France boost defense ties", available from www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/2726111.stm. Internet; accessed 13 March 2005.

⁴⁰Bruce Ellerman. 'China's New "Imperial" Navy'. Naval War College Review. Summer 2002, vol VI, no 3.

these nations by conducting joint exercises or other confidence building measures.⁴¹ The potential to ‘gain’ more by co-operation than by coercion should not be overlooked, whilst not forgetting the value of coercion should it be necessary. Under increasing US pressure, the UK could therefore find itself conducting foreign policy, militarily, with nations it would not normally have considered as within its sphere of influence on the grounds of improving worldwide security through better understanding and interaction.⁴²

Of course the UK’s position in the world order must also be considered. Respected in world politics and as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the UK has significant Foreign Policy resources and will naturally seek to maintain or even enhance them. The impact of these issues is the need to ‘[improve] capabilities in order to be able to undertake operations’.⁴³ A key requirement of the military then, in supporting the Foreign Office’s strategic objectives, is to be a credible force enabling it to remain the partner of choice for the US military, whilst at the same time assume a leading (if not *the* leading) role in Europe. UK FCO policy ‘demands flexibility and deploy-ability . . . heavily dependant on naval airpower’ and therefore, ‘carrier based air power . . . is a necessity’.⁴⁴ This has thus impacted on the UK’s Defense Policy, which has had to evolve in response to the changing strategic environment.

⁴¹ International. ‘*US exercises multi purpose*’, available from www.china.org.cn/english/international/100631.htm; Internet; accessed 17 March 2005.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Foreign and Commonwealth Office. ‘*UK International Priorities: A strategy for the FCO*’, available from <http://www.fco.gov.uk>; Internet; accessed 27 March 2005.

⁴⁴ David J Jordan. ‘*Future Carrier Aviation Options, A British Perspective*’. Naval War College Review, (Summer 2001), vol LIV, no3. 73.

To be fair, the UK's Defense Policy has acknowledged the requirement for improved capabilities, particularly of deployable, mobile and sustainable forces and the need to maintain a qualitative edge.⁴⁵ The current defense missions, although encompassing many of the traditional roles, have also been refocused to reflect current priorities laid down by the FCO. Significantly, the formalization of Defense Diplomacy as a defense mission has, from the RN's perspective, reinforced their pivotal role and potential for use across the spectrum of diplomatic missions, from confidence building to coercion.⁴⁶

Key to the FNOC is the concept of a VMF, which will be able to 'swing' between a range of mission types as directed or required by the Government of the day.⁴⁷ FNOC attempts to develop the concept into an expression of five Core Maritime Roles (CMR) that will guide the RN's "efficiency and effectiveness in joint and multinational war-fighting in the maritime and littoral environments".⁴⁸ Those five capabilities are Maritime Force Projection (MFP), Theatre Entry (TE), Flexible Global Reach (FGR), UK Maritime Security (UKMarSy) and network Command, Control, Computer, Communication, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR). Combined, these capabilities naturally lead to the flexibility, size, scale, and effect that an aircraft carrier, specifically the new CVF, can offer.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Ministry Of Defense. 'Defense Policy 2001', available from <http://www.mod.uk/issues/policy2001>; Internet; accessed 12 Feb 2005.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Ministry Of Defense. 'Future Navy Operational Concept', available from <http://www.royal-navy.mod.uk/static/pages/data/FNOC.pdf>; Internet, accessed 17 Jan 2005.

⁴⁸ Director of Naval Staff Duties. 'Rolling Brief – Future Naval Operational Concepts'. Ministry of Defense (Navy), (London, Nov 2002).

⁴⁹ Director of Naval Staff Duties. 'Rolling Brief – Future Naval Operational Concepts'. Ministry of Defense (Navy), (London, Nov 2002).

Effectively the SDR set out to re-orientate the UK Armed Forces capabilities and endorsed the need for a ‘large’ aircraft carrier to enable government military policy of ‘force projection and littoral operations [and] versatility and deploy ability’.⁵⁰ Whilst acknowledging that the CVF is not just a naval asset, BR1806 also clearly states that joint is far more than single services coming together but that it extends to multinational operations as a matter of course’.⁵¹ So as well as the obvious benefits it brings to maritime operations for the RN, CVF will contribute significantly to the joint battlespace bringing full support to the Royal Air Force (RAF) and British Army (BA) from the sea wherever and whenever directed.

Unique to the UK, CVF will be the ability to control both the open ocean and littoral simultaneously. It could be argued that the extended reach of CVF’s air wing is, in fact, extending what is defined as the littoral, but, either way, the CVF will be able to ‘swing’ to meet open ocean threats much faster than other naval forces, current or future.⁵² It should also be remembered that Sea Control is the facilitator to all maritime operations and the added capability that CVF will bring is seen as significant step forward in terms of flexibility and reach.⁵³

Within the three services the competition for funding via the Defense Budget is of course bloody. But the SDR’s commitment to CVF has seen the RN’s profile in ascendance, despite promised cut backs in other platform acquisitions: “appropriating money for a carrier usually means reducing appropriations for something else . . .

⁵⁰David J Jordan. “*Future Carrier Aviation Options, A British Perspective*” . . . , 66.

⁵¹ BR1806. British Maritime Doctrine. 1999 . . . , 161.

⁵² BR1806. British Maritime Doctrine. 1999 . . . , 167.

⁵³‘The condition that exists when one has freedom of action to use an area of sea for one’s own purpose for a period of time and, if necessary, deny its use to an opponent. Sea control includes the airspace above the surface of the water volume and sea bed below it’. *Ibid.*, 232.

other shipbuilding projects, other Navy programmes”.⁵⁴ An example of this is the early retirement of the Type 22 frigate HMS Sheffield in 2002 (saving the RN some 20million a year) and subsequent announcements of the retirement of two Type 23 frigates and 3 Type 42 destroyers.⁵⁵

There are of course continuing questions about the necessity of aircraft carriers for middle ranking powers as, by virtue of its considerable costs, it is an unnecessary luxury. Friedman states, “Navies are . . . highly capital and technology intensive, and are expensive to replace” and by far the most expensive item is the carrier.⁵⁶

Despite all that has gone before in this essay, the final issue with the CVF that could have an effect on UK Defense and Foreign Policies is that of its failure to be delivered as planned, or even at all. Whilst the CVF project is still at an early stage and no firm decisions have yet been taken, there is open speculation that mismatches between the £2.9 billion contract and the intended size of the carriers could result in downsizing and hence loss of capability.⁵⁷ The Thales/BAE Systems consortium are now estimating that to build the new carriers as the MOD has stated will cost more conservatively in the region of £4 billion each.⁵⁸

Two concerns arise from this mismatch. Firstly the inability to reconcile these discrepancies could cause the project to be cancelled, and secondly, that CVF would

⁵⁴John Birkler. ‘*Options for Funding Aircraft Carriers*’. RAND Institute. 2002. iii.

⁵⁵ Navy News, available from www.navynews.co.uk/articles/2002/0210/0002101701.asp. Internet, accessed 11 Dec 2004.

⁵⁶ Norman Friedman. ‘*Sea power as Strategy: Navies and National Interests*’. (Annapolis, Maryland. Naval Institute Press. 2001). 42.

⁵⁷ ‘Vital Statistics in Carrier Battle’, *The Times*, 10 March 2004, archive, available from <http://timesonline.co.uk>; Internet; accessed 12 Feb 2005.

⁵⁸ ‘Navy’s Carriers Shrink Before They Hit Water’, *The Times*, 15 Oct 2004, p. 23, archive, available from <http://timesonline.co.uk>; Internet; accessed 12 Feb 2005.

be scaled back to meet the budget. This might curtail its capacity and capability to such an extent as to render the carriers unsuitable for their intended roles within the RN's 5 core maritime roles and therefore, the current defense missions defined by the Defense Policy as discussed earlier.

The second argument is that the failure to develop CVF would result in the UK having to moderate its global aspirations and policies and finally accept its place as a Rank 3 Medium Global Force Projection power.⁵⁹ Whilst detractors would claim this would not be before time, significantly this argument might also be the strongest that supports the UK's continued push for and introduction of the CVF. Whilst accepting that capability, and not size, should be the key driver, without a carrier with the capability to project power as required within the FCO's global priorities, the UK could find itself unable to match up to its Government's interventionist aspirations or indeed its prestigious and powerful positions in global organizations. This may serve the effect of creating even stronger UK Foreign Policy ties to the US as the only natural ally that can realistically project power. This however, may cause an irreparable divide within Europe as the far reaching decisions on a collective foreign and defense policy become finalized.

Defense Policy would also be affected by the cancellation or downsizing of CVF. The cancellation of the project would result in large-scale adjustments to future plans, both from the MOD and RN's perspective. It is also possible, nay probable, that inter-service wrangling and in-fighting would be renewed as to how the capability gap might now be best filled and how the funds freed up by the cancellation, might best be utilized. The introduction of CVF with reduced capabilities could only result

⁵⁹Leadmark. *The Navy's Strategy for 2020*. (Ontario: The Directorate of Maritime Strategy, 2001), 44.

in their role being confined to one similar to that of the current CVS, that is of one more symbolic than one of true power projection.

The ability to produce combat aircraft without the need for HNS, when and wherever a Government requires or directs it, is a fundamental capability that an aircraft carrier provides. The UK has a proud history of operating these war-winning platforms and, having so nearly lost them in the early 80's, the 1998 SDR, led by Foreign and Defense Policy initiatives, identified the requirement to retain and indeed enhance its carrier capability. It is understandable why the First Sea Lord is publicly adamant that the CVF remains his highest priority.⁶⁰

*The object of [the] ship is to shoot airplanes off the pointy end and catch them back on the blunt end. The rest is detail.*⁶¹

In closing then this paper has shown that, as an island nation, the UK is dependent on its continued access to, and use of, the sea - coastally and globally - for its immense import and export trade, for its security of oil/gas and fish resources, and in order to deploy its military might in support of the UK's diplomatic and/or coercive stance. The new CVF is key to that ability and therefore its arrival in service to replace the current CVS is vital.

⁶⁰ Michael Evans, 'Sea Lord picks his site for Battle over Navy Cuts', *The Times*, 16 Jan 2004, archive, available from <http://timesonline.co.uk>; Internet; accessed 12 Feb 2005.

⁶¹ Gene I Rochlin, Todd R La Porte, and Karlene H Roberts. '*The Self-Designing High Reliability Organization. Aircraft Carrier Flight Operations at Sea*'. Naval War College Review. Summer 1998. Vol L1 No3. 109

This paper has shown that, as a long term member of NATO, a permanent member of the UNSC, and now as a lead nation in the ESDP, its Foreign Policy is now driving the UK towards credible contributions to multinational operations whilst retaining a purely unilateral ability to support its own overseas interests and dependencies. It has moved away from its Cold War stovepipe focus to one that now seeks a world safer from global terrorism and WMD. If it is to remain the partner of choice for the USA, retain leading status in European defense, and have military credibility to back up its own diplomatic rhetoric, only the introduction to service of CVF will guarantee this coveted interaction and influence through 2020 and beyond.

This paper has shown that UK Defense Policy is evolving in response to the new vision expressed in UK Foreign Policy. It calls for armed forces with improved capabilities that must ensure deployability, mobility, and sustainability. The RN has grasped this concept early and, through its FNOC, has identified 5 CMRs' that, with clear and fully joint aspirations, is driving the fleet forward to support land, sea and air operations from the littoral. In an environment where money is extremely tight and where each armed force is having to cut numbers and some capabilities, the CVF offers a single platform that can deploy, loiter, act decisively through power projection, support forces ashore, and then withdraw quickly without the need for HNS or a big footprint ashore. It is a key joint enabler and vital to the UK's military ability and credibility world wide, especially as such nations as China vi for greater maritime status.

Finally, this paper has also shown that the delivery into service of HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales in its current concept is far from certain. It may not even be built at all. Their detractors argue that the cost, already massive, has the potential to continue to spiral beyond sense. Yes, cost must be kept within certain limits, but if the UK's national security, and that of its dependent territories, is at risk

and CVF is determined to be the best optimum means to reduce those risks, then the cost has got to be worthwhile. Those same detractors also argue that carriers are a luxury item that in the current world climate, the UK, now realistically a middle ranking power, could do without. But CVF is intended to be a significant capability that can be called on to conduct a wide range of tasks, coercion to humanitarian, in support of the Government's expeditionary philosophy. The CVF's key attribute is its ability to project power worldwide.

CVF's introduction will be a visible signal to the world that the UK has stepped up its capabilities significantly. This is likely to provide new opportunities for both cooperative and coercive influence and hopefully an affect for good towards peace and stability. CVF must survive and arrive in service as declared. The long-term advantages and capabilities that the platform brings must be the knockout blow for those who oppose this world leading asset. Failure by the UK Government to acquire the asset(s) will have a detrimental impact on its visionary Foreign and Defense Policies and thus its continued ability to influence and direct world events from a strong political, military and economic position.

Bibliography

Books

Keegan, John. ‘*Churchill - Memorandum of 1 Sep 1913*’. London, Weidenfield and Nicolson, 2003.

DND Documents

Leadmark. ‘*The Navy’s Strategy for 2020*’. Ontario: The Directorate of Maritime Strategy, 2001.

MOD Documents

BR1806. Naval Staff Directorate. *British Maritime Doctrine*. Edition 2. London, HMSO, 1999.

Director of Naval Staff Duties. ‘*Rolling Brief – Future Naval Operational Concepts*’. Ministry of Defense (Navy). London, 2002.

United Kingdom. Ministry of Defense. *Strategic Defense Review*. London, HMSO, 1998.

United Kingdom. Ministry of Defense. *Future Maritime Operational Concept*. Portsmouth, Royal Navy Graphics Center, 2004.

Internet

British Broadcasting Association. “*UK and France boost defense ties*”, available from www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/2726111.stm. Internet; accessed 13 March 2005.

Bush, George Snr. “*New World Order*”. Speech to US Congress. 6 Mar 1991, available from www.al-bab.com/arab/docs/pal/pal10.htm; Internet; accessed 12 February 2005.

The Historical Context. ‘*Select Committee on Defense*’, available from www.parliament-the-stationary-office.com/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmdfence/138/13804.htm; Internet; accesses 07 March 2005.

Department of Trade and Industry. ‘*UK Trade and Investment*’, available from www.dti.gov.uk/ewt/uktrade.htm; Internet; accessed 07 March 2005.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office. ‘*A strategy for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office*’, available from <http://www.fco.gov.uk>; Internet; accessed 28 March 2005.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office. ‘*UK International Priorities: A strategy for the FCO*’, available from <http://www.fco.gov.uk>; Internet; accessed 27 March 2005.

International. ‘*US exercises multi purpose*’, available from www.china.org.cn/english/international/100631.htm; Internet; accessed 17 March 2005.

Lancaster, John. ‘Iraq is happy with pact on inspections’, Washington Post, 24 Feb 1998, archive, available from www.wpni.com/wp-sn/inatl/longterm/iraq/stories/iraq022498.htm; Internet; accessed 27 February 2005.

- Marine Nationale de France. '*Operational functions*', available from http://www.defense.gouv.fr/marine/anglais/present/dim/d_missions.html; Internet; accessed 14 March 2005.
- Ministry Of Defense. '*Future Aircraft Carrier*', available from: www.mod.uk/dpa/projects/cvf.htm; Internet; accessed 08 March 2005.
- Ministry Of Defense. '*Defense Policy 2001*', available from <http://www.mod.uk/issues/policy2001>; Internet; accessed 12 Feb 2005.
- Ministry Of Defense. '*Future Navy Operational Concept*', available from <http://www.royal-navy.mod.uk/static/pages/data/FNOC.pdf>; Internet, accessed 17 Jan 2005.
- Navy Matters, '*Future Aircraft Carrier – CVF. Part 7*'; available from www.beedall.com/frn/cvf1-7.htm; Internet; accessed 06 March 05.
- Royal Navy. '*Future Navy Operational Concept*', available from <http://www.royal-navy.mod.uk/static/pages/data/FNOC.pdf>; Internet; accessed 23 February 2005.
- Space War. '*Thales Seeks British Help to Win French Aircraft Carrier Project*', available from www.spacewar.com/2003/031019023126.y154z8yn.html; Internet; accessed 27 February 2005.
- United States Navy "*Forward...From the Sea*" Nov 1994, available from <http://www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpulib/policy/fromsea/forward.txt>; Internet; accessed 07 March 2005.

Journal

- Jordan, David J. '*Future Carrier Aviation Options, A British Perspective*'. Naval War College Review, Summer 2001. Vol LIV no3.
- Ellerman, Bruce. '*China's New "Imperial" Navy*'. Naval War College Review. Summer 2002. Vol VL no 3.
- Rochlin, Gene I, La Porte, Todd R, and Roberts, Karlene H. '*The Self-Designing High Reliability Organization. Aircraft Carrier Flight Operations at Sea*'. Naval War College Review. Summer 1998. Vol LI no3.
- Birkler, John. '*Options for Funding Aircraft Carriers*'. RAND Institute. 2002.
- Friedman, Norman. '*Sea power as Strategy: Navies and National Interests*'. Annapolis, Maryland. Naval Institute Press. 2001.
- Hayden, Peter. '*The Strategic Importance of the Oceans*'. Maritime Affairs. Spring 2002.
- Phillips, Rear Admiral R T R RN; Hooper, Nick; Edmonds Prof Martin; Bird Stewart; Malcolm, Sir Moray; and others. '*British Naval Aviation in the 21st Century*'. Bailrigg Memorandum 25. CDISS, Lancaster University, 1997.
- Ewing, Humphrey Crum and Grove, Eric. '*Aircraft Carriers: Their current and Prospective Role in Power Projection*'. Bailrigg Memorandum 35. CDISS, Lancaster University, 1997.

Magazines

Jane's Defense Weekly. '*Ready, Steady, Go – The evolution of the Fleet Battle Staff*'. Vol 41, no 20, 19 May 2004.

Jane's Navy International. Fleet Review, '*Royal Navy poised to perform another rebalancing act*', vol. 109, no 3, April 2004.

Jane's Navy International. Fleet Review, '*Standing Ready For NATO*', vol. 109, no 4, May 2004.

News Paper

Financial Times. '*Defence Staff all at sea over Re-equipping Armed Forces*'. 23 Dec 2003, archive, available from <http://www.ft.com>; Internet; accessed 21 March 2005.

James Meek. '*All at sea*', The Guardian, 21 Jan 2004, archive, available from <http://www.futuregate.co.uk>; Internet; accessed 21 Feb 2005.

Michael Evans. '*Sea Lord picks his site for Battle over Navy Cuts*', The Times, 16 Jan 2004, archive, available from <http://timesonline.co.uk>; Internet; accessed 12 Feb 2005.

Navy News, available from www.navynews.co.uk/articles/2002/0210/0002101701.asp. Internet, accessed 11 Dec 2004.

Speeches

Garden, Sir Timothy. '*The Security Context and UK Present Capabilities*'. UK Forum. House Of Commons. London, UK. 11 March 1997.