

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

21 November 2015

Defence Committee right to call for a more flexible military

Commenting on the publication today of the House of Commons Defence Committee report setting out a checklist of potential threats and general vulnerabilities that should be addressed in the forthcoming Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), Simon Whalley, Head of Policy and Public Affairs at the Royal Aeronautical Society, said:

“The UK faces a very different global threat landscape, with growing instability, than it did at the time of the last SDSR five years ago, altered dramatically by a series of unanticipated international events. The Defence Committee is absolutely right to call for the development of a more flexible, agile and adaptable military in the forthcoming Review.

“The approach set out by the Government in 2010 is no longer fit for purpose and a more strategic, threat-based approach to determining military capability, which can more easily and successfully counter shifting situations, is essential if the UK is to maintain vital national security and influence on international issues.

“We are pleased that the Defence Committee has also highlighted the importance of closing critical capability gaps, especially in maritime patrol aircraft, as well as the regeneration of sufficient numbers of trained personnel and equipment for the military to remain effective – issues we raised in our SDSR contribution published in July.

“Nowhere is the problem of mass more relevant than to the issue of combat air capability. Without control of the air, forces are vulnerable and severely compromised. The number of fast-jet aircraft squadrons is at an all time low – from 33 at the time of the first Gulf War in 1990 to just eight today. As a priority the number of combat aircraft squadrons must be addressed in the forthcoming SDSR if they are to be in balance with the rest of the UK’s forces and provide the essential cover they need.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. The [Royal Aeronautical Society](http://www.aerosociety.com) (RAeS) is the world’s only professional body dedicated to the entire aerospace community. The Society promotes the highest professional standards in all aerospace disciplines; provides specialist information; acts as a central forum for the



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exchange of ideas; and plays a leading role in influencing opinion on aerospace matters.

Visit www.aerosociety.com for more information.

2. In July 2015, the RAeS published [*Aerospace in the SDSR 2015: Building flexible capability for a fast-changing world*](#), which assesses the current international landscape and sets out the capabilities required to deal more effectively and efficiently with new global threats.
3. Simon Whalley is available for further comment and interview.

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