



Westminster Round-Up | June 2018

Edited and compiled by Liam Walpole and Megan Karlshoej-Pedersen

June saw tensions heightened between the Defence Secretary, the Chancellor and the Prime Minister as claims surfaced that Theresa May had questioned whether the UK must remain a Tier 1 military power, sending the MoD, Parliament and the media into a frenzy.

The debate came in the aftermath of a Defence Committee report which called for at least 3% of the GDP to be spent on defence to ensure that the UK can adequately respond to diversifying threats; the RUSI land warfare conference, at which the new head of the British Army described how the rise of revisionist powers meant the UK required the necessary capabilities to respond to an increasingly destabilising world; and a twitter-bashing from the U.S. President Donald Trump to get the UK to increase defence spending to lighten the burden on the U.S. military.

While these stories develop, the MoD continues its efforts to complete the Modernising Defence Programme in time to release headline conclusions before the upcoming NATO summit on the 11th July.

Focus Points

NATO must address modern challenges

| 05.06.2018 | In a [new report](#), the Lords International Relations Committee identifies NATO as the “bedrock of the UK’s defence” but urges that the

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upcoming July NATO summit should be spent addressing contemporary challenges, such as threats posed by Trump- and Russia's foreign policies.

Defence Committee urges government to fund the MDP findings

| 18.06.2018 | In their report “Beyond 2 per cent”, the HCDC urges the government to ensure that the MDP addresses challenges such the resurgence of state-based threat. The financial settlement to fund the MDP must be complete and sustainable, they add, and defence spending must move closer to 3% of the GDP. Follow the RWP's ongoing analysis of the MDP on [our blog](#).

House of Commons

Britain's commitment to NATO

| 20.06.2018 | Led by the Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson, MPs discussed the role of NATO in a diversifying threat landscape and argued that it must continue to adapt to its challenges. MPs also debated the Defence Committee's recent report and agreed that a commitment to spend 2% of the UK's GDP on defence should be the minimum of spending – 3% being the goal.

Imminent attack on Hodaydah Port examined by MPs

| 11.06.2018 | Two days before the eventual attack on Hudaydah Port in Yemen, MPs discussed possible approaches to de-escalate the conflict. When asked if he would reconsider the UK relationship with the Saudi-led Coalition in Yemen if the attack on Hudaydah went ahead, Alistair Burt, Minister for the

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Middle East answered simply that the UK government would continue to put pressure on the coalition to stay within International Humanitarian Law. The RWP recently released [a report](#) examining over a decade of British ‘train and advise’ missions in Yemen.

PM affirms importance of remaining a Tier 1 Military Power

| 27.06.2018 | After it emerged that the Prime Minister had raised doubts about the importance of the UK remaining a Tier 1 military power, an MP who served on several tours in Afghanistan asked the PM to confirm during PMQs that she is committed to the UK’s military status. The PM confirmed that she fully believes in remaining a leading military power, but there is a need to understand current threats and the cost of addressing them. She referred to the upcoming MDP as the attempt to do just this.

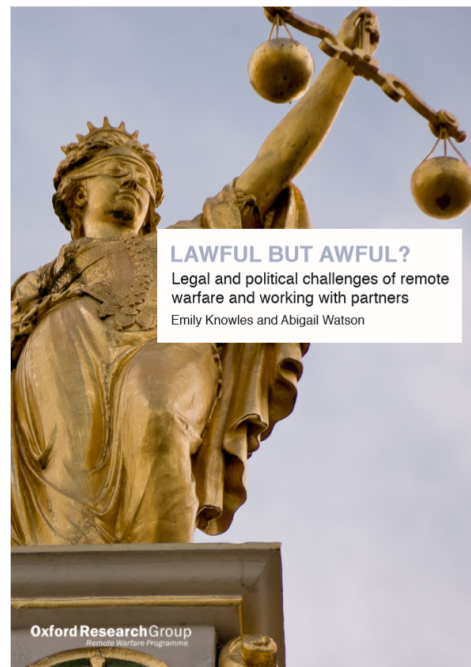
Committee News

Cross-governmental Funds criticised for lack of transparency

| 05.06.2018 | After the government committed to increasing their spending for non-DFID ODA, the International Development Committee released a report in which they criticise the CSSF and similar cross-governmental funds for their lack of transparency – RWP emphasised the inherent dangers in the CSSF’s lack of transparency in our [recent blog post](#).

Effectiveness of UK’s Arms Export regime examined

| 06.06.2018 | The Committees on Arms Export Controls held their concluding evidence session, examining transparency and reporting within arms exports and the possible impact of Brexit. The UK government has been heavily criticised for its export of weapons to Saudi Arabia, in the light of the humanitarian disaster in Yemen. The UK's role in Yemen is further examined in our report on the [legal implications of remote warfare](#).



Defence Select Committee calls for clarity on Defence-collaboration with the EU after Brexit

| 08.06.2018 | In their [latest report](#), the HCDC outlined what they believe are the government's expectations for defence developments after Brexit. The Committee then poses 16 questions to the government to gain better understanding of the government's post-Brexit defence plans. The EU External Affairs Sub-Committee [warned last month](#) that the UK risks losing valuable influence over European Defence missions after Brexit.

Review of cross-government aid-spending examined

| 20.06.2018 | After the Independent Commission for Aid Impact released a report on the lack of transparency in the CSSF in March 2018, the Sub-Committee on the Work of ICAI questioned ICAI team members on their case-study methodology and government officials on their response to the report. The RWP recently analysed the impact of the CSSF in our [blog on Defence Engagements](#).



Image credit: DFID/Flickr

House of Lords

House of Lords debate forthcoming attack on Hudaydah

| 11.06.2018 | Lords debated the possible impact of the forthcoming attack on the vital port in Yemen by Saudi-led Coalition forces. Several challenged the UK's continued arms export to Saudi Arabia in light of the cost on civilians of an attack on Hudaydah. Lord Ahmad, Minister of State, Foreign and

Commonwealth Office, replied that the UK continues to review any support offered and that Houthis are to blame for a large amount of IHL violations.

Government Announcements

Stabilisation Unit identifies vital steps to successfully reduce violence in fragile state

| 15.06.2018 | A report launched at Chatham House by the Stabilisation Unit has found that a greater focus on the political aspects of conflict, and direct communication with those who control power and resources are the best ways out of conflict.

Deal Making and Peace Building: A New Approach to Reducing Conf



Foreign Secretary calls for Saudi-led Coalition to respect International Humanitarian Law in Hudaydah

| 13.06.2018 | As the Saudi-led Coalition launched their attack on the vital port in Yemen – which the UN has warned could lead to 250,000 killed and 350,000 displaced – Boris Johnson urged the coalition to respect Human Right Law.

‘Autonomous Warrior’ launched at RUSI Land Warfare conference

| 20.06.2018 | the AW will allow the British military to provide supplies to armed forces on the “last mile” – the dangerous final approach to a combat zone, in which provision of supplies is crucial – from afar. The AW is one of several new technological advancements within Remote Warfare that was announced at the conference.

Boundaries between war and peace have broken down, according to Armed Forces Minister

| 20.06.2018 | During his speech at the RUSI Land Warfare conference, Mark Lancaster argued that we live in a time of unique and diverse challenges: including the breakdown of clear boundaries between war and peace. The RWP launched a FOI request to the MoD in April this year, asking how conflict missions are distinguished from non-combat missions, but have not received any reply.

International Development Secretary outlines importance of effective spending and collaboration with the MoD

| 21.06.2018 | While it is the MoD's spending that has received the bulk of media attention recently, DfID has also come under recent pressure to demonstrate value for money. In a speech at the Chatham House, Penny Mordaunt outlined the importance of not only spending aid well but spending it as well as possible. She also outlined the growing interdependency between DfID and the MoD in delivering national security objectives.

About the editors

Liam Walpole is the Senior Advocacy Officer at ORG's Remote Warfare Programme. He leads the team's engagement with Parliament, political parties, and policy-makers. His policy interests include: the changing role of Britain's special forces; the link between transparency, accountability, and effective policy-making; and the long-term implications of Britain's contemporary military engagements.

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