

Chat the extracts from Making MDI Happen: Learning From Our International Partners - 20th July 2023

Please note the chat has been filtered to protect contributors, however comments are largely unchanged to allow readers to understand the questions or points made.

Some notes from the Command Paper:

- With industry, forming a new alliance that is more proactive, responsive and resilient
- With allies and partners, particularly through NATO, with a strengthened focus on interoperability, including in digital and data. (DIANA is mentioned).
- Defence partnerships importance stressed FVEY, AUKUS etc
- More agile acquisition process and an even stronger partnership between government and industry, both primes and small- and medium-sized enterprises.
- Our relationship with industry will not just be with the traditional primes: we will also be open and welcoming for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and those outside of the Defence sector to better collaborate with the MOD.
- We will be clear on our specific requirements, particularly relating to integration, while leaving room for the market to provide innovative solutions.

Comment re DCPR etc. - Given the (necessary) emphasis on industry and more of an all-of-nation approach, it would be great to see in detail somewhere how Defence is getting other government departments to push levers they control re Defence industry. Quick example - I know startups who are struggling to create bank accounts because they work in the defence space; little the MOD can do alone to change this.

Sadly, I also know of SMEs walking away from Defence because of the misapplication of 703 over 705

a partial answer to this.. I recognise the cultural problem.... Two things we are doing, which is to bring heat and light to the work of BMNT (which will do at DSEI) and also I'm working on the route through Defence Innovation to the National Security Strategic Investment Fund.

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[National Security Strategic Investment Fund - British Business Bank \(british-business-bank.co.uk\)](#)

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Learn more about the National Security Strategic Investment Fund and our purpose.

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Question: Where does MD4IA (StratCom prog) fit into this? I believe there is an intent for MD4IA to wrap their arms around MDI (particularly data/mission data as a strat enabler) from FY24-25 onwards...

I can never get the MD4IA acronym quite right (Mission Data for Information Advantage)... the point I would make is that it is the other way round - MDI putting our arms around MD4IA. We are helping to champion the MD4IA approach, and its unique funding model and joined up with MD4IA leadership. But very much part of our collective forward planning.

the MDICP works closely with the MD4IA team and are currently reviewing their Concept of Employment for their Mission Data Operating Enterprise alongside our IDA colleagues to ensure it aligns with other data reform initiatives and to identify opportunities for the outputs to be shared with NATO also

IDF taken 15 -20 years a good lesson as is the fact that they 'threw away' stuff en route.. connect the need for more digital risk in procurement approach?

Software / IT has a half life of 18 months. Our procurement system is based on products, or PSI contracts, that last many more years than this. Do we need to look at the procurement approach? How do you do partnership if MOD won't engage with the whole of industry because it fears litigation?

Ukraine War has proved the need for blurring the R&D and combat lines and almost turnaround in days and weeks

The BATES system was developed with an integrated Royal Artillery and Industry Team developing the software. BATES was seen as a disaster. When you dig into why there was a failure to engage the end users who were not bought into the concept and would not change their processes, which was the whole point of BATES

Blurring of R&D with Ops implies a change of stance on risk being required - due to shortened or automated approaches to Qualification and validation of capability -

One of the key lessons from the Ukraine conflict is that Governments cannot succeed on their own. We need to continue to foster a deeper relationship with industry – engaging more closely with industry, upstream, to help shape capability planning and jointly address our most pressing operational problem sets.

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xxxx asked earlier about the commercial realities in creating a close partnership with the armed forces and private companies. From our perspective, as a consultancy, the setup is exactly the same as with all of our clients - we thrive when our clients thrive, and we work to attain that. We also know that if we're not providing return on investment, we can be made redundant. In practice this has been an excellent recipe throughout the 23 years Reaktor has existed.

That sounds a healthy approach to consultancy. I suspect that the optimum, creative and productive relationship between a monopsony (lone customer like MOD) and a bunch of delivery companies simultaneously competing and cooperating is different: not impossible but different.