Key Messages– Making MDI Happen, Learning from International Partners

20Th July 2023 – via Virtual MS Teams
Unclassified / Official event.

Focus:
1. Defence Command Plan Refresh (DCP), to align with IR Refresh.

2. 2023 MDI Working Group Programme Status

3. DSEI 2023 MDI Approach

4. Data and Digital, the latest thinking on intent into action

5. Learning from other Nations.

Event summary:
- Participants found the event informative and beneficial, with very positive feedback via chat and post event compliments.

- Significant recognition that the world of Multi-Domain Integration (MDI) is happening, the only variable being the speed at which UK MOD exploits.

- 60 of 105 people registered attended, with 75% remaining to the end.

- The importance of people is now evident, both in Government endorsed documents, e.g., Defence Command Paper (Refresh) 23 (DCP(R)23)) or digital education / enablement.

- One of the key message from the DCP Refresh is a more contested world now requires fit for purpose digitally enabled capability, at pace.

- All International Speakers conveyed a national recognition of a world of constant competition and MDI being a capability which extends far beyond Defence.

- Supporting these key messages brief are links to important DCP(R) 23 material and the presentations.

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Specific Presenter Key Takeaways:
- It was evident that Data & Digital are important 'strategic' bed-fellows, what is hoped is that the exploitation of the Defence Command Paper (Refresh) continued to enable greater, and promote, greater clarity of what it means for the community that needs to exploit (including Operations).

- The importance of DATA 'FABRIC' was promoted; however, the audience remain unclear of the milestones of the delivery programme.

- The current conceptual digital backbone leaves all users with some discomfort. Whilst it makes HMG and specifically UK Defence seem agile, the lack of clarity on what is to be an 'intelligent data highway' makes it potentially distracting. Does top down and bottom up align? And does lack of clarity enable or destroy the required pace?

- It is clear the whole defence community is energised with being Digital and the importance of its achievement through people is to be applauded.

- The digital aspiration needs SMART objectives and some timelines to add pressure and focus now. Industry also needs to forecast and plan resources; they currently cannot.

- UK MOD's MDI concept is consistent with NATO's adoption of Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) + plus the strategic drive for cross government working & data sharing. We will provide greater clarity within our next MDI Working Group blog, including the increased emphasis that the MOD will put on 'Integration' as a more accessible umbrella term.

- Access to talent is an enterprise agenda item, which extends beyond defence training.

- The International speakers were noticeably clear that MDI – or Integration - is a whole nation quest, which is embraced from crisis management to defence outputs. To be clear this embraces all walks of life from central government to media and provides that ability for decisions within Operations.

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- The International speakers conveyed a clarity that their community fully recognised the world of constant competition and their role / obligations within it.

- Finland and Israel, whilst creating the impression of being 'islands', where both absolutely committed to be connected via standards and protocols to the international world.

- Poland had a very clear perspective: NATO and Industrial alignment are the foundation of their MDI capability. 'NATO 1st' is a strategic agenda both within the military and national Polish crisis capability.

- All presentations emphasised the perspective that the nation-led commitment to MDI helps drive opportunities to embrace innovation, technology or application quickly, enabling a trials and fail fast / learn fast environment.

- Finland as a new NATO member is clearly bringing valuable disruptive thinking to NATO and the International community. Finland will be a useful ally to the UK in digital transformation thinking.

- The willingness to exploit new entrants and SMEs was clearly pivotal to the success of the apparent speed. However, it was clear that success to date originates in the longevity and determination of the nations to embrace MDI.

- Finland operated a trade body structure, which by law, operates as independent / non-competitive enabler to the development of collective capability and broad industrial market. This approach facilitates transparency of government data.

- The use by Poland of its defence academy to facilitate useability within Operations and feedback benefit to Industry, allowed through a novel approach the maximisation by all parties of the capability available.

- In summary, all International Speakers demonstrated that, open collaboration is necessary approach to delivery process, with allied by design a key requirement.