

# The Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF)



April 2022



**Admiral Sir Antony David Radakin, KCB, ADC**  
Chief of the Defence Staff

The Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) is a powerful security initiative that brings together the full range of military and inter-governmental capabilities from the United Kingdom and nine like-minded participants from northern Europe. Created to counter the growing European and global tension that threatens our security and prosperity, the JEF is a clear demonstration of our combined resolve to deter our adversaries, contribute to international security and ensure regional stability.

In so doing the JEF recognises that the character of warfare has evolved, and the distinction between peace and war is not as clear as it once was. The grey area this creates has allowed our adversaries to develop new ways of threatening us, and we recognise the need to counter this by protecting, engaging and constraining the threat. We therefore see advantage in the JEF being able to take collective action below the traditional threshold of conflict, if necessary, before NATO declares Article V, in a complementary capacity to NATO.

As befits its membership, the core geographic areas of interest for the JEF are the High North, North Atlantic and Baltic Sea region. The military, security and political challenges we face across these areas demand active management, across institutional boundaries, and in close cooperation. However, the JEF is also configured to respond further afield – for example, in response to a humanitarian crisis. It is, as its name makes clear, an expeditionary force.

Having reached Full Operating Capability in June 2018, the JEF has developed into a highly responsive combined force, capable of undertaking operations across the full spectrum of conflict, from high intensity combat to persistent deterrence. The JEF is designed in its complementary relationship to NATO to provide another quick response option for combating the growing threat in our core areas of interest. It is coherent with the NATO Framework Nations Concept and uses NATO standards and doctrine as its baseline. It is designed to be able to support the UN, NATO or other multinational or coalition operations in peacetime or crisis.

The JEF builds upon the shared experiences of the ten Participant Nations and proves that, together, we are stronger. The development of this capable and credible framework signals our resolve to allies and adversaries alike and is a tangible reminder of the United Kingdom's steadfast pledge to support European security.

This brochure explains the role of the JEF, its command structure, and how the organisation will operate.

# The Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF)



## What is the JEF?

The JEF is a UK-led coalition of like-minded nations (**Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden**), comprising high readiness forces configured to respond rapidly to crises in the High North and Northern Europe. It can integrate into larger international operations such as those led by NATO, the UN, or other security coalition and can conduct the full spectrum of operations. It enhances the deterrence messaging of NATO and provides agile, credible, and capable forces in support of JEF Participant Nation interests. The JEF is not a standing force and will draw on Participant Nation forces across all five Domains when conducting activity.

## Why do we need the JEF?

In recognising the challenges to our security and national interests it is important that we have forces able to respond appropriately. Population growth, migration, energy demands, climate change, globalisation, urbanisation, technology changes including cyber-attacks all contribute to challenges within the rules based international system, in addition to traditional state-on-state threats. Furthermore, the rise of 'fake news' has put the importance of being first with the story at the very tip of the spear. It is of vital importance to win the battle of the narrative and the JEF has an ability to manoeuvre in this area where others cannot. These complex trends are likely to inform the future deployment of our military and the militaries of the Participant Nations and should therefore be a focus for JEF Force Development. The JEF is designed to build upon these partnerships that have evolved through strong operational experience and a shared common understanding of national security threats. It provides a flexible, integrated, Joint Force that can respond quickly, anytime, and in any environment. In acting together, we demonstrate the JEF's solidarity, capability, and resolve to stand together for security and stability in our region.

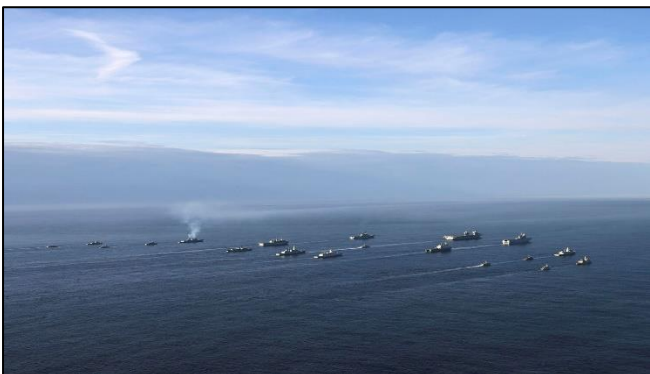






### **The JEF Framework**

The JEF is designed as a multinational force, with NATO standards and doctrine as its baseline. At its core, the JEF can operate as a scalable force package that presents itself as a persistent competitor to any adversary. To contribute to this deterrence, the JEF must be capable and credible, and demonstrate and communicate intent. Preference will always be to cooperate with Participant Nations, who can provide additional force elements, intelligence, and capabilities depending on the type of activity, operation or training being conducted.

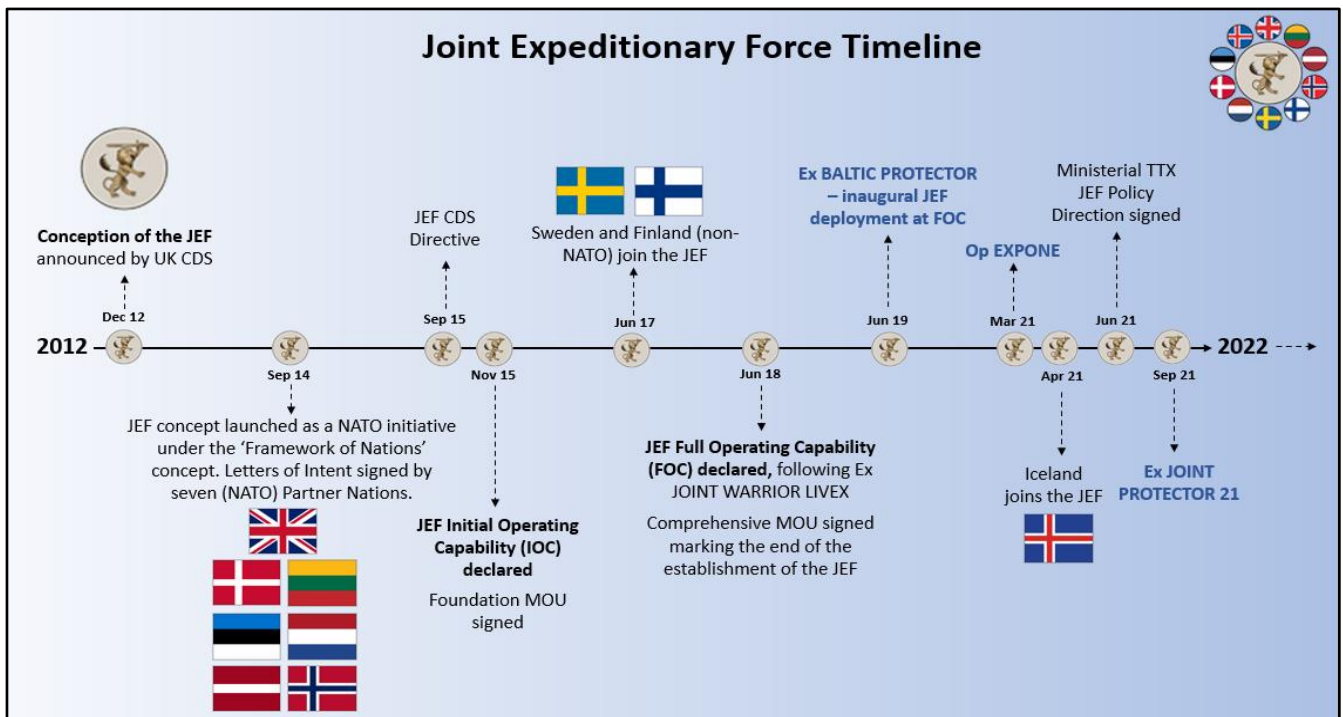


## The Road to the JEF



For over a decade the UK worked closely alongside trusted partners during campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. As these operations drew down, Participant Nation militaries re-focused on high readiness contingency forces. It was evident that we needed to ensure this hard-fought, shared experience was not lost.

Following the NATO summit in Wales in September 2014, the JEF Participant Nations signed a Foundation Memorandum of Understanding in London in November 2015 and the JEF was declared at an Initial Operating Capability. In June 2017, JEF membership grew further to nine as Sweden and Finland joined. The latest addition of Iceland in 2021 brings JEF up to ten.



The signing of the Comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding in 2018 marked the completion of the process to establish the JEF, with strategic military relationships firmly recognised and processes in place to support JEF activation. Beyond FOC, JEF interoperability has continued to mature through an advanced Force Development agenda and regular training events planned over a four-year cycle. Such activity continues to maximise extant Participant Nation exercise programmes and bespoke cross-Governmental Exercise activity. It remains wholly coherent with NATO training events and Participant Nation Defence Exercise Programmes.



## Participant Nation Integration



For a given JEF activity or operation the UK as the Framework Nation will nominate the most appropriate Operational Headquarters and Operational Commander. Participant Nations may choose to assign HQ staff, force elements and support functions to the nominated Operational Commander. Importantly Participant Nations are not allocating forces 'to the UK', they are allocating forces for a specific activity or operation. National contingents to the JEF always remain under the Full Command of their respective National Authority. Participants will delegate appropriate command and control to the Operational Commander, and national strategic direction to Participant Nation forces will be delivered through Senior National Representatives present in the chain of command. By incorporating Participant Nation staff, along with partners from across Government, into the Operational Headquarters JEF deployments will be Joint across the Services and environments, combined with Participant Nations, and integrated across Government departments.

## Opportunities for Further Integration

As well as operational utility, a key strength to the JEF is the close relationship between all JEF nations. The JEF provides focus for developing greater interoperability between JEF members using NATO protocols, including tactical integration between units across Participant Nations. It also provides a community to drive innovation and experimentation, whilst seeking opportunities to support developing concepts through NATO-founded doctrine.



## JEF Command and Structures



The UK has several options for JEF command and control under the 3\* Permanent Joint HQ Group; they are scalable and flexible to match the requirements of the deployment. However, the 2\* Standing Joint Force Headquarters (**SJFHQ**) Group is the UK nominated permanent JEF operational HQ. The SJFHQ Group is joint, international, and inter-agency by design. It provides Operational Liaison and Reconnaissance Teams on immediate notice to deploy, a HQ on 24 hours' notice to move and a joint logistics HQ.

The UK also holds environmental single service HQs for where the circumstances of the operation make them appropriate, including the Maritime UK Strike Force HQ, the Army's 3rd (UK) Division, and the Joint Forces Air Component (JFAC). Depending on the JEF activity, operational command can be delivered by another Participant Nation HQ. In order to provide a constant JEF operational focus the JEF Operational Coordination Cell (JEF-OCC) has been formed within the PJHQ Group. It is the JEF focal point for the development of combined Participant Nation activity and is responsible for coordinating the generation, integration, and delivery of JEF activity to meet agreed designated effects.



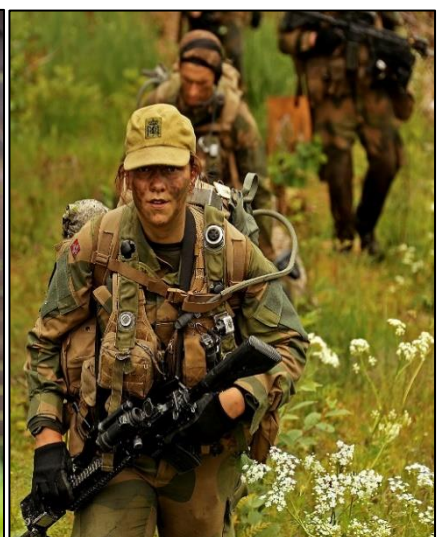


## JEF Operating Models

The military, security, and political challenges we face across this region demand active management, across institutional boundaries, and in close cooperation. However, the JEF is also configured to respond further afield – for example, in response to a humanitarian crisis. It is, as its name makes clear, an expeditionary force. CHODs subsequently endorsed the concept of three Operating Models for the JEF. These models were designed to provide clarity in determining the role of the JEF and deliver direction for undertaking Force Development activity. The models were framed as ‘Deterrence’, ‘Crisis Management & Defensive Action.’ As each of these are non-linear in nature, the JEF could theoretically participate across each area concurrently. The proposed Operating Model construct is driven by the narrative that the JEF integrates activity to unify effects; exercises should no longer be seen as singular events, but rather treated as a series of programmed activity that builds the JEF narrative. Furthermore, the JEF is also well placed to champion five-domain integration given its responsive and dynamic nature, common understanding and shared Participant Nation experiences.



Spectrum of Political Decision		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Deterrence</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>‘Sub Threshold’</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Crisis Management</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>‘Adversarial Action’</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Defensive Action</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>‘NATO Integration’</b></p>





## Examples of JEF Activity

**Exercise BALTIC PROTECTOR**, which took place from May – July 2019 in the Baltic Sea region saw a total of 3,000 military personnel and 17 vessels from nine nations taking part in the first maritime deployment of the JEF. The purpose of this deployment was to deter regional aggression, enhance JEF Participant Nations’ interoperability, rehearse regional contingent responses and exercise with the UK’s enhanced Forward Presence commitment in Estonia.



The JEF undertook **Operation EXPONE** in March 2021. The focus of the activity was maritime security in the southern Baltic Sea. It represented a key milestone in the development of the JEF as well as a demonstration of the UK’s commitment to the security and stability of the region. Op EXPONE saw the participation of the frigates HMS LANCASTER and HMS WESTMINSTER, tanker RFA TIDERACE together with vessels from all three Baltic states – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

In June 2021, the **JEF Defence Ministers** took part in a table-top exercise in Helsinki to further develop our understanding of how the JEF will operate in times of crisis caused by sub-threshold threats.

**Exercise JOINT PROTECTOR 21**, a 2\* Command Post exercise took place in the UK and Sweden in September 2021 and tested the JEF’s ability to operate in a sub-threshold role and provide protection against malign influence. The exercise enabled further integration and improved interoperability of the JEF Participant Nations. The lessons identified from this Exercise are now being incorporated and developed as part of the SJFHQ-led Operational Studies.



## How do we see the JEF Evolving?

As the UK Integrated Review set out, we are now facing an ever-changing threat landscape, characterised by persistent great power competition. The conventional distinctions between peace and war, home and abroad, state and non-state, the virtual world and reality are becoming blurred. It is this sub-threshold space that our competitors are increasingly looking to exploit to their advantage, where conflict is prosecuted by unconventional and non-lethal means. The JEF will evolve with that threat. Both the UK and the JEF Participant Nations recognise the need to remain persistently engaged against the full spectrum of threats and to be able to respond rapidly and flexibly to an escalating crisis. It is imperative that we harness the specialised expertise and cultural knowledge of each Participant Nation.

In this era of constant competition, we will make the JEF a catalyst for integrating our military capabilities more effectively with other levers of government as we take a whole-of-Government approach.



## Summary

The Joint Expeditionary Force is how the UK and like-minded Participant Nations with shared operational experience and interests have chosen to pool their high readiness forces for global contingencies.

It is designed so that political decision makers can respond quickly to crises in our core areas of interest, but it is not a standing force.

The JEF's utility firmly lies in its agility, responsiveness, and coherence of narrative. The principle geographic focus of the organisation enables it to utilise Participant Nation expertise and experiences, and the defined Operating Models to provide clear direction for Force Development activity. The JEF is designed to complement contributions to NATO and other existing alliances, rather than compete with them.

In summary, the JEF makes a substantial contribution towards meeting the threats and challenges of an uncertain world and reinforces strategic relationships with European allies.



# #JEFtogether











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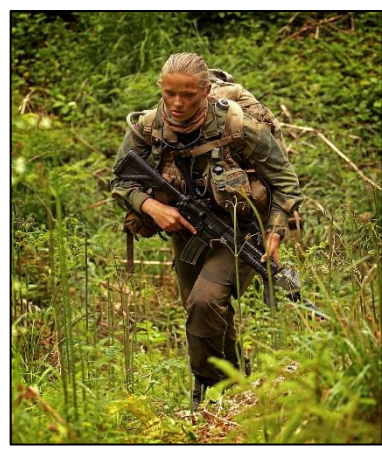
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