

# Role of Military Contract Officers in the UK's Defence Engagement Agenda

Learnings from the Gulf  
1964-2016

# My thesis

Military Contract Officers (MCOs) can play a valuable, albeit constrained, role in the UK's Defence Engagement Agenda, and their work should be facilitated where it aligns with UK goals

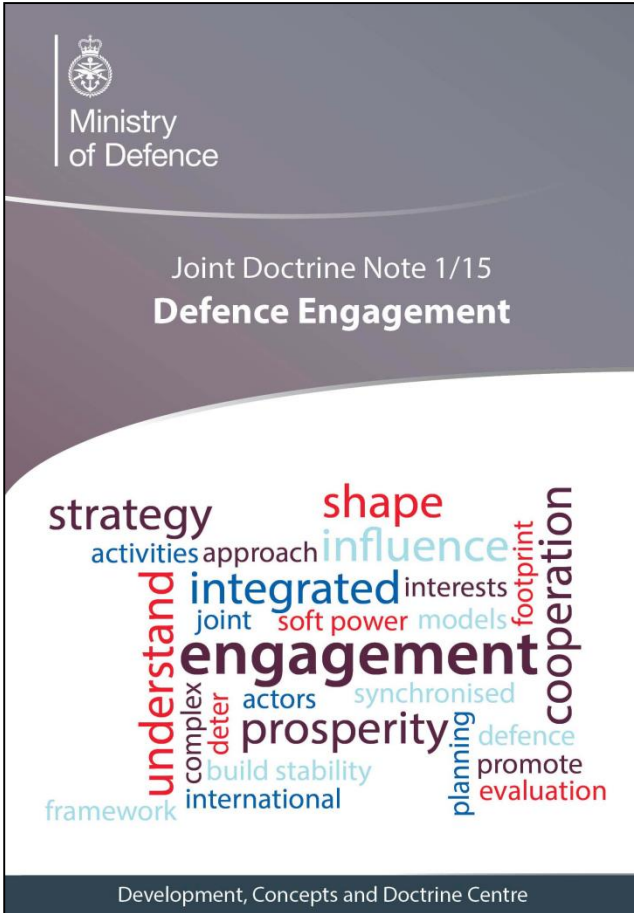
# Research question

- Can, should and how best would British MCOs be used to advance the UK's Defence Engagement Agenda?

# Contents

1. What is Defence Engagement?
2. UK's strategic interests in the Gulf
3. MCOs in the gulf
4. Questioning that seconded personnel are always 'loyal'
5. Cases of MCOs and advancing UK's DE agenda
6. Why Gulf Rulers have wanted MCOs for over 50 years?
7. How should they be used?
8. How best would they?

# Defence Engagement (DE)



“the means by which we use our Defence assets and activities, short of combat operations, to achieve influence”

International Defence Engagement Strategy (IDES), 2013.

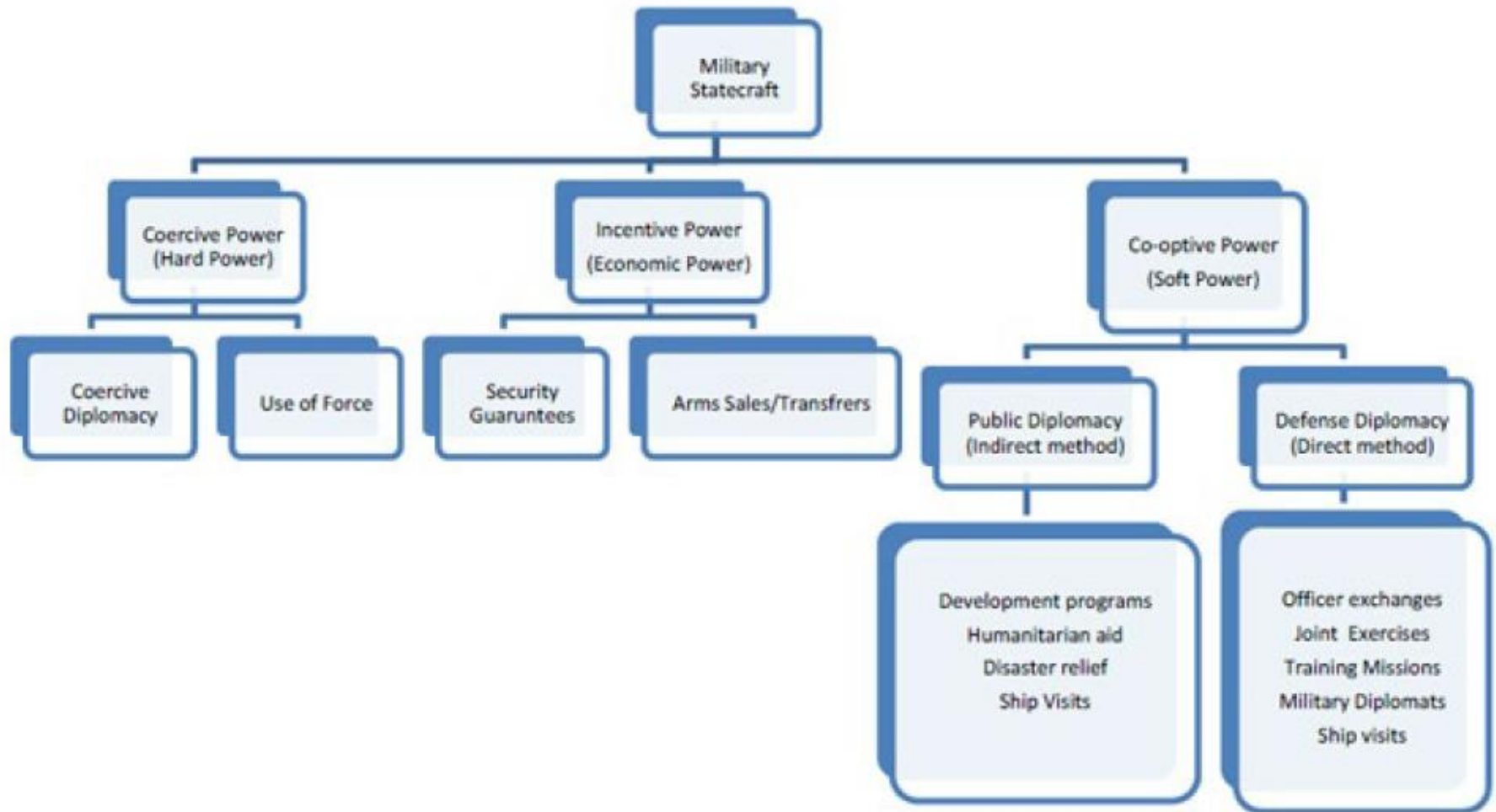
# Defence engagement activities

- Bilateral and multilateral contacts between senior military and civilian defense officials.
- Appointment of defense attaches to foreign countries.
- Bilateral defense cooperation agreements.
- Training of foreign military and civilian defense personnel
- Provision of expertise and advice on democratic control of armed forces, defense management and military technical areas.
- Contacts and exchanges between military personnel and units, and ship visits.
- Placement of military or civilian personnel in partner countries' defense ministries and armed forces (exchanges).
- Deployment of training teams.
- Provision of military equipment and other material aid.
- Bilateral or multilateral military exercises for training purposes.

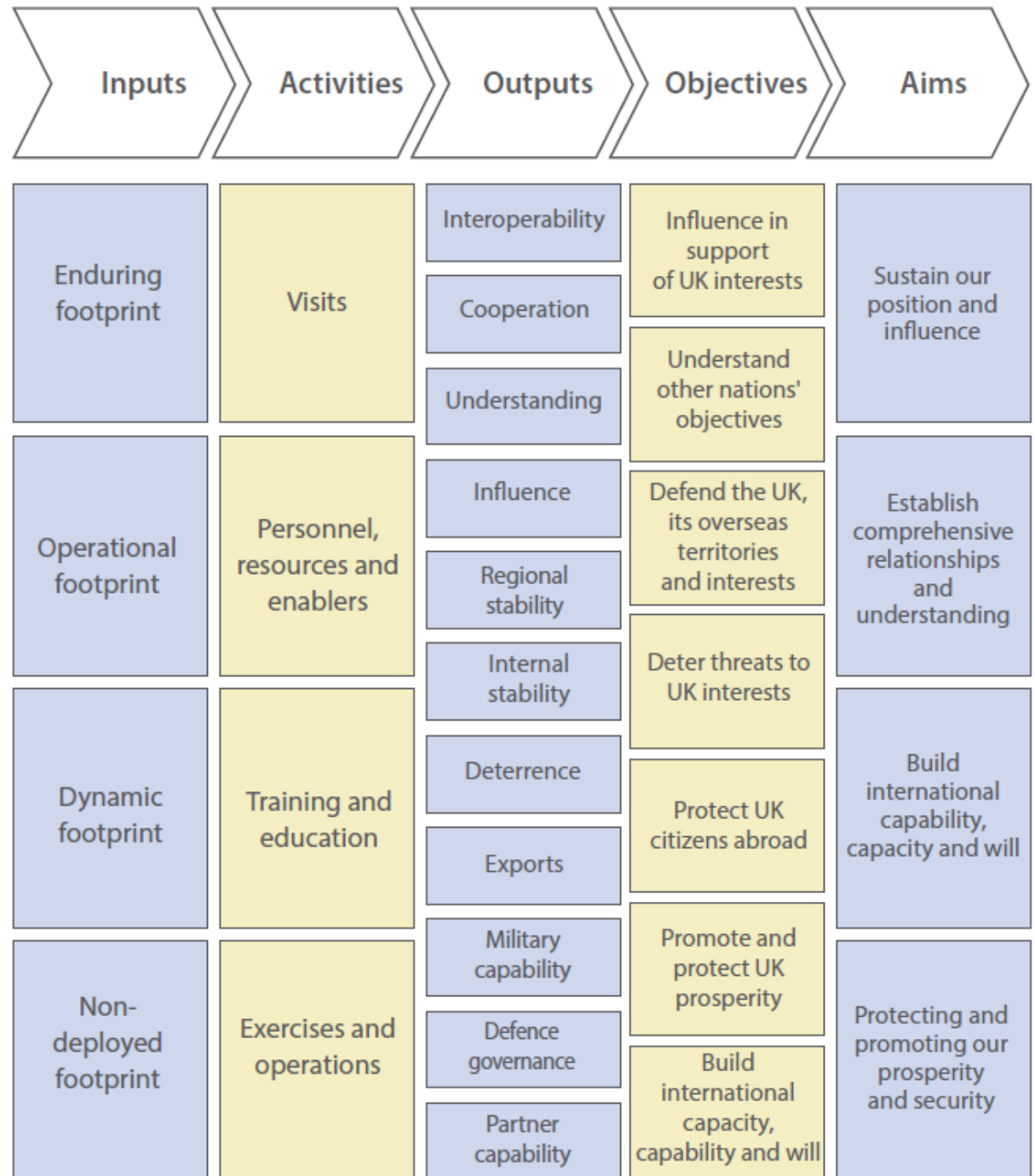
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Source: Andrew Cottey and Anthony Forster, "Adelphi Paper 365: Reshaping Defence Diplomacy: New Roles for Military Cooperation and Assistance." (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

# Defence engagement across the power spectrum



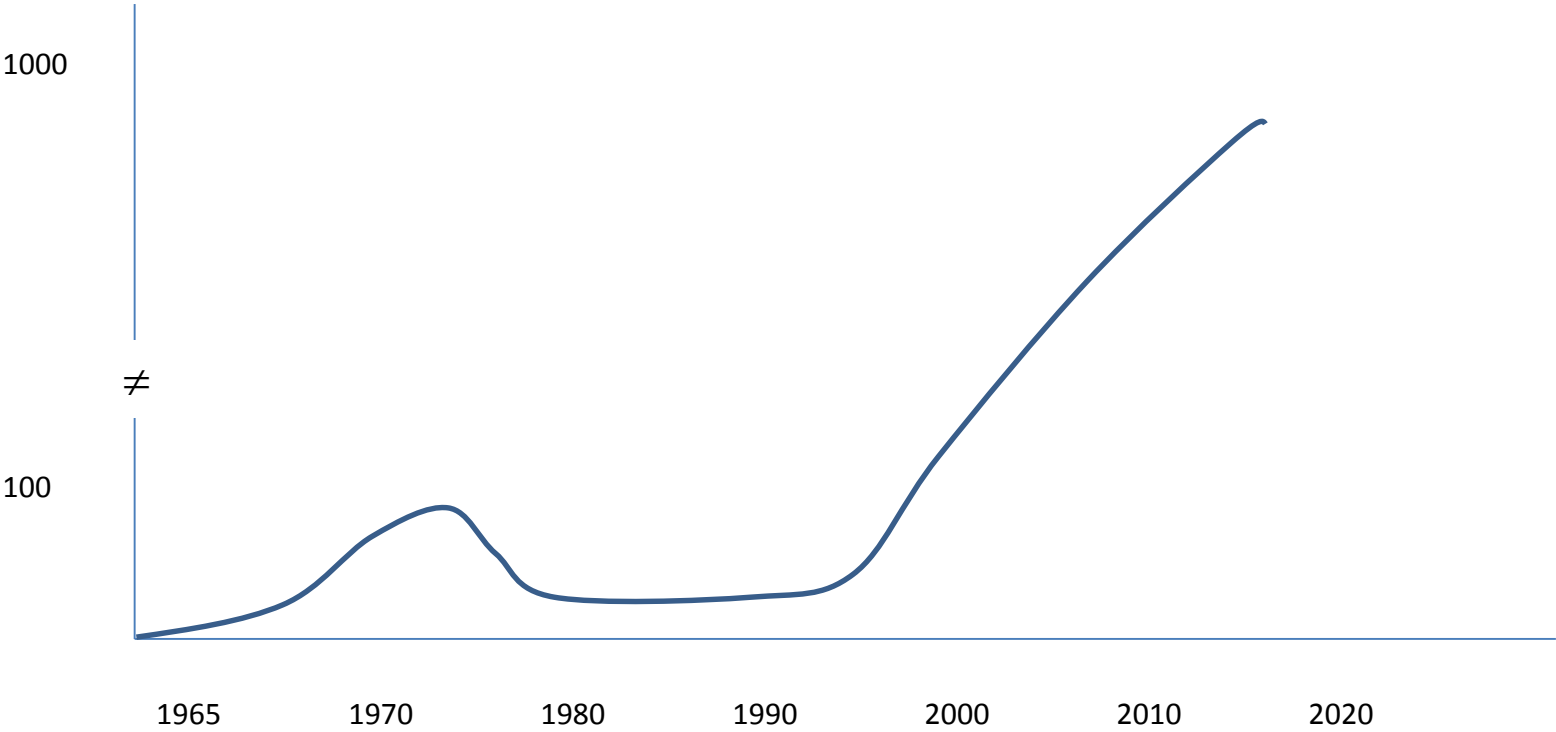
# The Defence Engagement logical framework





# Western expatriates numbers in one Gulf military force

The number of Western expatriates



# On patrol





# Categories of activities undertaken by expatriates

- **Doing**
  - Command – Armed Forces to Platoon
  - Staff positions
  - Intelligence collection.
- **Advising**
  - Emissary
  - Strategic
  - Technical
  - Mentoring
- **Training and educating**

# Sources of expatriates

- Seconded personnel
  - Loan service officers
  - Long-term military training teams
- Contract personnel (defined collectively as MCOs)
  - Direct hire
  - Manpower hires
  - Enduring consultants

# Seconded personal and 'loyalty'

Peter Carrington (UK Defence Secretary)  
seconded personnel are "...a very effective way  
of furthering the development of these forces  
and securing valuable influence" .

1001 TNA FCO 8/1324, Memorandum by Peter Carrington (Defence Secretary) to the Defence and Overseas Policy Committee, 'Policy in the Persian Gulf,' 28 December 1970)

# Seconded personal and 'loyalty'

“...whenever possible seconded officers should be provided rather than contract officers who would own no continuing allegiance to the British Army”

Minutes of the Persian Gulf Local Counter Subversion Group – Bahrain, 18 August 1966 (Records of the Emirates 1966-1971, p. 274)

“...The loyalties of many of these British advisors and contract officers were first and foremost to their Arab masters; even through their rapport with British officials might provide access for the latter, it could be just as likely that they would eventually present an obstacle to British official policy”

Rossiter, 2014, p. 289)

# Air Wing

- All were MCOs
- The role of the expatriates were to lead, plan, organize, train and equip the new force, as well as fly

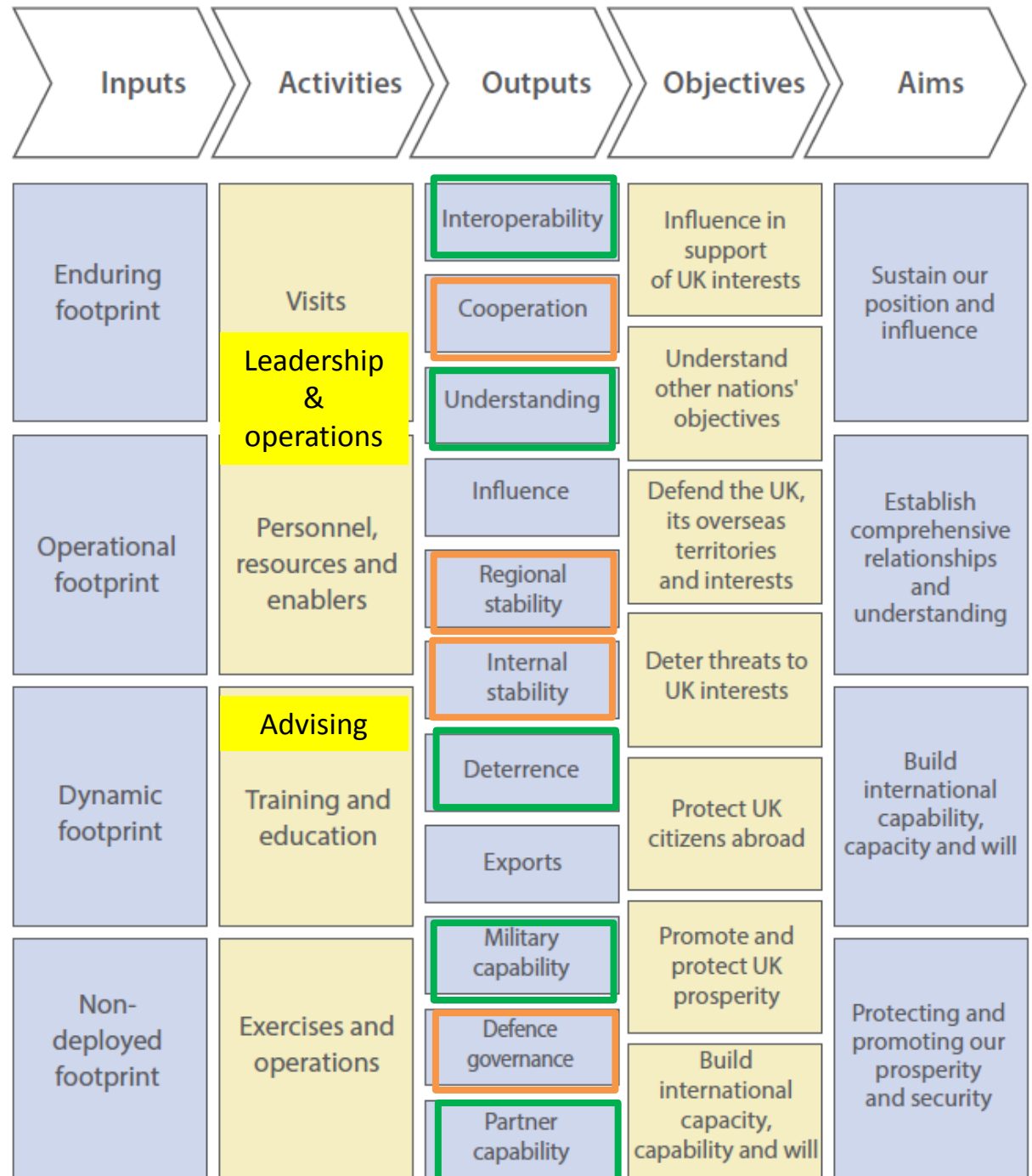


# 2000s example

- “British methods, philosophy and standards”
- Systems approach to training
- Instructor training
- Officer training – pre-Sandhurst
- Gulf/UK Defence Agreement – doctrine
- Building up to multi-national exercises
- Make UK-Gulf military meetings more productive

# Can MCOs be used to advance DA agenda?

## The Defence Engagement logical framework



# Should MCOs be used?

- To answer this, needs to know why the Ruler wants to improve the military
- If Ruler wants to improve their military
  - In a way does not generate threats from kin, tribe, ideologies
  - In a way that demonstrates independence from foreign influence
  - In a way that builds foreign partnerships which support the Ruler

# Should they be used

Yes

- If Ruler does not want seconded personnel
- If UK human resources are constrained
- If UK want to make enduring change
- If want UK personnel fighting but not being held accountable for it

Knowing that

- Always represent the interests of the Ruler
- Never want to be seen to be pro-British

# How best would British MCOs be used to advance the UK's Defence Engagement Agenda?

- Ensuring reach back
- Access to doctrine, training etc
- Preparation for training places
- Site visits – benchmarking, awareness raising
- Supply info on the quality of personal to be hired
- Providing access to training courses for expatriates