

Joint Expeditionary Force



Brochure 2024

Edition 1

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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 ten Northern European, like-minded participant nations. 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 from adversaries, 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 Northern Europe, 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 (FOC) 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 response option for countering the growing threat in our core areas of interest. It is coherent with the NATO Framework Nations Concept; JEF planning is underpinned by SACEUR's AOR-wide Strategic Plan (SASP) and fundamental principles 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 operates.

The Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF)

What is the JEF?

The JEF is a coalition of ten nations (**Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the UK as the framework nation**), comprising capabilities configured to respond 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 coalitions and can conduct the full spectrum of military activities. 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 operational Domains when conducting activity. The JEF is not a group that requires consensus to conduct activities and deploy forces; this is designed to add considerably to its responsiveness. Rather, the UK acts as Framework Nation; as such, following consultation, the UK may conduct a JEF activity with the participation of one or more JEF Participants. JEF Participants are not obliged to contribute forces to any given JEF activity or deployment; instead, it remains a sovereign national decision for Participants to contribute, within their respective legal frameworks.



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.



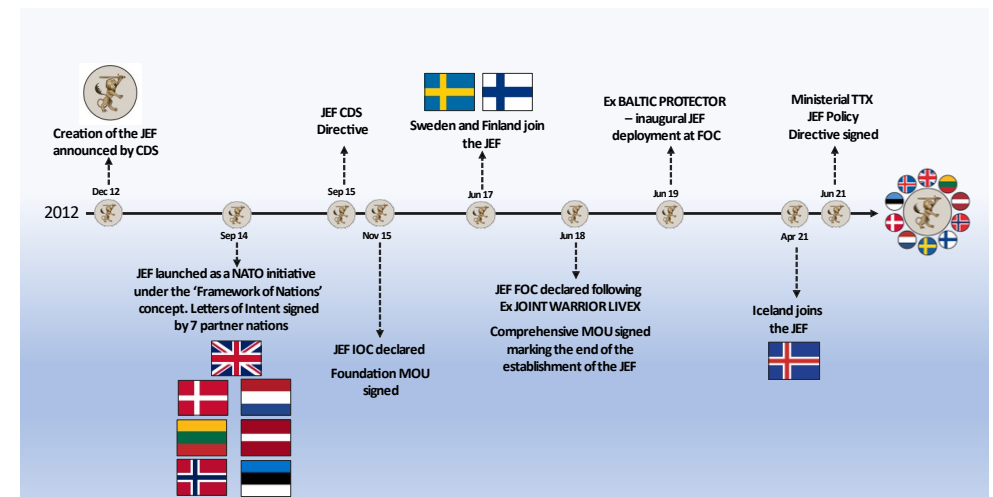
The Road to the JEF



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.

The JEF was formally announced at the NATO summit in Wales in September 2014 and is coherent with the NATO Framework Nations Concept. 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.

Joint Expeditionary Force Development Timeline



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 deployed 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 Headquarters (PJHQ) 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 also be delivered by another Participant Nation HQ. To provide a constant JEF operational focus the JEF Operations 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.

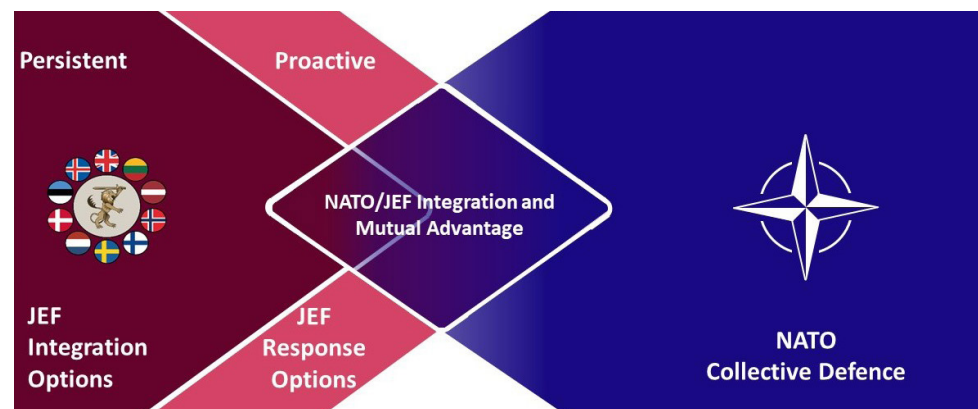


JEF Operating Models

The military, security, and political challenges we face across the 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. The JEF Chiefs of Defence (CHODs) subsequently endorsed the concept of JEF Operating Framework for the JEF. This was designed to provide clarity in determining the role of the JEF and deliver direction for undertaking Force Development activity.

The Operating Framework construct is driven by the narrative that the JEF integrates activity to cohere 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 (PN) experiences.

Given the centrality of NATO as the ultimate guarantor of European security, the JEF will remain aligned with NATO – in peacetime, in crisis, and in conflict – assuring complementarity and effective use of (multi)national capabilities. The JEF provides processes that enable operational activities enabled through political and strategic engagement at pace. At the operational level, the JEF has been conducting significant operational activity, delivering both JEF Integrated Options (JIOs) and exercising JEF Response Options (JROs) which are designed, through the full spectrum of conflict. JIOs and JROs are a series of planned integrated military activities designed to complement NATO, in an escalation from constant competition to crisis.



Examples of JEF Activity

Exercise BALTIC PROTECTOR, which took place in **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 **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 & Lithuania.

In **March 2022** the ten **JEF Leaders** met in London to join Ukrainian President Zelenskyy in a video call. The JEF Leaders were united in their steadfast commitment to support Ukraine in the face of the Russian invasion. They affirmed their commitment to supporting Ukraine at pace with military aid to ensure Ukraine is best able to defend itself. The JEF re-asserted their commitment to work in complementarity to NATO and the EU to ensure that Russia does not continue to threaten European security.



Exercise JOINT PROTECTOR (JP), a UK SJFHQ led activity, is a Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) focussed overseas exercise enabling SJFHQ Gp collective training whilst continuing to operationalise the JEF construct. A Command Post Exercise (CPX), it rehearsed and developed the role of a UK led 2* JEF based upon the SJFHQ Gp in an escalating sub threshold context, using a real-world scenario. The exercise was supported by Partners Across Government (PAG) in the UK and PNs, supported the development and rehearsal of JEF Response Options, and supported C2 experimentation. Ex JP provides a demonstration of UK standing and deployable Framework Nation C2 capability to JEF and NATO Partners and contributed to departmental STRATCOM.

In **June 2023** the ten JEF Defence Ministers met in Amsterdam, Netherlands. The meeting took place against the backdrop of the continuing crisis in Ukraine. The JEF Participant Nations responded decisively to provide military and humanitarian assistance, at pace, to ensure Ukraine is best able to defend itself, and will continue to do so as for long as it takes. With that situation at the heart of the agenda, the meeting re-affirmed the importance of the JEF as a group of like-minded and proactive nations, with shared purpose and values, and a common focus on security and stability in the High North, North Atlantic and Baltic Sea region.



JEF Support to Ukraine

Joint Expeditionary Force Summit, Riga - Joint leaders' statement: 19 December 2022

"We, the Leaders of the United Kingdom, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden met today as members of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), a framework of nations established under NATO auspices in 2014. We heard first hand from President Zelenskyy of Ukraine's continued determination and resolve in the face of Russia's unprovoked and illegal war. We remain steadfast in our support for Ukraine and its people. Today we committed to provide further political, military, humanitarian, and economic support to Ukraine for as long as it takes.

Ukraine's victory is vital to all our security. We condemn Russia's attacks on critical national infrastructure designed to terrorise Ukraine's people. Intentional attacks against the civilian population and civilian objects constitute war crimes. We reiterate our determination to ensure full accountability for these abhorrent actions, as well as accountability for crimes committed against Ukraine. We will continue supporting Ukrainian citizens who have had to flee their homes. We reject Russia's ongoing violation of Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and its illegal attempts to annex Ukrainian territory.

We continue to recognise Ukraine's internationally recognised borders, and the fundamental principle, enshrined in the UN Charter, that these cannot be redrawn by force. We welcome President Zelenskyy's readiness for a just peace. No peace talks can be credible while Russia continues to pursue a war of aggression. We therefore call on Russia to cease hostilities, withdraw its forces, abide by its commitments under international law, and restore peace and security in Europe. We also reaffirm our readiness to further strengthen political and practical cooperation with Ukraine".



JEF Activities and Planning

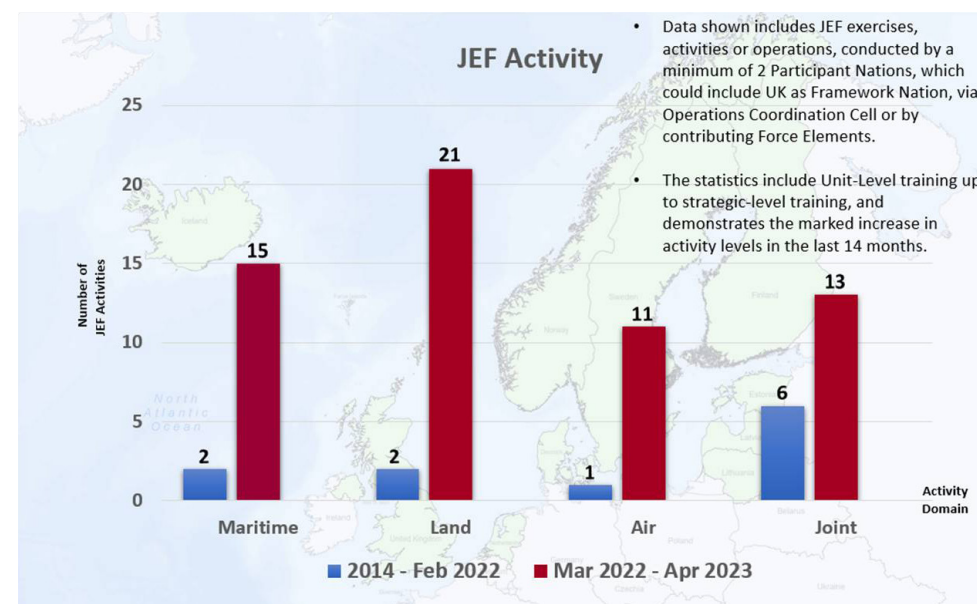
Since the illegal and unprovoked attack by Russia on Ukraine in Feb 2022, the JEF has exponentially increased activities in the High North, North Atlantic and Baltic regions, across all domains. The activities have ranged from tactical and unit level observation teams, through to multinational exercises, operations and strategic ministerial level table top exercises.

All ten nations have agreed to working closely together to enhance cooperation on security of Critical National Infrastructure (CNI), intelligence-sharing, and refinement of the JEF Response Options (JROs) – the protocols by which JEF can respond in times of crisis.

The work to develop JROs has built consensus in the JEF planning processes and resulted in stand-alone packages of potential activities which can support Participant Nations and NATO for a swift, credible and capable response to a raft of threats and challenges in the region.

The value added by the JEF is a significant contribution to both security and deterrence, giving JEF Participant Nation governments, and NATO, more options in times of crisis.

The chart below illustrates the significant increase in JEF activities across a range of levels and domains since March 2022.



Source: JEF Secretariat April 2023

JRO Activation December 23

Since the illegal and unprovoked attack by Russia on Ukraine in Feb 2022, the JEF has exponentially increased activities in the High North, North Atlantic and Baltic regions, across all domains. The activities have ranged from tactical and unit level observation teams, through to multinational exercises, operations and strategic ministerial level table-top exercises. All ten nations have agreed to working closely together to enhance cooperation on security of Critical Underwater Infrastructure (CUI), intelligence-sharing, and refinement of the JEF Response Options (JROs) – the protocols by which JEF can respond in times of crisis. The work to develop JROs has built consensus in the JEF planning processes and resulted in stand-alone packages of potential activities which can support Participant Nations and NATO for a swift, credible and capable response to a raft of threats and challenges in the region.

This led to the first JRO being activated by the JEF Defence Ministers in December 2023, which saw a coordinated series of activities with contributions from all ten JEF participant nations. These activities demonstrated JEF's ability to deploy maritime and air assets to contribute to the protection of CUI in Northern European seas. The activation was coordinated with NATO's enhanced Vigilance Activity in the Baltic Sea Region following recent damage to the Balticconnector pipeline in the Gulf of Finland.

The JEF Operational Headquarters, Standing Joint Force Headquarters, planned and coordinated the activities which involved 29 vessels and 11 aircraft patrolling one million square miles of sea in four operational areas – UK/ Dutch waters and the North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, Central and Eastern Baltic and the Norwegian Sea. The ships and aircraft performed a range of complex tasks in the challenging winter conditions of the Northern European seas, including patrolling key areas and conducting undersea surveillance. Iceland deployed StratCom advisors to support the JRO messaging. This extensive and successful delivery of JRO activities confirmed JEF's ability to coordinate regional effects in line with NATO and national objectives.

The value added by the JEF is a significant contribution to both security and deterrence, giving JEF Participant Nation governments, and NATO, more options in times of crisis.

UK Secretary of State for Defence Grant Shapps stated:

"The UK and our JEF partners will do whatever it takes to defend our mutual areas of interest, and today's display of unshakeable unity sends a powerful message of deterrence that we stand ready to meet any potential threat with force. Together, we stand firmly in support of peace, security, and a steadfast resolve to uphold the rules-based international order."



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 with other levers of government. PNs will, where appropriate, adopt an approach that brings together military elements of national power to respond to hybrid security challenges.



The Joint Expeditionary Force is how the UK and like-minded Participant Nations with shared operational experience and interests have chosen to integrate, coordinate and, if required, act in an increasingly volatile and challenging security environment. 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 Framework 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.

The Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF)

The JEF is a **multinational** military partnership that can act independently in its own right. It can also be deployed in support of NATO or other cooperative ventures.

The JEF has been fully **operational** since **June 2018**. It can operate as soon as two or more of the participating countries identify a requirement.



OBJECTIVES

Working together with like-minded Participant Nations to provide military options to our governments, in peacetime as well as during crises or conflict. In addition, the JEF can act as a testing ground for innovations in the fields of operations, doctrine and technology.

PURPOSE

The JEF focuses on the whole spectrum of military operations. This ranges from civil-military cooperation, training, military exercises and crisis management to combat operations.



Source: Netherland Ministry of Defence via Defense.nl



Joint Expeditionary Force



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