

MoD 'still missing' Afghanistan equipment targets

The Ministry of Defence continues to miss targets for the delivery of key equipment to UK troops in Afghanistan, the public spending watchdog has said.

Despite some improvements, the National Audit Office said still only one in three air deliveries reached the front line within five days as intended.

Better management of the supply chain and more efficient logistics would free up resources for troops, it argued.

Ministers said they were "constantly working" to improve performance.

In a report on the MoD's supply chain, the watchdog said 130,000 deliveries had been made to the UK's approximately 10,000 troops in Afghanistan last year and progress had been made in reducing the amount of time service personnel had to wait for supplies over the past year.

Challenges

However, it found that the MoD still faced "considerable challenges" in meeting its own targets for dispatching high-priority items.

The main reason for the delays, it concluded, was a lack of available supplies in certain areas and this was exacerbated by the fact that officials were not correctly forecasting how often items would be used and in need of repair.

The MoD's use of information to manage its supply chain "fell short" of best practice across the logistics industry, the watchdog added, and officials were unable to "reconcile coherently" details of where its troops were based with the costs involved in meeting their needs.

The watchdog suggests that more items could be delivered by road in Afghanistan and that transferring 10% of freight from air to road could save £15m.



More than 130,000 equipment deliveries were made to Afghanistan last year

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The Ministry of Defence urgently needs better supply chain information systems with the appropriate skills and processes to match”

National Audit Office

'More agile'

About 90% of supplies are delivered by air in Afghanistan because of concerns about the safety of travelling by road and of equipment falling into enemy hands.

"The Ministry of Defence urgently needs better supply chain information systems with the appropriate skills and processes to match," Amyas Morse, head of the National Audit Office, said.

"It currently keeps the armed forces supplied by either stockpiling more than necessary, sending too many routine items by air, or both. This ties up precious resources that could be better used to support troops."

Defence minister Peter Luff stressed the mission in Afghanistan was the UK's "top priority".

"The National Audit Office notes the improvements in the supply chain including to our armed forces on the front line," he said.

"We are constantly working to improve our performance and we are currently implementing an £800m contract with Boeing Defence for a more streamlined, agile, and effective logistics support chain."

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