

Nick Houghton

Former Chief of the Defence Staff of the British Armed Forces

General, The Lord Nick Houghton was the United Kingdom's Chief of Defence Staff until July 2016. His military career spanned 43 years and much of it was spent at the very heart of UK crisis management and operational and strategic decision making. During his seventh and final operational tour in Northern Ireland in 1999 he took the last patrols off the streets of Belfast.

As the MOD's Director of Military Operations from 1999 to 2002, he oversaw the initial response to the 9/11 attacks, the first deployments to Afghanistan, the successful campaign in Sierra Leone and the military response to the Foot and Mouth Disease Crisis.

In 2005-06, he was the Deputy Commander of all Allied Troops in Iraq when that country came to the verge of civil war. He then became the UK's Chief of Joint Operations during the precarious period when UK troops were committed to both Iraq and Afghanistan. He planned and executed the UK withdrawal from southern Iraq. He became the Vice Chief of Defence in 2009 and was the sole military member of the Lord Levene Defence Reform team which remodelled the UK MOD and formed the Joint Forces Command.

During his time as Chief of Defence he successfully concluded combat operations in Afghanistan. He was the prime military architect of the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review, helping to secure the 2% GDP financial settlement for UK Defence. He was also instrumental in the strategic recalibration of UK military commitment to meet the multiple demands of ideologically inspired terrorism, a more assertive Russia and a far less stable global context.

In August 2016 General Houghton became the 160th Constable of the Tower of London, but he remains closely involved in Security and Defence issues. He became a Cross Bench Peer in 2017 and served on the House of Lords International Relations and Defence Committee.