

# A Delphi Paper

## XDF Strategic Defence Review 3213

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### Overview

At the end of the First Exterminator War the XDF underwent a transformation. The UXN changed from essentially a fleet of small craft supported by a handful of capital ships and optimised for maximising the federal presence through extensive patrolling of the Union's member systems into the well balanced fleet of major and minor combatants of today able to fight in the line of battle alongside our allies against the common foes of humanity. Over the space of 10 years the UXN has gone from relying on 20 small escort carriers to possessing 18 fleet carriers, 14 of which are incorporated into five battle fleets. In conjunction with the adoption of the CVI, the UXN's inventory of active heavy cruisers has increased from 6 to 29 with over half being specialist missile cruisers. However, the UXN has continued to champion the role of minor combatants within fleets and although it no longer possess the largest destroyer flotilla it remains second only to the IEN with 57 scouts and destroyers currently in service.

Largely overlooked in the post Holocaust Review due to funding issues and a propensity to favour IS capable ships, the PDF has nevertheless undergone an even more remarkable transformation than that of the UXN and where it used to operate only two IP class vessels there are now 45. Ex-UXN EVIs are also now to be found deployed in the Starguard role. These changes have proven politically popular in uncertain times although they have drawn criticism from traditionalists who lament the diversion of resources away from strategically mobile forces.

This change in force structure has heralded a change in role for the XDF, one that matches a more assertive external policy by the Union. A decisive intervention on Wing to counter aggression against a friendly colony was Union led, and the Union also undertook a more protracted, low key, but ultimately equally successful intervention to end civil strife on Orion in Q4. Two fleets have been deployed into Sector EJ under the direction of the SHC where the UXN's faith in the CMI class vessel was tested and proven well founded. This year the Union responded to an urgent request from the SHC for allied scouting assets to be dispatched to a number of key locations in Q0 and was able to meet 80% of that request with UXN assets. There remain, however, limits to the XDF's freedom of action dictated by the economic realities of the distribution of Union membership. This meant, for instance, that the deployment to EJ was only possible with logistical support from allies, in this case the Centauri.

The XDF of today is very different from the one that fought in EW1 and has proved itself in combat against the Roaches in space and on the ground at Wing and Deadwood against human and non-human adversaries respectively. There remains a strong commitment to the combined human fleets and the Union continues to honour the force pledges it made at the Asteel ToOL Revision, even going beyond that with additional contributions to joint scouting forces. This review looks at the current force structure of the XDF with the aim of ensuring that it can continue to meet the security

needs of the Union and provide us with the means to play an active and positive role in the affairs of humanity.

## UXN

Following rapid growth over the last decade the navy will enter a period of consolidation and enhancement of existing fleet capabilities to create well balanced forces able to undertake the wide range of tasks that recent experience has shown is required in these uncertain times. Embedded within designated fleets will be additional minor combatants to provide operational flexibility and an organic scouting capability. Only fleets assigned to JACs will not be provided with their own scouting assets as scouting for CHF is provided for separately with the Union's contribution being met by the *Issachar Scouts* and their 12 fully supported scouts and destroyers. The UXN flagship, the XS Ark of the Covenant, has already been reassigned from the *Training Fleet* to the *Home Fleet* and with the carrier program now largely completed the responsibility for training future carrier crews will be handed over to an SVI.

A fundamental requirement of the Office of the Navy of Xyon (Onyx) has been that all operational formations should have sufficient intrinsic logistical assets to allow for independent operations without the need to call upon additional support. This requirement will continue but a number of key fleets will be augmented with the assignment of more logistics vessels to ensure that they have the ability to dispatch fully supported ad hoc task groups without compromising the logistical integrity of the rest of the fleet.

The navy's ethos of 'more and faster' rather than 'fewer but larger' has survived from the pre-EW1 era. All fleets are now built around fleet carriers supporting cruisers. The UXN preference for the cruiser's greater speed and manoeuvrability is long standing and there are no plans to introduce the battleships favoured by other navies. However, swarm ships are to enter the order of battle enhancing the tactical durability of the two main battle fleets. The UXN has also been a pioneer in the use of missile cruisers in direct support of fleet actions. Most of the navy's cruisers are to be assigned to cruiser squadrons with the following standard sizes:

- CMI squadrons - 4 vessels
- CAI squadrons - 3 vessels
- CLI squadrons - 3 vessels

The remainder of the cruiser force will operate in ad hoc groups and the Quadrant Fleets.

The majority of the UXN's vessels are assigned to a Battle Fleet, a Quadrant Fleet, or a Watch and these are described below.

### Quadrant Fleets

**Role** – Defend Union interests and assets in the Outer Quadrants and provide a visible presence of the XDF. Their capability has steadily improved since EW1 with EVIs being replaced by SVIs which in turn have been replaced by CVIs.

**Deployment** – One each in the Union's four outer quadrants excluding Q8 (see Battle Fleets), Q3 and Q5.

**Composition:** CVI, CAI, 2xCLI, ALSI, LSSI

Enhanced Quadrant Fleets incorporating a Heavy Cruiser Squadron and additional logistics vessels allowing for the detachment of a supported task group have been approved by Onyx. *2<sup>nd</sup> Fleet* will be the first such fleet and is scheduled to receive its additional vessels by the end of 3215. Other candidates for enhancement are the *7<sup>th</sup> Fleet* and *1<sup>st</sup> Fleet*.

## Watches

**Role** – Scouting and patrolling assets of the UXN have traditionally been formed into Watches. Since the end of EW1 these Watches have been organised around an AMI which often acts as the group flagship. Watches retain their key role of supporting A'man (Naval Intelligence) and the Office of Defence Intelligence.

**Deployment** – One 'P' Watch assigned to each of the outer quadrant; three 'S' Watches and one 'H' assigned to the SHC and operating in the sectors; one 'I' Watch in Q0 and a further 'H' Watch deployed in Q2.

A further 'P' Watch designated *Mosquito Forces* is jointly operated by the UXN and RWN in Q2 with the UXN providing the SCI and AMI and the RWN the two DDIs.

**Composition:** The 3207 Review re-designated Watches into three categories according to mission specialisation – P, I and S – with Onyx adding the 'H' category in 3211

- P (Patrol): 2xDDI, SCI, AMI
- I (Intelligence): DDI, 2xSCI, AMI
- S (Scouting): 3xSCI, AMI
- H (Hunter): 3xDDI, AMI

The *27th Watch* in Q6 and the *18th Watch* in CJ are both scheduled to be converted to 'I' Watches by the end of 3214.

## Battle Fleets

The main striking power of the UXN is concentrated into five Battle Fleets, three of which are assigned to joint allied fleets in a demonstrable commitment by the Union to the collective defence of humanity. By the end of 3215 the *Home Fleet*, *1<sup>st</sup> Reserve Fleet* and *8<sup>th</sup> Fleet* are to receive additional assets enhancing their firepower, scouting capability and capacity to detach fully supported ad hoc task groups.

### Home Fleet

**Role** – UXN premier fleet tasked with defending the Union worlds of Q0 and acting as a reserve for the rest of the navy.

**Deployment** – Based at Agama, Q0

**Composition:** 4xCVI, MPSI, 3xCAI, 4xCMI, CLI, 4xDDI, SCI, ALSI, AMI, C5, 3xLSSI

Additional assets required are a CAI and LSSI currently under construction and due to be delivered at the end of 3213; a DDI to be transferred from the *27th Watch* in 3214; a new CLI in 3215 to replace the XS Gilat which is to be transferred to the *Training Fleet* in 3214; and an MPSI at the end of 3215.

### ***1<sup>st</sup> Reserve Fleet (Combined Human Fleet)***

**Role** – Currently assigned to ‘H’ Force this will become the main striking force of the UXN and will double in strength to make-up for the withdrawal of IEN vessels.

**Deployment** – Based at Masada, Q0

**Composition:** BBI, 2xCVI, MPSI, 6xCAI, 4xCMI, CLI, 4xDDI, SCI, AMI, 4xLSSI

Additional assets required are an MPSI and LSSI currently under construction and due to be delivered at the end of 3213; two Heavy Cruiser Squadrons, one each to be delivered in 3214 and 3215; and an SCI and AMI in 3215.

### ***Purim Fleet (Combined Human Fleet)***

**Role** – UXN contribution to the Combined Human Intervention Front (CHIF). Ordinarily assigned to the defence of Q0, the fleet is also available for operations in the outer quadrants and beyond subject to the provision of appropriate logistical support.

**Deployment** – Based according to the requirements of the SHC, currently at New Washington, Q0.

**Composition:** 4xCVI, 3xCAI, 4xCMI, 2xLSSI

### ***Baalshem Fleet (Combined Human Fleet)***

**Role** – UXN contribution to the Quadrant 7 Defence Front (Q7DF) tasked with defending humanity in Q7 and environs. The fleet is available for operations outside Q7 subject to the provision of appropriate logistical support.

**Deployment** – Based at Potomax, Q7.

**Composition:** 2xCVI, 3xCAI, LSSI

### ***8th Fleet***

**Role** – The Union’s Quadrant Fleet for Q8 with responsibility for the defence of the second most populous world in the Union and location of considerable Union investment over the past ten years. The *8th Fleet* is also charged with the defence of humanity’s Joint Hyperlynium Facility funded by the ToOL members.

**Deployment** – Based at Deadwood, Q8.

**Composition:** 2xCVI, SVI, 3xCAI, 4xCMI, 3xCLI, 2xDDI, SCI, ALSI, AMI, C5, 2xLSSI

Additional assets required are a CLI and LSSI to be delivered by the end of 3214, and an SCI due for delivery by mid-3215. The two DDIs are currently deployed with the *18th Watch* and will be reassigned in 3214 when they are scheduled to be relieved by new SCIs.

### ***Fleet Assets***

These independent vessels and formations will continue to provide the UXN with the ability to deploy, often at short notice, additional assets to meet specific requirements or the need for specialist capabilities. The *5<sup>th</sup> Light Cruiser Squadron, 5CS(L)*, will remain seconded to the RWN but in 3214 will be assigned its own logistical support vessel. Specialist vessels such as SRIs, SSIs and TPTIs will be attached to operational formations as and when required. A mothballed strategic

reserve of capital ships including at least two cruiser squadrons will be maintained. It is noted that the Union's 'X' class vessels, whilst manned by XDF personnel, are now funded and tasked by the Ministry of Science and Research.

### ***Training Fleet***

**Role** – Meet both the space-side training needs of the UXN and PDF plus help maintain the operational capability of the XDF to project ground forces onto the surface of any planet identified by the Defence Ministry.

**Deployment** – Based at Haggai, Q0.

**Composition:** SVI, CLI, 2xDDI, 4xC5A, ALSI, TPTI

With the successful introduction of CVIs into the Fleet, the training CVI has now been reassigned to the *Home Fleet* as future carrier training requirements can be met by an SVI. A CLI is to be transferred from the *Home Fleet* in 3214.

### ***Task Force Shekinah***

**Role** – Deploy SMASH in support of XDF operations or in response to a request for assistance from civil authorities.

**Deployment** – Based at Haggai, Q0.

**Composition:** ALSI(H), DDI, C5

The hospital squadron organised around a converted ALSI has seen regular service in both conflict and medical quarantine zones since its creation in 3203. There remains scope for an additional hospital squadron enhancing the Union's ability to provide humanitarian aid although this would be subject to additional funding being made available.

### ***XMC***

No changes are planned for the Xyon Marine Corps. The ground force brigade assigned to each of the navy's seven ALSIs are designated 'Marine Regiments' and form the first line of the XDF's intervention forces. They fall under the control of the UXN and would be backed-up by Mobile Infantry units from the PDF in any second wave. The 'Marine Battalions' are elite starship marine units attached to capital ships and the SSIs with smaller detachments assigned to other vessels. There are also seven Independent Marine Battalions. UXN starship marine units differ from those of other polities due to their greater use of robots. The current size of the XMC is deemed sufficient to meet the needs of the Union.

### ***PDF***

The four branches of the Planetary Defence Forces – Starship Troopers, Mobile Infantry, Aerospace Corps and the National Guard – plus the independent special forces battalions of the Palmach were largely ignored during the last strategic defence review but have, nevertheless, undergone significant changes since then, particularly in relation to space borne in-system defences. Now much enhanced with IP class warships defending key systems, the expansion programme also saw the replacement of most SG vessels with DDs in Q0 and this policy is to be extended into the Outer Quadrants. Sacrificing the IS capability of the SGs in favour of the superior handling, firepower and

sensor suit of a DD is considered a worthwhile trade-off for a service which rarely needs to leave its home system. The challenge has been finding slots in heavily committed shipyards to build the necessary IP class vessels which often then need to be flat-packed for transportation to their final destination. The *Deadwood PDF* has already been re-equipped to the same standard as that found in the Q0 PDFs, and the *Tiel PDF* in Q7 is currently in the process of being so. Ultimately the PDF at all Colonial Capitals in the Outer Quadrants will be brought up to Q0 standard.

With the significant increase in IP class vessels in PDF service which hitherto have been largely manned by seconded UXN personnel it is recommended that these personnel be formally transferred over to the PDF. Establishing a free flow in crew between the UXN and PDF in much the same way as already happens with PAC pilots for the two services will benefit the XDF as a whole. It is expected that younger personnel in the PDF with fewer family commitments will find it easier to transfer into the UXN whilst facilitating transfers in the other direction for older and more experienced personnel who may wish to be based closer to family.

### **Starship Troopers**

They man the IP and Starguard vessels of the PDF and are responsible for in-system security including anti-piracy operations, policing of federal laws, and customs. Ten years ago they operated two BBs and 84 SG vessels, with the BB personnel seconded from the UXN. Today the Starship Troopers operate 74 SGs and 12 EVIs, plus 4xSAB, 5xCV, 9xMPS and 27xDD resulting in a doubling of manpower. Although seconded UXN personnel should be transferred into the PDF the Customs Officers will remain under the Ministry of Finance. The rolling programme of DD replacements for SGs is set to continue as and when slipways become available, and it is planned to provide an MPS, CV and SAB for the *Tiel PDF* when resources allow.

### **Mobile Infantry**

The XDF maintains only a small force of Mobile Infantry. There are ten brigades, half based in Q0, and five divisions, all but one in Q0. Their role is to follow-up where necessary any deployment of the XMC Regiments and to this end the brigades conduct annual exercises with the Marines and their associated ALSIs. There are two TPTIs available for the transportation of divisions, although one is kept mothballed in reserve. The *Irgun Division* at Haggai is designated as the default on-call unit. Additionally, one of the two divisions based on Agama is always on notice for possible out of system deployment. There are no immediate plans to increase the number of MI divisions or brigades. The Mobile Infantry also includes the five Palmach Battalions which are Special Forces optimised for planet-side operations. One of these, the *Shomrim*, is permanently assigned to Hakamim protection duties at Agama and the *Negev Battalion* has been deployed on Wing since 3206.

### **Aerospace Corps**

The Corps is responsible for training all PAC pilots in the XDF and operates all PACs except those assigned to UXN vessels. With the introduction of the MPS class vessel into PDF service in 3205 there are now far fewer independent PAC squadrons as most were reassigned to serve aboard the new ships. The Corps performed admirably in providing enough PAC pilots to enable the rapid expansion of the UXN carrier force over the last ten years and a period of consolidation is now anticipated. There will, however, be some growth as the UXN introduces two MPSIs in coming years.

## **National Guard**

The primary function of the National Guard is to defend their home system. The number and composition of National Guard units is directly related to the number of systems in the Union and the population and level of economic development in those systems. The Defence Ministry maintains a commitment to upgrade any militia to planetary guard divisions once the system's economy reaches Average and to do this in a timely manner. There are currently 18 militia divisions and 40 PG divisions.

## **Conclusion**

Our alliances with others remain at the heart of Union defence policy. Recent experience has demonstrated the need for flexibility in both force structure and doctrine within the XDF in order for it to meet the range and breadth of security challenges facing the Union and our allies. The expansion of the UXN in the last decade has enabled the Union to deal with these challenges and the changes outlined in this review are designed to enhance that flexibility and lay the basis for the force structure of the XDF over the next 10 years. The balance between the mobile forces of the UXN and the generally static forces of the PDF has altered in favour of the latter since the last strategic review in 3202. This process is on-going and current projections for the division of resources between the two are considered appropriate for the needs of the Union and its members.