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The Integrated Review In Context: One Year On

October 2022

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is the third volume in a series of essays that aims to put the Integrated Review in context. The first volume was broadly focused and reflected on some of the foreign policy implications of the Review. The second volume focused instead on the defence and security aspects of the Review and its aligned publications, including the Defence Command Paper and Defence and Security Industrial Strategy.

What you will read in this, the third volume in the series, are 10 essays that appraise the Review a year – in fact, eighteen months – on from its publication. Each essay considers a different aspect of UK strategy in the light of recent events. The essays have been published previously online. They are collected together in this edition to coincide with the end of Boris Johnson's premiership and the start of his successor's term in office. The essays in this volume and the previous instalments in the series provide a good account of the breadth and complexity of national security challenges facing the new prime minister.

Once again, we are very grateful to our excellent contributors – who are former practitioners, established and early-career scholars, most of whom are aligned with the School of Security Studies at King's College London. We thank them all for agreeing to take part in this collection and to offer their insights into and analyses of the Review and its implications. As with the previous volumes, there is no uniformity of views. At times, the contributors offer different perspectives – for example, about the UK's response to the conflict in Ukraine. As we wrote when introducing the previous volumes, such differences of opinion reflect the fact that UK strategy is subject to multiple different interpretations – and will continue to be so throughout the life-cycle of the Integrated Review and whatever might replace it.

We would like to thank again Lizzie Ellen and her exceptional communications team in the School of Security Studies for all their efforts in bringing this collection to publication. The attractive and accessible format of this series is entirely down to them. Particular thanks are due to Stella Elizabeth Goodwin and Eric Kwon for their help in preparing the essays for publication. Thanks again to Abby Bradley, Danielle MacDivitt and Ayesha Khan for all their help with the previous volumes in the series, on which this volume can build.

We would also like to thank our colleagues in the Centre for Defence Studies, the Freeman Air and Space Institute, and more broadly in the Department of War Studies and wider School of Security Studies at King's. We have benefited greatly from discussing the Review with them and debating how best to reflect on its implications and fitness for purpose in light of recent events.

Finally, we would also like to thank our respective families for their patience and support as we prepared this latest volume for publication.

Hillary Briffa, Joe Devanny and John Gearson
October 2022

The Integrated Review in Context: One Year On

Dr Hillary Briffa, Dr Joe Devanny, and Professor John Gearson

“ALTHOUGH THIS SERIES IS FRAMED AS A RESPONSE TO THE INTEGRATED REVIEW, THE ADVENT OF A NEW PRIME MINISTER OBVIOUSLY PRESENTS THESE ESSAYS IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT, AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT ON THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACING THE NEW ADMINISTRATION.”

Editors' Introduction

In March 2021, the UK government published its flagship, much delayed strategic blueprint: Global Britain in a Competitive Age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy. The Integrated Review had bold ambitions and was billed by the incumbent Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, as one of the biggest ever re-assessments of Britain's role in the world and how best to achieve national strategic objectives.

Any effort to look ahead and prepare Britain to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities of the 2020s was likely to face the same perennial issues that have beset strategic reviews throughout history. In practice, the events of the past year – including the fall of Kabul to the Taliban, the rapid spread of the Delta and Omicron variants of COVID-19, the urgent climate negotiations at COP26, and the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine – have already provoked a plethora of questions about whether the Review captured the right priorities, and whether it is even still fit for purpose.

On its publication, critics wondered whether the Integrated Review's judgements about international security would be proved well-founded and useful for orienting UK policy: did it strike the right balance between Britain's role in the political and security architecture of Europe and expansive plans to enhance Britain's global role, particularly in the form of the Indo-Pacific tilt? And was the size, shape and pace of change in Britain's armed forces well calibrated to provide the necessary instruments to support the Johnson government's ambitious agenda?

This new volume of 10 essays addresses these issues one year – in fact, now eighteen months – on from the Integrated Review's publication. This is the latest volume in a series on the Review, published by the Centre for Defence Studies in the School of Security Studies at King's College London. Our first volume focused on the broad geopolitical and strategic implications of the Review, and the second focused specifically on its significance for defence and security policy.

The 10 essays that comprise this latest volume were originally published online in weekly instalments. This volume now brings them together in one place, fittingly published after Boris Johnson's premiership has ended and that of his successor, Liz Truss, has started to unfold. As in previous volumes, our contributors are primarily drawn from the outstanding academic community of the School of Security Studies, encompassing established and early career scholars, academics and former practitioners. Although this series is framed as a response to the Integrated Review, the advent of a new Prime Minister obviously presents these essays in a different light, as an opportunity to reflect on the challenges and opportunities facing the new administration . Indeed, the Truss administration has already commissioned an update to the Review, to be published before the end of the year. Reportedly, Truss's special adviser, Professor John Bew – instrumental in the original Review – will lead the update.

These essays cover a wide variety of contemporary defence and security topics, reflecting the way our existing governance systems face unprecedented challenges in this increasingly uncertain and networked world. The Integrated Review conceived of the UK as a 'problem-solving' and 'burden-sharing' state, positing a certain idea of global leadership in which the UK is an active, constructive and collaborative ally. In the last six months, we have arguably seen a specific example of this vision in practice, in the UK's active diplomacy and material support for Ukraine.

STATES ARE STILL POWERFUL, BUT THE INSTRUMENTS OF THAT POWER, AND THE MANNER OF ITS EXERCISE, ARE COMPLEX AND INTERDEPENDENT.

More broadly, however, for governments to effectively pursue their national and shared interests in the globalised economy, address (and shape) the impact of emerging technologies, and overcome volatile resource pressures, they must embrace a range of new roles and relationships with strategically significant non-state actors. States are still powerful, but the instruments of that power, and the manner of its exercise, are complex and interdependent . No single state can achieve its objectives alone. And states cannot overcome strategic challenges without active collaboration with the private sector and civil society . Effective engagement entails relationships with a wide range of actors. States must therefore conceive their roles more broadly and flexibly than that of sovereign deciders – as enablers facilitating, guiding and working with other actors.

With a change of Prime Minister, the Integrated Review remains an important framework to guide such a transition, assisted by a network of underlying sectoral sub-strategies that elaborate the detail necessarily absent from the top-level vision of the Review. Collectively, these demonstrate the UK's commitment to establishing common goals and collaborating with a range of partners – in bilateral, minilateral, multilateral and multistakeholder processes – and to take the longer-term into account. This outward-looking, collaborative and inclusive approach should continue to be at the heart of UK strategy. And, as the re-intensified conflict in Ukraine has demonstrated so starkly, European issues and relationships must be the starting point for UK national strategy.

Each new Prime Minister since 2010 has brought in new personnel, revised central machinery and supporting roles, and conducted major strategic reviews. For David Cameron, this was most notable in the reforms that created the National Security Council and ushered in a quinquennial cycle of National Security Strategies and Strategic Defence and Security Reviews. Theresa May adapted the machinery and advisory roles she inherited from Cameron, and conducted in-cycle strategic reviews of national security and defence. Johnson's Integrated Review and his reshaping of the central national security machinery was a further example, covered in our previous volumes. It is to be expected that, as the new Prime Minister, Liz Truss will consider what needs to change to serve her priorities and preferred ways of working. For example, whilst Professor Bew has been retained from Johnson's government, Truss has already replaced the National Security Adviser with senior diplomat Sir Tim Barrow. It also appears that machinery has been refreshed, or at least restyled: the NSC is now called the Foreign Policy and Security Council. Precisely what this means in practice will no doubt become clear in time.

IT IS TO BE EXPECTED THAT, AS THE NEW PRIME MINISTER, LIZ TRUSS WILL CONSIDER WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE TO SERVE HER PRIORITIES AND PREFERRED WAYS OF WORKING.

The timing of all this is, of course, not ideal, with the impact of previous changes still being worked through, for example the merger between the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. But the Whitehall bureaucracy is well-prepared from past experience to adapt to such changes. And it is right that the new administration should have the opportunity to review and revise the arrangements – and the strategy – that it inherits. Such reviews benefit from a structured process to collect evidence, reflect on findings and devise new options. The reality is, of course, that from the outset the Truss administration faces serious challenges on numerous fronts – most notably the domestic cost of living crisis, and the continuing crisis in European security caused by Russia. Balancing short- and long-term perspectives – always a difficult balance to strike in government – will be an especially acute challenge for the Truss premiership. Success in such circumstances will look like the serenity prayer in action: accepting what cannot or should not be changed (at least for the moment); courageously addressing what does need to change; and wisely discerning what falls into each category.

Looking beyond the shape of present challenges and opportunities to those rising up on the horizon, as the Integrated Review sought to do, is a necessary role of government, but it is crucial to recognize that a strategic review is not a crystal ball. Lord (Peter) Ricketts, a Visiting Professor in the Department of War Studies at King's College London and the UK's first National Security Adviser (2010-12), emphasises this fact in his essay. The 2010 review did not anticipate the Libyan crisis the following year. The 2015 version did not foresee or address Britain's subsequent decision to withdraw from the European Union. Rather than expecting a strategic review to predict the future, the value of such exercises lies in identifying long-term strategic priorities. This helps government to allocate resources, time and energy to the nation's top priorities. It facilitates effective

decision-making, guiding the trade-offs required between competing priorities in a world of limited resources. Lord Ricketts is appreciative of the goals set out in the Review, but laments a lack of clear priorities amid the myriad competing interests encompassed by the 114-page document. A year on, "forcing choices and clarifying Britain's essential interests" will be imperative to engender greater progress.

Lord Ricketts argues that the Ukraine crisis refocused British attention on its immediate neighbourhood and its contributions to NATO, despite the prominent Indo-Pacific theme of the Review . Dr Simon Anglim, a Teaching Fellow in the Department of War Studies at King's College London, expands on this theme in his essay by specifically looking at the limits of Britain's ability to project force on land, owing to a prevailing culture in the UK defence establishment. Mere months ago, many pundits were convinced that wars of the future would only be occurring below the threshold of kinetic force, with 'grey-zone' activities gaining increasing prominence. However, if the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war was not enough to signal that armed conflict is very much still present in the European neighbourhood, the Ukraine crisis dispelled any residual doubt. Dr Anglim outlines the Russian land warfare doctrine and assesses the British response, lauding the swift imposition of punitive economic sanctions and reflecting on the limited ground forces that the UK could potentially offer. He reminds us that the confrontation with Russia over Ukraine "will succeed or fail on the land battle" and future British investment should reflect this.

"LORD RICKETTS ARGUES THAT THE UKRAINE CRISIS REFOCUSED BRITISH ATTENTION ON ITS IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATO, DESPITE THE PROMINENT INDO-PACIFIC THEME OF THE REVIEW."

The importance of conventional capabilities is further reflected in the essay by Dr Maxine David, a Lecturer in European Studies at Leiden University, and Dr Natasha Kuhrt, a Senior Lecturer in International Peace and Security in the Department of War Studies at King's College London. Both authors are experts in Russian foreign and security policy and have focused their contribution – a follow up to their essay in a previous volume in this series – on the implications of Russia's invasion of Ukraine for the Integrated Review. Their commentary is not limited to conventional force, however, but also reflects on cyber and nuclear warfare, recognising the significant British capabilities in these areas and the way that bilateral and multilateral support to Ukraine helps to mitigate Russian power asymmetry. At the same time, Dr David and Dr Kuhrt go even further, adding a critical fourth perspective on the threat to values posed by both the Russian aggressor, and indeed by Britain's own policy responses. A significant theme that emerges from this essay is the question about how governments can balance securitisation, and the concomitant need to protect citizens, with the need to avoid compromising our democratic values.

The perspective provides a neat segue into the concerns of the next essay in the volume, written by Dr Amelia Morgan, a Research Associate at the Centre for Science and Security Studies at King's College London and an ESRC/AHRC Policy Fellow at the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), and Dr Heather Williams, currently the Director of the Project on Nuclear Issues at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Dr Morgan and Dr Williams reflect that the decision by the British government to increase its nuclear stockpile – together with greater ambiguity concerning when a deployment would be considered permissible – was among the most vociferously discussed aspects of the Review on its release in March 2021. Whilst the Ukraine conflict could be argued to have vindicated, to some degree, the decision by the UK government to augment its nuclear capabilities, Dr Morgan and Dr Williams argue that the decision stands in tension with the UK's stated ambition to be a leader in nuclear disarmament and potentially undermines its credibility both with UK domestic public opinion and with states that are signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Like Lord Ricketts, Dr Morgan and Dr Williams also recognise the importance of balancing British interests between the growth of strategic competition in Europe and Britain's ambitions and interests in the Indo-Pacific. In relation to the former, engagement with NATO takes centre stage, whilst the provision of nuclear submarines to Australia through the wider AUKUS partnership, and close collaboration with the US is a promising feature of the latter. Taken together, the authors view the AUKUS trilateral partnership "not so much a 'pivot' away from Europe, but rather a widening of Britain's strategic gaze to include two strategic competitors".

How to carefully manage this dual approach is a question that preoccupies Gesine Weber, a doctoral candidate in the Defence Studies Department at King's College London, and her co-author Professor Anand Menon, the Director of the UK in a Changing Europe and Professor of European Politics and Foreign Affairs at Kings College London. For Weber and Menon, the UK's early approach to AUKUS complicated UK-EU defence and security cooperation, particularly given the way in which the initial steps of AUKUS provoked tensions with France. Through their examination of a range of shared challenges for the UK and the EU – the Ukraine conflict chief among them, but with the spectre of a more assertive China still haunting the continent – Weber and Menon remind us that UK relations with EU partners remain strained in the post-Brexit landscape. The Integrated Review's stated ambition to achieve more constructive and productive relations with European allies evidently still requires hard work and coordinated action to make it a reality .

Ironically, Russian aggression in Ukraine has stimulated further opportunities for enhancing European collective defence and security arrangements by admitting two new members (Finland and Sweden) to NATO. The UK is well situated to help develop these opportunities. After the February 2022 re-intensified Russian invasion of Ukraine, Finnish and Swedish public opinion transformed, swinging decisively in favour of NATO membership. Accession diplomacy rapidly accelerated and, on 5 July 2022, NATO Ambassadors signed the accession protocols for both nations. In their essay, Samu Paukkunen, Deputy Director of the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, and Dr Valtteri Vuorisalo, a Senior Visiting Research Fellow in the Department of War Studies at King's College London, illuminate the potential for Finland and Sweden to become net contributors to NATO collective defence and security, extending the umbrella of NATO protection across the North and East of Europe, through the Arctic, Nordic and Baltic regions. Finland and Sweden are, they argue, natural partners for the UK, with shared values and the prospect for high interoperability in combined forces. The accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO would bode well for the stated ambition in the Integrated Review for the UK to "support collective security from the Black Sea to the High North" (p.74).

"THE INTEGRATED REVIEW'S STATED AMBITION TO ACHIEVE MORE CONSTRUCTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE RELATIONS WITH EUROPEAN ALLIES EVIDENTLY STILL REQUIRES HARD WORK AND COORDINATED ACTION TO MAKE IT A REALITY."

In addition to geopolitics, the Review also addressed the issues of capability development, with air and space power prominently represented. In her essay, Julia C. Balm, a doctoral candidate in the Freeman Air and Space Institute (FASI) in the School of Security Studies at King's College London, evaluates the significant progress made by the UK to upgrade its capabilities and doctrine in Space, buoyed by sizeable £1.4bn investment over the coming decade. Still, in the space domain, even such an eye-watering figure can only go so far, and Balm's commentary shrewdly reflects on the need for "ruthless prioritisation" in the development of this new area. At the same time, materiel is not the only necessity, and the essay gives thoughtful consideration to the organisational structure and culture that must be cultivated to see meaningful progress over the coming years.

Whilst Dr Anglim's essay earlier in the volume provides a sobering reminder of the criticality of land forces in the ongoing campaigns to repel the Russian threat, Dr Sophy Antrobus, a Research Fellow with the Freeman Air and Space Institute (FASI) in the School of Security Studies at King's College London, and Andy Netherwood, the Air and Space power editor for the Wavell Room, apply their joint expertise and experience from long careers in the Royal Air Force (RAF) to evaluate the air power aspects of the Review. They dissect the perceived shortcomings of the Review in relation to air power, juxtaposing its ambitions with "incoherent" funding cuts to the various forces required to sustain them. Again, lessons from the Ukraine conflict loom large, exposing several gaps and vulnerabilities resulting from budgetary cuts. However, this is not the only crisis that has revealed the growing problems with UK air power capabilities: indeed, the authors are particularly excoriating in their appraisal of British failures to evacuate many eligible Afghans, following the fall of Kabul to the Taliban in August 2021.

The chaotic scenes in Kabul surrounding this US and allied withdrawal from Afghanistan is the subject of the next essay, by Professor Tim Willasey-Wilsey, a Visiting Professor in the Department of War Studies at King's College London and former senior UK diplomat. Professor Willasey-Wilsey reflects on the confluence of factors that led to the

de-prioritisation of Afghanistan, despite the British presence there over two decades. These factors include departmental restructuring, staffing changes, budgetary allocations, and the impact of changing threat perceptions. As Professor Willasey-Wilsey reflects on the poor outcome in the region, he argues that this is now testing the UK's relationship with partners ranging from the US to India. He concludes on an optimistic note, in relation to partners further East, such as Singapore, Japan and South Korea, suggesting that strategic focus is now shifting more fully towards the challenge presented by China's rising power and influence.

Finally, whilst the management of present crises has featured prominently throughout these essays, it is imperative not to forget the Integrated Review's focus on longer-term, more slow-burning issues. The Review promised, for example, to make "tackling climate change and biodiversity loss its number one international priority" (p.4). In his essay, Dr Duraid Jalili, Lecturer in the Defence Studies Department at King's College London and co-director of the King's Environmental Security Research Group, highlights the progress – and shortcomings – of the UK's approach to tackling the global climate emergency. Dr Jalili documents failures to make sufficient progress on climate finance at COP26 in Glasgow and to meet domestic targets, failures which are undermining British leadership in this consequential area. And yet, as Dr Jalili also notes, the UK has also achieved progress. For example, strides have been made regarding cross-governmental and inter-sectoral coordination. The Ministry of Defence has released the world's first national defence Net Zero strategy. And there have been several wins for UK climate objectives in international fora. So, despite the prevailing geopolitical gloom of the past year, it is promising to see increased engagement with partners and stakeholders to address the shared global challenge of the climate emergency.

DESPITE THE PREVAILING GEOPOLITICAL GLOOM OF THE PAST YEAR, IT IS PROMISING TO SEE INCREASED ENGAGEMENT WITH PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO ADDRESS THE SHARED GLOBAL CHALLENGE OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY.

Conclusion

Among the "quiet gains" highlighted in Dr Jalili's essay is the UK Cabinet's Collective Intelligence Lab (CILab) – which Dr Jalili argues "is designed to crowdsource external expertise on current approaches to UK policy". We have conceived this volume and the wider series on the Integrated Review in the same spirit, that is to say, of bringing independent expertise and outsider perspectives into the public debate about UK strategic and defence and security policies. The Integrated Review, and whatever might replace it under the new administration's quick update, has to help the government to address a complex and uncertain global security environment, clarifying Britain's top priorities and effectively pursuing its national objectives. We hope that this latest volume of essays will contribute to the important public debate about the current and future direction of UK strategy, about Britain's role in the world, and the perennial challenge of effectively aligning the nation's ends, ways and means.

It is clear from the breadth of issues addressed in these essays that, as the UK's new Prime Minister, Liz Truss inherits a portfolio of major risks to manage – but also of real opportunities to seize. As with every premiership, the continuous present of immediate short-term priorities will inevitably demand much of the Truss administration's finite executive bandwidth. Continuing to manage the UK's role in responding to the conflict in Ukraine, and its wider consequences – both domestic and international – will be the first task. But this will proceed at the same time as the administration addresses multiple strategic issues, from continuing the process to identify and deliver a successfully redefined and constructive set of relationships for the UK in Europe, to pursuing patient, incremental diplomacy in multilateral and multistakeholder processes regarding the global climate emergency, responsible state behaviour in cyberspace, or the standards shaping future global telecommunications and emerging technologies.

AS WITH EVERY PREMIERSHIP, THE CONTINUOUS PRESENT OF IMMEDIATE SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES WILL INEVITABLY DEMAND MUCH OF THE TRUSS ADMINISTRATION'S FINITE EXECUTIVE BANDWIDTH.

The Integrated Review and its aligned, sectoral sub-strategies have indicated that the UK recognises the magnitude and variety of these global challenges, and sees the potential for the UK to play a constructive and leading global role. The Truss administration must strike the right balance between the need to be globally competitive and the imperative of global collaboration. Many of the answers to the questions implicit in these challenges will emerge within the most highly-classified circles of government. And yet, a well-functioning system of coherently defining and ruthlessly pursuing the national interest must be open

THE TRUSS ADMINISTRATION MUST STRIKE THE RIGHT BALANCE BETWEEN THE NEED TO BE GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE AND THE IMPERATIVE OF GLOBAL COLLABORATION.

to the advice, alternative analysis and challenge function that can only be provided by stakeholders from beyond the siloes of government. The essays in this new volume are a contribution to this on-going, public debate about the national strategy that Britain needs.

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One year on: Reappraising the Integrated Review

Professor the Lord Ricketts

Strategic reviews should not be judged on whether they predict the next crisis. The 2010 review did not foresee the NATO air campaign over Libya the following year. The 2015 document did not factor in that Britain would in 2016 decide to leave the EU. The 2021 integrated review could not have anticipated that, within a year of publication, Putin would decide to transform the European security landscape by mounting a full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The real value of these planning documents is in identifying the long-term interests of the country, and deriving from these a set of enduring priorities which will guide the allocation of finite resources . How does the 2021 integrated review measure up to this yardstick? My broad assessment at the time was that the review set out in thoughtful terms a wide range of ambitious goals for Britain's new national strategy, but failed to establish any clear priorities. The Ukraine crisis is now doing that job, forcing choices and clarifying Britain's essential national interests . As a result, the eye-catching novelties which were played up in the political marketing of the Review have been cast aside. But much of value remains, and now needs to be adapted to the new circumstances.

"THE REAL VALUE OF THESE PLANNING DOCUMENTS IS IN IDENTIFYING THE LONG-TERM INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY, AND DERIVING FROM THESE A SET OF ENDURING PRIORITIES WHICH WILL GUIDE THE ALLOCATION OF FINITE RESOURCES."

Some of the threat analysis in the early part of the Review has been shown to be spot on, in particular the statement that: 'The precondition for global Britain is the safety of our citizens at home and the security of the Euro-Atlantic area'; and the judgement that 'Russia remains the most acute threat to our security'. The problem was that these important judgements did not drive the main conclusions of the Review. The whole thrust of the document, and especially the presentation of it by Ministers, was that leaving the EU was an opportunity to move on from traditional ties and seek fresh opportunities and new partnerships beyond Europe. The section headed 'Prime Minister's Vision' set the objective that 'by 2030, we will be deeply engaged in the Indo-Pacific as the European partner with the broadest, most integrated presence in support of mutually – beneficial trade, shared security and values'. The same paragraph emphasised that Britain would be active in Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf. Almost nothing was said about future relations with the EU.

There was also a strand of thought in the Review that Britain's new global role meant taking a different view of the international order: "The Integrated Review also signals a change of approach. Over the last decade, UK policy has been focused on preserving the post-Cold War 'rules-based international system'...today however the international order is more fragmented... A defence of the status quo is no longer sufficient for the decade ahead." The clear implication was that the post-war system was increasingly outmoded, and that in future Britain would take a more dynamic approach, building what the Review called a "network of like-minded countries and flexible groupings."

The implications of the Ukraine conflict

Putin's war put this Global Britain rhetoric into a very different perspective. The crisis has shown that Britain's vital national interests are not engaged in the Indo-Pacific region to the extent they are by events on the European continent. It has demonstrated that defending the post-war rules-based order as laid down in the UN Charter is vital if the world is not to fall back into the sort of barbaric wars which disfigured the twentieth century. And it has been a sharp reminder that strengthening the NATO alliance is far more central to Britain's security than creating flexible new groupings.

> **DETERRENCE OF A HOSTILE RUSSIA, INVOLVING LARGER NUMBERS OF NATO GROUND FORCES BASED IN EASTERN EUROPE, IS HERE TO STAY. THIS HAS PROFOUND IMPLICATIONS FOR BRITAIN'S DEFENCE POSTURE AND EQUIPMENT PROGRAMME.**

In practice, the UK's military response to the crisis has been sure-footed. British governments have developed a close military training relationship with Ukraine since 2015, and built on that to take a leading role in the supply of anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons as soon as the Russian invasion began. British forces were among the first in NATO to reinforce the Baltic States and Poland. But however the war ends, the European security landscape has undergone a major strategic shift. Deterrence of a hostile Russia, involving larger numbers of NATO ground forces based in Eastern Europe, is here to stay. This has profound implications for Britain's defence posture and equipment programme.

The Integrated Review did not contain much detail on the size and mission of the future armed forces. The main emphasis in the section dealing with defence, apart from the important announcement on nuclear warhead numbers, was on the benefits of advanced technology: "We will prioritise the development and integration of new technologies…and a 'digital backbone' to enable multi-domain operations." The Royal Navy (RN) was given pride of place in the political presentation of the Review, with the new Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers and their advanced F35 aircraft symbolising Britain's ambitions to play a global role. The accompanying Defence White Paper announced that Britain would strengthen its 'strategic hubs' in Oman, Kenya and Singapore. It also made pretty clear that spending on major equipment programmes would continue to be directed largely to the Navy and the Royal Air Force (RAF): 'The RN will have new ships and missiles, the RAF new fighters and the Army will be more deployed and better protected.'

The Army's status as the Cinderella service of the Global Britain strategy was further underlined when the Defence Secretary told Parliament in March 2021 that the Army would be cut to 72,500, its smallest size since 1714. Mr Wallace explained that numbers were now less important, since new technology made each soldier more effective. However, the Army's equipment modernisation programme has been dogged by problems, with the scrapping of programme to upgrade the elderly Warrior armoured infantry vehicle and the continuing delays in bringing the Ajax reconnaissance vehicle into service. Now the Army is being called on to make new deployments of forces to Eastern Europe, which may become permanent.

Aircraft carriers are good for showing the flag in the Indo-Pacific but of little use in territorial defence of NATO allies. And the war in Ukraine, far from being a high-tech affair requiring dominance of cyberspace, has turned out to be a distinctly 20th century conflict depending heavily on generating forces of a significant size, with good logistics and firepower. Both the size of the British Army and the priorities in the defence equipment programme need urgent re-thinking in the light of the war in Ukraine.

Global Britain and the EU

There is one further aspect of the Integrated Review which now needs revisiting – Britain's relationship with the EU and its members. As noted above, the EU was almost totally air-brushed out of the document. All the emphasis was on the greater agility and speed of action which Britain would enjoy, having cast off the shackles of EU membership. Yet it turned out that both the EU and US were able to move more quickly than the UK in imposing sanctions on Russian individuals and companies linked to the Putin regime. The British Government had to scramble though a new law to fill in loopholes left after Brexit. And the fact that sanctions have to be coordinated between allies in order to be effective made it necessary for UK and EU sanctions experts to work together (even though this was not revealed at the time to the British public). This pragmatic cooperation needs to be expanded to all areas of foreign policy and put on a more permanent footing.

Beyond the practicalities of EU-UK cooperation, the Ukraine crisis showed that Britain and its nearest neighbours shared the same values and interests when it came to responding to war on the European continent. Indeed, the scale and barbarity of the conflict galvanised members of the EU into accepting for the first time that the organisation should take on a security and defence role in keeping with its economic weight. In Germany, security policy changed more in the first three weeks of the conflict than in the previous thirty years. With the prospect of Germany having the largest defence budget in Europe and resuming the central role in European security it occupied during the Cold War, the British Government should develop a new defence partnership with Germany on a par with the one we have had with France since the 2010 Lancaster House Treaties.

MANY OF THE IDEAS SET OUT IN THE INTEGRATED REVIEW FOR BUILDING A MORE SECURE AND RESILIENT UK CONTINUE TO BE RELEVANT. BUT PUTIN'S WAR IN UKRAINE HAS PUT EUROPEAN SECURITY BACK WHERE IT BELONGS – AT THE HEART OF BRITAIN'S NATIONAL SECURITY PRIORITIES.

Germany and many other EU countries were deeply shaken by Donald Trump's dismissive attitude to NATO. President Joe Biden has proved an effective leader of the Western alliance in the Ukraine crisis, but the Europeans are looking anxiously at the prospect of Trump or another Republican with a similar approach winning the Presidency in 2024. The decisions taken in Berlin and other EU capitals about the longer-term lessons to draw from Putin's aggression will shape European security for decades. It is crucial that Britain influences that debate, through dialogue with the EU and a reinforced partnership with Germany and France in particular. This was an issue which the Integrated Review could not have foreseen, but it is a now a top priority, and supersedes Global Britain slogans like the Indo-Pacific tilt.

Strategic reviews cannot predict the future. But if they are to prove durable, they need to set a long-term direction which can be adapted as circumstances change. Many of the ideas set out in the Integrated Review for building a more secure and resilient UK continue to be relevant. But Putin's war in Ukraine has put European security back where it belongs – at the heart of Britain's national security priorities. An updated version of the Review is now needed to weigh all the consequences of this seismic event.

Lord (Peter) Ricketts is a visiting professor in the Department of War Studies at King's College London. He was the United Kingdom's first National Security Adviser (2010-12) and is a former Permanent Under Secretary of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Head of the Diplomatic Service (2006-10) and Ambassador to France (2012-16). Lord Ricketts is the author of Hard Choices: The Making and Unmaking of Global Britain (London: Atlantic Books, paperback edition 2022).

The Review and the Army revisited: The implications of the war in Ukraine

Dr Simon Anglim

Despite the UK's vigorous response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, its ability to project force on land, essential to deter further Russian ambitions in Europe, was already diminishing before the Integrated Review. This appears to have arisen from prioritising capabilities other than kinetic force on the land battlefield, arising from prevailing culture in the Army and Ministry of Defence.

WHAT FORMED MR JOHNSON'S VIEWS ON CONTEMPORARY LAND WARFARE IS ANYONE'S GUESS, BUT THE AUTHOR DETECTS THE LIKELY INFLUENCE OF A SCHOOL OF THOUGHT CURRENTLY HAVING MUCH TRACTION IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (MOD) AND THE SENIOR RANKS OF THE BRITISH ARMY (BUT NOT, INTERESTINGLY, THE ROYAL NAVY OR AIR FORCE).

"We have to recognise that the old concepts of fighting big tank battles on the European landmass…are over and that there are other, better things that we should be investing in….I do not think that going back to a 1940s-style approach will serve us well." Mr Johnson said this during an exchange over cuts to the British Army's tank force with Tobias Ellwood, Chairman of the Commons Defence Select Committee and a prominent critic within Mr Johnson's own Conservative Party. Among the 'other, better things' the UK Ministry of Defence should invest in, Mr Johnson argued, was 'cyber', Mr Ellwood responding: 'You cannot hold ground with cyber'.

What formed Mr Johnson's views on contemporary land warfare is anyone's guess, but the author detects the likely influence of a school of thought currently having much traction in the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the senior ranks of the British Army (but not, interestingly, the Royal Navy or Air Force). This is a postmodernist view, influenced by certain US-based authors and think tanks, that 'conventional warfare is dead' and that contemporary conflict (or 'strategic competition') is now pursued via 'hybrid' methods with narrative control featuring prominently and cyber and 'information' attacks as credible alternatives to kinetic force. For instance, the recently-retired Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Nicholas Carter, was a strong proponent of 'information manoeuvre', raising a specialist unit in the British Army, 77 Brigade, to address key 'target audiences' while presiding over swingeing cuts to the Army's combat assets. The current Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Mark Carleton-Smith spoke in 2021 of a new British military 'house style' hinging on 'discreet' use of Special Forces, airpower and cyber with local allies doing much of the 'traditional' conventional fighting.

One doubts whether Presidents Putin or Zelensky would agree with any of this. On 24 February 2022, the army of the Russian Federation invaded Ukraine with an estimated 160,000 troops – almost twice the current size of the entire British Army. Although accurate figures for the invasion force are hard to come by, the Russian Western Military District holds around 1,000 tanks from the Russian Army's total stock of 2,840 (with an estimated 6-9,000 more in storage) and, perhaps more significantly, given current Russian land warfare doctrine's emphasis on deep fires, around 1,000 artillery pieces and surface-to-surface missiles and at least 140 fast jets capable of flying air superiority and strike missions and, indeed, the invasion began with deep strikes against military facilities all over Ukraine. These figures do not include extensive reinforcements from elsewhere in Russia.

Russian objectives and NATO's role

Initial Russian policy aims centred on the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) accepting an eight-point draft treaty barring Ukraine from joining it and limiting NATO's activities in what Russia sees as its 'sphere of influence' in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. This was rejected by NATO's Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, on the grounds that as a sovereign nation, Ukraine has the right to make its own security arrangements and that NATO membership is a matter for its own member states. Russia's demands were also branded 'unacceptable' by the US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, with US President Biden and Mr Johnson threatening major sanctions on the Putin regime if it invaded. In mid-February, President Putin escalated, recognising the illegal Russian-majority 'republics' of Donetsk and Luhansk – Russian puppets fighting the Ukraine government since 2014 –

while challenging Ukraine's very right to exist and the Russian forces entering Ukraine on 24 February were identified as 'peacekeepers', their 'peacekeeping' extending subsequently to major conventional battles, involving tanks and other armoured vehicles, artillery and air support, fought around some of Ukraine's key cities and with casualties on both sides in the thousands.

The British Army and UK strategy

This represents the first major international confrontation for Mr Johnson's government and the UK's first military confrontation since the publication of two interlinked documents intended to shape its post-Brexit security policy and strategy: the 2021 policy paper, Global Britain in a Competitive Age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, and the accompanying Ministry of Defence Command Paper, Defence in a Competitive Age. What follows examines British military responses, real and potential, to the Ukraine War, with particular reference to land warfare capabilities. Why these? There are two clear reasons. First, as this author states elsewhere, Russia is fundamentally a major land power which must be deterred on land and the invasion of Ukraine (or NATO territory in Europe) will succeed or fail on the land battle.

RUSSIA IS FUNDAMENTALLY A MAJOR LAND POWER WHICH MUST BE DETERRED ON LAND AND THE INVASION OF UKRAINE (OR NATO TERRITORY IN EUROPE) WILL SUCCEED OR FAIL ON THE LAND BATTLE.

Second, given the gravity of the crisis, we can deduce much about the UK's current land warfare capabilities from looking at what has been done on land to back up Mr Johnson's responses, allowing some preliminary judgements on the Integrated Review and Command Paper's impact and just how credible a tool the British Army they envisaged could be for Mr Johnson's 'Global Britain'.

In fairness, Mr Johnson has responded to the invasion vigorously, taking the lead in the international community inflicting punitive economic sanctions on the Putin regime and supplying Ukraine with generous amounts of 'defensive' weaponry, most prominently several thousand NLAW portable anti-tank guided missiles which have proven very effective against Russian armour.

Right now, Mr Johnson and others' strategy of supporting Ukraine as NATO's proxy while inflicting major economic suffering on Russia seems to be working very well indeed. The invasion has not gone well for Russia and some operations have failed disastrously, particularly the Russian attempt to seize Kyiv, Ukraine's capital. From speaking to British military officials in March and April, the author notes stunned disbelief at just how badly the Russian Army and Air Force have performed but Western weaponry has also been a key factor as the Ukrainians themselves attest. On 9 April, Mr Johnson became the first NATO leader to visit Kyiv since the invasion, holding talks with President Zelensky, who was sincere in his praise for the UK's support for Ukraine. In response, Russia has rumbled about escalation, President Putin hinting at use of battlefield nuclear and chemical weapons against Ukraine and armed retaliation against NATO countries supporting her. Russian officials have threatened Sweden and Finland should they – as seems increasingly likely – proceed to secure NATO membership, and there is concern that Putin might escalate to an attack on the Baltic States – NATO members – depending on the situation in Ukraine.

PUT BLUNTLY, NO SANE BRITISH PM IS GOING TO GAMBLE WITH A NUCLEAR-ARMED OPPONENT UNLESS THE UK ITSELF FACES AN EXISTENTIAL THREAT.

This confines current Western action below certain parameters - Putin commands the world's largest nuclear arsenal and, put bluntly, no sane British PM is going to gamble with a nuclear-armed opponent unless the UK itself faces an existential threat.

Even considering this, however, the British military response on the ground has been small-scale, provoking questions about possible UK reactions if the Russians were to escalate further. At the beginning of the crisis in autumn 2021, British ground forces deployed against Russia consisted of:

- Training teams deployed in Ukraine since 2015 as part of Operation Orbital;

- Thirty soldiers from the new British Army Ranger Regiment, training Ukrainian troops with NLAWs in early 2022;

- More broadly, British troops have formed part of NATO's enhanced forward presence in Estonia since 2017, and in February consisted of a 800-strong battlegroup from the Royal Tank Regiment, centring on a squadron of eighteen Challenger 2 Main Battle Tanks (MBTs). Following the invasion, this was reinforced by another British battlegroup from Germany and they are unified under a brigade headquarters – but a third battlegroup would be needed to bring the British force to full brigade strength.

Mr Johnson outlined further deployments at a joint press conference with Secretary Stoltenberg on 16 February: elements of 16 Air Assault Brigade, the British Army's airmobile task force, were going to Norway and 45 Commando, Royal Marines, to Poland while 1,000 more troops were earmarked in case of a 'humanitarian crisis' emerging on NATO's eastern borders.

These are probably the most land assets the UK can offer. Reflecting intellectual trends alluded to already, the Integrated Review prioritised spending on artificial intelligence across the armed forces; the Command Paper also prioritised R&D and it is telling that in its chapter on the future structure of the British forces it discusses the 'new' domains of space and cyber ahead of the traditional ones of land, sea and air. The Command Paper leaves the British Army with little capacity for fighting the kind of high-intensity mechanised battles most NATO-based scenarios entail.

"THE COMMAND PAPER LEAVES THE BRITISH ARMY WITH LITTLE CAPACITY FOR FIGHTING THE KIND OF HIGH-INTENSITY MECHANISED BATTLES MOST NATO-BASED SCENARIOS ENTAIL."

The Army is projected currently to be able to deploy one heavy division, consisting of two armoured brigades to fight the close battle alongside a Strike Brigade to carry out deep reconnaissance for artillery and fast air. The Strike Brigade (already reduced from two) still awaits the Ajax armoured vehicles on which it was to centre following a series of serious technical issues. The tank force, already tiny when compared with peer competitors at 227 Challenger 2s, is to be reduced to 148 updated Challenger 3s while the entire stock of Warrior Infantry Fighting Vehicles is being phased out and will not be replaced. (The battlegroups deployed to Estonia will use Warrior for now.)

Much of the Army's artillery and anti-air assets are obsolete and while the Command Paper promises new systems, these will not arrive in decisive numbers until towards the end of the decade.

It is fortunate, then, that the Army's main conventional force facing the Russians, the understrength brigade in Estonia, has armoured infantry from France and Denmark alongside its Challengers and would, presumably be supported by assets from other NATO members giving it some capacity to fight a mobile conventional battle. Few, however, have considered that if the Russians crossed the border in similar strength to in Ukraine the brigade would be massively outnumbered and fighting alongside the small Estonian Army, totalling just under 10,000 soldiers. The brigade might be boosted to divisional strength, but it could take weeks for the additional heavy brigade and battlegroup to arrive from the UK and the division would still need NATO allies to provide a third brigade and at least some of its artillery and air defence. The brigade might, therefore, be more of a statement of political intent than anything operationally valid although given the Russian army's dire performance in Ukraine anything might happen.

Moreover, on 12 February 2022 the UK Government announced the immediate withdrawal of all British military personnel from Ukraine, most prominently the training teams from the Rangers. The UK's second theatre-level evacuation in twelve months presents a challenge to the Ranger/Special Operations Brigade concept and the thinking behind it. Much of the Integrated Review is predicated on pre-emptively establishing British forces 'forward' in areas under 'challenge' from hostile states. The Ranger Regiment was to contribute to this 'forward presence' via training friendly forces and, under some circumstances, 'accompanying' them into combat, demonstrating British resolve to deal with situations before they escalate. Ukraine in early 2022 seemed a stark example of such a situation, but the Rangers' deployment there now looks like more political posturing, as pondering not only the withdrawal, but the initial arrival of a small number of advisors from an Army which had just withdrawn from Afghanistan to train people who have fought the Russians for eight years might indicate. We might also conclude that the complete Ranger package,

especially 'accompaniment', will be highly conditional in future, particularly if there is any risk of fighting.

Their situation may be complicated even further: in mid-April, the Times reported that 22 SAS may have taken up this training role covertly since the invasion - a possible expression of General Carleton-Smith's new 'house style'.

> THE COMPLETE RANGER PACKAGE, ESPECIALLY 'ACCOMPANIMENT', WILL BE HIGHLY CONDITIONAL IN FUTURE, PARTICULARLY IF THERE IS ANY RISK OF FIGHTING.

The Army and 'Global Britain'

All this must be placed in the context of 'Global Britain's' move towards a maritime strategy focused on East Asia and the Middle East and increased spending on the Royal Navy. This seemed apt at the time, a firm statement of 'Global Britain's' determination to look outwards towards the wider world rather than inwards towards Europe and, when the Review was published, the Ukraine crisis was still months ahead in the possible future. However, one still detects chickens coming home to roost. The size and structure of a country's armed forces are a statement of how it sees its place in the world and affect how other countries interact with it.

> THE SIZE AND STRUCTURE OF A COUNTRY'S ARMED FORCES ARE A STATEMENT OF HOW IT SEES ITS PLACE IN THE WORLD AND AFFECT HOW OTHER COUNTRIES INTERACT WITH IT.

Even at the time, the Review demonstrated some cognitive dissonance between the UK Government's tough stance against Russia and its capacity to back it up, particularly on land in Europe, where it really matters. If modern conflict is about 'narrative' then words must both reflect and serve action: the war in Ukraine has left the emperors of 'conventional warfare is dead' with no clothes and NATO allies are dumping this particular narrative. Will the UK?

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Russia and the UK: The Integrated Review in light of Russia's war in Ukraine

Dr Maxine David and Dr Natasha Kuhrt

> **THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY RESPONSE TO RUSSIA'S LATEST INVASION OF UKRAINE HAS BEEN ROBUST, THE UK CONTRIBUTION SIZEABLE.**

The UK response to the full-scale war Russia has been prosecuting in Ukraine since February 24th 2022 has demonstrated the inadequacies we identified in the UK's Russia policy in our original response to the Integrated Review (IR) (2021). In this follow-up piece, there is obvious reason to focus on conventional vs cyber warfare as the more immediate threat. Indeed, we have seen that the persistent focus on hybrid warfare meant the UK and others failed to register the seriousness of the conventional threat. Both these, therefore, along with the nuclear threat, have to be considered in the round, if the resilience spoken of in the review is to be achieved. We add here a fourth threat, one to values, a threat recognised in the IR but in a less existential fashion than now, just a few weeks into Russia's deepened war against Ukraine. If the promise of the IR is to be met, more must be done to reorientate priorities and ensure the multilateral values that should underpin UK foreign policy form the first line in the front against the great power politics the Kremlin seeks to institute, especially if the UK really is to shape "the international order of the future".

To begin with the positives, the international military response to Russia's latest invasion of Ukraine has been robust, the UK contribution sizeable . That contribution has taken the form of deployments of military staff to train the Ukrainian military; supplies of defensive weaponry, including anti-armour missiles, as well as non-lethal supplies, such as helmets and body armour. The successes of the Ukrainian army to date suggest the importance of the UK's contributions to training.

The adverse impact of domestic politics on UK foreign policy

This bilateralism mirrors other western countries' support to Ukraine and is anchored in multilateral workings within NATO, the G7 and also the EU. With some early signs evident that the UK Government sees the necessity of working with the EU on foreign policy matters, the unifying consequences of Russia's actions thus extend to the UK. However, the shadow of Brexit still shows in terms of a governmental unwillingness to amplify this aspect. In the context of Russia's war on a sovereign state in Europe, the Foreign Secretary Liz Truss's erasure of the EU in her headline tweet about a day in which she attended the European Council, NATO and the G7 meeting, was telling. This impression was further heightened by MP Steve Baker calling on the Government not to allow the war to prevent them triggering Article 16 of the Northern Ireland Protocol. Later came Prime Minister Boris Johnson's comparison of Brexit (as exemplifying the British desire for freedom) with Ukrainian armed resistance to the Russian invasion. At a time when full solidarity with western and European values and actors are undeniably the order of the day, these examples say much about the UK Government's priorities when it comes to self-interest versus national, European and global security. They further suggest the lessons of the Russia Report have not been learned.

The imperatives for change are profound. The swirling claims that Boris Johnson ignored a UK security services warning about making Evgeny Lebedev (owner of the Evening Standard and son of a former KGB officer) a peer, have added to long-existing pressure for a clamp-down on Russian interests in the UK to address the damaging stigma around the 'London Laundromat'. Again, this harks back to the 2020 UK Parliamentary report that highlighted the tensions between Downing Street's prosperity agenda and national security. In fact, one expert at RUSI suggests that "no one at a senior level of government" cared about the problem until the war in Ukraine.

> **IT IS CLEAR WE ARE WITNESSING THE DIVISION OF RUSSIA FROM THE WEST AND THIS DIVISION IS BUILT AS MUCH ON VALUES AS IT IS ON MILITARY LINES.**

As part of the response to Russian aggression, the UK Government promised to take non-military action including economic measures. The UK has made much of the robustness of its response in terms of restrictive measures, but did not initiate the agreed sanctions as swiftly as did the EU and US, allowing those such as Roman Abramovich time to move key assets. There has been criticism of the UK sanctions regime too, for suffering from insufficient budgetary allocation and numerous loopholes that potentially still allow bypassing of the measures. Relatedly, however, the Government has at least finally acknowledged that it must do something to end the use of British courts by "corrupt oligarchs and Putin allies", with the Secretary of State for Justice, Dominic Raab, setting out his proposal to tackle the use of Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation (so-called SLAPPs).

Leveraging partnerships as an important tool of UK strategy

Without invoking the spectre of a new Cold War, it is clear we are witnessing the division of Russia (perhaps others) from the West and this division is built as much on values as it is on military lines. As such, the UK must give thought to how its other relationships can be turned to better effect, something that will require utilising soft rather than hard power reflexes. An obvious focus is the Commonwealth, as recognised in the IR, spoken of as "an important institution in supporting an open and resilient international order". Of the 35 states that abstained in the historic March 2 vote of the UN General Assembly, 9 (Bangladesh, India, Mozambique, Namibia, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda) are Commonwealth members, 2 were absent, meaning that 43 Commonwealth states voted against Russia, "deploring" its "aggression" against Ukraine. With Russia increasingly active on the African continent, the UK would do well to tend more carefully to its relationships there. If the Commonwealth is to be better utilised, however, the UK will have to overcome the twin legacies of imperialism: distrust of and resentment towards the UK, and the resultant continued attachment to Russia. The former will be dependent on the ability of the UK to transition fully from empire and Brexit and there is unfortunately little evidence of the country's ability to do that.

A more promising endeavour in relational terms is the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) which has been a key coalition bringing together the UK, the Baltic states, Netherlands, and Nordic countries. The JEF met on 14 March to coordinate delivery of weapons and other materiel to Ukraine. All apart from Iceland have supplied weapons, and the JEF can act without the need for consensus. Like the Quad in Indo-Pacific, and the AUKUS, this is another ad hoc grouping that reflects the need for flexible partnerships rather than relying on more restrictive alliances in an increasingly multipolar or multiplex world.

> **THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM HAS BEEN SEEING THE REVIVAL OF THE DOCTRINE OF "EXTENDED DETERRENCE".**

Preparing the ground for strategic stability

As difficult as it may now be to envision a more positive scenario, ways forward must simultaneously be focused on in order to prepare the ground for the "strategic stability" so desperately needed in Russia-UK-NATO relations. Without suggesting any justification for Russia's war in Ukraine, it is the case that Russia is not the only state that bears responsibility for the near total dismantling of the INF Treaty and other nuclear arms control agreements. The international system has been seeing the revival of the doctrine of "extended deterrence", first discussed in the late 1990s. This concept suggests that the very fact of possessing a powerful nuclear-strike capability plays a decisive role in resolving any international problems. Vladimir Putin has regularly hinted at his readiness to press the nuclear button - in 2014 he suggested he was on the verge of putting Russian nuclear forces on standby were Ukraine to attempt to retake Crimea. Now, in 2022, fears of nuclear escalation have again been raised, as Russia has suggested that Western assistance to Ukraine represents an existential threat which could trigger a nuclear response. As one of the five Nuclear Weapons States under the NPT, the UK bears a special responsibility for European security, although as some have pointed out, those most vulnerable to the Russian threat, i.e. Central and Eastern European NATO members, have low levels of faith in the UK deterrent and worry about the UK's conventional capabilities.

> **THE FORMS THAT THE CYBER THREAT TAKES IS WELL-DOCUMENTED AND, AS WITH THE NUCLEAR ARMS TREATIES, THE UK MUST CONTINUE TO WORK WITH PARTNERS TO MANAGE SUCH THREATS.**

France, the UK and USA must now consider what the possibilities are, agree a unified position and utilise whichever channels – including other actors - are open to them to bring Russia to the negotiating table on this. Any such negotiations must be separate from those designed to end the war. Admittedly, therefore, the time may not be ripe for such an initiative for some time to come but the UK and its nuclear power allies should be ready to seize the opportunity when it arises.

Cyberspace must not be forgotten either. The forms that the cyber threat takes is well-documented and, as with the nuclear arms treaties, the UK must continue to work with partners to manage such threats. For now, there seems to be hesitancy regarding whether a Russian cyberattack on Ukrainian infrastructure for example, could elicit a response from Western powers, one that would target Russia. This could run the risk of escalation, although the UK Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace, has been more bullish than his US counterparts about a robust response, noting that "the best part of defence is offence" and drawing attention to the strengthening of the UK National Cyber Force.

The IR demonstrates that the Government is thinking about cyberspace in longer and societally-directed scales too, but serious questions arise about the shape of its attempts to build resilience and about what is at risk of getting lost.

The need to construe values broadly

Given the seriousness of the threat posed by Russia, it is understandable that any state might deliver policies that are overly securitised, allowing the perception of threat to obscure sight of the totality of what needs protecting. However, any contradictions in relation to such securitisation give cause for concern about what is deemed worthy of protection and what is not. The Government's proposed Online Safety Bill is a case in point, having been rightly criticised for failing to balance the need to protect citizens and democracy. Its presence also further begs the question of why equivalent legislation was not planned earlier on to tackle the Russian kleptocracy in the UK. Any democratic backsliding plays into the "whataboutist" hands of the Kremlin. Ultimately, reflexivity is needed if the UK (and the West generally) are to project their values credibly. This is a skill the West once had, but is one the UK at least, seems to be losing. It is also an increasingly glaring absence from the IR.

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Implementing the Integrated Review's nuclear doctrine

Amelia Morgan
Dr Heather Williams

> **THE UK'S DECISION TO INCREASE THE STOCKPILE AND EXPAND SCENARIOS IN WHICH IT WOULD CONSIDER USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IS SEEMINGLY AT ODDS WITH ITS NPT COMMITMENTS.**

In the year since the Integrated Review's release, the United Kingdom's nuclear doctrine has been subject to widespread criticism. The Review increased the UK's nuclear warhead stockpile cap to 260, a rise from the previous cap of 225, and further embraced strategic ambiguity around when it would consider using nuclear weapons. The one-year anniversary of the Integrated Review is an opportunity not only to revisit these criticisms, particularly in light of the worsening security situation in Europe, but also to explore next steps for the Integrated Review's implementation, particularly with regards to its Indo-Pacific tilt, NATO's nuclear mission, and nuclear disarmament.

Criticisms of Global Britain's Nuclear Doctrine

Two broad criticisms accompanied the UK's announcements in March 2021. First were questions about the government's commitment to nuclear disarmament and its obligations under Article VI of the 1970 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which commits all members to work towards 'general and complete disarmament' and 'cessation of the arms race'. The UK's decision to increase the stockpile and expand scenarios in which it would consider use of nuclear weapons is seemingly at odds with its NPT commitments. One expert described these moves as "a striking reversal of a two-decade push towards nuclear disarmament." More strident criticisms emerged from disarmament activists, who described the stockpile cap increase as "outrageous, irresponsible and very dangerous."

Second many experts were concerned that the UK decision will undermine transparency by no longer disclosing information on its operational stockpile, deployed missiles and deployed warheads. While all nuclear weapons states embrace ambiguity about the circumstances in which they would use nuclear weapons, albeit to varying degrees, there is an inherent tension in seeking to both maintain acceptable levels of ambiguity for deterrence purposes while also providing sufficient detail to decrease the likelihood of misperception and miscalculation. In adopting greater levels of ambiguity, observers feared that this could undermine an important tool of predictability in the nuclear age, and ultimately undermine the United Kingdom's position as a self-ascribed "responsible nuclear weapons state."

The United Kingdom attributed these changes to the evolving international security landscape, with rising competition and threats emanating from actors such as Russia and China, who are increasing and diversifying their nuclear capabilities. Open-source researchers uncovered new Chinese missile silo constructions in mid-2021, and Russia has spent the past decade modernizing and expanding its nuclear forces, to include various dual-capable systems. For example, in Ukraine Russia used the hypersonic Kinzhal missile, which can carry nuclear weapons. These developments along with Russia's invasion of Ukraine arguably justify the UK's decision to adjust its nuclear posture to the worsening security environment.

Three Challenges for Implementing the Integrated Review

But recent events have also pointed to forthcoming challenges for the UK in implementing the Integrated Review. Three such challenges stand out: balancing strategic competition in Europe and the Indo-Pacific; maintaining unity for NATO's nuclear mission; and re-establishing disarmament leadership.

1. Balancing strategic competition in Europe and the Indo-Pacific

One defining feature of the Integrated Review was its focus on the Indo-Pacific, identified as the "centre of intensifying geopolitical competition with multiple potential flashpoints."

> **IT IS CLEAR THAT EUROPEAN SECURITY HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED AND THE UK, ALONG WITH NATO AND EU MEMBER STATES, WILL NEED TO PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR A PERIOD OF INCREASINGLY AGGRESSIVE CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION.**

The Review specifies the UK's aim of becoming a "European partner with the broadest and most integrated presence in the Indo-Pacific – committed for the long term, with closer and deeper partnerships, bilaterally and multilaterally." We have already seen this shift in practice with the announced "AUKUS agreement", a new trilateral partnership in which the United Kingdom and the United States will help Australia develop and deploy nuclear-powered submarines, as well as recent high-level US-UK consultations on the region.

This focus is not so much a "pivot" away from Europe, but rather a widening of Britain's strategic gaze to include two strategic competitors. The Review specified Russia as "the most acute direct threat to the UK" and the Euro-Atlantic region as "critical to the UK's security and prosperity...." With the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the UK has entered a new period of sustained confrontation with Russia that only serves to reinforce this interpretation. Regardless of how the conflict unfolds in the short-term, it is clear that European security has been transformed and the UK, along with NATO and EU member states, will need to prepare themselves for a period of increasingly aggressive conventional and unconventional activities in the region.

With the government's limited attention and resources diverted to the crisis, the Indo-Pacific tilt may be distracted, if not delayed, and the UK will need to recalibrate these ambitions in light of a worsening security environment in Europe. It was already unclear that the UK economy, deeply bruised post-Brexit and post-COVID, had the requisite resources to expand and sustain strategic engagement in two theatres. The Ukraine conflict only exacerbates these challenges and will constrain the UK's ability to deepen defence commitments and alliances in the Indo-Pacific.

More broadly, the UK will also have to develop new forums for engagement with the EU beyond NATO. The Ukraine crisis has prompted a commitment by many EU states to increase defence spending and, in March 2022, the EU Foreign Affairs Council approved the EU's Strategic Compass, a strategic vision of the bloc's security and defence policy, which seeks to enhance EU defence capabilities, investment, and R&D. These welcome developments will further complicate the UK's influence as a major strategic player in the region and make it even more important for the UK to engage constructively with the EU and to redefine its relationship with the bloc post-Brexit. A first priority in this respect should be rebuilding its relationship with France, severely compromised by AUKUS and Brexit.

2. Maintaing NATO unity

> **NATO HAS DISPLAYED A REMARKABLE DEGREE OF UNITY IN RESPONSE TO THE RUSSIAN INVASION AND RESTRAINT IN THE FACE OF PRESIDENT PUTIN'S NUCLEAR THREATS. HOWEVER, THIS UNITY WILL BE MORE DIFFICULT TO SUSTAIN AS THE WAR CONTINUES.**

A second challenge is maintaining NATO unity. The Alliance includes 30 states with diverging threat perceptions and priorities, and has historically had to mediate a fragile balance between nuclear deterrence and disarmament. Compounding these difficulties are renewed efforts to undermine the legitimacy of nuclear deterrence. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which opened for signature in September 2017 and entered into force in January 2021, has inspired renewed parliamentary scrutiny over NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements. These efforts are asymmetrically felt across the alliance, with nations such as Germany and the Netherlands under increasing pressure to join the treaty, demonstrate greater transparency about the role and benefits of extended nuclear deterrence and their role in national security strategies.

NATO has thus far withstood these pressures and the Ukraine crisis has reinforced alliance cohesion. NATO has displayed a remarkable degree of unity in response to the Russian invasion and restraint in the face of President Putin's nuclear threats. However, this unity will be more difficult to sustain as the war continues. Energy dependence on Russia and broader economic pressures may incentivise the most vulnerable NATO members to adopt a less confrontational approach to the Kremlin. Hungary has already indicated a resistance to some sanctions (in part driven by the country's deep reliance on Russia for gas imports and energy supplies) and Belgium's initial response to sending humanitarian and military equipment to Ukraine in the weeks leading-up to the invasion can be described as lacklustre. While the Belgian government sharply reversed course and committed military hardware and protective equipment, the political infighting and disagreement among the seven-party coalition does not bode well for future consensus.

THE INTEGRATED REVIEW'S DECISION ABOUT THE STOCKPILE CAP AND DECLARATORY POLICY POTENTIALLY UNDERMINES THE UK'S ABILITY TO BUILD CONSENSUS WITHIN THE NPT AND CAPITALISE ON ITS ROLE AND LEGACY AS A LEADER ON NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT.

In the short-term, NATO's key priorities will be deterring Russian aggression, reassuring allies, and bolstering political, economic, humanitarian and military assistance to Ukraine. At its extraordinary summit in March, the Alliance also committed to adapting NATO's deterrence and defence posture. The United Kingdom, as a P5 state situated in Europe, should play a leadership role in NATO's risk reduction efforts, along with the United States. This might include developing risk reduction and crisis communication tools within the alliance, which would be particularly useful to reduce risks of escalation due to misperception or accident. Additionally, the UK and other NATO members can engage with ongoing risk reduction initiatives, such as the Stockholm Initiative and Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament, to distil lessons learned about the Ukraine crisis and how to reduce future nuclear risks. These will have the added benefit of contributing to the global nuclear order and laying the groundwork for future cooperation with other nuclear possessors

3. Re-establishing the United Kingdom's role as a leader in nuclear disarmament

A third challenge for the UK government in implementing the Integrated Review is re-establishing its credibility as a leader in nuclear disarmament. In 2007, Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett suggested the UK might become a "disarmament laboratory", and in the intervening years the UK played a leading role in establishing the P5 process, a forum for dialogue on disarmament among the five NPT nuclear possessors, along with the UK-Norway Initiative to explore technical solutions to disarmament verification. The Integrated Review's decision about the stockpile cap and declaratory policy potentially undermines the UK's ability to build consensus within the NPT and capitalise on its role and legacy as a leader on nuclear disarmament.

The UK has already offered some indications of how it plans to reclaim leadership on disarmament. It continues to provide unique transparency into its nuclear doctrines and policies by publishing its NPT reports and socializing them with a group of NPT states in advance of NPT meetings. The government also convened post-IR consultations with NGOs and academics about the changes to its nuclear doctrine. Longer-term, the UK also seeks to promote a practical discussion among nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapons states about irreversibility in nuclear disarmament (IND).

Domestic politics matter, too, and the government will also have to contend with a public that is already apprehensive about nuclear weapons. While the principle of disarmament is popular among many UK citizens, a like-for-like replacement of Britain's nuclear deterrent remains the public's preferred choice and has witnessed a modest rise in support since the Russian invasion of Ukraine- from 32% in September 2021 to 45% in March 2022. Only 18% contend that the UK should give up its nuclear weapons completely. These trends might assuage policymakers, but they are not immune to change and could evolve in unpredictable ways as the war progresses and if tensions escalate. 76% of Britons already report feeling "very" or "fairly" concerned about nuclear use by Russia, though for now at least only 33% of the population believe that an attack on the West is likely. The crisis in Ukraine has amplified questions of nuclear weapons and deterrence in public discourse, and the UK will need to strike a fragile balance between remaining defiant in the face of Russia's nuclear blustering, but committed to keeping the risks down.

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UK-EU defence cooperation

Gesine Weber
Professor Anand Menon

Events, my dear boy, events.' So Harold Macmillan responded when asked about the greatest threat to his administration. Events, of course, provide opportunities as well as posing threats. And events have played a key role in shaping how the Integrated Review has been translated into action when it comes to the UK and European security.

The Review contains only one reference to UK-EU cooperation in matters of security and defence. Equally, its emphasis on the 'tilt' to the Indo-Pacific led many to wonder how real the UK's commitment to the security of Europe would prove to be. For all its insistence on the continued importance of Euro-Atlantic security, it leaves little doubt that the Atlantic aspect is the priority. NATO is referenced frequently. In contrast, while European states are described as key partners, security cooperation with them, and particularly with the EU itself, is downplayed.

"WHILE EUROPEAN STATES ARE DESCRIBED AS KEY PARTNERS, SECURITY COOPERATION WITH THEM, AND PARTICULARLY WITH THE EU ITSELF, IS DOWNPLAYED."

A little over a year since the publication of the Review, events are helping define what it means in practice. Participation in the AUKUS deal has underlined the concrete implications of the 'tilt' to the Indo-Pacific – in terms both of the opportunities it affords (such as the new partnership to start work on hypersonic missile technology and electronic warfare capabilities) and its potentially negative impact on relationships with European partners.

More strikingly, the crisis over Ukraine has underlined the UK's continued commitment to European security. In asserting the real risk of a Russian invasion, and moving quickly to provide practical assistance to both Ukraine and neighbouring NATO allies, London has demonstrated that what it says about the Euro-Atlantic region will be matched by actions. In prioritizing NATO and bilateral links with European partners, it has also, for the moment at least, maintained its formal distance from the EU. However, whether the longer-term consequences of the war confirm the conclusions reached by the British Government last year will ultimately depend on many factors, not least on developments within the EU itself.

"IN ASSERTING THE REAL RISK OF A RUSSIAN INVASION, AND MOVING QUICKLY TO PROVIDE PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE TO BOTH UKRAINE AND NEIGHBOURING NATO ALLIES, LONDON HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT WHAT IT SAYS ABOUT THE EURO-ATLANTIC REGION WILL BE MATCHED BY ACTIONS."

The Integrated Review

The Integrated Review emphasizes the UK's commitment to the Euro-Atlantic region. The precondition for Global Britain is 'the safety of our citizens at home and the security of the Euro-Atlantic region, where the bulk of the UK's security focus will remain.' Consequently, the UK's 'commitment to European security is unequivocal.'

NATO is key to this vision. Even prior to the current crisis, London made it clear that it intended to do more for the security of Europe. Russia is identified in the Integrated Review as an 'acute threat' and the Defence Command Paper that accompanied it revealed that the UK intended to store more military equipment in Germany, would continue to base troops in Estonia and Poland and would contribute to the Alliance's standing naval forces. The ambition was that the UK would be 'the leading European Ally [sic] within NATO'. While this commitment was welcomed by other NATO members, however, some Europeans voiced criticism about the UK's insistence on the threat posed by Russia, arguing that this focus on a revisionist power was not commensurate with Russia's diminished weight in international affairs. Events would prove them wrong.

Equally striking is what Ian Bond of the Centre for European Reform calls an 'EU-shaped hole' in the Review. There are only two references to the European Union in the whole 114 page document. The Defence Command Paper, for its part, does not mention the EU at all. There is more in the Review on the 'tilt' towards the Indo-Pacific than about relations with the UK's nearest neighbour.

. And allusions to the EU tend to emphasize the ability of the UK to differentiate itself from it, on London's 'freedom to do things differently and better, both economically and politically' (Prime Minister's foreword).

AUKUS

The UK's willingness to do things differently was first manifested in its participation in AUKUS, a defence pact between Australia, the US, and UK concluded in September 2021. The UK's role and the benefits to be gained from it are still not entirely clear: some describe the UK merely as a broker between the US and Australia, while others see it as providing the UK with a unique opportunity to play a larger role in the region and put some flesh on the bones of its Indo-Pacific 'tilt'.

Not only did the pact blow up a multi-billion-dollar deal on submarines concluded between France and Australia; it also excludes France from the US-UK approach to the region. This is particularly problematic since the French strategy in the Indo-Pacific relies on partnerships with Australia and India, with Paris having played a key role in encouraging greater EU interest in the region. Unsurprisingly, therefore, AUKUS was described as a "stab in the back" in Paris, and although France saw the US as the driving force, the implications for relations with the UK should not be downplayed. The convergence of French and British interests in the region, not least their shared commitment to freedom of navigation, could have provided a basis for bilateral and potentially European cooperation in the region.

NOT ONLY DID THE [AUKUS] PACT BLOW UP A MULTI-BILLION-DOLLAR DEAL ON SUBMARINES CONCLUDED BETWEEN FRANCE AND AUSTRALIA; IT ALSO EXCLUDES FRANCE FROM THE US-UK APPROACH TO THE REGION.

Ukraine

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has fundamentally altered the European security landscape in terms of both the geopolitical order and the dynamics of security cooperation. It has also shed light on two key elements of current UK policy.

First, London takes its responsibilities within the European security order seriously. While the Integrated Review had sparked concerns regarding those responsibilities, London's response to Russian actions helped counter any suspicion that the Indo-Pacific 'tilt' might prevent the UK from living up to its responsibilities closer to home. London acted fast in not only recognizing the possibility of war but in delivering supplies, including anti-tank weapons, as well as posting advisers. And it has continued to offer material, including military, backing for Ukraine throughout the conflict, while loudly trumpeting its solidarity with the country. Its Defence and Foreign Ministers have been highly active and outspoken during the crisis, and of course the Prime Minister made a surprise trip to Kiev during the first weekend of April.

THE CONVERGENCE OF FRENCH AND BRITISH INTERESTS IN THE REGION, NOT LEAST THEIR SHARED COMMITMENT TO FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION, COULD HAVE PROVIDED A BASIS FOR BILATERAL AND POTENTIALLY EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN THE REGION.

None of which is to deny shortcomings in the UK approach, most strikingly a marked reluctance to address the flow of money into the UK from individuals closely connected to Russia. Research by the Center for American Progress - an influential Democratic-aligned US think tank – singled out the UK as a 'a major hub for Russian oligarchs and their wealth' and pointed to links between Kremlin-linked oligarchs and the UK's 'ruling Conservative Party, the press and its real estate and financial industry.'

Such concerns notwithstanding, the UK has acted decisively in support of Ukraine. It was among the first to impose harsh sanctions on Russia, and led calls to exclude Russia from the SWIFT agreement, despite (initial) wariness on the part of some EU member states. This pattern is being repeated in current debates about a possible energy embargo (though clearly the UK is nowhere near as exposed as some EU member states on that front).

During the early stages of the crisis, the UK's proactive approach stood in stark contrast with the early hesitancy of the EU. The EU finally shed its initial reluctance, agreeing a severe sanctions package, banning Russian state media, and deploying the European Peace Facility to equip Ukraine with lethal weapons.

DURING THE EARLY STAGES OF THE CRISIS, THE UK'S PROACTIVE APPROACH STOOD IN STARK CONTRAST WITH THE EARLY HESITANCY OF THE EU. THE EU FINALLY SHED ITS INITIAL RELUCTANCE, AGREEING A SEVERE SANCTIONS PACKAGE, BANNING RUSSIAN STATE MEDIA, AND DEPLOYING THE EUROPEAN PEACE FACILITY TO EQUIP UKRAINE WITH LETHAL WEAPONS

What some have seen this as the EU's geopolitical awakening (consisting not only of immediate measures taken to support Ukraine but also, and perhaps more importantly, of the shift in Germany defence policy brought about by Chancellor Olaf Scholz) clearly has significant consequences for London. Some UK officials privately express the concern that the US will increasingly turn towards Brussels rather than London when seeking a reliable western ally. Indeed, the failure of EU leaders to invite Boris Johnson to a European Council meeting attended by US President Joe Biden was seen by some observers as a sign of the UK's increasing marginalisation.

Yet to date there has been no sign of the UK rethinking its reluctance to countenance formal security cooperation with the EU. Rather, it has stepped up its collaboration with individual states or groups of states. The "Euro Quad"— the UK, France, Germany, and the US — as well as an enlarged Euro Quad (including Italy) have become key forums for coordination. Moreover, the attendance of Foreign Secretary Liz Truss at a meeting of EU Foreign Ministers spoke to the willingness of London to countenance at least informal coordination within an EU framework.

The crisis has also served to cement London's relations with the EU's northern and eastern states. These latter still harbour some suspicions of larger EU allies, generated both by German prevarication (notably on extending sanctions to gas and oil) and French President Macron's desire to deal directly with Putin ('nobody negotiated with Hitler', as the Polish Prime Minister put it).

Events have thus given some credence to the notion that the UK will continue to play a leading role in European security, albeit dealing directly with NATO, individual EU member states, or groups of states, rather than the EU itself. As a result of the crisis, the UK has reinforced its claim to be a key security provider in Europe.

Looking Ahead

Yet while events may determine the short-term agenda for cooperation, they tell us relatively little about the longer term. It would be all too easy for policy makers in London to draw the conclusion that the EU can safely be ignored when it comes to security matters. Yet recent events, not least the reforms announced in states such as Germany and the new-found EU determination to play a full role in European security (as outlined in the new Strategic Compass) imply that such thinking might be misplaced.

The Integrated Review was unequivocal in asserting that the UK's 'European neighbours and allies remain vital partners'. To date, partnerships have been pursued largely via loose intergovernmental formats rather than formal institutions. The UK already enjoyed close links with a number of mostly Northern European states through informal formats, namely the Joint Expeditionary Force and the Northern Group. Meanwhile, the E3 has met more frequently post Brexit, held its first meeting of Defence Ministers in August 2020 and has extended its remit to issues such Syria, instability in the Sahel and the South China Sea. While these ad hoc groupings aid coordination and achieve concrete results in specific situations, their scope remains limited, particularly as compared to the diplomatic and economic toolkits of the EU

The focus of much of the Integrated Review – implicitly or explicitly – is the United States, which 'will remain the UK's most important strategic ally and partner.' It is hard to avoid the impression that some of the language in the document – particularly concerning China – was written with half an eye on how it would be received in Washington (indeed the similarities with the Biden administrations' National Security Guidance are striking). However, the security interests of the US and UK do not always converge – not least when it comes to the European neighbourhood. Moreover, the UK has, like the EU, learnt lessons from the Trump years. Whoever replaces Joe Biden as President in 2024, the US will remain an unreliable partner as long as a significant strand of political opinion there takes issue with some of the key tenets of post-Cold War US foreign policy.

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Even given a Europhile administration in Washington, the UK has work to do. The current administration has a strong interest in a united West working together to address common challenges. The increasingly intense US-EU dialogue, not least in the context of the EU-US Security Forum, suggests that Washington is coming to endorse a stronger security role for the Union. The more London turns its back on cooperation with the EU, the greater the risk that it finds itself sidelined. This would undermine the western unity that is a key objective of current American foreign policy. It would also weaken the European solidarity that would be essential in the event that a less Europhile administration take power in 2024.

Looking ahead, a combination of different formats – bilateral, mini-lateral, and via formal institutions – seems the likeliest path for UK cooperation with its European partners.

Maintaining the current focus on working with individual European states is an important starting point. Whether judged as a function of their respective military potential, attitudes towards the use of force, or global interests, France and the UK are natural partners when it comes to security and defence. As early as 2019, President Macron had stated that he wanted to establish a 'very special relationship' with the UK after Brexit. As one of us has argued, the Integrated Review implies that the UK aspires to become more like France when it comes to foreign and security policy. The Combined Joint Expeditionary Force became operational in 2020 and allows for the rapid deployment of military personnel. The UK has also joined the European Intervention Initiative spearheaded by Paris. However, the main obstacle to cooperation – namely the tension between the French emphasis on the EU and strategic autonomy and the UK's clear preference for NATO as the only hard security institution in Europe – may yet limit the potential for collaboration.

Equally, trilateral collaboration with Paris and Berlin might be a practical option. The E3 has increased its scope since the 2016 referendum. In 2019, the three countries published a joint statement on the South China Sea, and all three have enhanced their naval presence in the Indo-Pacific. A Germany more committed to a muscular foreign policy stance might see greater value in such an arrangement, while France and Germany have both spoken of the possibility of creating a European Security Council, not least to facilitate cooperation with the UK. Such a format, however, might well spark difficult debates within the EU over questions of membership, decision-making power, and the relationship of any such body with the EU itself.

Which brings us to the EU itself. In the short term, it seems highly unlikely that a Conservative Government in London – under whatever Prime Minister – will seriously consider negotiating formal security relations with the Union. Yet over time, this may impede the UK's ability to achieve the ambitious objectives it has set itself in the foreign and defence policy spheres. Clearly, the absence of such relations will be an issue when it comes to foreign policy challenges with an economic dimension – where the EU has competence. And even when it comes to security per se, there are grounds to think that UK-EU collaboration might be in the interest of both sides. It is clear, for instance, that both have similar perceptions of China: the EU sees it as systemic rival, while the UK describes China as 'the biggest state-based threat to the UK's economic security.' Both view Beiing, in other words, as part rival, part commercial partner. As the strategy towards China on both sides of the Channel is likely to become a determining factor for their position in the international system, coordinating approaches makes sense.

Underpinning all this, however, is the need for stable political relationships between the UK and its putative European partners. The Integrated Review declares that 'we will enjoy constructive and productive relationships with our neighbours in the European Union.' Yet here is an ambition the Government has clearly not achieved to date. Brexit continues to unsettle relations between the UK and both the EU and its member states. A succession of crises – over fisheries and the Northern Ireland protocol – have rendered even bilateral relations with member states far less constructive and productive than they might otherwise have been. In a situation of continued tension and uncertainty, it is hard to see how closer security ties – either with individual member states or with the EU itself – can be built.

Conclusion

The Integrated Review is full of ambitious intent. As it acknowledges, however, the UK cannot be an effective 'problem-solving and burden-sharing' nation acting alone: 'collective action and co-creation with our allies and partners will be vitally important in the decade ahead'.

Writing on the day of the publication of the Integrated Review, the Prime Minister declared that the 'objective of "Global Britain" is not to swagger or strike attitudes on the world stage.' Yet both his Government and the EU seem caught in a rhetorical arms race. While EU officials talk about a 'geopolitical Commission' and European Council President asserts that 2022 will be the 'year of European defence,' the UK acts as if the EU does not exist and need not trouble it, while the Integrated Review itself was full of Johnsonian boosterism such as the claim that investment in private technology is 'ahead of the rest of Europe.'

ONE ARGUMENT USED TO JUSTIFY BREXIT WAS THAT IT WOULD ENABLE THE UK TO PURSUE A FOREIGN POLICY OF ITS OWN CHOOSING. IT IS HARD TO SEE ANY RATIONAL BASIS TO THIS CLAIM.

One argument used to justify Brexit was that it would enable the UK to pursue a foreign policy of its own choosing. It is hard to see any rational basis to this claim. EU member states were free to make their own foreign policy decisions, as the Iraq war underlined all too clearly. It was the UK, after all, that insisted on – and obtained – the declaration attached to the Lisbon Treaty underlining that the treaty's provision on foreign policy 'do not affect the responsibilities of the Member States, as they currently exist, for the formulation and conduct of their foreign policy nor of their national representation in third countries and international organisations.'

It is perfectly possible, in other words, to be part of the EU and enjoy an autonomous foreign policy. All the more possible to collaborate with the EU without constraining foreign policy autonomy – albeit that, if considerations of 'strategic autonomy' shape EU thinking, the Union itself might find it harder to collaborate formally with non-member states. Given the scale of the challenges they face, it is hard to see how either the UK or the EU can be as effective acting alone as they could be, when the need arises, acting together.

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Towards a 'bastion of the north': The UK and a new northern security architecture

Samu Paukkunen
Dr Valtteri Vuorisalo

IF COMBINED WITH THE UK'S CAPABILITIES AND FOCUS, THIS UNIFIED NORTH WOULD OUTRANK ANY OTHER EUROPEAN FORCE STRUCTURE AND WOULD HELP SECURE BOTH THE EASTERN AND NORTHERN FLANK OF NATO.

In February 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine, and openly portrayed the West as an enemy. At this point it became Svery clear for all that Putin's Russia is an aggressive and revisionist power, which cannot be contained with diplomacy or with the mechanisms of the rules-based international system.

The Western response has surprised many as it has been unified, strong, and concentrating on constraining Russia's ability to achieve its goals. Yet, while helping to stop the invasion of Ukraine, the West also needs to focus on safeguarding its unity from Russian influence. The likely accession process of Finland and Sweden to NATO will be a touchstone for the alliance, which maintain its "Open Door" policy to European states who share its values.

At the time of writing, the increasingly expected membership of Finland and Sweden in the alliance provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the Northern countries to cooperate even more intensively than before. Having all the Nordic countries in the alliance would constitute a basis for a strong, combined force that would change the force posture in the North.

After the possible accession, the defence planning of the Arctic, Nordic and Baltic regions could, for the first time, be coordinated as one. All the military elements for this increased cooperation are already in place and the existing defence cooperation structures would help facilitate and speed up this process.

Given that the United Kingdom shares historical, cultural, and geopolitical ties with the Nordic countries, the UK would benefit from having all Nordic countries within NATO. As relatively small countries, the Nordics would certainly benefit from the UK's support, especially related to logistics, intelligence sharing, and the security provided by the nuclear umbrella. If combined with the UK's capabilities and focus, this unified North would outrank any other European force structure and would help secure both the Eastern and Northern Flank of NATO.

In this essay, we will discuss how the United Kingdom could take on an even stronger role in than it already has in creating a "Bastion of the North" as part of a new security architecture in northern Europe. With a close relationship with all Nordic countries, the collaboration between the United Kingdom and the Nordics would establish a formidable force structure to strengthen NATO's eastern flank and with potential to ease transatlantic burden-sharing.

Nordics next-but not the way Kremlin planned

Even before Russia launched its invasion, Kremlin demanded in December 2021 that the alliance would have to agree to halting any future enlargement. This was seen as a direct threat especially towards Finland and Sweden, as the traditional policy of both countries has been to keep the option to apply for membership open.

So far, Russia's threat seems to have backfired. This is due to the facts that first, the war has led to the deployment of more NATO troops on its eastern flank, and second, both Sweden and Finland have seen a huge, sudden rise of public support for Swedish and Finnish membership in NATO. Both Helsinki and Stockholm have, at the time of writing, effectively abandoned their historical approaches towards the Alliance and have started to signal their desire to join it.

BOTH HELSINKI AND STOCKHOLM HAVE, AT THE TIME OF WRITING, EFFECTIVELY ABANDONED THEIR HISTORICAL APPROACHES TOWARDS THE ALLIANCE AND HAVE STARTED TO SIGNAL THEIR DESIRE TO JOIN IT.

The accession process is expected to proceed, and the negotiations presumably could be expedited. Still, the time that is required to obtain unanimous acceptance from all thirty current members is unknown – and risky. The longer this takes, the more time Russia has to undermine the accession process. This is not only a risk for the membership of Finland and Sweden, but for the cohesion and credibility of NATO itself.

UK taking the lead within the European theatre

The United Kingdom's response to Russia's revisionism has been to act as one of the spearheads of the pan-European effort to arm and support Ukraine. Leading by example, the UK has managed to polish its role among western security providers and is building up its role in the European security framework.

This leadership is even more important now when Germany, in comparison to the UK, is taking its time to reinvent its role within the European security architecture. Further, the French, with President Macron's leadership, have tried to balance between Macron's continued diplomatic efforts and the provision of support for Ukraine. Now that Macron is re-elected, chances are that the French position might be clarified, but Paris seems to be looking to the South as well as to the East and dividing its focus.

Given these ambiguities, the UK's leadership is welcomed in the North, as Russia tries to close NATO's open-door policy and warns Finland and Sweden against NATO membership. As a strong show of solidarity, the UK's defence minister Ben Wallace has already commented that it would be "inconceivable" that Britain would not defend Finland and Sweden if either of the countries were attacked, whether they had joined NATO or not. This message was reinforced by PM Boris Johnson on May 11th when he "signed security declarations with Sweden and Finland, ledging UK support should their militaries come under attack".

AS A STRONG SHOW OF SOLIDARITY, THE UK'S DEFENCE MINISTER BEN WALLACE HAS ALREADY COMMENTED THAT IT WOULD BE "INCONCEIVABLE" THAT BRITAIN WOULD NOT DEFEND FINLAND AND SWEDEN IF EITHER OF THE COUNTRIES WERE ATTACKED, WHETHER THEY HAD JOINED NATO OR NOT.

From NORDEFCO to JEF and beyond

Within the Nordic region, there are already a plethora of bilateral and regional defence agreements and exercises that have bound the Nordic countries closely together. The Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO) is the most important and well-known arrangement for regional military cooperation, consisting of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. The overall purpose of NORDEFCO is to strengthen the participants' national defence and explore mutually beneficial synergies whenever feasible.

It is relatively easy for the UK to integrate into these groupings: the UK and all the Nordic countries already share the same security challenges in northern Europe. The previous chief of the defence staff, Gen Sir Nicholas Carter, already in 2018 commented how Russia is the most significant state-based threat to the UK since the end of the Cold War, warning that hostilities could begin a lot sooner than the UK expects. The shared threat has only grown after that, as both the UK and the Nordics continue to provide weapons for Ukraine to help them in their war efforts. The Kremlin has forcefully condemned these efforts and warned of the consequences of these actions.

In the Arctic, the UK shares the Nordic threat assessment and has taken a more substantial role in defending the region. In its updated Arctic policy framework, the UK holds to a vision of a Global Britain that is engaged in the world and working with its international partners to advance prosperity and security in the Arctic. The 2021 Defence Command Paper makes clear that security in the High North and the defence of the North Atlantic remain of great importance to the UK. The MOD envisions to continue to ensure that it remains capable of protecting the UK's interests as the polar region opens for increased activity in the coming years.

Post-Brexit Britain has also set an important role for itself in the Baltic security debate. UK Armed Forces already have a leading role in NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in the Baltic States.

SINCE THE ALLIANCE LACKS A STANDING MILITARY OF ITS OWN, THE BALTIC COUNTRIES HAVE LONG DEMANDED A MORE PERMANENT FORCE PRESENCE. THE DEFENCE OF THIS REGION COULD BE IMPROVED SUBSTANTIALLY IF FINLAND AND SWEDEN WOULD BE ACCEPTED AS MEMBERS.

A COMBINED NORDIC FORCE WITH INTEROPERABLE, WELL EXERCISED, AND EQUIPPED TROOPS COULD POSSIBLY EVEN LEAD A NEW COMBINED JOINT TASK FORCE (CJTF) NORTH. THIS COULD FORM ONE OF NATO'S STRONGEST FORCE COMPOSITIONS.

The eFP was created to enhance Euro-Atlantic security, reassure UK's Allies, and deter its adversaries. About 900 British personnel rotate on a continuous basis alongside Danish, French, and host-nation Estonian forces.

Baltic states are widely seen as "the frontline of NATO security", dependent on the support of the larger NATO members. Since the Alliance lacks a standing military of its own, the Baltic countries have long demanded a more permanent force presence. The defence of this region could be improved substantially if Finland and Sweden would be accepted as members.

The main tool for Nordic-UK military cooperation has been the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), comprised of 10 Northern European countries. Since it includes the Baltic states, the framework is also a link between Baltic defence and the changing Nordic security environment. Launched in 2012, the Joint Expeditionary Force is seen as an agile provider of a rapid military response should Russia attack one of its members.

JEF can already be seen as the embodiment of the shared challenges of the Nordic countries and the UK, and it is precisely these threats that this force is preparing for. During the ministerial meeting in summer of 2021, ministers from JEF member states signed the JEF Policy Direction document, which provided an overarching policy framework for the Joint Expeditionary Force. Further, it set key principles for cooperation, such as the principal geographic area of interest in the High North, North Atlantic and Baltic Sea region.

The bilateral and multilateral defence cooperation between respective Nordic countries and the UK has also contributed to the interoperability of the armed forces. The latest example of this is from May 2022, when British land forces participated in the ARROW 22 exercise in Finland.

The Bastion of the North

A challenge, thus far, has been that all these defence arrangements have had to take into consideration all the defence solutions and allegiances that the Nordic and Baltic countries, as well as the UK, have. This has limited the depth of defence cooperation to some extent, but at the same time, it has emphasized and arguably increased the interoperability of these armed forces and paved the way for even closer cooperation.

With advanced militaries, Finland and Sweden would be net contributors to NATO security in the North. If all Nordic countries were members in the Alliance together with the UK, NATO would be able to cover both the Northern and Eastern flanks in Europe. Moreover, the Nordics would, together with the UK, be able to increase the stability and security in the Arctic, Nordic, and Baltic regions.

The UK has capabilities that would help to secure the region and deter Russia. It could be an invaluable partner for the Nordic countries, supplementing their strengths.

Taking into consideration the proximity of these countries as well as their cultural and historical ties, this Northern group (Nordics + the UK) could form a well-functioning force structure that would outrank any other European power. Norway, Denmark, and Finland will have almost 150 F-35 stealth multi-role fighter jets alone, in addition to 138 F-35s planned to be acquired by the UK. Moreover, Finland would provide one of Europe's biggest land forces and single biggest artillery, and Sweden and Norway their advanced maritime capabilities.

A combined Nordic force with interoperable, well exercised, and equipped troops could possibly even lead a new Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) North. This could form one of NATO's strongest force compositions and offer a unique possibility for the UK to contribute to the safety and security in the Northern Europe, in addition to its own. From the UK's perspective, this type of integrated northern approach could be a formidable tool with which the UK could engage its national strategic challenges in the future.

Conclusion

Security challenges that lie ahead are likely to be complex and far reaching. Even if Russia is deterred from escalating the war beyond Ukraine, and even if Ukraine itself succeeds in defending itself against the invasion, Russia will remain a threat for the West in the foreseeable future.

The Nordic-Arctic-Baltic region will have to prepare for this challenge in an environment that is in many ways more precarious than the collapse of the Soviet Empire.

Having all the Nordics in the North Atlantic Alliance would constitute a basis for one of NATO's strongest combined force structures. With the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO, the UK could be the actor solidifying the Northern bastion. The UK providing logistical support, intelligence capability and coordination, this combined force would outrank any other European force structures and make it hard, if not impossible, to exert pressure against countries in the European north.

"A STRONG 'BASTION OF THE NORTH' WITH THE UK IN IT WOULD POTENTIALLY EASE TRANSATLANTIC BURDEN SHARING, THAT IS, A NORDIC BASTION WOULD EASE THE COMMITMENT NEEDED BY THE US IN THE NORTH."

Moreover, a strong 'Bastion of the North' with the UK in it would potentially ease transatlantic burden sharing, that is, a Nordic Bastion would ease the commitment needed by the US in the North. A strong force posture in the North would not only ease the number of physical military resources needed by the US from a purely military economics perspective, but it would also help in gaining domestic political support in the US. A 'Bastion of the North' would clearly be a security provider, not a security consumer. Building the bastion could start quickly since the UK has already politically committed itself to defending Finland and Sweden, the only non-NATO members in the Nordics, joint planning of the new northern security architecture with a potential Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) North could start already in the summer of 2022.

Moreover, having strong UK involvement would also provide added stability in the region which, at times, has shown concern over the polarization of US domestic politics and its potential spill-over to military affairs.

Finally, should the UK take on such a role, it would certainly impact current doctrine, detailed in the most recent Integrated Review which currently particularly emphasises the UK's global ambition, China as systemic threat, science and technology as means for projecting power, and the cyber and space domains over multinational and interoperable conventional forces in the North. Instead of committing to all available efforts and every region, this moment in history calls for clear prioritizations of regional focus. This should be reflected in an updated Integrated Review.

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The IR's first year: One giant leap for UK space power

Julia C Balm

"THIS YEAR HAS SET A STRONG FOUNDATION AND FIRM TRAJECTORY FOR THE UK TO BUILD ON SPACE STRATEGY AND CONTINUE INVESTING IN CAPABILITIES ATTUNED TO NATIONAL PRIORITIES"

"GROWING THE UK SPACE SECTOR WITH A LIMITED BUDGET REQUIRES 'MEANINGFUL' GROWTH, CAPITALISATION ON OPPORTUNITIES, AND RUTHLESS PRIORITISATION."

The Integrated Review (IR) laid out the Government's vision for the UK up to 2030. Including the space domain in this strategic assessment of UK priorities was a testament that UK space activity defines Britain's place in the world. It should be underlined once more that this is the first significant time space was featured in this type of UK policy document, showcasing the government's place for space alongside other traditional domains. This has been a promising year with considerable focus on declaring space intentions, building new partnerships, and cohering cross sector approaches. In totality, we can certainly glance back at this recent year with optimism and assert that, on its own merits, the UK is enthusiastic about participating in the growing space economy, in preparing defence for protecting space advantages, and in growing a capacity to bolster space power in the coming years. This year has set a strong foundation and firm trajectory for the UK to build on space strategy and continue investing in capabilities attuned to national priorities.

Examining how the UK has developed space since the IR, this year in review reveals how the UK has integrated space as a domain nationally while integrating itself as a global space actor through an internationalising approach to collaboration.

National Integration

The strategic development of UK space policy has seen a major upgrade this year with comprehensive goals, integrated concepts and an outright desire for growth. This prominent focus on space strategy is exemplified by the Defence Command Paper (DCP), National Space Strategy (NSS), and Defence Space Strategy (DSS). As part of the new £1.4b investment into space over the next ten years, the ISTARI Programme, Titania, MINERVA programme and Prometheus 2 have received funding; space domain awareness (SDA), satellite communication systems, intelligence surveillance and multi-domain integration (MDI) are at the core of these investments. The recently published Scottish Space Strategy announced ambitions to deliver £4bn to the Scottish economy and a 5x increase in the workforce. Similarly, the Welsh Space Strategy engaged with the industrial ecosystem, focussing its strategy on space start-ups and the hi-tech workforce to strengthen areas of space launch, low earth observation (LEO) capabilities, and innovative satellite technologies. These strategic documents indicate that the UK is realising spheres of potential growth and leadership in space through clearly stated objectives. An essential component of curating an informed strategy is acknowledging implementation and its challenges; with relatively low levels of existing capabilities and new organisational structures, there are challenges to ensuring strategic ambitions are sustainable in the next phase. The direction of implementation thus far has largely had backward applications, with strategy declared after the start of implementation. This is a result of investments in a challenging strategic environment as well as pan-governmental alignment in decision making. The Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC) published a study, 'Realising the ambitions of the UK's Defence Space Strategy', after the launch of the DSS, identifying the key factors shaping implementation to 2030; this study found a need for space literacy, a 'market taker' approach to Defence, and a window of opportunity to do things differently in space. With just one year under the belt of the IR, these are still the early days of implementation with much yet to be actioned and many areas to grow. A main take away from this year in space strategy is a collective realisation that growing the UK space sector with a limited budget requires 'meaningful' growth, capitalisation on opportunities, and ruthless prioritisation.

There has also been significant progress in the development of organisational structures to tackle the coherence and realistic growth of space ambitions. The UK Space Command (UKSC), established 1 April 2021 as a joint command, centralises UK strengths into a singular organisation that unifies space operations, capabilities, and generation. By bolstering cohesiveness in the UK approach to space, UK Space Command provides "command and control of all of Defence's space capabilities, including UK Space Operations Centre (SpOC), SKYNET Satellite Communications, RAF Fylingdales" and more. The National Space Council, welcomed into the Cabinet Committees on 29 June 2020, continues to coordinate government policy and work on issues related to diplomacy and national security in, from, and through space. It is worth noting that there is also an equivalent National Space Council in US administration, currently chaired by Vice President Kamala Harris. The US Space Council is composed of cabinet-level members and senior executive branch officials to synchronise expertise on national space activities. Prior to the development of the UK National Space Council, the Space Leadership Council was the space-specific forum established in 2010 that represented the space industry at a national level by advising ministers on strategic policy and future ambitions.

"BECAUSE THE IMPORTANCE OF OUTER SPACE IS UNIVERSAL, TACKLING THREATS TO SPACE SECURITY AND THE PROMOTION OF RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOURS ARE INTERNATIONAL AGENDAS."

The UK's new National Space Council, chaired directly by the Prime Minister, is therefore a welcome post-Brexit development that coordinates overall government policy towards "issues concerning prosperity, diplomacy and national security in, through and from Space." While this Council is a stronger commitment to involving space directly in the government, it may be too soon to make an appraisal of institutional innovation and whether it follows the successful footsteps of the US National Space Council. In line with developing more organisational cohesion, in February 2022, the National Space Partnership (NSP) was developed as an independent body to sit neutrally across the space sector, coordinating new space activities, mediating sector interests, and ensuring the UK sector is maximising strengths. As a response to goals stated in the NSS, Director of the NSP, Ruth Mallors-Ray, positioned a Ten Point Plan to bring "together both the civil and defence space sectors for the first time" working "collaboratively with industry, academia and government bodies to enable, support and activate the space strategy". As a progression of the Space Growth Partnership (SGP) and former Innovation Growth Strategy (IGS), the NSP is governed with support from BEIS, UK Space Agency, Satellite Applications Catapult, UK space trade association and the Space Academic Network; neutrality in this approach means engagement with the entire space sector through thought leadership on geopolitics, regulation, supply chains, space science and wider market growth to build a unified portfolio on investments and opportunities. These organisational developments showcase a more synthesised approach to the growing space sector, allowing for increased coordination between diverse communities and stakeholders in a more agile approach to strategic goals ; organisational cohesion certainly conveys a feeling that space strategy is in capable hands

International Integration

Over the past year, the UK has been internationally integrating itself into the space domain, capturing a 5.1% share of the global space economy with the space sector contributing £16.4bn to the UK economy. As argued previously, abandoning the initial target to capture 10% of the global space economy was a refreshing decision made in the NSS that recognizes space power requires sustainable and steady growth rather than early comparative metrics.

Positioning a role of leadership in the domain, the UK proposed UN Resolution 75/36 "Reducing Space Threats Through Norms, Rules, and Principles of Responsible Behaviours" in December 2020. Since then, this open ended working group has been meeting as part of Preventing An Arms Race In Outer Space (PAROS) to discuss "threats in outer space, and how responsible behaviours might help tackle them." The discussion on responsible behaviours is highly relevant, especially with Russia's irresponsible anti satellite test (ASAT) on 15 November creating a field of at least 1,500 pieces of trackable debris, threatening satellites in low earth orbit (LEO) as well as the Internatvional Space Station. Because the importance of outer space is universal, tackling threats to space security and the promotion of responsible behaviours are international agendas. This resolution is an important opportunity for multilateral discussions to progress the identification and clarification of perceived threats and concerning behaviours; this can eventually lead to more fitting regulations and rules, either binding or non-binding, to create a safer and more sustainable space in a domain prone to dual use ambiguity and debris proliferation.

WHILE THERE IS MUCH ROOM TO GROW, THE UK HAS CERTAINLY HAD LIFT-OFF THIS LAST YEAR WHICH IS WORTH RECOGNIZING AS A MILESTONE IN THE HISTORY OF UK SPACE POWER.

For decades, the UK has leaned on partnerships with other countries to develop and access space capabilities. As the DSS noted, an 'own-collaborate-access' framework capitalises on the UK's capacity to grow sovereign assets while collaborating with partners to fill in the gaps of a limited UK budget and resources. The Combined Space Operations Initiative (CSpO), which comprises Australia, Canada, France, Germany, New Zealand, UK and US, recently affirmed a shared commitment to "generate and improve cooperation, coordination, and interoperability opportunities". This Combined Space Operations Vision 2031 reinforces IR objectives to both strengthen security and defence at home and overseas, and sustain strategic advantage through science and technology; this shared commitment between partners is emphasised through mission assurance and resiliency.

As part of the UK's Indo-Pacific 'tilt', collaboration between the UK and Australia has notably grown over the past year. The UK-Australia Space Bridge celebrated its first anniversary alongside a recent announcement of a strengthened UK-Australia partnership to boost bilateral cooperation in defence, security, climate and trade. Aiming to be "the European partner of choice in the Indo-Pacific", the UK is repositioning itself globally. AUKUS, the trilateral security partnership between the UK, US and Australia, indicates a growing depth of collaboration between the three countries. Australian foreign minister Marise Payne clarified that AUKUS will a focus on "equitable vaccine distribution, COVID-19 economic recovery, low-emissions technology, infrastructure investment, critical technologies, education, cyber security, space and countering disinformation". This partnership bewildered France outside of the AUKUS agreement, presenting a significant blow to French NATO participation which was only restored by Sarkozy in 2009. France's Indo-Pacific Strategy, released on 22 February, announced the departure from a relationship with Australia as a close strategic partner, dealing instead with Australia on a 'case by case basis'. The dynamics stirred by AUKUS, paired with a clear Indo-Pacific focal point, beg the question of where the UK's relationship with partners such as the European Space Agency (ESA) will move forward and where the UK will spread out space collaborations. While the UK remains a member of the intergovernmental organisation, the influence of the EU over ESA highlights whether UK interests can be protected in the agency in the long term, especially after participation in EU Galileo and European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS) ceased.

A Historic Year for Space

Looking ahead, there are significant plans for the future, including the launch of the first satellite into orbit from a launchpad on British soil and commercial growth with a new North West Space Cluster to bridge interregional sector strengths across the UK alongside Harwell, Leicester, Guildford, Scotland and Cornwall. But despite this ambitious year in review, it's important to rein in future expectations and recognize that not all years will see this level of growth. The IR's 'meaningful' approach to space will take time to materialise and potential future steadiness should not mischaracterize the UK as either a new space actor or a small space power. From as early as the 1610-11 King James telescope to recent involvement in the 2021 James Webb Space Telescope, Britain has long envisioned its place in space. As space strategy continues to evolve, the UK is integrating space within its national borders while merging into the global space stage through partnerships and leadership. The pace of growth for a 'meaningful' strategy, therefore, is not one which should be rushed for fear of catching up with others. In this respect, intentional cross-cut sector growth should continue to be a keen focus for the UK because strategy built on prestige in one area alone is highly perishable; sustainable growth is crucial. While there is much room to grow, the UK has certainly had lift-off this last year which is worth recognizing as a milestone in the history of UK space power.

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One year on: How did air power fare in the Integrated Review?

Dr Sophy Antrobus and Andy Netherwood

> **THE AIR POWER CHAPTER OF DEFENCE IN A COMPETITIVE AGE WAS INCOHERENT WITH THE AMBITION SET OUT BY THE INTEGRATED REVIEW**

Defence in a Competitive Age was published in March 2021 and set out how the Ministry of Defence was going to play its part in meeting the ambition for *Global Britain in a Competitive Age* set out by the Integrated Review. In his foreword, Defence Secretary Ben Wallace claimed that this was going to be different from previous reviews that 'have been over-ambitious and underfunded, leaving forces that were overstretched and underequipped'. This one was going to be 'threat-focused' and properly resourced based on 'unprecedented' investment in defence. One year on, how does it look from an air power perspective?

The answer, this paper will contend, is not very good.

The Review's air power shortcomings

The air power chapter of Defence in a Competitive Age was incoherent with the ambition set out by the Integrated Review . The vison of 'Global Britain' tilting to the Indo-Pacific with armed forces 'persistently engaged worldwide' never sat comfortably with deep cuts to the air mobility force needed to sustain them. An enhanced ability to 'detect threats' was incoherent with the cuts to the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) force. And a modest commitment to 'at least 48 F-35s' did nothing to resolve the Royal Air Force's (RAF) lack of combat air mass, leaving it lacking in resilience and ubiquity as it waited for the panacea of the Future Combat Air System to come along. This incoherence might explain why it is already unravelling in the face of events. The first of these was the fall of Kabul.

The biggest cuts to the RAF fell on the Air Mobility Force (AMF). Despite having just completed an expensive life extension programme to take it to its 2035 out of service date, the C-130J was to be retired by 2023. Furthermore, the BAe 146 was to be scrapped in 2022, with the replacements unable to carry out its cargo role. It was therefore ironic that the first major operation following Defence in a Competitive Age required the AMF to rapidly evacuate 15,000 from Kabul after it fell to the Taliban at a speed the Government had completely failed to anticipate. Tragically, despite the magnificent efforts of the AMF, there was not enough time to get everybody out. Many eligible Afghans were left behind. The UK and the West had suffered a visible defeat, something that is likely to have emboldened our enemies, which brings us onto Ukraine.

The air power implications of the Ukraine conflict

Despite planned reductions in air transport capacity, the Integrated Review was clear about the need for the armed forces to both train for warfighting and become more 'persistently engaged' globally saying that: 'In practice, persistent engagement will mean deploying more of our forces overseas more often and for longer periods of time' (p.73).

Though the Integrated Review recognised the 'resurgence of state-based threats', leading with four paragraphs on 'Russian Behaviour', it was left to the Defence Command Paper to explicitly lay out the challenges for the MOD in relation to Russia:

> Russia continues to pose the greatest nuclear, conventional military and sub-threshold threat to European security. Modernisation of the Russian armed forces, the ability to integrate whole of state activity and a greater appetite for risk, makes Russia both a capable and unpredictable actor. (p.5)

THE UK'S MOST MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTION TO UKRAINE IS THE PROVISION OF INTELLIGENCE USING ISR AIRCRAFT AND SUPPLIES FLOWN BY THE AMF. THESE ARE TWO CAPABILITIES THAT THE DEFENCE COMMAND PAPER CHOSE TO CUT.

As Russian troops built up on the border with Ukraine in late 2021 into 2022, the MOD stood by the implications of 'persistent engagement' which it stated: 'will increase the UK's ability to pre-empt and manage crises before they escalate and minimise the opportunities for state and non-state actors to undermine international security.' (p.15) By early February 2022, Britain had agreed to send 350 personnel to Poland, to join 250 already deployed there, and had offered to double its commitment to Estonia, where 900 British forces lead a NATO battlegroup. Additionally the UK offered to deploy additional RAF combat aircraft to Southern Europe along with additional Royal Navy warships to the Eastern Mediterranean.

Attempts at deterrence failed, not helped by tensions between European nations about the nature of the threat from Russia and what to do about it. Putin's forces invaded Ukraine on 24 February. At the time of writing (late March), the UK continues to support the supply of arms to the Ukrainian armed forces and is in the process of strengthening sanctions against Russia and specified Russian nationals. It is vehemently opposed to any further actions, saying that only Putin is escalating the situation and the UK will not do that. As such, British military forces remain on the sidelines. The UK's most meaningful contribution to Ukraine is the provision of intelligence using ISR aircraft and supplies flown by the AMF. These are two capabilities that the Defence Command Paper chose to cut. Meanwhile the need to reinforce NATO allies in Eastern Europe has exposed our lack of combat air mass.

Retiring or reducing air power capabilities, especially in the ISR and air mobility areas, and leaving a gap (yawning or otherwise) before they are replaced may align with the reduction in Army numbers and the recognition that their capability gaps make them ill-equipped for high intensity combat in serious numbers until later in the decade. However, the ongoing crisis may leave the UK looking exposed on several flanks at the same time. Not a good look for a Global Britain seeking to demonstrate its renewed vigour and influence on the world stage post-Brexit and in a post- or 'living with' Covid world. No doubt questions will be asked about the need for a 'new chapter' to the Integrated Review (likely to be branded as IR25) since events in Europe are completely overshadowing 'tilts' elsewhere. Hard questions also need to be asked about the effectiveness of deterrence and 'soft power' when dealing with regimes like Putin's.

Funding matters

THE CHALLENGE FOR THE RAF NOW IS TO MEET INCREASING COMMITMENTS FROM A SHRINKING BUDGET. ONE YEAR ON DEFENCE IN A COMPETITIVE AGE LOOKS OVER-AMBITIOUS AND UNDERFUNDED.

The underlying problem is one of money. The MoD has made much of the multi-year cash settlement agreed with the Treasury in 2019 with an additional '£24B' for Defence. However, inflation soon began rising, eroding the real value of that settlement. It has now topped 5%, its highest for 20 years. In this context, Ben Wallace had unwittingly signed up to a substantial cut in his department's budget. Defence spending is now set to fall in real terms every year for the rest of this Parliament. This looked unwise even before the Ukraine crisis; now it looks like folly and fortunately set to be reversed. Otherwise, the MoD will be back on the path of managed decline. And Air, like Land, has a smaller slice of the shrinking pie. The challenge for the RAF now is to meet increasing commitments from a shrinking budget. One year on Defence in a Competitive Age looks over-ambitious and underfunded, just as the Secretary of State had characterised previous reviews, and the RAF will be left overstretched and underequipped as a result.

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The Integrated Review and the withdrawal from Afghanistan

Professor Tim Willasey-Wilsey

THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS OF LEAVING AFGHANISTAN AFTER TWENTY YEARS WILL BE DEBATED FOR YEARS TO COME. WHATEVER THE REALITIES ON THE GROUND IN AFGHANISTAN IT IS CLEAR THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS LOSING THE POLITICAL WILL TO CONTINUE.

The United States withdrawal from Afghanistan and the chaos which surrounded it has been widely credited with encouraging President Putin's invasion of Ukraine. The effects of the British evacuation will be less dramatic but have impacted the ambitions described in the Integrated Review (IR). What was lacking was a holistic cross-government consideration of the effects of the withdrawal on British foreign policy in general and the IR in particular.

In the months following its publication the Integrated Review (IR) has faced an ordeal by fire; firstly with the evacuation of Afghanistan, then the AUKUS affair and finally from President Putin's war in Ukraine.

The rights and wrongs of leaving Afghanistan after twenty years will be debated for years to come. Whatever the realities on the ground in Afghanistan it is clear that the United States was losing the political will to continue . This was not just the view of President Donald Trump and of his successor Joe Biden but also large swathes of the United States diplomatic and intelligence community. The US military continued to believe in the mission but were vulnerable to the charge of having overstated both their achievements and their expectations over many years.

In Britain the first the public heard of British opposition to the US withdrawal was when Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) General Sir Nick Carter appeared on BBC's Radio 4 Today programme on 16th April and remarked that it was "not a decision we hoped for". In August, as the fiasco at Kabul airport unfolded, the cracks in alliance thinking about the Doha Agreement and the planning for the withdrawal became more apparent. Furthermore tensions emerged within the British government, particularly between the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

Minimalist references to Afghanistan in the IR

There were only two references in the IR to Afghanistan.

"We have close historical links with Pakistan and will continue to develop a strong, modern relationship focused on security, stability and prosperity. We will continue to support stability in Afghanistan, as part of a wider coalition." (p.64)

And:

"To disrupt the highest-priority terrorist groups overseas using the full range of our CT capabilities. These include our high-end PURSUE capabilities, through targeted military activity, intelligence-sharing and cooperation with international partners. Under persistent engagement, our armed forces will continue to contribute to the Global Coalition against Daesh in Iraq and Syria, provide support to the Government of Afghanistan and support French operations in the Sahel." (p.83)

Both mentions are somewhat minimalist given the extent of UK's diplomatic and military commitment to Afghanistan over the previous 20 years. It is also puzzling that neither paragraph makes an explicit reference to the Doha Agreement which was signed on 29th February 2020, over a year before the IR was published on 22nd March 2021. The wording was doubtless chosen to encompass a range of potential outcomes but evidently not the possibility that the Taliban would take power and that Afghanistan's role in a CT (Counter Terrorist) context would change so fundamentally.

Organisational impediments

In discussion with HMG officials in the weeks following the Kabul evacuation it became clear that the meagre references to Afghanistan in the IR reflected the reality in Whitehall that Afghanistan was viewed as a "legacy issue". A senior official described how the policy focus had switched from "the old agenda" of Iraq and Afghanistan to the "four Cs"; China, Cyber, Climate Change and Covid. The Secretary of State at the time, Dominic Raab, was known to regard Afghanistan and Counter Terrorism as subordinate to "great power competition".

In the FCDO there was the additional distraction of two important structural reorganisations. The big one was the integration of the former Department for International Development (DfID) into the former FCO. Guidance had been issued that this crucial (and controversial) development should be given priority. The merger was anything but straightforward. Whilst the FCO had long hankered after DfID's huge budget and for aligning DfID effort more closely with British foreign policy objectives there was concern in DfID that funding should not be diverted for purely national interests. In the MoD there was also a privately-expressed worry that DfID would bring additional "soft-power" focus to an FCO which was less and less accustomed to (and comfortable with) tough diplomacy.

> **"UK MISSED A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO PRESS THE CASE FOR A REGIONAL SETTLEMENT TO AFGHANISTAN."**

The second change was the removal of Afghanistan and Pakistan from the former South Asian Directorate and its integration with Iran as a new Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran Directorate (APID). This was less than ideal at the time given that the JCPoA (the Iran nuclear deal) was being renegotiated in Vienna. There was also a gap between the departure of the former Director South Asia and the arrival of the new Director APID. Working from home due to the Covid-19 pandemic added to the sense of organisational drift at a time of looming crisis in Afghanistan.

This therefore was the bureaucratic background to a key moment in British foreign policy. In truth there was no chance that HMG could have changed Biden's mind; indeed Biden's opposition to the Afghan campaign had a long history. However UK could have used its influence to amend some of the detail including the timetable. A delay of a further two months would have made it far harder for the Taliban to seize power during the Afghan winter. The US decision to abandon huge quantities of military materiel should have been challenged and UK could have done more to predict the effects on the Afghan economy of a Taliban takeover and the likelihood of a humanitarian disaster over winter.

But above all the UK missed a golden opportunity to press the case for a regional settlement to Afghanistan at a time when all Afghanistan's neighbours plus India and Russia wanted an inclusive administration in Kabul. Only Pakistan still favoured a Taliban government although its position seemed to be softening in the weeks before August 2021.

General Carter's efforts

> **"NOBODY SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN A HOLISTIC VIEW OF THE WIDER EFFECTS ON BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY."**

The only evidence of British activism came from the General Carter himself in a determined effort to remedy some of the implications of the Doha Agreement. In his attempts to persuade Pakistan to support a more broad-based government in Afghanistan he relied heavily on Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Bajwa who (whatever his private views) proved unable to change Pakistan's longstanding ambition for a Taliban victory. In Kabul General Carter was also influenced by former President Hamid Karzai whose naïve opinion that the Taliban were "country boys" owed much to his two decades of isolation in Kabul's green zone. The fact that the terrorist Haqqani group had strengthened its position within the Taliban received insufficient attention in Whitehall. Indeed, during this whole process, Carter needed heavyweight FCDO support to avoid the myriad diplomatic pitfalls. He received that support in Pakistan but, for much of the time, the Ambassador's position in Kabul was also gapped.

Even General Carter's valiant efforts still viewed Afghanistan in isolation as a self-standing issue. Nobody seems to have taken a holistic view of the wider effects on British foreign policy and the implications for the IR. The most immediate connection was with UK's Counter Terrorist requirements which were considerably weakened by the loss of a reliable and secure base in Afghanistan.

> **TO INDIAN EYES, IT SIGNALLED A WANING BRITISH INTEREST.**

UK's ambitions for enhanced relations with India and the wider Indo-Pacific were also at stake. India had been mentioned 17 times in the IR and the related concept of the Indo-Pacific on a further 32 occasions. One key extract reads:

"The UK-India relationship is already strong, but over the next ten years we seek transformation in our cooperation across the full range of our shared interests. India – as the largest democracy in the world – is an international actor of growing importance." (p.64)

And on the Indo-Pacific:

"Indo-Pacific: we will pursue deeper engagement in the Indo-Pacific in support of shared prosperity and regional stability, with stronger diplomatic and trading ties. This approach recognises the importance of powers in the region such as China, India and Japan and also extends to others including South Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and the Philippines. We will seek closer relations through existing institutions such as ASEAN and seek accession to the CPTPP" (p.24)

The impact on IR ambitions

The ambition for UK-India relations was considerable, especially given that the relationship has underperformed over the past 75 years. However, HMG was determined to seize a rare moment when two Prime Ministers enjoyed a good personal and political relationship and at a time when it seemed that the UK had finally managed to de-hyphenate its Indo-Pakistan relations. Indeed this was one of the key reasons for the FCDO to separate Pakistan and Afghanistan from the new Indo-Pacific Directorate.

However the withdrawal from Afghanistan has inflicted some damage to UK's reputation in New Delhi. To Indian eyes, it signalled a waning British interest in an issue of fundamental importance to India. Not only is Afghanistan on India's putative trade route to Central Asia but the Taliban are also close to several terrorist groups which directly target India in Kashmir and more widely; including the Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) and the Jaish-Mohammed (JM). The UK's knowledge of Afghanistan and regional terrorism was highly valued in New Delhi.

Even more importantly the British withdrawal from Afghanistan will inevitably breathe new life into the UK-Pakistan bilateral relationship because, without its Afghan presence, the UK is going to be more reliant on Pakistan for Counter-Terrorist support. If this begins to look anything like re-hyphenation then UK can expect a return to New Delhi's traditional scepticism about Britain's balancing of relations between India and Pakistan.

In other areas of the Indo-Pacific the withdrawal from Afghanistan might even be welcomed. In Singapore, Japan and South Korea there has long been frustration that Whitehall was too fixated on its campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan detracting from a sufficiently clear focus on the challenges presented by a rising China.

AUKUS and Ukraine may provide opportunities for Britain to overcome the Afghan debacle and lay to rest the charge that it represented "the biggest foreign policy failure since Suez" However one of the most disappointing aspects is that insufficient cross-government rigour was brought to bear on the wider implications for an IR which had been published only months before.

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Loud failures and quiet gains in the UK's 'Year of Leadership' on climate

Dr Duraid Jalili

"*I apologise for the way this process has unfolded and I am deeply sorry. I also understand the deep disappointment but I think, as you have noted, it's also vital that we protect this package.*"
Alok Sharma, President of the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference

Loud Failures

On its release on 16 March 2021, the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy boldly stated that the UK Government would make "tackling climate change and biodiversity loss its number one international priority" with "sustained international action" and support for "others in leading the advance towards our shared goals" (pp. 4, 19, 21). Its capacity to achieve this would be bolstered by its presidency of COP26 and chairing of the G7, heralding a "year of leadership in 2021" (p.14). Overall, the review set a strong tone on the degree to which climate and biodiversity 'challenges' impact on global insecurity and instability, whilst maintaining flexibility and room for manoeuvre on the scale and pace of response required. This vision garnered responses from strong praise to fierce criticism, and everything in between.

OVER THE PAST YEAR, CRITICS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S VISION APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN VALIDATED.

Over the past year, critics of the government's vision appeared to have been validated. The G7 summit in June 2021, hosted in Cornwall, failed to produce sufficient promises on climate finance, an agreed phase-out date for coal, or any real detail on how solutions would be operationalised. In November 2021, the UK oversaw COP26. Importantly, this was the first COP in which the Paris Agreement's "ratchet" mechanism had come into effect, forcing countries to submit new or updated nationally determined contributions (NDCs). Yet, despite its promise to "keep 1.5C alive" and its consistent foregrounding of "coals, cars, cash and trees", the UK presidency failed to raise the $100bn annual climate funding pledge promised to vulnerable countries, failed to gain agreement for a phase out of coal (with the term 'phase down' being used instead), and garnered NDCs that would lead to an estimated 2.6C to 2.7C warming by 2100. Furthermore, throughout its "year of leadership," the UK's ability to project itself as a global leader was progressively hampered by its own environmental controversies, including (amongst other things) local government approval for a coal mine in Cumbria, ongoing subsidies for fossil fuel companies and airlines, new oil and gas licences in the North Sea, scrapping the ailing green homes grant, maintaining VAT for renewable energy equipment and installations, and imposing financial cutbacks for environmental agencies and overseas aid. The perceived contradiction between its rhetoric and its own climate actions reduced its moral authority in the eyes of other nations, environmental campaigners and the wider public, hampering its ability to lobby credibly for radical global action

THE UK'S ABILITY TO PROJECT ITSELF AS A GLOBAL LEADER WAS PROGRESSIVELY HAMPERED BY ITS OWN ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROVERSIES.

Quiet Gains

Away from headline grabbing political statements, inter-governmental agreements and controversies, however, government ministries have been quietly developing responses to the Integrated Review's climate and biodiversity goals. Cross-governmental and inter-sectoral coordination has been increasing. This includes new initiatives to enhance inter-departmental collaboration, such as the X-WH climate security community of interest, which brings together desk level officials from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Ministry of Defence (MoD), and other relevant departments to coordinate lessons identified, good practice, and common strategies regarding the domestic and international stresses generated by climate change. Dedicated environmental advisors are also being appointed to review the climate and biodiversity risks and opportunities of different projects, including the government's flagship cross-departmental Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF).

GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES HAVE BEEN QUIETLY DEVELOPING RESPONSES TO THE INTEGRATED REVIEW'S CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY GOALS.

UK government outreach to wider partners and stakeholders also appears to be growing. In partnership with allied nations and inter-governmental working groups, FCDO officials have been engaging in sustained lobbying – both within the UN and through 'climate diplomats' worldwide (i.e. embassy-based officials assigned to undertake focused diplomacy on climate issues) – to enhance the level of political focus, joint policymaking, and response mechanisms available to deal with the security and stability implications of climate change. There has also been a notable flurry of outreach to non-governmental stakeholders, from the commissioning of reports and the creation of interdisciplinary working groups on the climate and security nexus, through to the launch of the UK Cabinet's Collective Intelligence Lab (CILab), designed to crowdsource external expertise on current approaches to UK policy (including environmental issues).

One particularly significant area for development is the growing role of the MoD in climate-related issues. Historically, militaries have faced minimal political or legislative pressure to engage with climate and sustainability issues, providing the MoD with significant flexibility in applying environmental principles to operations, infrastructure, capabilities, and policies. Although binding legislative measures are unlikely to be applied across the full spectrum of defence activities in the near future, the traditional politico-military mindset of 'environmental exceptionalism' appears to be shifting. On 30 March 2021, the MoD took a significant step in working towards the Integrated Review's climate ambitions by releasing the first NetZero strategy of any military force, within its Climate Change and Sustainability Strategic Approach (CCSSA). This is a notable act, not simply because Defence is responsible for at least 50% of all UK government emissions and, thus, represents a major global polluter; but also because it faces significant risks in terms of stranded assets and operational threats resulting from climate change, as well as a raft of prospective climate-related financial, legal, and reputational risks and obligations.

The CCSSA outlines the relevance of climate change for defence, areas of existing progress, and bottlenecks for sustainability and adaptation. It also proposes a method for achieving NetZero and greater climate-resilience in three 'epochs', in which defence will seek to: create comprehensive sustainability baselines and enhanced sustainability collaboration with suppliers (2021-2025); reduce emissions and increase resilience through existing and emerging technologies (2026-2035); and, finally, invest in novel technologies for resilience and emissions reductions (2035-2050). There are, of course, any number of relevant and important concerns regarding this strategy, including its perceived reliance on prospective technological solutions and its non-binding nature. At the same time, the report has become a commonly referenced proof of concept for other militaries that are considering whether, how, and how far to implement government NetZero and sustainability goals. Together with Chief of Air Staff Mike Wigston's bold (or, as some commentators have argued, wholly unfeasible) goal of achieving NetZero for the RAF by 2040, these actions have raised the MoD's international visibility and status as a potential climate leader across the global security sector.

BY CREATING A DEDICATED CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY DIRECTORATE, THE MOD HAS BEEN ABLE TO DELIVER A PROOF OF CONCEPT FOR VARIOUS MILITARIES.

Alongside the release of the review, the MoD has been starting the uphill process of developing more coherent internal systems and procedures for enhancing mitigation, adaptation, and resilience. Importantly, there currently exists no official Defence Line of Development (DLOD) for climate and sustainability, limiting the degree to which military commands must consider such issues when making decisions on military capability. However, the MoD has created a dedicated Climate Change and Sustainability Directorate headed by James Clare, a civil servant with experience in the workings of MoD infrastructure and capability reform. Although still very much in its nascent stages, the directorate is already working to gain cross-governmental backing for key concepts and strategies (particularly in relation to 'climate security'), and to help ensure that current sustainability ambition and intent within the MoD is supported by suitable methodologies and cross-departmental coordination. In their current form, such actions may not abate concerns amongst external and internal commentators regarding the degree to which the MoD can achieve significant gains at the pace and scale required. Once again, however, by creating a dedicated climate and sustainability directorate, the MoD has been able to deliver a proof of concept for various militaries, increasing the prospect that coordinated climate and sustainability initiatives could be used as a route for enhancing defence engagement and stabilization activities worldwide.

What Next...

> **THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE UK CAN MAKE MEANINGFUL STRIDES ON ITS INTEGRATED REVIEW PRIORITIES MAY RELY AS MUCH ON HARD WORK AND QUIET GAINS AS IT DOES ON ANY NUMBER OF POSSIBLE BLACK SWAN EVENTS.**

Even with the room for manoeuvre built into the language of the Integrated Review, it is difficult to overemphasise just how much work would need to be done to achieve the climate ambitions it sets out, including: developing creative diplomacy and multilateralist efforts to solve joint climate challenges; upscaling public and private climate finance for nature-based solutions, novel technologies, and climate action across Africa, Asia and Latin America; integrating biodiversity considerations into economic decision-making; and enhancing resilience across national infrastructure, education, governance, human rights, health security and the ocean. Since COP26, the government's ability to press for this in an effective way at the highest political levels has inherently diminished, with Alok Sharma and his team facing an uphill battle in pushing countries to act upon their NDCs before handing over the presidency of COP to Egypt in November 2022.

Internally, the UK government faces an equally daunting set of challenges. Perhaps above all, whilst advances in scholarship have provided greater insight than ever before on the potential impacts and solutions surrounding climate change, the ability to link these together through holistic, cross-governmental policies will face significant bottlenecks and hurdles. These challenges stem not only from the sheer scale, pace and non-linearity of environmental trends, but also from more general but equally intractable issues inhibiting global environmental governance, such as fluctuating political support, vested interests, lobbying and protectionism, as well as limitations and inequities in resources, funding, and access to decision makers, and a continued reliance on skewed models for economic and mitigation planning.

Despite these challenges, significant opportunities for climate gains exist over the course of the next year. In the run up to and the last few days of COP26, there was a flurry of interest on the question of limiting military emissions as part of countries' NDCs, with pressure liable to build further for COP27. Increased focus on climate security issues is also being seen in debates and statements from the UN Security Council and NATO. In line with its ongoing intra-governmental reforms and membership of key coalitions and working groups, the UK government has the potential to lead and support discussions in these areas and, perhaps, generate more wide-reaching sustainability gains by leveraging cross-national procurement initiatives with greater purchasing power. The release of the IPCC's Working Group II and Working Group III reports this year may help to further bolster inter-governmental goals as well as intra-governmental initiatives, particularly for government officials seeking to connect existing policy with associated concerns of climate justice, loss and damage. As the past year has shown, however, the degree to which the UK can make meaningful strides on its Integrated Review priorities may rely as much on hard work and quiet gains as it does on any number of possible black swan events that could emerge as a corollary of the very environmental crises that the government is seeking to address.

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