

UK Resilience

The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom - Security in an interdependent world

19 March 2008

The Prime Minister today announced the publication of the first National Security Strategy for the United Kingdom. The strategy highlights the nature of the new security challenges, how they have changed, and how we are responding. In his statement to Parliament the Prime Minister said:

“While our obligation to ensure the safety of the British people and to protect the national interest is fixed and unwavering, the nature of the threats and the risks we face has changed beyond recognition and confounds all the old assumptions about national defence and international security.

“As the national security strategy makes clear, new threats demand new approaches. A radically updated and much more coordinated response is now required.

“We need to mobilise all the resources available to us: the power of our military, police and security services; the persuasive force and reach of diplomacy; the authority of strengthened global institutions which, with our full support, can deploy both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ power; and because arms and authority will never be enough, the power of ideas, of shared values and hopes that can win over hearts and minds.”

The strategy sets out how we have learned the lessons of recent years, including experiences of terrorism and civil emergencies, but also overseas. Rwanda, the Balkans, Sierra Leone, Iraq, Afghanistan, Darfur, Burma and Kenya all show the need for the international community to be united and act decisively, but also to plan for the longer term, including supporting failing states and stabilising areas recovering from conflict, and tackling violent extremism.

The Prime Minister also announced:

- a review of our Reserves, to see how they can play a greater role in stabilisation and reconstruction in post-conflict zones;
- £600m of cross-government funding for conflict prevention, resolution and stabilisation around the world over the next three years, including an immediate commitment to fund 750 Burundian troops as part of the African Union peacekeeping force in Somalia, and more help to train, equip and deploy troops for the joint UN-AU peacekeeping operation in Darfur;
- in Afghanistan, an integrated civilian-military HQ, building on the December plans for a more integrated approach across security, governance, and development;
- in Iraq, progress on the Basra Development Commission, led by Michael Wareing, promoting economic regeneration.

The Strategy argues that globalisation and an increasingly interdependent world bring massive opportunities, and the UK, as an outward-facing nation with global links and a focus on skills, is well placed to exploit them. But we must also recognise and address the vulnerabilities associated with globalisation: travel, modern communications, the internet, and increased trade can present opportunities for terrorism and transnational crime, or increase the risk of pandemics.

We need to harness globalisation to meet the challenges it generates. We need broader alliances and a reformed international architecture to tackle common challenges. The strategy sets out our intention to:

- reform and strengthen [NATO](#), [EU](#), and the [UN](#), for example working to make the UN Security Council more representative to give greater legitimacy to decisive international action, including looking at interim solutions if necessary;
- offer a “new bargain” to non-nuclear powers, inviting interested countries to a London conference this year to discuss a new system to help non-nuclear states safely acquire the new sources of energy they need, including through a global enrichment bond;
- build bilateral and multilateral cooperation on terrorism, for example with a new agreement signed with the UAE on freezing terrorist assets.

As well as recognising that the challenges are increasingly global and demand global solutions, the Strategy recognises that the roots of problems are often local, as are the effects, and sets out:

- a new Civil Protection network, replacing the old idea of civil defence, building and strengthening local capacity to respond to a range of circumstances from floods to terrorism;
- a new National Risk Register, publishing information previously held privately within Government, so the public can see at first hand the risks we face, and plan accordingly;
- an update on the Prevent work to help local communities resist violent extremism, to be published shortly.

The Strategy sets out how we will build a more hard-headed, long-term, integrated approach:

- It reinforces the cross-government counter-terrorist effort, including expanding the inter-departmental Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, and work to strengthen protection at our borders and for crowded places.
- It confirms the shift in Foreign Office focus from Europe to key regions, for example the Middle East, with Embassies which used to do mainly consular work now doing political engagement and security support, for example in Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh.
- It reinforces the long-term focus on underlying drivers of insecurity: tackling the violent extremism which drives terrorism; conflict mediation; post-conflict stabilisation; and the effects on security of the long-term challenges of climate change and global poverty.
- It recognises that Government can't meet all these new challenges by itself, and commits to stronger partnerships with local authorities and communities and announces a new National Security Forum composed of business, academics, community organisations and military and security experts to advise Government.
- It commits to greater transparency and accountability in this increasingly important and visible area of policy, with an enhanced scrutiny and public role for the Intelligence and Security Committee, including the first public hearings.

Copies of the strategy are available on the [Cabinet Office website](#)