



# International Relations and Defence Committee

## Corrected oral evidence: Defence concepts and capabilities: from aspiration to reality

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Members present: Baroness Anelay of St Johns (The Chair); Lord Alton of Liverpool; Lord Anderson of Swansea; Baroness Blackstone; Lord Boateng; Lord Campbell of Pittenweem; Baroness Fall; Baroness Sugg; Lord Stirrup; Lord Teverson; Lord Wood of Anfield.

Evidence Session No. 6

Heard in Public

Questions 41- 46

### Witnesses

**I:** Dr Jennifer Cole, Lecturer in Global and Planetary Health, Royal Holloway, University of London, and Associate Fellow, RUSI; Professor Catherine Kennedy-Pipe, Professor of International Relations and International Security, University of Loughborough.

## Examination of witnesses

Dr Jennifer Cole and Professor Catherine Kennedy-Pipe.

Q41 **The Chair:** Good morning and welcome to this session of the International Relations and Defence Select Committee in the House of Lords. It is my pleasure to welcome today, to give evidence to us, Professor Catherine Kennedy-Pipe, professor of international relations and international security at the University of Loughborough, and Dr Jennifer Cole, lecturer in global and planetary health at Royal Holloway, University of London, and associate fellow at RUSI. Thank you for giving us time today to take evidence in our inquiry, "Defence concepts and capabilities: from aspiration to reality".

I remind our witnesses and committee members that this session is on the record, broadcast and transcribed. I also remind our members, as always, that, before they ask any question, they should declare any relevant interest. I am going to begin by asking the first question, which as usual is rather general in scope. I shall then turn to my colleagues to ask more focused questions. Throughout the session, I shall try to alternate which of our guest witnesses I call first so that it is even-stevens between them.

To what extent have the Integrated Review and the Defence Command Paper adequately addressed non-traditional threats to the United Kingdom? By "non-traditional threats", I think of terrorism, cybersecurity, changes in climate and ecology, let alone pandemics. What do you think was missing, if anything? How heavily should we weight such non-traditional concerns against more traditional inter-state threats, given Russia's hostility and China's rise?

**Professor Catherine Kennedy-Pipe:** The Integrated Review and accompanying documents provided, post Brexit, an extremely effective way of viewing the UK and its position in global politics. This was of course before the shock of the invasion of Ukraine. What was to be welcomed was the particular emphasis on the threat from environmental and climate change, which link us all, whatever the current deep disagreements with Russia may be. That is also true of China, and I will return to that. All of these issues are interlinked. Environmental insecurity, climate change, world weather and rising sea levels all give rise in some communities to insecurity, which in turn promotes radicalisation and terrorist groups.

In that, because of the UK's position, our overseas commitments and our expertise in resilience, disaster management and training of counterterrorism abroad, as well as at home, point to the central position of the UK as a key player both in European and global defence. I heard part of the other session. We have a particular expertise, I would argue, in terms of understanding the Arctic, which of course is the pivot of global warming. We have our military and scientific commitments, which make us an Arctic stakeholder, if not an Arctic power. Climate resilience, shifting demographics and migration will all come because of climate change.

As the UK, we are a full-spectrum military and nuclear power, and a leader in particular on the northern flank and European security. The Integrated Review of course addressed these concerns. We have become used to thinking about radicalised Islamist extremism, as well as the rise in right-wing terrorism, and we are presented again in Northern Ireland with the politics of partition and what that might yet lead to. I do not think for a moment that we will return, thankfully, to the bloody days of 1972 and the years that followed. Nevertheless, a terrorist threat exists.

Coming together, perhaps my criticism of the Integrated Review was not seeing very clearly or perhaps not articulating well enough the joint threat from Russia and China. We have seen China trying to balance the relationship with Russia in respect of Ukraine with allies such as Pakistan. Nevertheless, the sanctions regime has pushed Russia and China together, creating a new cleavage in global politics between the rules-based international system, of which freedom of navigation is a part, as are human rights and our adherence to all of the international treaties on the conduct of war, and a very different view of global politics, which cements an anti-western view in China, Russia and other countries, which we have seen begin to emerge.

The Integrated Review was effective but did not address adequately the Russia-China authoritarian nexus.

**Dr Jennifer Cole:** I would absolutely echo everything that Professor Kennedy said. One thing that really struck me goes back to the non-traditional threats and hazards, and certainly the risk on things like climate change, in terms of whether that is actually being recognised quite enough, not only in terms of the threat but also how the military could help to go downstream to tackle that threat. That is perhaps with a shift more towards the training and the interaction with humanitarian work, and also right downstream in how you train soldiers.

As well as the war-fighting, it is about whether there is a need to invest more in, for instance, undergraduate cadetships in politics or foreign affairs. That would help to train the next generation of students to understand that fully, looking at some of the strategic places around the world, looking perhaps at some of those cadetships going to second-generation immigrant UK families from perhaps Kenya or Uganda, in parts of the world where we are going to have to not only be able to war-fight but understand the concepts and understand the cultures of those countries more.

The more that we move away from those non-traditional hazards and the threats being able to be tackled more downstream, the military capabilities may need to be looking more at putting that in downstream. That also could help with some of the socialising of the military and certainly the very large military spending within a population who, at the moment, I am not sure really understand what the military does and particularly what the military does overseas. Looking at some of the costs involved, they come across as being very high in an age of austerity and

an age when everybody is seeing their daily living costs squeezed. It is how we show that value to the population.

Giving more opportunities to the next generation of soldiers, who will be a very different type of soldier, perhaps more embedded in that knowledge environment, would be a way that the military could really cement its position of value to the defence and security of the UK. If there was anything that I thought was missing, it was something around that. It seemed to be very much reactive. Everything it talked about was reactive to the problems. Is there an opportunity for the military to move far more downstream into funding some of that prevention work? I know it does, but actually this is in how you train soldiers to be the right people, to have the skills to be able to enact that prevention work.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much indeed for setting the scene.

Q42 **Lord Stirrup:** Good morning. Could I turn to the issue of resilience? The Integrated Review identified building national and overseas resilience as one of its four overarching objectives. Of course, resilience is a huge topic. It can be tested by natural events, whether from the climate or from disease. It can be tested by deliberate attack, whether conventional or unconventional. It can even be tested by international disagreements.

Given the scale of the challenge, how would you assess the current state of the UK's national resilience? What shortcomings would you identify? Could I ask you to comment on what you see as the military's role in providing national resilience? Clearly, military aid to the civil authority and to the civil power have long been tasks of the military. We have seen them used for all sorts of things from foot and mouth to Covid. Is that appropriate? Is the military doing too much, too little or just the right amount in that regard?

**Dr Jennifer Cole:** You are probably aware most of my work has been in resilience, particularly community resilience. One thing that we have seen in a particular project I have just finished at Royal Holloway is that resilience is dependent on community resources. Those community resources have been absolutely stripped away over the last 10 years. That is in terms of local fire stations, local police stations, local community centres and people just being able to afford food and energy, and therefore to have confidence that their Government are looking after them. That has really come to a head in the Covid-19 pandemic. We have seen an incredibly disproportionate impact on people dependent on their socioeconomic circumstances. That cannot continue if we want the UK to be secure.

In terms of the military role in that, there are two facets of that. One is military aid to the civil authorities. That depends sometimes on those community resources being able to help with flooding. It depends on whether there is a local fire station and if it has water pumps, as well as how well the military and the civil authorities are trained to work together, which again is difficult when the public authority is being really stripped away.

Again, I would go back to the public seeing the role of the military. There is a real role for the military, and particularly the reserves, to be better trained and better embedded in their communities, perhaps in communities where some of those other public services have been stripped away, to show the value of the military to the local area. For instance, if you have a region—there are many in the UK—that no longer has its own fire station or ambulance service, is that actually something that the reserves could help to support in the way, for instance, the military supports the ambulance service in Israel, as an embedded part of its role in that UK resilience?

That would help to train people. It would help to train people in mass catering, evacuation and being able to run field hospitals, which could then again carry over into civilian life, which would show more value to training young people in apprenticeships in areas where there are not necessarily many roles. It could actually create jobs around that in those regions and, again, would help to cement support both for the military and for a community feeling that the Government care about them.

That is certainly something that we saw in Covid. It really cemented in the minds of a lot of communities that they are left behind and ignored by the Government. That is because they genuinely were. It is not a grievance on their parts. They were genuinely left behind and ignored by a Government that did not consider their needs and did not understand how close to the breadline they were. The military has traditionally recruited from some of those regions and from some of those families that were on the real front end of the pandemic cuts.

Again, the way that could bring the community and the military together, could teach real skills that would be valuable to people and could embed that resilience that is needed at a community level would be a massive advantage both to the military itself and to the UK public in general as we perhaps head into more of this type of emergency, with large-scale pandemics, large-scale floods or storms caused by climate change.

**Professor Catherine Kennedy-Pipe:** We expect many things of our armed services. It is of course a social as well as a military instrument. What Covid revealed was that the Armed Forces response was the biggest ever homeland military operation in peacetime. This demonstrated just what the military can do in aid to the civil power in terms of vaccination programmes, overseas vaccination drops, as well as, of course, the valuable work done by military planners in conjunction with the Civil Service. Indeed, many critics of the Civil Service would add that this is now the time for the Civil Service to learn from military planners.

There were some very interesting and positive consequences of the visibility of the military. It provided public assurance and public confidence, as well as medical assistance. More importantly, viewing this as the Scottish, Welsh and English Governments, they all had very different political as well as medical approaches. What we saw was the one unifying national instrument, our Armed Forces, acting without any disruption, whether it was ambulance driving in Wales, the erection of

Nightingale centres or aid to the civil power in Scotland. In one sense, in this era of devolution and fragmentation, there was an enormously positive story that we can extrapolate from.

Linking, as Dr Cole has, to climate change, as well as the rupture that Covid has caused, it has rendered a generation to miss years of schooling and to live online. We will come back, I am sure, to that discussion of radicalisation. It has also demonstrated that we have a generation who will inherit climate change emergencies from what is now happening. As General Carleton-Smith himself pointed out, the military will have an extremely valuable role in its commitment to low-carbon military activities, because that is precisely what our young people are demanding: that the Army, as well as the United Kingdom generally, must embrace climate security.

Coming out of the pandemic, with all of its dreadful economic consequences, we can rebuild. Dr Cole talked about the relevance of the military. It will be incredibly relevant if the UK can, as it wants to, shift in terms of training, architecture and green technologies. I know the MoD is addressing the state of the green military estate throughout the UK in terms of tree planting and solar power. All of this speaks to an Army that can lead by example and perhaps address some of the social concerns that Dr Cole has articulated.

**Lord Stirrup:** Just building on that point about the national coherence that you suggested the military brought during Covid, given the breadth and complexity of the potential risks to national resilience, is there an argument for a better command and control structure? It could be something perhaps echoing or even absorbing the National Cyber Security Centre, which of course is a key element of resilience, which could not only co-ordinate responses across communities and across various government departments during an emergency but could also plan and conduct exercises. Is there a requirement for some kind of national resilience equivalent to the stress tests that were introduced to banks in the wake of the global financial crisis?

**Dr Jennifer Cole:** If I could come back on that, it goes back to this experience and relationship between the civilians and the military. If there was more of a short service commission at the lower ranks role as well, which looked as if it was a normal career for perhaps people to go into the Army directly after university for three or four years, they would learn all of these skills and then go back into civilian life, understanding cybersecurity from a military point of view and being able to take that into the companies they went to work for.

If they understood military command and control and how to do it and, again, took that back into management roles in the civil sector, there would be a huge opportunity to embed what the military does well into civilian life, in the way that would have been there in the 1950s, when most of the young people coming through would have had that experience of military planning, military command, military briefings and

military assessments. That would actually help to strengthen some of our resilience across the board.

Certainly for as long as I can remember, there have been talks of planning and exercising together with the public sector. What nearly always happens is that the public sector does not have the time to exercise properly, does not want to do it outside of nine-to-five working hours and may be more reluctant to do it away from home at the moment. The more people understand that and the more space that is made for that within the public sector and within the private sector, the more opportunity there is going to be for people to truly understand it.

It goes back to being able to sell to them the value and why it is important, along with being able to build the skills and the understanding to actually do it. I saw a lot of lip-service paid to exercising and to stress-testing, which was never really taken seriously. If it is going to be done, it has to be done properly. That involves being prepared to put not only the resources but also the pre-training and the pre-awareness that people will need to take part in it properly into the process.

**Professor Catherine Kennedy-Pipe:** Dr Cole is right. I agree with the need to integrate the private sector with the public sector and to look at, for example, cybersecurity, where we are increasingly aware that resilience is in many ways compromised by logistic chains and by the failure in the private sector to take security risks as strongly as perhaps they should. I know that NIS is addressing this. Nevertheless, the vulnerabilities of the country do not just rest on the military. They rest on the private sector and on logistical chains that are not secure but through which water, health and infrastructure can be compromised.

There is no registration, for example, of those working in some of the critical cyber logistics. If we look at the cyberattacks on Microsoft Exchange Server, the country is extremely vulnerable to these privatised and outsourced chains. You are right: a whole-society approach has to involve, from the top down, armed services, but also these crucial elements of the cyber sector, which is not regulated at the moment.

Q43 **Lord Anderson of Swansea:** Good morning. The core task of the military is nevertheless training for and preparation for actual war-fighting, although aid to the civilian authorities has always been a parallel task. I noticed from page 25 of the Defence Command Paper that they proudly set out the defence's contribution to combating Covid-19, both at home and in the overseas territories. To some extent you have already covered this, but how would you assess the quality of the contribution of our forces? Were there any lessons to be learned and any shortcomings revealed?

**Professor Catherine Kennedy-Pipe:** That is an incredibly important question. The security and resilience of the UK contribution to defence and security indeed rests on our global commitments: 145 bases, 22 countries and a raft of endeavours, whether it is counter training missions, working as a contribution to UN peacekeepers or protection of

wildlife. There is a dizzying array of expertise displayed by UK Armed Forces across a terrain such as Africa, where Chinese expansionism and Chinese arms sales are threatening to destabilise local communities and inspire different forms of anti-West sentiment. In terms of range and breadth, there is a lot to be impressed by.

This is again an all-society approach. We have not yet really grappled with the way in which deployments and interventions abroad can sow the seeds of hostility towards the British state. There needs to be careful study and reflection given to how things are read locally, however benign, right or beneficial we might feel about policy, intervention, use of drones or deployment of our soldiers. That is one of the lessons from much of what has occurred in Afghanistan subsequent to the exit last summer.

It would be interesting to look at how objectives are set but how they might become compromised by a misunderstanding of the competition we face in an African continent or how we might be read on the ground. Now, we have been very careful in all our public documentation, such as with radical Islam, to separate out religious sentiment from radicalisation, but we do not appear, either at home or abroad, to have always managed that message effectively. There is where there is a gap and work to be done.

**Dr Jennifer Cole:** I again would completely echo all of that. It would go back to some of that training on the knowledge side of it. Do we have enough people who can do human terrain mapping, as the US Army would understand it, that come up from real foreign policy, from anthropology or from what the World Health Organization calls risk communication and community engagement, who really understand what the community needs, how they see us, how the military is shaping those narratives or combating those narratives?

If we look at Covid-19, there are still parts of the world that do not have access to vaccination, because they do not have the healthcare system or the logistics capability to roll out a vaccination programme in their country. That is something that military could certainly help with hugely, having gone through it in the UK, to use that in the way that perhaps the US have used some of the Mercy Ships to actually shore up those healthcare systems and win a hearts and minds campaign.

We have taken some lessons from that, around some of those inequalities, which breed mistrust and resentment. Can we support the countries to be able to provide those capabilities, which prevent some of that resentment from arising in the first place? Covid-19 and perhaps some of that military and health security response really gives an opportunity to do that.

Going back to what Professor Kennedy said about the greening of the Army, fridges that can work off-grid so that you can maintain cold chains in areas where they are needed to store the vaccines is something that the military could have a huge role in, in some of that off-grid technology that goes out into the rural areas, which really helps the communities on

the edges. Again, that could be driven through more STEM training to stimulate jobs in technology research and development. It could give an opportunity to check what kind of technology works and does not work, which could then help with scale-ups and rollouts as we move more towards a climate-neutral technology landscape, hopefully.

There are huge opportunities around what we have seen from the Covid-19 response, both in the UK and in how we might be able to use that to project some of the soft power internationally, that can be taken forward, certainly over the next few years, in parts of the world where the Covid-19 pandemic is not over in the way that it is largely over in some of the more developed western countries.

**The Chair:** Turning to Lord Anderson for his supplementary, Dr Kennedy-Pipe, when you answered his initial question you focused very much on the following question, which is on radicalisation. Perhaps you might want to give some more detail when you respond to his supplementary.

Q44 **Lord Anderson of Swansea:** Thinking outside the box, in your judgment, is there an alternative and better way to respond to national emergencies, for example with a national emergency call or, as Lord Stirrup has mentioned, better co-ordination in terms of national resilience?

**Professor Catherine Kennedy-Pipe:** The lesson that we have learned from Covid is very much that central co-ordination is absolutely key in terms of delivering when there are shocks to the system. I would disaggregate what was a very long crisis for most of the public with Covid, calling on individual, family and communal sacrifice, to the shocks of the system of an onslaught from cyberattack or from a terrorist attack, as we saw at the Manchester Arena. For me, I would differentiate between a pandemic—a plague, if you like—that can go on for many months and the ruptures to national security that caused the shock. In both cases, an integrated centre, bringing together the military and the civilian response, is absolutely what works best.

In terms of terrorism, after many years, both in Northern Ireland and from the current threat from radical extremists, we have developed these systems extremely well. If anything, the response is positive. We need to have a more active capability, which is very difficult, in terms of identifying, confirming and dealing with the actors who might commit terrorists attempts before they get to that stage. We have been wrestling with this for many years, of course, under Prevent.

We need to now rethink in particular the global networks, which, during Covid, went online to radicalise our young people and think not, as we have, of the traditional grooming in a mosque or in a gym but far more about how we can deal with, at a national level, that radicalisation that happens in a bedroom, to an individual and not a group. This can be radicalised terrorism or right-wing terrorism. We need to join up our educational responses, our social resilience in terms of thinking about

civic culture again post-pandemic, as Dr Cole was thinking about, and what our young people feel alienated from.

We know the war in Iraq and military interventions radicalised a small proportion—and it was a small proportion—of the younger generation. Terrorists are usually young. The old perhaps are too lazy or do not have enough energy. I am not saying from cradle to grave, but I am certainly talking about schools, university, higher education, apprenticeships, to try to promote if not Britishness, because that is a very complex issue, this concept of citizenship and responsibility.

**Dr Jennifer Cole:** I would completely agree with that. In terms of where that needs to be positioned, there can be national frameworks. Certainly, what I have seen in my own research is that at the ground level it does not have to be a very standardised model; it does not have to be a national resilience civil defence corps in every town. It can be the scout unit in one town; it can be the football club supporters club in another; it can be a church in another; it can be a mosque somewhere else; it can be a school group. If there is a framework that they understand how to fit into and they have those skills that are needed around logistics, planning and leadership, that emerges naturally.

That is what we have seen during the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of these groups have emerged naturally with the skills that they had. They needed those skills and those resources to be there already. One thing that we found unexpectedly, in a piece of research I have just finished, is the importance of space, of having a space to operate out of, whether that was a church hall, an empty shop unit, a café, a fire station or a TA centre. Space was an incredibly important community resource, in a way that has not been considered before, particularly within Cabinet Office resilience planning.

Again, what went with that were the people who were trained to be able to respond in that way. Many of the people who were involved to begin with were people who were already very civic-minded. The more people you have to be trained and educated to be civil-minded, the more people think in that way, once they are more civil-minded and they feel more part of their community, they are less likely to be easily radicalised. I completely agree with the idea that people who are radicalised are alienated. If they are not alienated and they feel connected to their community and the people around them, they are less likely to go online and look for radicalisation.

I am a great believer that the internet does not radicalise people; the internet allows people who are on the path to radicalisation to connect with others who are already radicalised. It is not the gateway into it. The gateway is the alienation that they feel within their own communities, the lack of identity, a role and a future. They needed to look for something else.

To some extent, Prevent has done a lot of very good work in that space. Prevent understands, for instance, how we talk to some of the more

radical imams, who may have views that we disagree with and perhaps we see as contrary to our view of what we might like Britishness to be, but who are not actually violent extremists, and how they can talk to the people who appear to be on the path of violent extremism and pull them away from that.

There is certainly something within the anti-vaccination explorations that the World Health Organization has been interested in. The health sector has not recognised the value of that to the extent that the Prevent programme does. The importance of civic identity, feeling a connection to your community and therefore being able to organise at the ground roots community level upwards, meeting something top-down that gives you a framework in which to operate, is something that is missing; that may be the funding, standardised training or something as simple as getting DBS checks through more quickly.

It is not necessarily that very formalised, very radicalised, very paramilitary, to use a controversial term, group of volunteers. It is to allow those groups that are already civically minded space to grow and to encompass their community, and to bring people who want to help into a community that they see as worth helping, rather than pushing them out of it to go online and to look for radical contacts elsewhere.

**Q45** **Baroness Fall:** This has been a fascinating discussion. I wanted to go to the wider challenge of counterterrorism, and counter-radicalism within that, and just go back to the Integrated Review, to get your view on whether the seven priority actions that were highlighted are being implemented. Are we spending enough money, time and resources on what is quite complex and wide-ranging challenge for the UK Government?

**Dr Jennifer Cole:** Again, with any priorities, they are not always the same priorities for the same groups. Understanding not only what a priority for the military is but also how that priority is seen by the people the military is impacting is really key. Reading some of the documents, they are very much written from a military perspective for a military audience. If I put some of those to some of my academic colleagues who do not have a background in the military and have not worked with the military over time, they would find them quite unpalatable. There came across almost a pride about how much money is being spent on missiles, aircraft carriers and the training that was more military training.

That is one thing with the priorities that is almost red-teaming them with groups who are likely to be hostile to them. There needs to be a sense, therefore, as to how they are picked up and read by some of those groups. Is there a way that those can be reworded? They may not be intended to be read antagonistically, but they can be by people who are not used to that kind of language. There is a growing separation between civilian understanding of the military and the military, which comes from some of that stripping out of TA centres, the shrinking number of people in the military or who have experience of any family or friends who have been in the military or have military backgrounds themselves.

There is something in there about how priorities are different for different people. To what extent has that been considered as to what other groups' priorities may be and therefore how they would receive the priorities on that basis?

**Professor Catherine Kennedy-Pipe:** As Dr Cole has said, this is fascinating because, as we see in Ukraine, military defence, national pride and an all-society response buoyed up by western armaments has really begun to change certain images that had been developed among some younger folk about the purposes of military. The legacies of Iraq and Afghanistan, in the encounters I have had, have not led to any disrespect of the integrity or courage of the Armed Forces but of the purposes. This relates to my earlier point that militaries in liberal societies, to really be relevant, have to conform to all the expectations of gender integration, an awareness of environment and having a key role in society.

Since the end of the Cold War and conscription in most advanced liberal democracies, we have seen a gap opening up between the understanding of the purposes of a military and its unifying, important and key role in keeping a nation state together. There is also a growing unawareness of what militaries do outside of the battle space. Information and communication are absolutely crucial to attract, not to alienate, the next generation.

In a sense, Covid has demonstrated the ability of UK Armed Forces to act in the national interest. There is also a growing awareness, among those interested in international relations and foreign affairs, that the balance of power, both globally but also in a European sense, means that what we have become familiar with in defence terms has shifted, and shifted quite dramatically. We are beginning to have to rethink categories of defence and security, the role of NATO and European forces. There is a growing sense, with all of the caveats that Dr Cole has so rightly put upon this, that defence links to security, whether it is climate, or energy in particular. Rising, spiking energy prices also point to the key need for national resilience.

I am optimistic that, given the right communications, that gap can be closed with those who might not understand precisely everything the military is seeking to do.

Q46 **Baroness Fall:** There was a leak in the papers today, in the *Guardian*, saying that William Shawcross, the former Charity Commission chair, feels that Prevent is not necessarily fit for purpose and is concerned that no one is taking Islamist propaganda seriously, or it is being ignored. I wonder whether you could comment on that. Linked to that, is it your view that this sense of Britishness, which you have talked about in this session, is taught enough in schools? Are we doing enough to get the balance right between celebrating multiculturalism and a sense of Britishness in our country?

**Dr Jennifer Cole:** This comes back to the communication of how Prevent is taught. I remember from about 10 years ago that the Prevent booklet

that went into primary schools was one of the most terrifying things I had ever seen, because that introduced to primary school children the idea that some of the children in their class were different and might be a threat to them. That is hugely damaging, both for those children and for the integration of some of those communities.

Prevent has come a long way from that, but it goes back to the idea that in order to be radicalised you need to be vulnerable to radicalisation. We can strengthen children's resilience to being radicalised. That does not come from telling them that terrorists are evil. That comes from giving them a youth club where they get good role models and they feel part of their community. Again, probably going back about 10 years with the Contest strategy, there was some Contest money that was channelled semi-anonymously into things like youth clubs in very diverse areas and providing opportunities. It was well known, although it was not publicised, that the money was coming from counterterrorism programmes.

Certainly, some of the communities we worked with in the north-west at RUSI were very reluctant to access some of that money, because they felt it tarred them with a brush that almost made them look as if they were vulnerable to terrorism. How would that be seen within the local community? In fact, that money might have been used to buy them a table-tennis table or resurface a football pitch. If the money had been available under more of a community regeneration programme, even if there was talk behind the scenes of which areas might be more needing of that money than others, it delinks it from that idea of Prevent and terrorism.

You do not want to pull children off the path. You want them to never go on to it in the first place. Those are slightly different approaches. You prevent people from being radicalised by giving them a standard of living that is acceptable and dignified, that they feel they do not want to kick against. People rebel when they have something to rebel against. Try not to have the need for them to rebel in the first place.

A phrase that came through again and again in the work that we did on mutual aid during Covid was, "I did not realise that poverty was on my doorstep". People were genuinely shocked at the conditions that children in their own schoolchild's class lived—people who were living two streets away from them—and the absolute grinding poverty that they were living in. That has increased over the last 10 years. This comes down to things as simple as students having to pay university fees. That has a massive impact on children from disadvantaged communities being able to come into university. That disadvantages more the children of immigrant families, even if they are second or third generations of ethnic minorities, because they tend to be the ones at the lower socioeconomic level.

Sometimes we look at some of those ethnic groups, and the challenge is actually poverty. That has come through again so strongly with Covid. The problem almost was not the pandemic; the problem was poverty. The problem with radicalisation is poverty. The problem is feeling that

you do not have a future, you do not have a place and your only option is to rebel against that and to fight against that. If you take away the need and the reason to want to fight, you will get rid of 90% of the problem.

There may always be those one or two last miles that are harder, but the vast majority of it can be tackled by tackling the underlying drivers rather than the problem itself.

**Professor Catherine Kennedy-Pipe:** If I could take that to an international level, what happened after the end of the Cold War—I am not here to give anyone a history lecture—was that, with the supposed triumph of liberalism, the collapse of the communist Soviet Union, there was a laziness in academia and public life about what global politics actually looked like. The future seemed inevitably to be capitalist and western. That led to a profound ignorance of the importance of religious sentiment in many societies, indeed the very cornerstone of many societies, and the cultural politics of many societies, which had vowed to remain outside that western world.

What we have not done very well, in terms of education, is to point to the complexity of a world that is globalising but that is not necessarily western. I am not talking about clashes of civilisation; that is the wrong phrase. Those clashes of ideas mean that young people, many people, are bombarded with ideas, mainly through social media—it is hugely powerful—with critiques of the West, of capitalism in particular and of empire. It is how to educate about those battles of ideas and ideologies, and it is how to train people how to be able to disaggregate what they are being told on the internet.

I agree that they are probably already on a pathway of alienation. It is about how to have the tools and the pathways to not then have, for example, as we have seen, vulnerable young women being enticed to go and fight for ISIS in Syria. How do we create an educational resilience and academic environment where our young folk not only have the technical skills they will need for the future but have those academic, intellectual, common-sense skills to know the difference between propaganda and reality?

In that, Britishness is a difficult concept, but citizenship is not. That is a profoundly important concept in terms of training. It does not mean being uncritical. It means being critical about one's state but also building the resilience to understand what being part of a community and a nation, and to be able to disagree with it, might mean.

In Northern Ireland, we know that the debates over the protocol are sparking precisely this kind of dissent over what it means to be Irish/British. It is always inevitably linked with politics. Again, it is the teaching of political negotiation and political diplomacy. This idea of isolation is extremely interesting, because we have found that those who commit radicalised acts of brutality and violence tend, particularly on the right, to be isolated figures and to have been infected by a certain type of thinking. I would look at resilience as extremely important as a skill; I

would, because I am an academic and not a policymaker. Citizenship and community are absolutely key parts of the curriculum.

**Dr Jennifer Cole:** I would add as well that there is a distinction in academic literature between civic nationalism and ethnic nationalism. It is about how civic nationalism really allows anybody to move; if you move into a country, you can be a civil nationalist if you believe in the values of the country. If you are an ethnic nationalist, that is more open to racism. We tend to shy away from the idea of nationalism, whereas we should be promoting a civil nationalism that includes everybody and that people can move into.

That also allows there to be certain barriers to be placed, such as, "This is acceptable within civil nationalism and this is not". That may actually shift over time. A good example of that would be gay marriage. Fifty years ago, gay marriage would have been outside of civil nationalism. Today, it would be inside. Values and ethics are changeable, depending on what the population want. They are open for discussion. They are open to debate. You start to have those debates and to be able to train people to have those discussions. We are living in a more pluralistic world, and we have to understand that people sometimes have different views to us or want to live in a different way, but there has to be a consensus.

Again, there is some interesting literature around the difference between ethics and principles. Principles are something that you hold individually but ethics are things that have to be agreed collectively. The ethics when they are agreed collectively allow you individually to have perhaps a principle that you are more principled on than ethics. For instance, you may be a vegetarian but understand that it is not acceptable to go and bomb an abattoir, because those are the ethics of society and you accept that collective society's position has set the line. If we can introduce more of that, it is important. It comes into some of the ways that we look at China and Russia.

Certainly in the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, there was an enormous othering of China in terms of their brutality and their human rights records. Therefore, people thought they were forcing people to stay in their homes, they had soldiers on the street and they were building hospitals because obviously they were covering up the number of deaths, rather than actually standing back and thinking, "Why are they doing that? Perhaps this is the best response to the pandemic. They are doing it in a way that a liberal democracy could not, but actually they are limiting the figures. They are building a hospital because it is good to have it in place in case you need it"—in fact just as the UK did.

That opens up some of that more critical thinking and more understanding of what our values are individually, collectively and nationally. Is there room for grey areas rather than hard lines within those rather than between some communities and others against the national? It opens up those spaces for more discussion and then more understanding of people's place in the world. That is not only valuable for the UK but also for diaspora populations within the UK, for their links with

their families back in the country that their families came from originally, from the rest of society around that country.

We have seen some of that with Covid-19 vaccination. We looked specifically at Uganda and Armenia, the anti-vaccination sentiment in Uganda and Armenia and how that affected their diaspora populations in the UK, and also how it was affected by diaspora populations not only in the UK but, for instance, within France and the US, and how that related back to how people in Uganda and Armenia think about it.

Going back to what Professor Kennedy said about the links online, one thing we saw in Armenia is that people were constantly bombarded with propaganda from all sides. They were bombarded with America rubbishing the Russian vaccine, Russia rubbishing the American and western vaccines, the EU rubbishing the AstraZeneca vaccine and everybody trying to play vaccine nationalism. At the end of it, you ended up with a country that genuinely did not know who to believe and genuinely had no information coming out of their own country that was not incredibly influenced by one side or the other.

We were looking particularly at resistance to vaccination, but you could easily extrapolate that to counterterrorism or radicalisation in general. How do you actually address that? How do you then help the second-generation students in the UK who are living in absolute poverty, whose parents have been furloughed because they were in low jobs to start with, who cannot go to university because they genuinely cannot afford it and just cannot face the idea of being in that much debt at the end of it? They have a role and a place in this society.

It just comes back to the point that it needs a deeper exploration of what the society is that we are protecting. If the military is there to protect the national interests, what actually are the national interests? Do we genuinely understand that well enough to be making sure that we have the right military in place that protects those for everyone?

**The Chair:** Thank you. I am afraid that we have reached our limit of time. There are two very important questions remaining. One is on climate change and biodiversity, and one is on cyber. It is vital that we get answers that address those specific issues. I cannot call either Lord Teverson or Baroness Sugg at this time, but I will of course invite our witnesses to provide a written response to both of those, because it is essential that we cover the issues of climate change and biodiversity, and specifically the issue of cyber. Thank you very much for your contribution this morning.