

Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy

Oral evidence: [National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015: Annual Report](#)

HC 153

Monday 6 March 2017

4.54 pm

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Members present: Margaret Beckett (The Chair); Crispin Blunt; Baroness Falkner of Margravine; Lord Hamilton of Epsom; Lord Harris of Haringey; Lord Mitchell; Dr Andrew Murrison; Robert Neill; Lord Powell of Bayswater; Lord Ramsbotham; Lord Trimble; Mrs Theresa Villiers; Lord West of Spithead.

Evidence Session No. 3

Heard in Public

Questions 100 - 119

Witnesses

[I](#): The **Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP**, Home Secretary; **Sir Mark Lyall Grant**, National Security Adviser; **Conrad Bailey**, Director SDR and Defence, National Security Secretariat, Cabinet Office.

Examination of witnesses

The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP, Sir Mark Lyall Grant and Conrad Bailey.

Q100 **The Chair:** Home Secretary, we thank you and your officials for taking time today to discuss implementation of the SDSR. We are almost all here, but other Committee members may come in and I hope you will not take that as any kind of discourtesy.

Before we get into the detail of implementation and how it is working, which is the focus of our discussion today, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge last week's announcement that Sir Mark is retiring as the National Security Adviser. I think I am right in saying, Sir Mark, that you are the first National Security Adviser to retire rather than to move into another post. It is a key role and of interest to the Committee, and you have given evidence to us more than once. Can you tell us why you decided to retire?

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: Thank you, Chair, for those kind words. I have spent 37 years in the government service and I feel the time has come to try something new.

The Chair: You will know that there have been reports that you and the Prime Minister did not see eye to eye over policy, style or whatever. Is there any substance in those reports?

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: No, there is no truth in those reports. It has been a great honour for me to be able to serve two Prime Ministers. I feel I have done my best for them, and both have said they have been very happy with me.

The Chair: Sir Mark, one thing that is of concern to this Committee is that, as you know, Sir Ivan Rogers has already left his post, and there is always a nervousness among Select Committees when there is a feeling that it may not be wise to speak truth to power.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: I cannot speak for Sir Ivan Rogers, but I have never found it difficult to speak truth to power.

Q101 **The Chair:** I am sure the Committee is comforted and reassured to hear that, Sir Mark. Thank you.

Home Secretary, as you see it, is your role now as chair of the SDSR implementation sub-committee one that you undertake in your capacity as Home Secretary, or is it a somewhat separate responsibility?

Amber Rudd: I think it is relevant that I am Home Secretary, but I view the chairing of it as rather separate. If I may expand on that, the role of the Home Secretary is about security and keeping people safe, so it is relevant for this particular task, but when the implementation unit meets, as we do twice a year, to go through progress, I invite the Minister of State to attend so that I am chairing it and not reporting on Home Office matters, and I think that is important. Eleven of the commitments are Home Office-related, but the majority are defence or foreign, so I think I

have the right balance to try to make sure that I can be independent in overseeing it and informed on security, while keeping a little distance from the actual chairing of it.

The Chair: Is that your Minister of State from the Home Office?

Amber Rudd: Yes.

The Chair: You said that you meet twice a year. Have you met so far?

Amber Rudd: The committee met twice last year, once in May and once in November, when I chaired it; it was my first time. I also get quarterly reports and have regular letters and correspondence from Conrad Bailey on behalf of the team to let me know of any additional points, and when I meet the Defence Secretary or the Foreign Secretary I am able to catch up with them as well.

The Chair: From the sound of it, it takes a fair bit of your time.

Amber Rudd: I do not think it takes a fair bit of my time, but it takes a fair bit of my attention to make sure that it has the right approach. I would not consider myself hugely expert on the individual commitments, but I take very seriously my responsibility of making sure that implementation is challenged.

The Chair: Which of course is the point. What role did you have in producing the 2016 annual report on implementation? Are you the lead person advising the Prime Minister?

Amber Rudd: I would not say I was the lead person advising the Prime Minister. That was probably Sir Mark.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: We prepared the draft report and submitted it to the Home Secretary as chair of the sub-committee and then she passed it on to the Prime Minister for approval.

Lord West of Spithead: Home Secretary, the group involves who exactly?

Amber Rudd: The committee.

Lord West of Spithead: Yes. Who are the substantive members and who is in attendance?

Amber Rudd: Me, the Foreign Secretary and the Defence Secretary, and BEIS is on it, I think.

Conrad Bailey: BEIS and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

Lord West of Spithead: He is a full member.

Amber Rudd: Yes.

Q102 **Crispin Blunt:** Home Secretary, your predecessor was the Minister for Government Policy, who was obviously a Cabinet Office Minister. What

was the rationale, as you understand it, for appointing the Home Secretary to oversee the implementation of the SDSR across the whole of the Government?

Amber Rudd: The head of the Cabinet Office is not an attending member of the NSC at every event, so it had to be overseen by a senior member of the Cabinet who also attended the NSC. That is a fairly natural move either to me or to the Chancellor. The Chancellor, of course, chairs the cyber committee.

Crispin Blunt: The next National Security Adviser is the Permanent Secretary to the Home Office and you are now chairing the implementation committee. The Prime Minister used to be the Home Secretary. It has been said of the Prime Minister that she is much more "5" than "6". Does that rather suggest that under the Prime Minister national security now really means domestic security?

Amber Rudd: No, I do not think it does. I see where you are going with the line of questioning, Mr Blunt, but we are all clear about what we have to do in the National Security Council and that it is both foreign and national. There is overlap. We are all aware that when we talk about various elements of commitments about, say, immigration crime, there are international and national issues. I hope we will continue to see the same emphasis on international issues while incorporating national issues.

Crispin Blunt: Sir Mark, if you had to balance your time between international policy responsibilities and domestic ones, how would you do it?

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: I have two deputies. One covers a lot of what you might call homeland security; the other covers a lot of what you might call foreign and defence policy issues. Obviously I cover both. The National Security Council agenda is roughly 50:50 for homeland security and international issues.

Crispin Blunt: Does that apply to your time?

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: My time is probably more 60:40 on foreign and defence policy as compared with homeland security. I have a very experienced deputy in Paddy McGuinness, who does a lot of the homeland security business.

Q103 **Crispin Blunt:** Home Secretary, the SDSR applies to a number of key Home Office policy areas; I think you said that you have to address 11 key areas. The fact that you chair the committee, even though you bring your Minister of State along, slightly suggests that you will be marking your own homework. How would you respond to that criticism? Who is going to check the marking of your homework?

Amber Rudd: I can tell you that the Foreign Secretary and the Defence Secretary are always alert to that problem. I do not think there will be anywhere to hide if those sorts of discussions come up. I have the

smallest number of departments to cover in the commitments, so I think we can manage that, partly because we are all very aware of it.

Crispin Blunt: In 2010, when the coalition was formed, there was a Minister for National Security. Would it not be appropriate to have a National Security Minister within the Cabinet Office attending the National Security Council to oversee SDSR implementation? That Minister would be able to hold all the relevant departments to account without these kinds of questions having some degree of justification.

Amber Rudd: It is an interesting suggestion, but seniority in these situations matters when talking to quite senior Cabinet Ministers. It is easier for me to do as Home Secretary than it might be for a Minister of State in the Cabinet Office.

The Chair: Lord West has an interest in and a view about this matter.

Q104 **Lord West of Spithead:** Indeed. I was the Minister for National Security and we produced the first national security strategy. I agree with the Home Secretary; basically the big beasts in the Cabinet could not give a stuff when I said I wanted them to do so and so. I agree that there is an element of that. It is unfortunate, because I was able to focus on the totality. I am concerned about aspects of what I call the existential threats to our nation. At the moment, terrorists are not an existential threat to our nation.

Is there sufficient discussion of strategic requirements for things like the production of certain weapons systems? What things that are felt to be very important for our nation should we invest in and ensure that we have, such as the steel industry? Is there any debate about deterrence in the sense of the number of warheads? Looking at the totality of the threat, where do we stand on deterrence, on things like resilience, on the just enough, just in time economy? What stoppage of certain things will cause us as a nation immediately to stall and lock? When I was National Security Minister, I had great difficulty getting people wound up to do that. I would be very impressed if you are doing those things, but I have a horrible feeling that they are not being done, because it seems that there is a slight bend towards internal security and counterterrorism.

Amber Rudd: I do not think there is a bend that way, but the committee I chair does not lead on those discussions. Those are the sorts of discussions I would expect the Defence Secretary to have internally with the Prime Minister or at the NSC. My committee is about implementation, so unless there is a change of direction from the NSC, which meets weekly to discuss many of those different issues, I do not think it is necessarily the place for those discussions.

Lord West of Spithead: But you cannot direct the NSC to look at certain things.

Amber Rudd: That is for the Prime Minister. I could raise possible suggestions for discussion, should we need to have it.

Lord West of Spithead: Sir Mark, I am delighted that you speak truth to power. For me, it depended slightly on which power I was speaking to, so I am not as clear-cut as you. At certain times in my naval experience I could not speak truth to power or it would have been the end of my career. As the National Security Adviser, do you feel there is a correct balance, or has there been a slight skewing? There is a feeling—I certainly have the feeling—that because terrorism is more immediate and is what people are thinking about all the time, there is a tendency to look at that, whereas our chances of being destroyed and wiped out as a nation lie in other areas.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: I think we have a pretty good balance. It is true that we discuss different facets of counterterrorism on occasion, including the whole question of counter-Daesh activity in Syria and Iraq. Equally, in the first couple of months of this year we looked at Russia as a state-based threat, and we have looked at cyber in the National Security Council and whether one can develop a deterrence theory in cyberwarfare and things like that. There has been a very good balance.

Q105 **Dr Murrison:** Home Secretary, your predecessor as chair of the sub-committee was clear when he gave evidence to this Committee in May that his position in the Cabinet Office was important because a number of senior colleagues had an interest in this business and he was able to take a holistic view. Do you think he was right in expressing those concerns? What do you make of the fact that the senior responsible officer for the three enabling funds—the CSSF, the prosperity fund and now the empowerment fund—the National Security Adviser, is about to be the Permanent Secretary at the Home Office? Does it not start to look a little incestuous? That brings me back to the marking-your-own-homework point. I would like to press you a little on your thoughts about how genuinely independent that assessment might be, because from an outsider's perspective it looks as if this is becoming something like a Home Office stitch-up.

Amber Rudd: I can see that is a theme here, Dr Murrison, but I ask you to judge us by results as I chair the committee. It does not feel like that to me. I feel that there is sufficient independence for the chair to range fairly widely and freely. The former chair of the committee had enormous status in the Government and did a great job of exactly that: making sure that he looked after the implementation. As Lord West said, status matters, and I hope I will be able to carry that authority when I check not only my homework but, through the Minister of State, the Foreign Secretary's and the Defence Secretary's.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: There may be some misconception about my successor, Mark Sedwill. He spent many years in the Foreign Office; he was my deputy when I was high commissioner in Islamabad and he has been ambassador in Afghanistan, so he is by no means a Home Office creature.

Mrs Villiers: I am not sure whether this is the appropriate point to raise this question, but I hope you will not mind if I do. One of the most lethal

terrorist threats to the United Kingdom continues to be posed by dissident republicans. Thankfully, it seldom materialises in harm because of the effectiveness of the response of the police and MI5, but it would be interesting to know how, in your work in relation to the SDSR, you ensure that the machinery back in London is doing everything that it can to support the tackling of that threat, particularly the threat to police officers.

Amber Rudd: I share your view that that remains a very large terrorist threat in the UK. The counterterrorist uplift will affect all counterterrorism, so I would also expect that to be included, particularly as we see increasingly difficult times in Northern Ireland and Ireland. That will certainly continue under our watch.

Lord Hamilton of Epsom: Home Secretary, it seems to me more likely that if we have a terrorist outrage it will come from Islamic terrorists, and we may see a very large number of people being killed. If that were to happen, would the Cabinet initially meet on it, and what role would your committee play in reacting to a big disaster of that sort?

Amber Rudd: I will ask Sir Mark to deal with the process.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: In a crisis response, it would be Ministers meeting in COBRA, chaired possibly by the Home Secretary or the Prime Minister, depending on availability and the severity of the incident. It would not be a matter for the sub-committee dealing with the implementation of the SDSR.

Q106 **Lord Harris of Haringey:** I want to pick up the points about seniority, which I understand as regards making things happen. When Sir Oliver Letwin gave evidence to this Committee, he talked about 89 areas of the SDSR on which he was chasing implementation. Given your senior position as Home Secretary, do you have the time and capacity to give attention to 89 different areas of implementation? How do you manage that?

Amber Rudd: The system is that my committee meets every six months, but Mr Bailey and his colleagues work feverishly all the time in between to catch up with the tasks that we have set on implementation and to keep us up to date with any questions that we have had or any issues that might arise. There are 89 different areas of implementation, which is considerably fewer than the 220 in the previous SDSR. The purpose of the implementation committee is to check that they are all up to date, to look at where there might be problems and to ask departments to address them. I will chase that every six months from the quarterly reports and my regular meetings. I do not find it a huge, time-consuming initiative. I have to make sure that I give it the right time and effort, but it is mainly the secretariat that implements it.

Lord Harris of Haringey: I understand that. It obviously makes sense as a process, but what you describe is essentially an official-led process, which comes up to you when a serious problem is identified. It is an

exception-led matter.

Amber Rudd: It has more continuity than that.

Lord Harris of Haringey: What is the role of the Prime Minister in all that? She wrote the foreword to the annual report on implementation. She is not a formal member of the SDSR implementation sub-committee. How frequently do you report to her on these matters?

Conrad Bailey: Essentially, the Home Secretary writes to the Prime Minister after each meeting of the sub-committee to update her, and typically we follow up any further questions. At senior official level, we meet quarterly across government. We base our reporting on the single departmental plans, so it is a thorough look at the 89 commitments; it is not by exception. We report to the Home Secretary on a quarterly basis across the full number of commitments.

Lord Harris of Haringey: That suggests that you report formally to the Prime Minister twice a year unless something big emerges that you feel needs the authority of the Prime Minister.

Amber Rudd: I would have no hesitation in bringing something to her attention if I needed to.

Lord Harris of Haringey: On implementation, the work done by Mr Bailey and his colleagues is based in the Cabinet Office. Are there any challenges for you as Home Secretary in keeping track of what is going on with officials in another government department?

Amber Rudd: There have not been. I expect the department to talk to me and raise any issues with me as they come up. I have found that has worked perfectly well because I can have easy and swift access to the Foreign Secretary or the Defence Secretary if I need to challenge them.

Lord Harris of Haringey: The situation is that you have a team within the Cabinet Office that reports to you quarterly, unless something emerges in between, and you have a meeting twice a year, at which point you report to the Prime Minister.

Amber Rudd: In addition to letters and correspondence if needed, or to update me on things that are going better than we had thought before, or on particular areas where I might have asked for a deep dive. I would not expect them to wait every six months to update me, but to give me the information as soon as they had it.

Lord Harris of Haringey: Am I correct in assuming that it is not just once every three months but that you receive material on implementation, or some aspects of it, on a weekly basis?

Amber Rudd: I have not received it on a weekly basis, but every two or three weeks I might receive a letter or a note regarding something I have raised to do with previous correspondence or the quarterly return, or I might ask to see Sir Mark before a national security meeting—we meet

every week—to check up on a particular element, just to catch him in conversation about it if I am concerned. The fact that I have access to Sir Mark and the relevant Foreign and Defence Secretaries is very helpful for chivvyng along or catching up on concerns.

Lord Harris of Haringey: How often do implementation matters come up at the weekly meeting, or is the agenda such that they never arise?

Amber Rudd: They do not emerge as a result of my committee, but the NSC meeting weekly enables the Prime Minister to have a view of what is taking place on the commitments we have already entered into.

Dr Murrison: Of the 89 implementation points, your predecessor as chairman of the sub-committee identified two priorities, both, broadly speaking, defence matters. Do they remain your chief priorities, or have your priorities changed or shifted? If so, what are they among the 89?

Amber Rudd: Do you want to tell me which they were?

Dr Murrison: Reserves and MOD apprentices.

Amber Rudd: Recruiting for reserves and maintaining the Army at 82,000—retention as well as the 50,000 apprentices—during the next five-year period is a challenging and ambitious target. That is one of my primary concerns. The Defence Secretary is completely aware of that. There are plans, which he has set out for me and others, for what to do about that and how to improve retention and recruitment in an economy that is doing well. How to attract the best people is not necessarily obvious. We have put various initiatives in place, such as Help to Buy for the Armed Forces, so that they can acquire property, and more family-friendly regulations. That is an area where we have concerns, but we are taking action.

Q107 **Lord Hamilton of Epsom:** I would like to talk about the funds that are available to support the work. We discovered the other day that we are responsible to Parliament for the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund. We have a slight problem; we would be mildly interested to know in which countries a lot of that money is spent, and we cannot be told because it is secret. We feel that we are groping around in the dark a bit, not knowing what is going on. Do you have responsibility for the prosperity fund and the new empowerment fund as well as for the CSSF?

Amber Rudd: The three funds are part of the SDSR delivery and our commitments. As far as the CSSF is concerned, we have 97 programmes in 40 different countries. They do a great job in reaching out and addressing UK interests in unstable areas, such as the White Helmets in Syria, who do great work. I hope there is enough information for the Committee to have confidence in those funds. If the Chairman would like me to, I can arrange a closed briefing, or if I can provide any confidential information I will forward it. Accountability for the fund is basically for the NSC.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: When I gave evidence to this Committee previously, Madam Chair, I know you would have loved more transparency about the individual programmes, but I explained on that occasion that because we were working in very difficult countries with some sensitive partners it was not always possible to be completely open and transparent about each programme in all 40 countries. I think we were able to give you on that occasion an indication of the amounts of money that we were spending in the main countries in conflict, and give examples of the sort of programmes that we support.

As regards the governance structure, the NSC sets the allocations. That process happens yearly, and the NSC has recently signed off the allocations for the year 2017-18. All the work that the CSSF does is in pursuit of NSC strategies, so the NSC is the ultimate accountability mechanism for the fund.

Lord Hamilton of Epsom: Home Secretary, perhaps I could give you a little more “Yes, Minister” detail on this. We were informed that if we were told about the individual countries it might create enormous embarrassment in the countries receiving the funds and envy among other countries not receiving funds. The result was that we could not be told about any countries at all. One happens to know that we are helping Lebanon, Jordan, Libya, Iraq and Syria. That is in the public domain, so it seems very odd that we cannot be told more about which countries are benefiting from the funds that we give them.

Amber Rudd: I have to be mindful of what the National Security Adviser said about confidentiality, but please allow me to take that away to consider how I can improve communication with the Committee and whether there is any further information I can share so that there is not quite such a “Yes, Minister” feeling about the situation.

The Chair: I am grateful to you, Home Secretary, for your suggestion. As you have gathered, the Committee is not yet content that we have the detail that we would like to see. Although we completely understand the reservations expressed by the National Security Adviser, we expressed a lot of reservations in our last report, to which the Government have not yet had the opportunity to reply. The occasion of that reply might give Ministers and officials the opportunity to consider what more might come forward, particularly in the context of some kind of annual report on the CSSF.

Amber Rudd: I will take that away to consider and will discuss with the National Security Adviser how best we can accommodate it.

The Chair: Thank you.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: We have committed to doing an annual report on the CSSF.

The Chair: That is what we thought.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: We are looking carefully at the proposal your Committee made for having a single Minister in charge. That is one of the options that we are looking at. I hope we will be able to give a response when we give our formal reply to your report.

The Chair: That is very helpful. Can you say anything more about the other two funds that Lord Hamilton mentioned?

Amber Rudd: The prosperity fund is £1.3 billion. The fund creates particular opportunities for business, including UK companies. In the first year, £55 million of the fund was spent, but I am not sure I can be hugely transparent about it, because the National Security Council has authority over it. It has a very good rating from ICAI on the progress it has made in a short timeframe, and the fund's systems and processes. The spending target is already under active review. Shall I include more information about it, if I have it, in the response that I give following this meeting?

The Chair: Thank you.

Lord West of Spithead: As we have found, much to our surprise, that we have responsibility for keeping an eye on the CSSF, which Minister do you believe we should call in front of us who has key responsibility for those funds? Is there one who has responsibility for all three funds? If not, should there be a Minister who has overall responsibility for all three, so that we can call that Minister and carry out our duties to scrutinise the funds?

Amber Rudd: Lord West raises an interesting potential omission. As the National Security Adviser said, we are looking at that for the CSSF. The same issue applies to the prosperity fund; it reports to the National Security Council, so we should consider potential ministerial cover there, too.

Q108 **Crispin Blunt:** The Foreign Affairs Committee reported last week on our relations with Russia and looked particularly at the use of the empowerment fund with reference to Ukraine.¹ We identified that the £20 million set aside for Ukraine-related programmes was utterly inadequate to the task of securing Ukraine within the Euro-Atlantic area. Empowerment and good governance in Ukraine are a central strategic interest for the United Kingdom because of Ukraine's relationship with Russia. How will you oversee the proper allocation of resources in the fund when that figure appears to us to be wholly inadequate to the strategic interests of the UK?

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: Our commitment to Ukraine, which incidentally we will discuss in the National Security Council tomorrow, is not limited to the empowerment fund. That is just one very small part of the overall UK

¹ The Foreign Affairs Select Committee Report "[The United Kingdom's relations with Russia](#)", HC 120, 2 March 2017, looked at the use of the Good Governance Fund in relation to Ukraine, not the Empowerment Fund. The Good Governance Fund is now part of the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund.

investment in support of Ukraine, so I would not want you to think that is the totality of our effort in supporting Ukraine. The investment fund is in its very initial stages. It has only just been set up. No money has been allocated for programmes starting next year, and that process is ongoing, so the figure that you quote from the fund is not necessarily the definitive one.

Dr Murrison: I congratulate you on the empowerment fund. We do not know a lot about it yet, because it has not been formally established. Its aims and ambitions appear wholly laudable, but they seem to overlap quite a lot with the sorts of things that DIT is doing. To what extent do you think that is a reasonable observation? It seems to me that DIT, which I accept is primarily not concerned with security but nevertheless is a major government department, has an interest in the sorts of things that you intend the fund to do on governance, education and culture—in particular, I imagine, the extension of the English language.

Amber Rudd: I would expect the fund to work closely with DIT to make sure that the benefits are also felt by initiatives in DIT. We will work closely together to make sure that those initiatives and the benefits are shared across departments.

Q109 **Lord Ramsbotham:** Home Secretary, can I switch to cyber, which is the subject of our next inquiry? As you know, cyber is one of the four main priorities that we are looking at in national defence. We are unclear as to who is responsible. The Committee said last year in its comments on the national security strategy and the SDSR: “The lines of responsibility and accountability on cyber within Whitehall are unclear.” There is of course an NSC committee chaired by the Chancellor, but the Minister for the Cabinet Office and the Minister of State for digital and culture also have cybersecurity listed under their responsibilities. All ministries must face up to the threat from cyber, as we have seen in the examples in the Baltics; the traffic lights went out first, and so on. Everyone must be involved. Could you advise us as to which Minister we ought to call to give evidence to the Committee on the whole question of cybersecurity?

Amber Rudd: At the risk of volunteering myself for another session, I have quite a strong interest in cyber from a homeland security point of view, particularly through the National Crime Agency, which does a lot of work on the dark web to track organised crime. The answer to your question is that it has a lot of ministerial cover, because, as you rightly said, it is an area that crosses so many different departments: Culture, Media and Sport through the digital agenda, the Chancellor through the prosperity agenda, and the Cabinet Office, which is co-ordinating it. The Chancellor chairs the sub-committee, but I humbly suggest, depending on where your focus will be, because it covers so many different areas—defence, organised crime, sexual exploitation and digital elements—that you might focus on the responsibilities of different Ministers. Perhaps everybody could have the opportunity.

Lord West of Spithead: When I produced the first-ever cybersecurity strategy in 2008, most people in government could not spell “cyber” and

I had huge difficulty in getting some departments to accept that there would even be a cyber strategy. When the cyber strategy came out, I was made the Cyber Security Minister.

Home Secretary, I hear what you say about working out which things we are interested in, but bearing in mind the all-embracing nature of cyber now, it seems that there should be a Minister who sees it as their role to make absolutely sure that this is co-ordinated across departments and that we are really focused on it. I know that a lot of work has gone on with the NCSC. I know that the OCSIA has changed its name to whatever it bloody well is now and is monitored in the Cabinet Office, but it seems extraordinary to me that we do not have one Minister who sees it as his or her responsibility, in whichever department it is, that that co-ordination is proceeding correctly. I find it extraordinary that we have to identify that it is a little bit of this and a little bit of that. Do you think that is satisfactory, or has it just happened within Whitehall and that is the way it is? Should we be thinking about saying that perhaps this ought to change?

Amber Rudd: It is a crowded place as regards different ministerial responsibilities. You make a reasonable suggestion, and perhaps it is something that a number of us can reflect on.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: We do discuss whether it is better to bring it all together with one Minister or have a range of Ministers involved. One of the counterarguments to your point, Lord West, is that it is important that all Cabinet Ministers recognise the importance of cyber to their individual business.

Lord West of Spithead: But you can be a power that makes that happen, can you not, Sir Mark?

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: We accept that we need to bring it together on occasions. The Chancellor, as the Home Secretary said, chairs the sub-committee that brings it together. The Minister for the Cabinet Office also has a role in co-ordination. It is more DCMS and the DfE that need to be involved in looking at digital skills and building up cyber skills in the education system, but one does not want to take away the responsibility of the line Secretaries of State to focus on cyber as well.

Lord West of Spithead: I do not think it does that, if I may say so.

Lord Ramsbotham: There is also the question of awareness. It is very important that all staff in every ministry should be aware of the threat and looking out for it. That needs to be co-ordinated. I would have thought that all ministries are aware of that.

Lord West of Spithead: In any huge, complex thing there are obviously lots of people working in detail in those areas, but in my experience it is very good to have one person. If you are going to chop someone's legs off when they get it wrong, you want one person for that. Very often that is quite a good way of doing things.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: I suggest that as of this moment that person is the Chancellor.

Lord West of Spithead: Do we put that as a recommendation?

Lord Hamilton of Epsom: Cybercrime has created a serious industry of people involved in cybersecurity. It strikes me that a lot of the commercial sector is left responsible for its own cybersecurity and has to pay for it. Home Secretary, do you have a clear idea in your own mind as to where government responsibility for cyber and cybercrime begins and ends and where the private sector comes in? There must be a dividing line. Do you have a view on where it lies?

Amber Rudd: You are absolutely right that although the Government have a cyber strategy, and now a new cyber centre, which opened four months ago, it is part of our mission to make sure that other people also take responsibility. We have the Cyber Aware campaign to try to engage organisations and businesses and to make sure that they take action to protect themselves. As people in the industry often say, you would not leave your front door open, so why would you leave your password for everyone to see or not take action to protect yourself? Since the cyber centre opened, it has made agreements with 3,000 organisations and private sector businesses, which they update all the time, on cyber threats and action that they can take.

We are picking up some good momentum working with other organisations to try to help them to take the steps they need to take, and for them to have the confidence in us that when something takes place, such as an incident involving a telecoms company or a bank, they will report it to the cyber centre rather than keeping it confidential, which occasionally they have been known to do, and we can help them take action and stop it happening again. We are making good progress there.

Q110 **Baroness Falkner of Margravine:** To me, this discussion illustrates the domestication of the whole area of oversight and goes back to our earlier discussion about Mark Sedwill replacing Sir Mark Lyall Grant. I am sure you will be aware that the last NATO ministerial decided to include cyber as one of the threats to which there would be an Article 5 response. In light of that, and as it seems that we have no Minister on whom we can call, my particular concern is about whether and to what extent a named person, should there be one, would have the FCO and defence angle in his armoury. I cannot see it, frankly, having listened to that discussion. My broader point is whether, if there was an attack similar to the one on the banking system in Estonia, it would be considered part of NATO's Article 5 response.

Amber Rudd: I would not want you to think that it is only about the UK. Our cyber strategy recognises there are also state-sponsored cyberattacks. The Defence Secretary is very alert to that and to the need for offensive as well as defensive cyber, and we have discussed that at the NSC. He will make sure that our cyber strategy is part of our

armoury, so that we have the right tools and the right cover within international law to respond where we need to.

Lord Mitchell: I have a real sense of foreboding about all this. The speed of development in the whole digital/IT area is increasing exponentially; it is getting faster and faster. The Committee had a very interesting session with Melissa Hathaway, the cyber adviser to President Obama. She said a number of things, one of which was fascinating to me: by 2020, there will be 50 billion devices in the world connected to the internet. The possibilities of all sorts of effects are quite dramatic. I say “foreboding”, because I feel that the epicentre of the whole debate is moving further and further away from where we are and where we need to be. I need to be reassured.

Amber Rudd: The National Security Council and Ministers involved in the area are very much alert to the growth of cyber and devices, as you said, and to the real danger of not staying ahead of this. The transfer and movement of data is central to so much that we do in keeping the UK and its citizens safe. That is why the cyber centre is under the oversight of GCHQ, which most people recognise as one of the international leaders in this area. One of the essential things that we have to do to stay ahead is to make sure that we train people, and get the best people, so that they will always be able to keep up. GCHQ has its training programme in Cheltenham. The new cyber centre has training programmes in London—CyberFirst and CyberFirst Girls—to make sure that we recruit the best people. We are already working with experts in the private sector; for example, the NCA has cyber specials who work primarily for the private sector but are also under contract with the NCA for part of the year in order to give their extraordinary skills to make sure that we stay ahead. I share your sense of concern, but I am more optimistic about our staying ahead.

Dr Murrison: Can some reassurance not be gleaned from the fact we appear to have more than doubled our spend on cybersecurity? Would you agree that, particularly as we approach Brexit, it is very important that the UK remains the go-to nation for cybersecurity, which we appear to be, and that that is our offer to partners at a difficult time? We also need to ensure that financial services in this country are particularly robust against the threat and to encourage them to remain in the UK? Finally, do you have any concerns at all that our much-publicised cyber apprentices may constitute a college of crime and cause us more problems than they solve?

Amber Rudd: That is a very worrying final question. I hope not. I hope that the good values they will get from being part of our cyber centre will make sure that they do not turn to crime.

On your other points, of course increasing spending has been critical and will enable us to keep our lead. On the EU offer, we are regarded by European partners as one of the leaders in this area. In particular, the strength of GCHQ has been helpful to other countries in some of their incidents. On financial services, we will have to make sure that we have a

system whereby they can stay central to our UK economy as we leave the EU and have some sort of arrangement with data to support them, and on which we can get agreement with the EU.

Lord Powell of Bayswater: In other areas of our defence we have the concept of arms control. Do you think it is feasible to think of codes of conduct in the cyber area applying to state cyber activities?

Amber Rudd: There is already an agreement that cyber activity falls within the same restrictions in international law as other activities. The architecture is already in place up to a point, but I expect it is something we will have to revisit.

Lord Powell of Bayswater: The architecture may be there, but it is not being used to any great effect. Can you think of something more specific being developed within the National Security Council?

Amber Rudd: I will ask Mr Bailey to answer that.

Conrad Bailey: I am not a deep expert in the area, but we are working both multilaterally and with our close allies, particularly our partners in the US, Australia and Canada within NATO, to make sure that we can operate effectively. It is clearly an area where there is a lot more work to be done.

Lord Powell of Bayswater: My point is that a code of conduct could apply to our enemies as well as our allies.

Conrad Bailey: That is not an area I have worked on, so I am not an expert on it.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: I would add two things, Lord Powell. One is that on the bilateral side we have reached an agreement with China, for instance, against bilateral industrial espionage. Obviously, implementing that agreement is ongoing. Separately, there is the multilateral sphere, and there has been quite a lot of discussion at the United Nations about whether to develop guidelines and norms for international practice. One has to get the balance right between not balkanising the internet—many countries would like to control cyberspace for their own reasons, which we do not share—and having norms and rules that prevent the use of the internet for child sexual exploitation and other things. We are looking both multilaterally and in specific cases bilaterally at developing that sort of norm environment.

Crispin Blunt: We are the ones preventing progress on an international basis, are we not, because of our anxiety that if we have rules we will obey them and other nations will not? Is that not rather like saying there should not be laws of war such as the Geneva Conventions, because we will obey them and the other side will not? We need to get into a space where there is at least a set of standards against which everyone can be held.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: I would not say that we are preventing it, but you are right to say that we are cautious; we would not want to establish guidelines or rules that we follow but that we know others may not. We want to get the wording right, and that is an ongoing discussion. With the new US Administration coming in, that is one of the discussions that we are having with them.

Crispin Blunt: Does it not leave us in a somewhat legally and morally exposed position where we are the ones opposing suggestions that there should be regulation and some degree of codification in the area of what is and is not acceptable by states?

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: I do not think so. We are by no means alone in our caution in this area. It is an ongoing multilateral discussion at the UN, and there are different groups coming at the issue from different angles, because it is extremely complicated.

The Chair: Lord West has a question about apprenticeships.

Q111 **Lord West of Spithead:** It is actually about the Chinese issue. I am very interested in how much discussion there has been on it. We know the problems with Huawei, switchgear, lack of visibility and remote updating. We know that the biggest data centre in the UK has been purchased by a Chinese company, which ostensibly is not government-owned, and now a Chinese government-owned company has bought the biggest CCTV structure in Europe, with all the implications that has for the internet of things. We know that CESG has discovered dormant malware in quite a lot of systems relating to our critical national infrastructure. Is any sub-committee or sub-group looking at what the totality of that means, because it seems to have significant implications when we add all those things together? For example, the United States has set up a whole group to look at all those aspects. It excluded things like Huawei, but it is looking at things in great detail.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: Yes, there is a group—the infrastructure security group. It is chaired by one of my two deputies, and looks on a regular basis at the whole question of foreign investment in critical national infrastructure. It collates the foreign investment bids and alerts Ministers accordingly if there are issues of concern. As you know, the Business Secretary is developing some ideas precisely on this for the Government as a whole at the moment, so a lot of work is going on in the area.

Q112 **Lord West of Spithead:** Having looked at where we stand on funding and the equipment lists for Joint Force 2025, they do not seem to stack up. Home Secretary, in the context of looking at the SDSR and its implementation, are you concerned that there will be some problems and shortfalls in that area? From the facts and statistics available to people like me, which are obviously not as thorough as yours, it does not look as though the joint force will be met by 2025. For example, the number of ships will be fewer than the figure set out. Is it an issue that has concerned you?

Amber Rudd: Joint Force 2025 is attached, is it not, to the issue of Army recruitment and retention? It is a 10-year plan. It is ambitious, but we can still deliver on it. It is one of the most important commitments and it goes through 2020, so it is something on which I will continue to challenge the Defence Secretary at our regular meetings. I am aware that, because of the challenges of recruitment in the Armed Forces, we need to make sure that we keep the numbers up to enable full delivery to be available by 2025.

Lord West of Spithead: I agree that is one area that is very worrying, and manpower in the Navy is worrying, but I was thinking just about equipment. There will be fewer ships than those predicted for 2025. At the moment, I cannot see how one can get round that, looking purely at how long it takes to build a ship. Similarly, there are issues about aircraft. Are you concerned? For example, have you personally had a chance to speak to the Chief of the Defence Staff—I do not expect you necessarily to say here what you said to him—about his concerns, or otherwise? You can get that truth. Clearly, he cannot speak that truth when he is talking in public.

Amber Rudd: I can get that truth and I will speak to him about it if I need to, but can I first ask Mr Bailey to address your point about ship numbers?

Conrad Bailey: The commitment set out in the SDSR remains very much as it is. Sir John Parker provided his independent report on the national shipbuilding strategy back in November. Work is now going on. It was a full and complex report that needed proper attention. The work is being led from the Ministry of Defence, but across government, to look at how we can implement the report and the recommendations in it. We are due to publish a national shipbuilding strategy, which I think goes to the core of your question of how we ensure we have the number of ships in the 2020s.

Lord West of Spithead: Conrad, I am onside with all you are saying. I understand that, but the bottom line is that the number will be lower than it was said it would be for 2025. I cannot see any way in which that can be achieved; it is just impractical. I am not having a go at you for it, because you are looking at various things, but we must never delude ourselves into thinking that we are getting something if we are not going to get there.

Conrad Bailey: The report by Sir John sets out some suggestions on how those numbers can be delivered.

Lord West of Spithead: It does, but it will not meet those timescales. We must not delude ourselves about reality. That is all I am saying. One understands difficulties, but we must not delude ourselves.

Amber Rudd: I will make sure that I take the opportunity to pursue extra challenges following that point.

Crispin Blunt: The Vanguard programme in the 1990s was rescued because of the National Audit Office's assessment of financing. The movement of currency helped. From memory, it was only one of the 25 major programmes the NAO looked at that came in under budget. The currency is now going in the other direction. It would seem from data provided to the Committee and others that currency fluctuation is blowing out of the water your assumptions about what you will have to pay for actual kit.

Amber Rudd: That is an important issue and one that I have raised. The Defence Secretary will reassure us that it has been hedged for a period, as you would expect, so it will not impact immediately. Of course, we do not know where the currency will be in two years' time, but we are very aware that it could impact after two years if it is in the same place and our purchasing power is down by 15%. You are right that it will have an impact, Mr Blunt, but at the moment the situation is that it is hedged for a period.

Crispin Blunt: For two years.

Amber Rudd: For two years.

Crispin Blunt: This is Joint Force 2025, and then we are talking about a successor that comes into service in the mid-2030s.

Amber Rudd: None of us knows what the currency will be like after two years, but I accept your point that it could impact on our ability to purchase, given that a certain amount of money has been committed to it, and there might have to be conversations with the Chancellor at that stage.

Q113 **Lord Mitchell:** We will do well to get this question answered before the Division, but let me try. I want to talk about geopolitical issues. I suppose our two key relationship countries are France and the United States. Of course, Brexit is happening and there are elections in France, and we do not yet know the result and how that will go. In the United States, there seems to be a totally different environment, although there seems to be some pulling back on some of the excessive positions that the President has come out with.

Home Secretary, I would like to know, first, what you expect our relationship with France will be, and, secondly, how difficult you anticipate our relationship with the United States will be in the future.

Amber Rudd: Our relationship with France remains strong and enduring. Like us, France spends a large amount on defence. After us, France is the largest spender in Europe. We have the expeditionary force planned with France. Everything we do is underpinned by the Lancaster House treaty of 2010. The relationship as regards counterterrorism is close from my point of view, and it is close from the Defence Secretary's point of view. I believe he has meetings or conversations almost every month, sometimes every other month, with his opposite number.

On nuclear, defence and security, the relationship with France is close, and I believe it will continue to be so. The French share the same interests as we do in security.

America remains our strongest and closest ally. There is no indication that that has changed in any way. One might go further and say that it is the opposite, given that early on the Prime Minister got President Trump to give his commitment to NATO, which underpins all our security here.

Q114 **Robert Neill:** Can I move to another Brexit-related topic, which is the broad issue of security and justice co-operation? The Prime Minister made it clear in the Lancaster House speech that that is one of the 12 top priorities. You referred earlier today to the importance of the European arrest warrant in that context, Home Secretary. The reality is that the arrest warrant and membership of Europol, Eurojust, and information systems such as ECRIS and the Schengen Information System II, are all mutually reinforcing and linked together, are they not? Do you accept that you cannot disaggregate them?

Amber Rudd: I accept that they are—

The Chair: I am sorry, Home Secretary. I need to suspend the Committee in case colleagues wish to vote. If three Members of the Lords do not need to vote, we could continue because we will be quorate. There are three, so we can continue. Home Secretary, I did not mean to interrupt you.

Amber Rudd: Mr Neill, you are absolutely right. The elements of our security that we have access to through the European Union keep us much safer: ECRIS, SIS II and Europol. We hope to negotiate with the European Union a new agreement whereby we have access to them. They benefit from our ongoing participation as well as us having access to them.

Robert Neill: Lynne Owens, the director of the National Crime Agency, described the importance of sustaining our current access, so that there will be no diminution. Do you share that view?

Amber Rudd: That would be a desirable outcome. We benefit from having access to those different initiatives. The UK led on setting them up and persuading other European Union members to participate in them. We know that they help to keep people safe. My interaction with other interior Ministers from the EU indicates that they would like us to participate. We have to find a way of making sure that we can deliver that and, I certainly hope, without any diminution.

Robert Neill: I am glad to hear that, because Lynne Owen also said that loss of access to SIS II, for example, would seriously inhibit our ability to catch those who are a threat to security—to paraphrase her words.

Amber Rudd: The transfer of information across Europe about the sort of people who are a threat to security is absolutely key to making sure we keep people safe. I reassure colleagues, and people generally who

share an interest in this area, that the UK is a leading participant in these initiatives, so I feel that our desired ongoing participation in some form is reciprocal.

Robert Neill: The Justice Committee had some evidence to suggest that, in practical terms, in order to continue access to the information in the data systems it will be necessary post Brexit for our data regulation and legal framework to be equivalent to that which will continue to pertain in the EU; otherwise, those countries cannot lawfully share with us the information on their systems. Is that recognised as a key priority to be achieved?

Amber Rudd: It is recognised as a key priority. Making sure that we have a system whereby we can all transfer data under regulation that is satisfactory to different countries will be critical to any final agreement.

Q115 **Mrs Villiers:** The SDSR committed the Government to updating their counterterrorism strategy in 2016, but, according to the briefing the Committee has had today, the revised strategy has not yet been published. Could you share with us the stage it has got to and the reasons behind the delay?

Amber Rudd: It is at its final stage. I expect to publish it very soon. I am acutely conscious that it is one of the areas where we are already behind, but I will put that right very soon. I look forward to doing a refresh of the Contest strategy.

Mrs Villiers: We have had a chance to discuss in some detail the efforts you make in your capacity to hold other departments and Ministers to account on their performance in aspects of the overall strategy. In relation to this matter generally and specifically the delay, who performs that function in relation to you as Home Secretary? Who challenges you to ensure that the deadlines are met, given that you chair the committee?

Amber Rudd: Other members of the National Security Council are aware that the new Contest strategy is coming out soon and are expecting it to do so. The counterterrorism relaunch is a big initiative, and there is awareness throughout the National Security Council that we need to deliver it very soon. As to the actual challenge at the six-monthly meetings, I have the Minister of State there who would respond on that specifically.

Q116 **Mrs Villiers:** The SDSR states that Contest is to be updated "through a new NSC committee on Counter-Terrorism", but my understanding is that that sub-committee no longer exists, so it would be useful if you could set out the process by which the strategy is updated.

Amber Rudd: We have had substantial discussions about it in the NSC in order to make sure that all parties support the new direction and the funding going forward on it. Do you have anything to add, Sir Mark?

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: No, that is entirely fair. I hope that the strategy will be published in the course of this month.

Mrs Villiers: I appreciate that you will not be able to share with us what is in the strategy before publication, but are there particular aspects that you can outline to us that will look very different from the current strategy? What innovations do you expect to be included that you might be able to explain to us?

Amber Rudd: We have said that the counterterrorism threat is increasingly from Daesh, and we need to take additional initiatives to make sure that fewer people are radicalised in the UK. We will be putting extra effort, funding and ideas into how to do that nationally.

Mrs Villiers: Is there an angle to Contest work that looks specifically at women and at efforts to prevent them from being radicalised? Is there a distinctive approach related to young women, given the examples we have had of women travelling abroad to join Daesh?

Amber Rudd: I can tell you that in the Prevent strategy, which is part of the initiatives on counterterrorism, we put extra emphasis on making sure that we focus on community leaders who also need to be women. Sometimes you find a list of community leaders and there is an insufficient number of women. I was in Leicester about a week ago and met some fantastic women who were leading Prevent initiatives through their community leadership, particularly for other young women. It is important, because culturally they are not always in the same space, to make sure that we have enough women leaders in that initiative.

Q117 **Lord Trimble:** Can we turn to the newly created Joint International Counter-Terrorism Unit? I noticed that in March 2016 the *Financial Times*, referring to it, noted that it had in effect shifted from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The FCO's counterterrorism unit has been disbanded and the new Joint International Counter-Terrorism Unit is to be headed by an FCO official, who will report to the Home Office's director of the existing office for security and counterterrorism, so you have had quite a successful raid on the Foreign Office. Seriously, what was the thinking behind it? As it was an international unit located within the Foreign Office, it seems possible that the perspective will be altered. Are you sure it is not going to end up with too much focus on the home side of things and not enough on the international side of things? Perhaps you can throw into your answer whether any improvements will flow from the change, and anything else you think is relevant.

Amber Rudd: My experience of working with JICTU is that it brings together very successfully two different areas of expertise. We have input from the Foreign Office about the international side and input from the Home Office about the impact of internationally inspired terrorists back in the UK. I do not find there is the sort of friction that is perhaps suggested by your question. I think it is a way of harnessing information and expertise from the Foreign Office to make sure that both the Foreign Office and the Home Office have access to both sides.

Lord Trimble: Does the Foreign Office have any unit left?

Amber Rudd: I am afraid I am not aware of what the Foreign Office has in those terms.

Lord Trimble: It looks as though the function has moved from the Foreign Office to the Home Office.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: No, it is a genuinely joint unit, Lord Trimble. The SDSR established about seven new joint units to try to foster co-operative working across Whitehall, and this was one of them. As the Home Secretary said, the head of JICTU is a Foreign Office official, and JICTU itself is made up of a mixture of officials from different government departments. It is hosted in the Home Office and reports to a DG in the Home Office, but it reports equally to the Foreign Secretary and the Home Secretary for the work that it does.

Lord Trimble: But the Foreign Office's counterterrorism unit has been disbanded, so the Foreign Office no longer has that capability.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: The Foreign Office has people in overseas posts where a lot of the front-line counterterrorism work happens, but they report through JICTU.

Q118 **Lord Trimble:** The 2016 annual report talked about a cross-government review into the funding of extremism in the UK. I would be interested in your comments on whether or not it has been successful. You might like to take in the comments of Tom Keatinge of RUSI in the papers in August 2016 that our knowledge of terrorist funding flows into the UK "is limited to border cash declarations, providing little insight into the metrics that the Prime Minister set". Is that an accurate comment?

Amber Rudd: I was trying to find my notes on that particular point. You are right, Lord Trimble; we have not published that review. We are still looking at what needs to be done. There has been some good work with the Charity Commission to find out about misleading charities—organisations with terrorist links trying to raise money as charities—and we have worked closely with the commission to try to address that. A proper review has not been taken forward at the moment, but we will look at it again.

Q119 **Baroness Falkner of Margravine:** I want to take us back to the Government's decision, given the significant changes that have happened in the international environment, not to reassess whether we need a tweak to the national security strategy. Sir Mark, you are nodding. I refer to the fact that Brexit happened and the Government decided not to do that. In my view, the election of President Trump has a serious impact on the relationship as regards the strategy. I heard the Home Secretary say that the relationship is stronger than ever, which makes me quite concerned about two or three points. One is that you can see how dated the strategy is. It talks about the conclusion of a successful TTIP. Well, that has gone. It talks about enhancing our co-operation on DFID-US AID programmes. That makes me rather alarmed when we think of the

current US Government's approach to contraception, for example. Are we going to be influenced by that? Are we going to follow the line that Planned Parenthood and other people will be denied development aid for programmes conducted abroad? There are others, such as immigration. The profiling list of six countries has come up again today.

More important than all that is Mr Trump's stated aim to increase the arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race. One cannot tell from tweets at five in the morning, but it appears to me, from what he said, that there is a determination to disregard arms control treaties of the past and move in the direction of another arms race. Home Secretary, do you really believe that this is a great framework for an enhanced relationship with the US, and the relationship is stronger than ever? Does that indicate that we are likely to go down the same route? At what point, and in what circumstances, might the Government produce a new strategy before 2020?

Lord West of Spithead: Can I jump in? I did some research on this. Trump said initially that he wanted to increase numbers, but since then he has said that no, he does not, but he wants to go ahead with Obama's plan to replace various systems.

Baroness Falkner of Margravine: Thank you for that intervention. It supports my point that we have no idea. There is more confusion. We talk about certainty, but at the moment the United States is a forum for uncertainty. We have one thing at two in the morning and something else by 5 pm. Are we absolutely clear, in relation to our risk assessment for the future, that we do not need to do anything until 2020?

Amber Rudd: I believe that we should engage constructively and patiently with America as a friend and as our ally. Lady Falkner, you have raised some interesting challenges that may be part of that relationship with President Trump, but it would be a mistake to redo our strategy based on that. It is our responsibility to engage with our opposite numbers, just as the Prime Minister has engaged with President Trump, and perhaps influence as well as continue the good work that we have done with them. I do not believe there is a need to redo the SDSR. It sets out the important principles, and where we see threats coming from, as regards international law, state activity, cyber and counterterrorism. Those four elements remain the dominant threats to the UK. It is absolutely right that we continue to use those as our guiding principle.

Baroness Falkner of Margravine: Perhaps I can come back, as you have mentioned cyber. Is the US one of the countries that has reservations about signing up to new legal norms in cyber? Mr Blunt mentioned our role in that.

Amber Rudd: I am afraid I do not know.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant: The new US Administration has launched a review of cybersecurity strategy that has not come out yet, so we do not know exactly what the new Administration's view will be on it.

Baroness Falkner of Margravine: Home Secretary, I wonder whether you would be able to reassure us that our own national security priorities, as defined in the paper and in ongoing discussions, will remain, and that in some of the disruptions I mentioned, such as profiling Muslim countries and changing our rules in that regard, we will not follow the US but will act on our own evidence and carry out our own foreign policy as we see fit.

Amber Rudd: I can reassure you, Baroness Falkner, that that is exactly what we will be doing.

Lord West of Spithead: Am I right in assessing that we have absolute clarity about the fact that our link with the United States is the most important one there is for the security of this country, and probably the security of the globe, and that at the moment nothing has happened to make us change that perception? We are joined at the hip in so many ways in intelligence, defence and other areas. Is that still the position?

Amber Rudd: That is still the case.

The Chair: You will be pleased to hear that we have come to the end of our questions.

Lord Harris of Haringey: Maybe my question was dealt with while the Lords were voting. I thought the procedure was that the Committee had to adjourn, but there we are. Home Secretary, can you tell us what happened to the counterextremism Bill that was included in the last Queen's Speech? Are we still going to have one?

Amber Rudd: We are considering that at the moment. I cannot give you complete confirmation on that, but we are continuing to consider it.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Home Secretary, Mr Bailey and Sir Mark. Sir Mark, we wish you well in your retirement. Thank you very much for your attendance today and for your answers.