



The National Security Adviser
London SW1A 2AS

Dame Margaret Beckett
Chair, Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy

13 October 2022

Dear Dame Margaret,

REVISED COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND INTEGRATED REVIEW REFRESH

Thank you for your letter on 30 September. I look forward to working with you and your Committee in my role as NSA. I am writing to update you on changes to the Government structures for national security and the refresh of the Integrated Review (IR). Specific responses to your questions can be found at Annex A.

Committee Structure

The Prime Minister has made changes to the previous NSC, including renaming it the Foreign Policy and Security Council (FPSC). The Prime Minister will chair the FPSC on a monthly basis and meetings will focus on delivery and implementation of the Government's key foreign policy and security priorities. The core members will be:

- The Prime Minister
- Deputy Prime Minister
- Chancellor of the Exchequer
- Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
- Secretary of State for the Home Department
- Secretary of State for Defence
- Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
- Attorney General
- Minister of State (Minister for Security)

Other Ministers and officials will be invited to attend based on the agenda.

Integrated Review (IR) Refresh

The Prime Minister has committed to refreshing the IR by the end of the year in light of the changing geopolitical context since publication, not least the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The refresh will assess the implications for the UK's grand strategy, and where we may need to adjust our overarching approach and priorities for action to 2025. It will supplement and extend the IR rather than replace it.

I am keen to meet with your Committee to discuss this process and other issues on 7 November.

Yours sincerely,

SIR TIM BARROW

Annex A

The Foreign Policy and Security Council

1. The new Cabinet Committee structure replaces the National Security Council (NSC) with a new Foreign Policy and Security Council (FPSC). In precisely what manner will the FPSC's remit differ from the NSC?

a) Will it consider domestic and transnational security issues in the same manner, in addition to matters of foreign policy?

b) Will it consider hazards as well as threats?

Government Response to 1, 1a and 1b: The terms of reference are “to consider matters relating to national security (including domestic and transnational security), foreign policy, defence, trade, international relations, development, resilience (including hazards) and resource security”. This differs from the NSC by bringing together all of the Government’s priorities in this space - including the additions of Europe and Trade issues - enabling the Government to consider its approach to foreign policy and national security in the round. As with previous NSC meetings, I will ensure that the agendas are shared regularly with your Committee.

2. How often will the FPSC meet?

Government Response to 2: The FPSC will meet at least once a month.

3. Please provide a full list of officials expected to attend FPSC meetings, including senior military and intelligence agency personnel.

a) If not answered by your response to question 3, how will the intelligence agency heads, Chief of the Defence Staff and Chair of the Joint Intelligence Council (JIC) feed into FPSC discussions?

Government Response to 3 and 3a: To date, the Chair of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), the Chief of the Defence Staff, the three Agency Heads and the Permanent Undersecretary of the FCDO have attended the FPSC. As Secretary to the FPSC I, or a Deputy NSA, will always be in attendance to support the PM as Chair.

4. Will the National Security Ministers' group – and shadow officials' group – now be disbanded? If so, which officials' group(s) will support the FPSC?

Government Response to 4: There are no current plans to schedule meetings of National Security Ministers, the ad hoc sub-committee introduced in 2021 for which the PM delegated the chair.

The fortnightly senior officials meeting NSC(O) has been renamed FPSC(O) and will now meet weekly, chaired by me. This meeting will support the FPSC.

5. Please provide a full list of planned sub-committees under the FPSC, along with their membership and terms of reference.

a) In particular, will the NSM (Resilience) group continue to meet? If not, what will replace it?

Government Response to 5 and 5a: There is currently just one sub-committee under FPSC. What was previously NSC(Nuclear) has now been renamed FPSC(Nuclear) but otherwise remains unchanged.

As per our response to question 4, there are no current plans to schedule meetings of National Security Ministers. Resilience issues will be discussed at FPSC.

6. What do these changes to the Cabinet Committee structures mean for the function, scope and composition of the National Security Secretariat? In particular, will the Strategic Advantage Cell – established in response to the Integrated Review – continue its work?

Government Response to 6: Within the Cabinet Office, the National Security Secretariat (NSS) has now also taken on additional responsibilities mirroring the expanded remit of the FPSC. I can confirm that the Strategic Advantage Cell will continue its work to set and adapt UK grand strategy, including through the IR refresh. This is an essential function that we have maintained throughout the Afghanistan crisis and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The Integrated Review

7. What are the Terms of Reference for the planned refresh of the Integrated Review, and what is the timescale for its completion?

Government Response to 7: The new Prime Minister has committed to producing a 'refresh' of the IR by the end of the year to ensure that the UK's security, defence, development and foreign policy architecture is keeping pace with the evolving international environment.

The refresh has two core aims:

- to review changes in the strategic context since publication of the IR; and
- to adjust the UK's overarching approach and its priorities for action to 2025, including in line with the new Prime Minister's specific priorities.

The IR remains the right strategy for the UK. The refresh will supplement and extend the IR rather than replacing it. It supports the ongoing process of strategy development and delivery within government, and is an example of adaptive strategy in practice.

8. While the refresh is underway, will the Implemented Review Implementation Groups (IRIGs) continue to meet and drive forward implementation of key IR priorities, or are IRIG activities now on hold?

Government Response to 8: The IRIGs will continue to meet and implementation of the IR will continue while the refresh is ongoing. The Government will review whether the existing structures are still the right ones to support the objectives of the refreshed IR in due course.

9. Your predecessor NSA committed to publishing an annual report on implementation of the IR. Can you confirm that the Government will publish – or share with us in confidence, if necessary – its assessment of progress against the previous IR's objectives, up to September 2022?

Government Response to 9: The first annual report was due to be provided prior to summer recess this year. In the event the resignation of the Prime Minister and the subsequent leadership contest meant that it was not possible to provide your Committee with this report to this timetable. I can confirm the IR refresh will also include progress against the IR objectives and I hope you agree will therefore serve as an appropriate substitute to an annual report on the original document.

10. We note that the National Resilience Strategy, a key commitment of the IR, has been delayed for over a year. Does the Government still intend to publish this strategy before the end of this year?

Government Response to 10: The Government intends to publish the Resilience Strategy later this year. I understand that the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster wrote to you recently offering to discuss changes in our approach to Resilience and to update you on the Resilience Strategy.

Sir Tim Barrow GCMG LVO MBE
National Security Adviser
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[via email]

30 September 2022

Dear Sir Tim,

JCNSS scrutiny - new Cabinet Committee structures and the Integrated Review

Congratulations on your appointment as National Security Adviser, and thank you for agreeing to give evidence to us on Monday 7 November. We look forward to hearing from you on a wide range of issues, including the national security machinery of Government, the revised Cabinet Committee structure, forthcoming changes to the Integrated Review, and the current situation in Ukraine.

To ensure that we make the most effective use of your time, we would be grateful for responses to the following questions in writing, in advance of that session.

The Foreign Policy and Security Council

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 - b) Will it consider hazards as well as threats?
2. How often will the FPSC meet?
3. Please provide a full list of officials expected to attend FPSC meetings, including senior military and intelligence agency personnel.
 - a) If not answered by your response to question 3, how will the intelligence agency heads, Chief of the Defence Staff and Chair of the Joint Intelligence Council (JIC) feed into FPSC discussions?
4. Will the National Security Ministers' group – and shadow officials' group – now be disbanded? If so, which officials' group(s) will support the FPSC?
5. Please provide a full list of planned sub-committees under the FPSC, along with their membership and terms of reference.
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6. What do these changes to the Cabinet Committee structures mean for the function, scope and composition of the National Security Secretariat? In particular, will the Strategic Advantage Cell – established in response to the Integrated Review – continue its work?

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We request a full response by **Wednesday 19 October**.

Yours sincerely,

Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP

Chair