



House of Commons  
Foreign Affairs Committee

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**A brave new Britain?  
The future of the UK's  
international policy:  
Government Response  
to the Committee's  
Fourth Report**

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**Eighth Special Report of Session  
2019–21**

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## The Foreign Affairs Committee

The Foreign Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and its associated public bodies.

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# Eighth Special Report

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On 22 October 2020, the Foreign Affairs Committee published its Fourth Report of Session 2019–21, *A brave new Britain? The future of the UK's international policy* (HC 380). The Government's response was received on 16 December 2020 and is appended to this report.

## Appendix: Government Response

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### Introduction

The Government is grateful for the Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC) report “*A brave new Britain? The future of the UK's international policy*” on the FCDO and The Integrated Review.

### Response to the full report and recommendations

**1. The Integrated Review is a timely and necessary response to a world characterised by ever-strengthening interconnected and rapid technological change** (paragraph 2)

1.1 We agree with the Committee's assessment that this is the right time for the Integrated Review. The Review is an opportunity to define and strengthen our place in the world at a time when the global landscape is changing dramatically.

1.2 We also agree that the pace and nature of technological change is an important factor to consider. The UK will need to be adaptive and work with a broader range of allies to compete and build advantage in this more complex landscape. The Integrated Review will address this.

**2. The world is increasingly driven by global competition rather than cooperation. Global competition is driven by geo-political change. But this global competition is also a battle between competing visions and mind sets. And the global competition is increasingly one between different technical systems.** (paragraphs 3 and 4).

2.1 We agree that geopolitical change and competition are major global trends. Western democracies' share of economic power has declined: the G7's share of world GDP in 1975 was 62%; it is now 45%. Conflict and instability, exacerbated by the existential issue of climate change, will likely grow in the years ahead. We are mindful that the UK will need to work hard to sustain its strong relationships, develop new ones, and lead international collaboration to address global challenges. The Integrated Review is an opportunity to do this as we define the UK's role in the world for the next decade.

**3. Such competition has stalled, and to some degrees reversed, cooperation through multilateral organisations. The drive towards international arbitration is increasingly challenged by great power rivalry and influence projection. The world lacks consensus-building leadership. Global divides are widening, and there is a risk of the world's challenges becoming more abundant, more severe and more difficult to resolve.** (paragraph 5)

3.1 The growing complexity within the international system makes addressing transnational challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, increasingly difficult. Despite this, there have been positive aspects to the multilateral response on COVID-19 on which we can build. For example, the global fiscal response led by the IMF and multilateral development banks; and vaccine equity through initiatives such as Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness (CEPI) and the COVAX facility. The UK has played a key role in these.

3.2 COVID-19 has also exposed some weaknesses in the international system and we will need to work with others to support and strengthen multilateral organisations to ensure they are fit for purpose through institutional reform, modernising rules, and ensuring adequate financing, effective diplomatic input and representative governance. We are willing to build and invest in new partnerships and mechanisms that are agile, innovative and enable us to find the right solutions.

**4. An increasingly assertive and revisionist China has created geo-political friction with a more introspective United States. China and Russia, as leading authoritarian and revisionist powers, have also been more adept than their ideological rivals at realising where their capacity for international influence lies and harnessing the full spectrum of such capabilities.** (paragraph 6)

4.1 We agree that there is increasing geo-political friction. The open international order that the UK co-founded 75 years ago is being contested. The UK is committed to the international system and the global order that has underpinned our mutual prosperity for decades. We want to strengthen it, ensure it works for future generations and ensure it is not remade or revised in ways that would undermine our interests, or the stability of the international system.

4.2 We agree that Russia has developed its “hybrid threat” capabilities and is increasingly willing to use them. Assassination attempts and cyber-attacks are examples of Russia’s persistent malign activity. The UK has been at the forefront of efforts to demonstrate that there are consequences to these actions including working to put in place new capabilities such as EU and UK cyber sanctions regimes. Our Russia Strategy aims to balance the need for essential engagement with Russia with our work with international partners to protect the national security interests of the UK and its allies, and defend the international system. The Salisbury response showed how robust and active we can be, not just at home but internationally, in standing up firmly to Russia.

4.3 China is a significant member of the international community. Its size, rising economic power and influence make it an important partner and there are wide-ranging opportunities for us to work together, from increasing trade to cooperation in science and innovation, and tackling climate change. But as a democracy with a free society and an open economy, we must have a calibrated approach. It is precisely because we recognise China’s role in the world that we expect China to live up to its international obligations and international responsibilities and we will hold China to account when it does not. There will be matters on which the UK cannot agree or compromise with China, for example on human rights or Hong Kong. We are clear where we disagree, and we will be tough where our values, our security or the integrity of the international system are being undermined.

**5. The UK's own international policy has been adrift. It has lacked clarity. It has also lacked confidence. Our contributors the world over were clear that the UK has recently appeared less ambitious and more absent in its global role. None of our contributors wanted the UK to stand back or keep quiet. All of them urged the UK to step up, do more, and play a more impactful role in the world. They highlighted the positive contribution that the UK could make to international relations, and the negative implications if it declined.** (paragraph 7, 8 and 9)

5.1 We disagree with the Committee's characterisation of the UK's international policy. It is not adrift. We have shown global leadership this year where values have come under attack in Hong Kong and Belarus. The UK imposed landmark sanctions on Alexander Lukashenko, his son and senior figures in the Belarusian government under the UK's new human rights sanctions regime in response to the torture and mistreatment of hundreds of peaceful protestors in custody. Our new Magnitsky sanctions regime and our campaigns for media freedom and the protection of journalists, and freedom of religious beliefs show we are a force for good around the world. We have also been working to secure the best possible deal with the EU as we come to the end of the transition period. We are also preparing for our G7 Presidency to host the COP26 summit in Glasgow in 2021, and to co-host the Global Partnership for Education replenishment conference in partnership with Kenya.

5.2 In response to COVID-19 the UK has led global efforts to leverage international development finance that supports developing countries to manage the impact of the COVID-19 downturn, including debt sustainability, to build global stability and resilience. We rapidly pivoted our 2020 ODA programming towards humanitarian relief and global health security; and in November 2020 the Foreign Secretary set out a new approach to managing all ODA. We have repatriated over 38,000 people from 57 countries, kept supply chains open, and raised \$8.8 billion for Gavi through our hosting of the Global Vaccine Summit. We are a leading supporter of CEPI and the largest funder of the COVAX Advance Market Commitment.

5.3 In addition to our actions on the global stage, the creation of the FCDO and its Global Network Uplift programme is a visible demonstration of our commitment to engage globally, and the biggest investment in the diplomatic network for decades. In 2019 the then FCO established 10 new Posts – including a High Commission in the Maldives, a mission to ASEAN in Jakarta and a Resident Commissioner in Antigua & Barbuda – and added over 1,000 new staff positions in the UK and overseas. This uplift enables us to deliver greater political engagement with other G20 members, rising powers, and new partners; and will bolster our impact in working alongside historic partners, such as the Commonwealth and, in particular, our friends and allies across Europe.

**6. The UK has a strong capacity to use its memberships and influence to bring countries together in dialogue. Contributors also admired the UK as a pragmatic country whose thought leadership, and the legal drafting capabilities of the FCDO's lawyers, can bring the world together through agreed, stable and predictable frameworks. The UK's own adherence to such frameworks is of paramount importance to its international reputation.** (paragraph 11)

6.1 The UK will continue to be a leading voice in upholding and defending the rule of law, democracy, global free trade and human rights. We will continue to call out serious breaches

of international norms. The Magnitsky sanctions regime showcases our commitment to the international system and the values that underpin it, and to standing up for victims of human rights violations and abuses around the world. Support for international criminal justice and accountability is a fundamental element of our foreign policy. For example, we continue to support the work of the International Criminal Court and the international tribunals to tackle impunity for the most serious crimes. We will continue to draw on the expertise and capabilities of the FCDO's lawyers to support work that helps to strengthen the rules-based international system, reduce conflict and promote stability.

**7. But the UK will have the greatest impact abroad if it uses its range of assets and capabilities coherently. It is unlikely that the merger of the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) will resolve the persistent problem that Britain abroad is less than the sum of its parts.** (paragraph 12)

7.1 We disagree with the claim that Britain abroad is less than the sum of its parts. The Prime Minister has set out his ambition to reform the way that the UK Government operates internationally and for all UK Government operations overseas to be fully integrated. Our goal is to maximise the impact of all our international activity by aligning all the expertise, relationships and tools that UK Government has to offer to achieve our shared objectives. All government departments will work to a single set of agreed government objectives for which the Ambassador or High Commissioner will be fully accountable. Our new Strategic Framework for ODA, announced to the House of Commons in November 2020, will further enhance this coherence. The creation of the FCDO enables integration of international development and foreign policy, and lowers the risk of different parts of government working independently of each other, preventing the UK from speaking with one voice internationally and from being able to act quickly as situations arise.

7.2 Under the leadership of the Foreign Secretary as the single Cabinet Minister for foreign and development affairs, we will ensure that our diplomatic aims are supported through our development resource, and that our world-class diplomacy helps to deliver greater effectiveness and impact in our development programming and policy influence. Whether in preparing to host COP26 or the G7 Presidency, supporting British Nationals Overseas, or meeting global challenges, bringing together diplomacy and development policy will allow us to be more coherent abroad.

**8. The review must provide: i) a clear articulation of the UK's interests and values, and of their roles in a coherent strategy for the UK's international policy, ii) clear and limited priorities within designated timeframes, iii) meaningful and targeted resources with which to deliver, iv) greater coherence and alignment among UK levers of influence, and therefore greater impact abroad, v) an unambiguous leadership role for the diplomatic service.** (paragraph 13)

8.1 As the Prime Minister stated on 19 November, the Integrated Review will be published in the new year. It will define the long-term strategic aims for our national security and foreign policy, including a more strategic approach to development. In defining the Government's ambition for the UK's role in the world, it will set out how the UK will be a problem-solving and burden-sharing nation.

8.2 A number of Spending Review decisions have been informed by the Integrated Review's initial findings. The Prime Minister announced an additional funding uplift of £16.5 billion over four years for Defence, including an additional £1.5 billion for military R&D. There is also support to ensure we have a secure and resilient UK by investing heavily in health and climate resilience at home.

8.3 The Government is committed to having effective mechanisms in place for implementing the Review and that in this process, we learn lessons from previous reviews and successful models used by other nations. There will be a structured cross-Whitehall process to allow for an effective, integrated approach to implementation.

**9. The Government has committed to spend 0.7% of GNI on Official Development Assistance (ODA) and we agree with the Government that UK diplomats must play the leading role in coordinating how this money is spent. But we recommend that the resourcing of the UK's diplomatic service itself be directed by the strategic needs and must not be skewed by the requirements of ODA eligibility.** (paragraph 13)

9.1 We agree that our diplomatic resourcing should be led by our strategic foreign policy priorities, and it is these that determine our resourcing decisions. The FCDO secured a £65 million (5%) increase in non-ODA funding in the 2020 Spending Review to cover rising operating costs which support not only our diplomatic service, but the UK's wider presence overseas. The Spending Review has also provided for the continuation of £60 million funding to maintain our enhanced diplomatic presence in Europe. New funding will support the merger and creation of FCDO; rising operating costs; improvement to our global estate, including upgrades to our embassies in Washington, Paris, and Ottawa; and an increase in FCDO's UK presence outside London and the South East.

9.2 In the new FCDO we will combine international development with diplomacy, focusing our efforts where the UK can make a difference, ensuring the UK is a force for good across the globe. This includes ensuring we have the right staff and programmes in the right places across the globe, including on non-ODA eligible work such as strengthening cooperation with European and NATO allies on security and intelligence. The ODA eligibility of FCDO operational costs are determined by the OECD Development Assistance Committee's directives. Where staff activity is ODA eligible, it is right that we continue to capture it as such.

9.3 The seismic impact of the pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to take tough but necessary decisions, including temporarily reducing the overall amount we spend on ODA. We remain a world leading aid donor spending 0.5% of GNI. We will spend more than £10 billion next year to fight poverty, tackle climate change and improve global health. We will do aid better across Government, even if the budget is smaller, to deliver maximum impact for every pound we spend. We will return to spending 0.7 of GNI on ODA when the fiscal situation allows.

9.4 As a result of the Spending Review, the FCDO will take on a greater role in ensuring the coherence and coordination of all UK ODA, with the Foreign Secretary deciding the final allocation of aid to other Departments to ensure a coherent approach. All programmes proposed across Whitehall will be assessed against a new framework. Failing

or underperforming projects will continue to be closed. This will mean 93.5% of the UK's aid will either be spent by – or allocated to others by – the FCDO through a 'double lock' with HMT.

**10. The UK should also be an inclusive nation that opens opportunities for others. The Government should use the UK's convening power, its thought leadership and its legal drafting skills, to establish a baseline for cooperation and exchange between nations and individuals that helps realise the benefits from technological innovation and global interconnection.** (paragraph 14)

10.1 The UK's G7 Presidency and COP26 next year will provide two significant platforms to work with others to address global challenges, while projecting UK values and advancing our national interests. Our focus for the Presidency will be to tackle the major global challenges such as climate change, strengthening the international response to, and recovery from COVID-19, and promoting the resilience of our societies, economies and the planet; and to demonstrate the strength of open, democratic societies.

10.2 The UK, as a leading donor to the global COVID-19 response and one of the world's biggest development and humanitarian actors, has been pushing the UN and wider international system for a strong, co-ordinated and prioritised response. For example, we have played a leading role in securing agreement of a new G20 Finance Action Plan on supporting the global economy through the COVID-19 pandemic, and worked with other finance ministers through the G20 Finance Track to suspend all debt repayments for the poorest and most vulnerable countries until the end of 2020.

10.3 We agree that the UK must enhance its international engagement in the development of standards, regulations and norms to guide the development of digital, emerging technology and data. We will demonstrate leadership on regulation, standards and norms of digital, emerging tech and data as part of the UK's G7 Presidency in 2021, as well as advancing our interests in multilateral forums including the OECD, Commonwealth, G20 and UN. We will use our COP26 Presidency to push forward norms that promote clean growth. The UK will take a prominent role in shaping the rules of international digital trade through the WTO's Joint Initiative on E-commerce and become a thought leader on services, digital and environmental issues in trade.

10.4 The UK will continue to invest in world leading ODA-funded research and innovation partnerships. These produce new technologies which save and improve millions of lives and generate new knowledge for UK and developing country policy makers, development practitioners and entrepreneurs. We deploy these investments and partnerships in support of country cooperation and strategic dialogue.

**11. The UK should be a resilient state which recognises the changing nature of the threats we face at home and abroad and is able to match and counter them through the efforts of government and non-governmental actors. This will involve a co-ordinated, cross-Government approach with expanded investment in offensive and defensive capabilities, based on our national security assessment.** (paragraph 14)

11.1 The Committee is correct to note the changing character of threats to UK interests. In an uncertain world, our ability as a nation to prepare for, withstand and recover from crisis - our resilience - is as critical to our security and prosperity as our ability to deter and disrupt hostile threats.

11.2 On 19 November, the Prime Minister announced the largest sustained offer to defence since the end of the Cold War, to ensure our armed forces have the necessary tools and equipment to defend the UK and its people against evolving and increasingly complex threats. The Prime Minister also announced the establishment of the National Cyber Force, drawing together under one command the expertise of the MoD, the Secret Intelligence Service, Government Communications Headquarters, and the Defence, Science and Technology Laboratory. This new force will undertake cyber operations to disrupt terrorists, hostile state activity and criminals, all of which threaten UK national security.

11.3 We will continue to defend, deter and disrupt threats and risks where we can, using the full spectrum of our sovereign capabilities - military, diplomacy, economic, law enforcement, offensive cyber and covert means - to deter our adversaries, denying them opportunities to harm UK interests and holding them to account when needed. The collective security provided by our membership of NATO enhances the credibility of our deterrence.

11.4 Recognising that our security and foreign and domestic policies increasingly overlap, we will work closely with partners overseas, both to disrupt threats upstream before they reach the UK, and to build international resilience. This includes effective deployment of our development capabilities, taking a long-term approach to mitigate and adapt to climate change and conserve biological diversity, address health, food and water insecurity, and tackle the drivers and consequences of conflict and instability.

**12. The Government must do more to align the full spectrum of the UK's instruments for influence. A hybrid approach by the UK will achieve greater impact for serving the British people, countering our adversaries, and contributing to the world. Just as ambassadors lead in coordinating the UK's activity abroad, so should the FCDO lead in coordinating the UK's international policy within Whitehall.** (paragraph 14)

12.1 The Government is committed to strengthening our position in an intensely competitive world by making sensible changes. The Integrated Review will bring together all relevant instruments in support of the Government's objectives for national security and international policy. The merger of the FCO and DFID to create the FCDO is part of the Government's commitment to an integrated whole-of-government approach to deliver the UK's ambitious vision for the next decade. As mentioned above, the Government has recently announced a multi-year financial settlement for the MoD. This settlement underpins a wider drive to use our foreign policy to defend free and open societies, enhance our global influence, and maintain our role as a burden-sharing nation.

**13. The UK cannot 'tilt' to the Indo-Pacific without a strong base in Europe: both are important to UK prosperity and security and reinforce each other. In particular, considering the clout that several European nations exercise in many international bodies, including the UN, the UK will need to find new ways of maintaining its strong ties with European capitals. We recommend that both Europe and the Indo-Pacific be priorities for the UK's international policy. We recommend that the Government publishes clear priorities and resources for the 'tilt to the Indo-Pacific', explaining what additional resources will be committed to the region, what regions or budgets they will be drawn from, and for what specific gain.** (paragraph 15)

13.1 The Government agrees with the Committee's view on the importance of sustaining the UK's strong, historic ties with European states. The UK will continue to work intensively with our European partners on our shared security challenges. Being outside the EU will not affect this commitment, nor the unique role that our armed forces and security services play in keeping Europe safe from a wide range of threats. As a sovereign ally, we will reinforce the UK's position as a reliable neighbour and partner, reinvigorating our relationships in the region to amplify our global influence, achieve shared goals and act as a force for good in the world. That means doing diplomacy differently and leaning in to those alliances and regional groups that can have global impact including in the multilateral system.

13.2 The Indo-Pacific is increasingly important for the UK, as a centre of global economic growth, and a region of increasing geostrategic importance. The UK has a range of enduring interests in the region.

13.3 The Integrated Review will set out the full breadth of our offer to the Indo-Pacific. However, through the Foreign Secretary's increased engagement with the region, the UK bid to achieve ASEAN Dialogue Partnership status and via actions to pursue accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), the UK has signalled its intention to prioritise the Indo-Pacific and develop closer partnerships with likeminded countries in the region.

**14. The UK intends to prioritise its promotion of trade, and trade policy has the capacity to become a significant aspect of the UK's priorities abroad, then the elevation of trade risks introducing further incoherence into the UK's international policy. We recommend that the Government delivers even deeper strategic coordination between the Department for International Trade (DIT) and the FCDO to ensure greater policy coherence and impact.** (paragraph 16)

14.1 We have detailed above (para 7.1) the measures the Government is taking to reform the way that UK Government operates internationally to maximise the impact of all our activity.

14.2 As announced by the Prime Minister on 16 June 2020, UK Trade Commissioners now work under the authority of the relevant Ambassador or High Commissioner in country. The Integrated Review, in which DIT has also been involved, will address trade as one of the international levers to achieve UK Government goals.

**15. We recommend that, as part of its problem solving and burden sharing role, the FCDO prioritises mediation, conflict resolution, and atrocity prevention. And we recommend that the Government equips the FCDO with an enhanced and institutionalised capability to coordinate with the Ministry of Defence in this space, to maximise the coherence and impact of the UK's contribution.** (paragraph 17)

15.1 While we await publication of the Integrated Review, we would not want to prejudge its outcomes. We agree that the creation of FCDO provides an opportunity to enhance our impact on conflict resolution and atrocity prevention through the integration of our diplomatic and development levers and a stronger focus on mediation.

15.2 However, shifting the trajectory of violent conflicts, preventing atrocities and supporting conflict resolution, will require us to apply all of UK Government's capabilities.

We agree on the importance of an institutionalised capability to coordinate activities across UK Government, including with MoD. This will ensure that our various instruments, including our aid spend, are applied in greater concert with each other, building on the experience and cross-government collaboration established through the Stabilisation Unit, Conflict, Stability and Security Fund and the UN Peacekeeping Joint Unit. The creation of the FCDO will also make our role in conflict prevention and management more coherent.

15.3 We will also continue to shape international responses to conflict, as a burden-sharing partner, providing contributions that influence the efforts of others. To date, we have led international efforts to recalibrate the UN towards conflict prevention through the Secretary-General's Sustaining Peace agenda, including through political leadership in New York during the Peacebuilding Architecture Review this year. Historically, we have been the largest donor to the Peacebuilding Fund since its inception, and remain among the top three donors, demonstrating positive burden sharing. Working closely with the MoD, we have also sought to inject UK expertise into key UN missions, and we have deployed UK staff in a number of strategic positions in key multilateral organisations, providing niche expertise on peacebuilding, conflict resolution and the humanitarian, peace and development nexus. The UK also routinely provides training support to improve the capabilities of UN police and troop-contributing countries deploying on peace operations. We also train 10,000 peacekeepers each year, principally in Africa, with partners such as Malawi (deploying peacekeepers to MONUSCO, Democratic Republic of Congo) and Zambia (deploying peacekeepers to MINUSCA, Central African Republic).

**16. Soft power is key to the UK's international influence. It is about much more than culture: the way it is used by some nations suggests it is the entire capability of the state short of war, for others it is power of attraction. The Government must not become complacent about the UK's advantage in this space, and the risk of their erosion. It should respond to the desire abroad for the UK to lead, and set a positive example, in new and innovative ways. We recommend that the Government publishes a coherent and credibly resourced soft power strategy. Given the range of contributors to UK soft power and the numbers of HMG Departments involved, we recommend that the Government gives an enhanced coordinating role to FCDO so that this strategy can be implemented in a cohesive and impactful way. (paragraph18)**

16.1 Soft power is an important part of our global influence, and an area in which the UK has an advantage. The UK is the only country to rank in the top two places in the Portland Soft Power 30 in each of the past five years, and the UK moved from fourth to second place in the recently published Anholt Ipsos Nation Brands Index. We are also ranked as the most attractive country for young people in the G20 in the British Council's recent soft power perceptions study.

16.2 Many institutions, including our Arm's Length Bodies, have demonstrated themselves to be hugely valuable throughout the pandemic. The BBC World Service has played a key role, as audiences have turned to the broadcaster for impartial and trustworthy news about the virus. Digital audiences for World Service languages grew to an average of 208 million people per week in March, up 142% compared to averages across April to December in 2019. These and other sources highlight the breadth of the UK's soft power strengths, including in creative industries and culture, education and media.

16.3 We agree on the need for effective coordination within government and beyond, in order to bring to bear the collective strengths of UK soft power in support of our international objectives. However, these institutions and assets are effective because they are distinct from government and spread across all four nations and the regions, reflecting the best of British culture and society. To support these assets, we have already established cross-government senior official fora dealing with soft power, in addition to links with external groups such as the UK Soft Power Group. The recent creation of the FCDO offers further opportunities to ensure that the important contribution to UK soft power of official development assistance and our development experience and skills, is given due weight.

16.4 The Integrated Review is considering the contribution made by soft power to our international objectives. At this stage, we would not want to prejudge the Review's outcomes in this area.

**17. We recommend that the UK convene and catalyse negotiations to reform multinational organisations: seeking to maintain their relevance and their benefit for all rather than a few.** (paragraph 19)

17.1 We agree with the Committee's recommendation. We have already been working to convene and catalyse negotiations to reform multinational organisations such as the UN's Committees and Executive Boards, NATO, the Development Assistance Committee, and the Commonwealth, in order to maintain their relevance.

17.2 The multilateral system is vast, complex and diverse, but has provided benefits that are worth fighting to preserve: open trade, avoidance of great power war, and common approaches to shared global problems. At its core the international system is a means to an end – only as good as the outcomes it secures. The Government's desired outcome is a functioning system that is fit to handle the defining issues of the future and secures the UK's specific objectives and influence. The Government is mindful that it is not one-size-fits-all. We must tailor our effort, prioritising our activity where it is in the UK's interest and where we can have meaningful impact in reforming and supporting. We must also be willing to work in other ways – such as through narrower coalitions - to achieve our goals.

17.3 We are already implementing this approach. At the UN we are a leading proponent of reform, both in the Secretariat and in the UN's Agencies, Funds and Programmes. We support the efforts of the World Health Organisation, which acts in the UK's interest and the global interest - that is why we are one of the biggest global funders of that organisation, contributing £340 million over the next 4 years, an increase of 30% on the previous four-year commitment. We played a key role in securing agreement in the General Assembly for major management, development system, and peace and security architecture reforms. As a top donor to the World Bank, we have used our seat at the board to secure agreement to significant reform and financial commitments from the International Development Association, including a doubling of support to the most fragile countries. At the recent annual meeting, we used our voice to shape the World Bank's approach to the COVID-19 response, education and health, and climate change.

17.4 At NATO, the UK has played a leading role in the biggest reinforcement of deterrence and defence in a generation and we are a major contributor to NATO's enhanced forward

presence. We now have a roadmap to look at the impact of emerging and disruptive technology, recognised space as a domain of operations and agreed NATO's first new Military Strategy in 50 years.

17.5 We have played a leading role in supporting the modernisation of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) ODA rules ensuring they continue to meet modern day development challenges. Since 2016 reforms have included: a new mechanism allowing countries struck by economic shocks/natural disasters to receive ODA again if there is a sustained fall in their national income; doubling UN Peacekeeping costs that count as ODA, recognising the vital role of peace and security in facilitating economic development; and delivering an increase in the percentage of the UN's Regular Budget which counts as ODA (18% to 47%), in recognition of how much of the UN's work is focussed on delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals.

17.6 We have strengthened the Commonwealth, through our efforts and those of fellow member states to reform the governance of the Commonwealth Secretariat, with Commonwealth Foreign Ministers adopting a set of reform recommendations in 2019 - subject to endorsement at the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

**18. The UK should use its convening power and thought leadership to bring together nimble networks of like-minded nations by agreeing a baseline for cooperation between them. These coalitions would be open, issue-based, fleet-footed, overlapping and even temporary: a 'vari-lateral' system.** (paragraph 20)

18.1 We agree that the UK should be agile and flexible in its approach to partnerships. We will be pragmatic and open minded, working with countries with whom we find common cause, including emerging and regional powers. For example, on 12 October, the Prime Minister announced that the UK, along with Kenya, would host next year's replenishment of the Global Partnership for Education.

18.2 In addition to our work in the international system and reinforced bilateral ties, small groups will play an important role in shaping the international response on a range of issues, and can be particularly helpful by being agile, adaptable and creative. For example, cooperation at E3, in small groups on Yemen and Myanmar, the Five Power Defence Arrangements, as well as the Five Eyes are all key to policy delivery across a range of foreign policy issues.

**19. We welcome the Government's commitment to make global health security and working to counter climate change priorities within the UK's international policy. We recommend the Government delivers on its commitments to prioritise the existential issues of climate change and global health security.** (paragraph 21)

19.1 We agree with the committee's recommendation. Climate change and global health security - both their causes and impact - are priorities for the FCDO's diplomatic and development work.

19.2 The UK has a strong record in global health security. We support partners to prevent, detect and respond to health threats, as set out in the International Health Regulations (2005). The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of key elements of the UK's approach to global health security, while also showing that we need to do more.

19.3 To support the global response to COVID-19 and advance the global health security agenda, the UK has made significant financial and political commitments. These include committing up to £1.65 billion over the next 5 years to maintain global efforts against vaccine preventable diseases in the world's poorest countries; and committing up to £571 million to COVAX, a new initiative designed to distribute a COVID-19 vaccine across the world. We have also demonstrated our commitment to the World Health Organisation by announcing a core contribution of £340 million over the next four years, and we continue to promote the vital role of WHO in leading an effective, evidence-based, public health response.

19.4 We are working with the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) and other departments to implement and undertake international engagement on each element of the Prime Minister's five-point plan to prevent future pandemics, using our public health expertise and our diplomatic network. The UK will use its G7 Presidency, its work with WHO and the other agencies (the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Organisation for Animal Health), and wider multilateral and bilateral engagement, to strengthen the global health security system in line with these five points.

19.5 COP26 is a top priority for Heads of Mission across the network and addressing climate change will continue to be a Government priority beyond the Glasgow Summit. Our Climate Change and Energy Attaché Network was the world's first diplomatic network dedicated to this work.

19.6 The UK will provide at least £5.8 billion of International Climate Finance (ICF) between 2016/17–2020/21 as part of the commitment by developed countries to mobilise \$100 billion of climate finance annually by 2020. The Prime Minister also pledged, in 2019, to double the UK contribution to £11.6 billion over the next five-year period. Ministers are actively lobbying internationally in support of a clean and resilient recovery from COVID-19, encouraging investment in areas that will support economic growth and a sustainable recovery (such as investment in renewable energy sources, adaptation and resilience and nature).

19.7 In our response to the FAC inquiry this summer, we stated that 'Success would see the world make concrete commitments towards net zero Greenhouse Gas emissions by 2050 and put adapting to the impacts of climate change at the heart of their long-term plans'. The work of FCDO, the COP Unit and colleagues across government has been delivering on this. Recent Net Zero by 2050 announcements by Japan and the Republic of Korea, alongside President Xi's announcement that China will achieve Carbon Neutrality by 2060, show we are building global momentum. The Climate Ambition Summit co-hosted by the UK, the UN and France, in partnership with Italy and Chile on 12 December sought to maintain this momentum and reinforce the urgency of climate ambition into 2021. The Summit saw seventy-five countries announce commitments to climate action with twenty-four countries committing to net zero and carbon neutrality and 45 leaders bringing forward strengthened and more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions. The UK pledged to end financial support for overseas fossil fuels and led the way on cutting emissions by 2030.

**20. We recommend the UK use its convening power and thought leadership to seek agreement for regulations relating to frontier sectors such as emerging technologies, the cyber and space domains: mitigating threats by agreeing standards and allowing**

**states instead to access opportunities for exchange, innovation, and mutual benefit. We recommend the Government should establish diplomatic missions to the leading technology companies: achieving their cooperation in setting the rules and standards for the development of new technology and outer space, and using the UK's values as well as its reputation for fair regulation to enhance international cooperation within these frontier spaces.** (paragraph 22)

20.1 Since publication of the Committee's report, the Government has announced the first conclusions of the Integrated Review, which include investments in cutting-edge technology, positioning the UK as a global leader in domains such as cyber and space. To support these advancements, the Prime Minister announced the creation of the National Cyber Force and a new 'Space Command'.

20.2 We agree that the UK is well placed to influence the global debate and seek agreement for regulations for many frontier technologies, space and science, given the UK's significant strength in diplomacy, regulation, research excellence, and academia. The UK has developed a distinctive and comparatively sophisticated approach to the governance of frontier sectors which commands widespread support among policymakers, publics, scientists and industry.

20.3 Space is fundamental to the UK's prosperity, resilience, and security capability, and presents significant opportunities for the UK - whether in cutting-edge scientific research and exploration, international collaboration or global development. The FCDO with the UK Space Agency and the MoD will continue to play a leading role in agreeing international regulations and best practice to support the UK space sector and protect the space environment. The UK leads work to reduce threats to space systems through responsible behaviours and successfully ran a resolution at the United Nations General Assembly in 2020 to kick start the global debate.

20.4 The UK is a world leader in cyber expertise and has a prominent role in global security. The world is ever more reliant on cyberspace, and in this highly contested environment it has become increasingly important for the UK to be able to have a real-world effect in and through cyberspace to support our diplomatic, economic and military levers of power. The UK also continues to work actively with the international community (including as part of the ongoing UN processes on responsible state behaviour in cyberspace) to implement the voluntary and non-binding norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace and deepen understanding on how international law applies in cyberspace.

20.5 Our G7 Presidency will offer the opportunity to build on the promises made in the PM's speech at UNGA last year to ensure "emerging technologies are designed from the outset for freedom, openness and pluralism, with the right safeguards in place to protect our peoples". We have been among the few countries engaging proactively with the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation, where we are 'Key Constituents' in four working groups. We will also continue to work with developing countries to ensure they can engage successfully with the development of global standards and ensure mutual access to markets.

20.6 Engagement with leading technology companies is an essential part of the UK's international approach to setting standards and rules for new technologies but we do not agree on the need to establish diplomatic missions to leading technology companies. We

believe that any engagement should utilise the existing relationships government holds with key businesses in the sector. The Department for Culture, Media and Sports has a programme of engagement with key tech companies such as Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon and Microsoft; and the FCDO has strategic partnerships with mobile operators and tech companies (with over 800 members) through the Global System for Mobile Communications Association to invest in technology and innovation for addressing global challenges.

20.7 We recognise the importance of the digital technology sector on the US West Coast. We have recently appointed Joe White, an entrepreneur with 20 years' experience in the digital sector, as Consul-General San Francisco and Technology Envoy to the United States, in a combined role for the UK Government. Our Science & Innovation Network, Cyber Attaches, and the Asia Pacific Digital Trade Network work with tech communities around the world.