



The Rt Hon Dan Jarvis MBE MP
Security Minister
Cabinet Office and Home Office
Cabinet Office 70 Whitehall London
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Mr Matt Western MP
House of Commons
London
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25th August 2026

Dear Matt,

Thank you for your letter of 23 June 2026 addressed to the previous Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the opportunity to add further clarification to the government's response to your report on the National Security Strategy. The government welcomes JCNSS' important role in scrutiny and considers your reports and findings carefully. The government's response to your questions is set out below.

1. Can you confirm that there is no plan for the Government to review its consultation approach on matters of national security, despite the gaps highlighted in our report?

The government agrees that broad consultation and engagement with all parts of our society is key in building greater awareness of the threats we face and support those who can help mitigate it. Our approach to stakeholder engagement is regularly assessed to consider how we can best engage with all stakeholders without compromising national security. Please be assured that both Ministers and officials at all levels of government will continue to regularly engage with all sectors of British society and our allies on national security as a matter of course.

2. How frequently does the Government intend to update the Committee on the implementation of the NSS, noting the Committee's request that these updates should be delivered at least annually?

a. Will these updates be provided in the form of public evidence, in the interest of advancing the national conversation, or in private?

The government remains keen to engage with the Committee and will update members where appropriate. As he noted to the Committee during his session in December, the National

Security Adviser has also offered to attend future private sessions upon request and to organise a further appearance when requested by the Committee.

3. Please outline in your response where responsibilities lie for delivering the different elements of the NSS commitments, both at a departmental and Ministerial level.

National security is not the remit of one government department. There are aspects of the Strategy where there is a clear departmental lead. For example the Home Secretary is ultimately responsible for ensuring the UK is a harder target for those that wish to do us harm; the Defence Secretary is responsible for ensuring the UK improves its warfighting readiness. But some areas, such as improving our sovereign capabilities are the purview of the whole government, as they could be capabilities in digital, in military drones, in energy or in critical supplies to our resilience. The National Security Council ultimately oversees the government's national security policy.

4. Can you confirm definitively that ODA will not be cut further, where cuts can be demonstrated to have negative impacts on the UK's national security interests?

As the previous Foreign Secretary set out in Parliament in March, our commitment to international development is as important as ever. It reflects our values and supports those in extreme poverty and, in an interconnected world, crises around the world impact our security and prosperity at home. Supporting growth and stability in lower income countries are firmly in the UK's national interest as instability abroad affects the cost of living, the security of our borders, and the resilience of our economy at home. However, in an increasingly dangerous, contested and volatile world, as you are aware, and as the previous Prime Minister reiterated to Parliament on 20 May, to fund a necessary increase in defence spending, the Government took the decision to reduce the UK ODA budget to the equivalent of 0.3% of GNI by 2027.

This reflects the world we live in and the threats our country faces, while maintaining economic stability. The Spending Review 2025 details departmental ODA budgets that reflect this decision and which the Government is committed to meeting. The Government is committed to returning to spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA when the fiscal circumstances allow. The FCDO's ODA programme allocations set out in March outline how we are reprioritising in line with our new approach to development. We have been able to set three years of allocations, providing teams with the predictability required to effectively manage the transition to 0.3% of GNI. All future plans are subject to revision as, by its nature, the department's work is dynamic. Programme allocations are continually reviewed to respond to changing global needs, including humanitarian crises and other ODA allocation decisions.

5. Can you provide detail on specific resilience and security projects which will be included within the 1.5% spend, and update us on how discussions with NATO allies have been progressing on how the target will be hit?

In an appearance in front of the Committee on 26 January, the government set out the types of spend that can be included as part of the 1.5% commitment. This was defined by NATO after the Hague Summit in 2025. It can include spending to protect our critical infrastructure,

defend our networks, ensure our civil preparedness and resilience, drive innovation, and strengthen our defence industrial base.

6. Beyond the existing mechanisms re-iterated in the Government response for dealing with managing national security risks from China and the US, we ask that you respond to our specific report recommendations to a) publish accompanying statements at the signing of new treaties and agreements to make clear how national security considerations have been accounted for and b) prepare with European NATO allies for a 'worst-case scenario' where Europe can no longer rely on the US in support of a crisis.

National security considerations are always taken into account in any treaty or agreement to which the government is a party. The government does not agree with the proposal to publish accompanying statements on national security considerations at the signing of new treaties. Whilst we understand the need for transparency wherever possible, we are unable to publish an accompanying statement about national security considerations alongside any treaties that represent goodwill between two or more countries. Where there are no national security considerations, such a statement would be of little value. Where such considerations do exist, they are likely to cover areas of significant sensitivity that risk undermining the agreement itself.

Nevertheless, as part of an ongoing wider review of treaty guidance, we will consider how departments can be reminded of the importance of identifying and taking account of any national security considerations during the treaty negotiation process. Parliamentarians are also able to seek information on particular treaties in the normal way, whether through statutory scrutiny by the IAC under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010, or through other interested Committees seeking to question Ministers and officials / Euro Atlantic Response

As previously stated, the US remains the UK's most important defence and security partner, both bilaterally and through NATO. The US at the NATO Summit at The Hague last year joined Allies in reaffirming their ironclad commitment to collective defence as enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. For NATO to respond to the long term strategic threat posed by Russia, the PM has repeatedly acknowledged the need for a more European NATO - that sees Europe taking greater responsibility for transatlantic security, in close coordination with the US.

7. Will the Government commit to briefing the Committee in private on its assessment of which areas the UK needs to develop sovereign capabilities, and the way in which the Government is working with industry to ensure that development takes place?

The government would welcome the opportunity to discuss sovereign capabilities with the Committee in a private secure setting. The Prime Minister has been clear of the need for procurement reform and has set out where the government will "buy British" to boost sovereign manufacturing, making it easier for UK companies to win government and public sector contracts. This is especially the case in sectors critical to our national security such as defence, energy and prioritising sovereign AI solutions.

Thank you for taking the time to write about these important matters.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Dan Jarvis', with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

The Rt Hon Dan Jarvis MBE MP
Security Minister
Cabinet Office and Home Office