



*From the National Security Adviser*

Rt Hon. Tobias Ellwood MP  
Chair of the Defence Committee,  
House of Commons, London  
SW1A 0AA

**11 January 2022**

Dear Tobias,

**Integrated Review, Defence Command Paper and the Defence and Security  
Industrial Strategy**

1. Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence on 30 November and for your subsequent letter of 7 December. Please find enclosed the information you have requested.

**Question 1 - Polling**

2. Polling seen by the Cabinet Office, such as the British Foreign Policy Group's annual survey, shows that the public's interest in the UK's international policies remains high at 71%. A majority of people (57%) feel informed about UK foreign policy. Ipsos Mori's 'Understanding Society' report in December 2021 showed a public appetite for Britain to take a leading role in the world. A clear majority (71%) agree that Britain should seek to either increase its influence in the world or keep it the same. Most (87%) agree that Britain should set an example to other countries and be an ethical leader globally. In this regard, the UK was ranked fifth out of sixty nations in the 2021 annual Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index, which assesses how positively the UK is perceived internationally. Furthermore, polling by YouGov shows continued UK public confidence in the British armed forces, including their ability to conduct military operations overseas. A majority of the public understand the importance of NATO and support

UK membership. This remains the case after the drawdown and evacuation from Afghanistan over the summer.

## **Question 2 - Engaging the public**

3. The Government has always sought to engage the public and broaden the debate about defence and security. This is not a finite piece of work with an end date; we are continually looking for ways to communicate more effectively about our national security policies. There was a huge cross-government communications effort around the publication of the Integrated Review (IR) and Defence Command paper in March 2021. The Government is encouraging a wider range of people to consider careers in national security (<https://national-security.campaign.gov.uk/>). We are developing a more structured programme of interventions by senior national security figures, in line with the direction set out in the IR. Recent examples of this include high profile interviews with the heads of SIS, MI5 and GCHQ, as well as the new Chief of the Defence Staff Admiral Sir Tony Radakin's speech at RUSI. The government works with allies on international communications campaigns, like the 'We Are NATO' campaign, which reminds the public in member states that NATO is a guarantor of security, and how it delivers on this commitment. All of this work to engage the public on defence and security will continue.

## **Question 3 - Defence and technological change**

4. The MOD actively engages with stakeholders in Parliament, academia and civil society to understand issues, develop policy and explain its thinking towards strategic technology challenges. At the same time, the Department communicates its role and importance to the public by demonstrating how emerging technologies support our personnel on and off the battlefield. MOD set out its overall approach through the Defence S&T Strategy in October 2020.
5. With 40% of the UK public concerned about Artificial Intelligence, MOD will publish its first Defence AI Strategy early this year to set out to public and external stakeholders how it will accelerate the development and

exploitation of these technologies, along with its intent to influence and shape global AI developments to promote security, stability and democratic values. In parallel, it plans to publish details of its approach to the ambitious, safe and responsible adoption of AI-enabled capability.

#### **Question 4 - Lessons from previous role**

6. Clearly, responsibility for implementing the Defence Settlement and the Equipment Plan rests with the Secretary of State for Defence and the Permanent Secretary. The Cabinet Office provides a useful challenge and assurance function which helps MOD's leadership ensure that decisions are taken in the best interests of Defence and Government, and that the department remains focused on the Prime Minister's priorities. In my current role I am able to see the broadest possible range of threats to the UK, reinforcing the need for taking the different decisions on equipment to optimise our defences in the broadest definition.

#### **Question 5 - Integrated Review and Afghanistan**

7. The IR was designed to be a living document that guides an ongoing process of strategy-making and delivery through the lifetime of this Parliament. It provides an adaptive strategy process whilst providing the framework for future planning against the challenges we face, and to build our resilience against these. The events in Afghanistan do not contradict this strategic analysis. Indeed, in some areas they underscore it. We are conducting further strategic analysis of the implications of events to inform the ongoing implementation of the Integrated Review, but it will take some time for the full implications of events in Afghanistan to be understood.

#### **Question 6 - Integration**

8. Defence is fully integrated into the broader national security architecture and plays a vital role helping deliver the UK's priorities. The Carrier Strike Group 21 (CSG21) is a clear example of the Integrated Review (IR) in action – a multilateral deployment of cutting-edge capabilities focused on

developing global partnerships and strengthening alliances. The deployment spanned the Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, Indian Ocean and Western Pacific, and CSG has interacted with over forty nations, including numerous NATO allies, seven ASEAN members, all Five Eyes partners, Japan and the Republic of Korea. The ability to integrate a US Navy Destroyer and a squadron of US F-35B aircraft has provided an opportunity to demonstrate interoperability and interchangeability with our closest ally. Through a tangible demonstration of international cooperation, the UK has used HMS Queen Elizabeth's convening power to support global security, stability and prosperity, and to help foster cooperation and shape the international order. AUKUS is another example which has drawn, and will continue to draw, on a range of departments: MOD, FCDO, DIT and BEIS.

9. Another example is on national resilience. The COVID-19 pandemic remains a top priority for Defence, where it is working closely with DHSC, NHS and local partners on vaccine delivery, as well as other COVID-19 support tasks. Defence also has 1,200 troops held at very high readiness to support a range of other resilience operations at the request of the civil authorities and has continued to do so throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Defence engages with other government departments, the devolved administrations and local authorities to ensure it is well placed to support national resilience. Recent examples include Defence deploying HMS Mersey in support of Border Force's response to the migrant crisis in the Channel and providing support to flooding, erecting flood defences in North Yorkshire in response to Storm Dennis in 2020.

## **Question 7 - NSC**

10. The NSC considers matters relating to national security, foreign policy, defence, international relations and meets regularly when the circumstances dictate. The NSC is supplemented by meetings of National Security Ministers. The system is designed to be flexible as the Prime Minister has delegated authority to the chair of NSMs to decide on matters of policy as required, with powers of collective agreement. This ensures that there is more capacity in the system to discuss and deliver the breadth of the ambitious agenda of the Integrated Review.

11. As National Security Advisor, I am secretary to the NSC and responsible for advising the Prime Minister when the NSC should be convened, as well as the NSC and NSM agenda. My advice is based on a range of factors including the strategic significance of the issue, the seriousness of the threat and the need of central coordination. The Prime Minister has been clear that he wishes to use the NSC to dictate matters of strategic importance.

### **Question 8 - Sustaining strategic advantage through Science and Technology**

12. As you highlighted in your question, in June the Prime Minister established a new National Science & Technology Council (NSTC) which will make the strategic decisions needed to deliver the UK's Global Science Superpower ambitions. The Office for Science & Technology Strategy (OSTS) is a new unit in the Cabinet Office which will inform and deliver the NSTC's vision. It will work with all departments to help the government to align its capabilities behind S&T advantage. The National Technology Adviser (NTA), Sir Patrick Vallance, will oversee OSTS alongside his role as Government Chief Scientific Adviser (GCSA). Given the membership of the NSC and the NSTC, both Committees will work seamlessly to deliver strategic advantage for the UK, and the DG-level Head of OSTS is also a Deputy National Technology Adviser.

### **Question 9 - Afghanistan lessons learned**

13. The internal lessons learned exercises on Afghanistan are ongoing, with departments taking forward their own approaches. These are not being conducted in isolation and departments have sought feedback and coordinated to ensure they capture and implement their findings in a coherent manner. NATO has already begun incorporating lessons learned from the Afghanistan withdrawal and as a matter of course adapts to meet changing priorities. It has already publicly released the Afghanistan Lessons Learned Factsheet.

### **Question 10 - Crisis Review**

14. The Crisis Review is in its final stages and awaiting sign off by Ministers. I hope to be able to update you on progress in the first half of this year.

### **Question 11 - IR deliverables**

15. The list of IR deliverables will naturally fluctuate over time as real-world events unfold, completed projects are removed and new ones are added. At the time of writing, the MOD is responsible for 11 of the IR deliverables; but many others are also relevant to defence because they have a secondary impact or represent cross-cutting themes. The details of the list and the status of various projects is sensitive; we do not plan to release details about individual items nor provide a running commentary on their progress. However, as I have previously stated, we will provide annual updates on implementation of the Integrated Review as a whole.

### **Question 12 - Defence Assurance**

16. As noted in your question, I chair quarterly meetings with the MOD to assure the delivery of Defence's Settlement on behalf of the Prime Minister. The last meeting before my appearance at the committee on 30 November was on 14 September and the most recent meeting was on 7 December 2021. This assurance process forms the basis for monitoring the MOD's delivery of its 2020 settlement. Tracking of the MOD's IR deliverables is only one part of this process as we consider the delivery of MOD's outcomes contained in the IR and DCP. The process allows for constructive challenge and feedback, which is an important feature of IR integration.

### **Question 13 - Integrated Review SROs**

17. The MoD has one SRO across the IR sub-strategies but senior officials across Defence are involved in supporting and delivering the sub-strategies across the IR as part of the integrated approach we have developed.

## **MOD Equipment Plan**

18. I agreed during the evidence session to establish when the MOD intends to publish its Equipment Plan. I have been informed that the MOD expects to publish the Equipment Plan early in the New Year. They wrote to the Public Accounts Committee in November to inform the committee that an autumn publication date was no longer possible. They are working closely with the National Audit Office to agree a revised timetable for publication and intend to publish in early 2022.
19. I trust that this letter is helpful and I very much look forward to continuing my engagement with you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Stephen Lovegrove". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**STEPHEN LOVEGROVE**



# Defence Committee

Chairman, Rt Hon Tobias Ellwood

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Sir Stephen Lovegrove  
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7 December 2021

Following from our evidence session as part of the inquiry to the Integrated Review, Defence Command Paper and the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy, you agreed that we could write to you about matters on which we would like to receive further written evidence. It would be helpful if we could receive a response to these questions by Friday 14 January.

1. In polling seen by the Cabinet Office, what is the percentage of the UK population who say that they understand UK defence and security priorities?

- And in that polling, what is the percentage of the UK population who support the Government's defence and security priorities?

2. You said that the Government is taking steps to engage the public and broaden the debate about defence and security. What are they? When did they start and do they have an end date (and if so, when is this)?

3 Does Defence need to improve how it explains its role and approach to the public, to dispel any concerns about its transition to a reliance on emerging technologies such as automation and AI? If so, how should it do this?

4. Given your experience in managing the MOD and the Equipment Plan as PUS, what lessons have you taken into your role as NSA in

terms of effectively managing Defence from the centre and making sure it delivers according to the UK's strategic need?

5. What impact has the withdrawal from Afghanistan had on the implementation of the IR goals? Has the experience has reinforced integration or instead made it more difficult because of the public response? What lessons have been learned and what operational changes (to policy or process) have changed as a result?

6. What can you point to as examples of successful integration since the IR was published where Defence has played a role?

- What are the most difficult areas for integration that are relevant to Defence?

7. There are a number of trade-offs in the IR – achieving the balance between security and prosperity, promoting democracy and human rights whilst working with regimes which do not recognise them – which will require strong strategic direction from the NSC. How do you ensure that the NSC has the time and the ability to properly assess and make the political decisions required to implement the IR, especially now the number of NSC meetings has been reduced by almost a third?

8. One of the key overarching objectives of the IR is “sustaining strategic advantage through science and technology”. What is happening to ensure that we achieve this, both across Government and specifically within Defence terms? And who oversees this effort: the NSC or the National Science and Technology Council?

9. During the session, we requested sight of the conclusions of the internal lessons learned exercise on Afghanistan. Could you please confirm that you will be able to share them with the Committee? Could we also see a copy of the NATO lessons learned report in confidence?

10. You agreed to write with an explanation of the changes following the review of HMG's ability to manage chronic crises, following its sign off by Ministers, when do you expect to be able to do this?

11. You told us that the Cabinet Office is tracking 148 individual initiatives under the Integrated Review. How many of these relate to Defence?

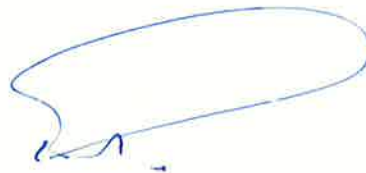
- How are you using these trackable initiatives to ensure that the Defence Equipment Plan will deliver the force structure demanded by the IR, within the budget set by the 2020 Spending Review?

12. The Chief Secretary to the Treasury told JCNSS that you hold quarterly meetings with MOD to evaluate the progress of defence programmes as part of a new assurance mechanism. When did the last quarterly meeting take place before your appearance before this Committee on 30 November? And when is the next one scheduled to take place after 30 November?

- How do these quarterly meetings interact with your reporting to the Prime Minister and the NSC on the 148 initiatives under the Integrated Review?

13. Of the sub-strategies under the Integrated Review (of which we understand there are 22), how many have MOD personnel as the SRO on them?

If you feel unable to respond in writing to any of these questions, we would be happy to attend a secure briefing at the Cabinet Office in advance of the deadline.



**Rt Hon. Tobias Ellwood MP**  
**Chair of the Defence Committee**

