

Biography

Professor Dorman trained as a Chartered Accountant with KPMG, qualifying in 1990 before returning to academia. He has previously taught at the University of Birmingham, where he completed his masters and doctoral degrees, and the Royal Naval College Greenwich. He is currently a Professor of International Security at King's College London based at the Joint Services Command and Staff College and the editor of *International Affairs*, the Chatham House journal published by Oxford University Press and a Research Associate at the University of Pretoria. Andrew Dorman's research focuses on the interaction of policy and strategy, utilising the case studies of British defence and security policy and European Security. He has held grants with the ESRC, British Academy, Leverhulme Trust, Ministry of Defence and US Army War College.

Background

1. The 2021 Integrated Review promised to make a post-Brexit way forward for the United Kingdom in the world. In his foreword then Prime Minister Boris Johnson promised '[b]y 2030, we will be deeply engaged in the Indo-Pacific as the European partner with the broadest, most integrated presence in support of mutually-beneficial trade, shared security and values. We will be active in Africa, in particular, in East Africa and with important partners such as Nigeria. And we will have thriving relationships in the Middle East and the Gulf based on trade, green innovation and science and technology collaboration, in support of a more resilient region that is increasingly self-reliant in providing for its own security' (p.6).¹
2. The United Kingdom finds itself in a difficult and in somewhat of an unusual position. Like many states, it faces the problems of increasing challenges to its current position, major divisions at home and the impact of the coronavirus on its' economy. In the background remains the long-term integrity of the United Kingdom with the Scottish National Party (SNP) calling for a further referendum on Scottish independence whilst in the Irish Republic there has been a surge in support for Sinn Fein raising the issue of a united Ireland once again.²
3. What makes the United Kingdom's situation unusual is that in the midst of these challenges it has also decided to leave the European Union and set out on an unclear and risky new path. What this means for the future direction of British foreign and security policy was unclear and the Integrated Review was the Johnson government's attempt to answer this question.
4. The planned Integrated Review refresh follows on from Russia's illegal invasion of the Ukraine and the financial shock that this has had on the United Kingdom and its allies. This paper reflects on what the Integrated Review did well, what it did badly and events of the last year have challenged its' findings. It would far to easy to say that this marks another

¹ 'Global Britain in a Competitive Age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy', CP.403, TSO, 2021, [Global Britain in a competitive age \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97411/global-britain-in-a-competitive-age.pdf), p.6.

² Arthur Beesley, 'What is driving Sinn Fein's electoral surge in Ireland?', *The Financial Times*, 10 February 2020, <https://www.ft.com/content/6449024a-4c19-11ea-95a0-43d18ec715f5>

'Tipping Point' as so many have done already.³ Nevertheless, there are importance choices to be made for by the government in challenging times and with a country that is far from united in what path to take.

Positives in the Integrated Review

5. In many respects, the central tenets of British foreign policy have been largely consistent for centuries and the Integrated Review sought to maintain them. Geography and an ever-changing flow of people into and out of the country have played a major part in shaping both Britain's history, its' identity and how it has approached the world. As a relatively small but densely populated island nation on the north-west edge of the European mainland, the defence of the United Kingdom has long been dominated by control of the waters and from the 20th century air around its shores. With the advent of the internet this requirement has broadened still further.
6. Moreover, the UK's dependence on trade to help fund the import of food and raw materials to sustain itself has meant that the United Kingdom has consistently been concerned with the ability to maintain the free movement of trade to and from the UK within the context of a relatively stable and balance of power on the European mainland. For the United Kingdom a peaceful and stable Europe has allowed it to engage in trade with Europe but also more importantly beyond Europe. The Integrated Review continued the successive British government's emphasis on NATO as the core security relationship for the UK.
7. The Integrated sought to enhance the UK's global role. Historically, Britain's geographical position has meant that, with the exception of the Channel Islands in World War 2, it has not been successfully invaded and occupied since days of William the Conqueror. Its' early industrialization and the successful development of the Royal Navy meant that by the mid-19th century it became the dominant maritime power. This allowed the British Empire to continue to expand so that by 1920 it covered almost a quarter of the world's land mass. The legacy of this can be seen in the 13 Dependent Territories scattered across the globe that remain part of the United Kingdom, its membership of the Commonwealth, the multiplicity of alliances and partnerships that remain extant and its position as one of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. It can also be seen in the retention of the Gurkhas within the British Army long after Nepal's independence. The Integrated Review stressed Britain's bilateral and multilateral relations with other states and the continuing desire not to be isolated. It promised increased trade agreements and referred to an 'Indo-Pacific' tilt and a recognition that economic and political power is moving from the Atlantic to the Pacific.
8. There was also an emphasis in the Integrated Review in maintaining the existing liberal international order which the UK has played an important part in developing and which gives the UK influence far beyond that owed to it. Along with France, this means that the United Kingdom has retained global responsibilities and pretensions evident, for example, in its commitment to the free movement of goods via the oceans.

³ See, for example, Michael Clarke and Helen Ramscar, *Tipping Point: Britain, Brexit and security in the 2020s*, London: I B Turis, 2020.

9. Controversially, the Integrated Review also abandoned 2010 review's commitment to a further reduction in the UK's nuclear stockpiles. Instead, not only will the nuclear stockpile be increased to a maximum of 260 warheads, but the Johnson government also announced that previous limits on the number of missiles and warheads on the boat at sea would also be abandoned. The reason given referred to improvements in anti-ballistic missile (ABM) technology and the need to preserve the minimum deterrent capability. In practice this was an acknowledgement that improved Russian ABM capabilities necessitated an increase in the number of missiles and warheads to maintain the same level of threatened destruction in order to preserve deterrence. A similar situation in the 1970s had led to the secret development of the Chevaline programme as a means of preserving the credibility of Britain's nuclear deterrent capability.

Problems with the Integrated Review

10. There were also many problems with the Integrated Review. It contained echoes of Churchill's 'Three Circles' policy with their colonial pretensions and associated ideas of UK exceptionalism.⁴ The Integrated Review did not really acknowledge that Britain's colonial legacy is not entirely viewed in a positive light and that light. For example, whilst the UK might want to increase its defence and wider links to India the same view is not necessarily felt in Delhi. It is noticeable that the UK does not part of the Quad and that France has been viewed in a far more positive light. The continued jingoism that parts of the Integrated Review continue to hint at are problematic and will continue to prove a hindrance.
11. Despite the prime minister's promises about a strategic approach the Integrated Review was contained basic flaws with a failure to link 'ends', 'ways', and means'. For example, the Integrated Review placed emphasis on the UK's global role, the importance of so-called soft power and conflict prevention whilst cutting the aid budget and support for the BBC. Similarly, expanding Britain's global role has not been accompanied with any significant pledges to enlarge its diplomatic capabilities. This would seem to suggest that the issues of strategic incompetency first identified in 'Blair's wars and Brown's budgets' back in 2009 have not been resolved despite the creation of a National Security Council.⁵
12. There was also a basic lack of integration of timelines. At a very basic level, the Integrated Review followed its' 2010, 2015 and 2018 in maintaining a de facto 'Ten Year Rule in which the government of the day promised to deliver the requisite defence capabilities a decade hence. In 2010 this made more sense with the risks to the UK identified as likely to occur from 2020 onwards. However, since 2015 governments have identified the risks as current whilst pledging to create the requisite defence capabilities later (for 2015 it was 2025, for the Integrated Review it is 2030). In fact, in each of the post-2010 reviews the threats to the UK have increased. In 2015 it was Terrorism and Russia and by the time of the Integrated Review China had been added to the mix whilst the accompanying 'Defence Command Paper' was noticeable for its vagueness and absence of content.

⁴ Michael Harvey, 'Perspectives on the UK's Place in the World', *Europe Programme Paper 2011/01*, Chatham House, 2011, https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Europe/1211pp_harvey.pdf, Srdjan Vucetic, 'Elite-mass agreement in British foreign policy', *International Affairs*, vol.98, no.1, January 2022, pp. 245-262.

⁵ Paul N Cornish and Andrew M Dorman, 'Blair's Wars and Brown's Budgets: From Strategic Defence Review to Strategic Decay in Less than a Decade', *International Affairs*, vol.85, no.2, March 2009, pp.247-61.

13. The Integrated Review made bold claims that were not backed up by substantive deeds. For example, it spoke of an 'Indo-Pacific tilt' with China spoken of both in terms of economic partnership and as a threat to Britain's interest in maintaining the existing international order.⁶ As part of this the UK announced its commitment to AUKUS,⁷ the defence partnership with the United States and Australia clearly aimed at China, the Five Eyes Community, the Five Power Defence Accords aimed at protecting Malaysia and Singapore and its growing defence links with Japan and South Korea. The sub-text was that the United Kingdom was looking to deter a growing China from exerting its increasing military capabilities. Measures contained within the Integrated Review included the permanent stationing of two off-shore patrol vessels (OPVs) to the region with the pledge of more capable Type 31 frigates to follow later along with the periodic deployment of an aircraft carrier group to the region. In some respects, this echoes the deployment of Force Z to Singapore in 1941 as an attempt to deter Japanese aggression. Centred on the battleship *HMS Prince of Wales* and battlecruiser *HMS Repulse*, Force Z was subsequently destroyed a few days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The problem was that the deterrent lacked credibility and the periodic deployment of a small aircraft carrier task force looks more like a token gesture.
14. If the UK is looking to enter into a deterrent relationship with China, the obvious omission in the IR's military commitment to the region lies in the nuclear dimension. For deterrence to work the small conventional forces would also need the ability to escalate if the UK was not itself to be subject to potential nuclear threats from China. Ironically, this was part of the reason for the periodic deployment of V-bomber squadrons to the region along with plans by the then Conservative government to acquire 5 Polaris nuclear submarines in the 1960s in order to maintain one boat East of Suez. The revised Integrated Review will need to seriously consider whether it wants to go down this route and, if so, decide what they believe to be the Chinese equivalent of the Moscow Criteria. More challenging will be the idea of balancing both an economic trading relationship with China whilst also looking at China as a threat. In this the UK is not alone, but if the Australian experience is anything to go by it is not clear that balancing the two is a practical policy.⁸
15. Finally, there were a series of silences. For example, in a similar way to the American 2011 pivot, the British tilt carried with it the implicit withdrawal of its commitment to the Persian Gulf and a desire to move away from a dependence on Gulf gas supplies. This meant that the UK, at least in the short term, would look to others, such as Russia, for alternative supplies.
16. Moreover, whilst NATO continued to be emphasize NATO's role at the centre of British defence and security policy the accompanying Defence Command Paper implied that in

⁶ Joseph S Nye jr, 'How not to deal with a rising China: a US perspective', *International Affairs*, vol. 98, no.5, September 2022, pp. 1635-1651, Jochen Prantl and Evelyn Goh, 'Rethinking strategy and statecraft for the twenty-first century of complexity: a case for strategic diplomacy', *International Affairs*, vol. 98, no.2, March 2022, pp. 443-469.

⁷ Jamal Barnes and Samuel M Makinda, 'Testing the limits of international society? Trust, AUKUS and Indo-Pacific security', *International Affairs*, vol. 98, no.4, July 2022, pp. 1307-1326.

⁸ Sebastian Biba, 'Germany's relations with the United States and China from a strategic triangle perspective', *International Affairs*, vol. 97, no.6, November 2021, pp. 1905-1924, Rafal Ulatowski, 'Germany in the Indo-Pacific region: strengthening the liberal order and regional security', *International Affairs*, vol. 98, no.2, March 2022, pp. 383-402, Bernhard Blumenau, 'Breaking with convention? Zeitenwende and the traditional pillars of German foreign policy', *International Affairs*, vol. 98, no.6, November 2022, pp. 1895-1913.

some respects the UK would look to free-ride on the alliance at least in the short term. For example, it would not be until some nine months later that the promised reorganization of the army to be announced although the role of the army remained unresolved.

The world one year on from the Integrated Review

17. The most obvious change since the publication of the 2021 Integrated Review has been the consequences of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. In one respect, the invasion has been beneficial for the United Kingdom. It has underpinned NATO as Europe's main defence alliance and the accession of Sweden and Finland to the alliance suits the United Kingdom. Moreover, it has led the Biden administration to re-emphasize the commitment of the US to Europe's defence.
18. Russia has also allowed the new Chief of the General Staff to resolve the debate of almost a decade about the army's role by focusing it on the defence of Europe. Whilst organizationally and culturally this makes sense for the army it was also indicative of the continued lack of strategic perspective of the Ministry of Defence and government. In defence terms how the UK responds to Russia needs to be set within a NATO context. Whilst a number of current and retired generals have called for the return of the British Army to Germany, perhaps even at the expense of the nuclear deterrent, this isn't necessarily the most sensible or even strategic response from a NATO perspective. Rather, a focus on securing NATO's Northern flank and, in particular, supporting its' new Scandinavian members is probably a more logical focus given the UK's physical location whilst the UK's position as one of NATO's two nuclear guarantors is probably more important.
19. The Russian invasion has also highlighted the UK and NATO's limited nuclear options. For the alliance there are currently only two states providing a nuclear contribution – the US and UK – with France choosing to keep its nuclear force separate. In the case of the former, the Trump presidency,⁹ his decision to run again in 2024 and the potential increasing isolation of the US is a strong reminder of NATO's dependence on the US. Apart from US nuclear forces and the US provision of nuclear free-fall bombs to NATO's ageing strike aircraft, there remains only the British Trident force. Russia's invasion is a reminder that the UK is the only permanent member of the UN Security Council to operate a single delivery system. Which means that it only has limited options that it can provide NATO as part of any ladder of escalation. The development of any additional options will therefore need to be considered with the equipment of a force of Typhoons with a nuclear armed Storm Shadow missile being perhaps the easiest option to develop in the short term.
20. The Russian invasion along with Covid-19 have also highlighted the fragility of the world's integrated logistic chains. With China being increasingly viewed not just as a competitor but also a potential opponent the Integrated Review's call for improvements in the UK's resilience needs to be widened and acted upon. If, as the Chief of the General Staff commented, we are in a 1937 moment, then the assumption that the market can deliver whatever is required needs to be questioned and the consequences understood. Even with

⁹ Leonard August Schuette, 'Why NATO survived Trump: the neglected role of Secretary-General Stoltenberg', *International Affairs*, vol. 97, no.6, November 2021, pp. 1863-1881.

unlimited resources the UK would struggle to significant speed up the delivery of most major defence programmes let alone start new ones.

21. The Russian invasion has also had a significant impact on the UK (and others) financial position. As the Chancellor's Autumn Statement made clear the optimistic assumptions about increases in government spending will need to be reconsidered. On the defence side this means that a better analogy than 1937 might be 1980, where Margaret Thatcher replaced Francis Pym by John Nott as Defence Secretary, in order to bring defence spending under control via the 1981 defence review.¹⁰
22. The Integrated Review was predicated on a significant uplift in defence spending that now appears unlikely. Pressures on service salaries, the state of defence housing and foreign exchange costs linked to defence acquisition will all squeeze an already overcommitted equipment budget. There therefore needs to be a review of the defence budget and defence priorities which will directly impact on the Integrated Review. As the Integrated Review made clear, focusing purely on Russia, as the British Army is choosing to do, ignores the medium-term risk posed by China.
23. Whether there is the political willingness or capacity to undertake a serious review of the Integrated Review must be open to date. If the iron laws of defence and security reviews remain unchallenged, then the usual token measures will be followed, and policy will remain trapped in the 'Groundhog Day Cycle' that has been a constant of British defence and security policy for much of the last half decade.¹¹

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¹⁰ Andrew M Dorman, 'John Nott and the Royal Navy: the 1981 defence review revisited', *Contemporary British History*, vol.15, no.2, Summer 2001, pp.98-120, Andrew M Dorman, 'The Nott Review: Dispelling the myths?', *Defence Studies Journal*, Vol.1, No.3, Autumn 2001, pp.113-121.

¹¹ Paul N Cornish and Andrew M Dorman, 'Breaking the mould: the United Kingdom Strategic Defence Review 2010', *International Affairs*, vol.86, no.2, March 2010, pp.395-410, Paul N Cornish and Andrew M Dorman, 'Complex security and strategic latency: the UK Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015', *International Affairs*, vol.91, no.2, March 2015, pp.351-70.