

Supplementary written evidence submitted by Sir Stephen Lovegrove, National Security Adviser

Thank you for the opportunity to provide evidence to the inquiry into national security mechanisms and for your follow up letter of 6 July. I wanted in any case to update you on the progress we have made since we met.

Changes to the NSC

The Prime Minister has agreed the new terms of reference for the NSC. He has concluded that he will chair NSCs once a month and more frequently if circumstances dictate. Given the breadth and ambition of the agenda we have to deliver, Ministers will also meet as a sub-committee to the NSC as “National Security Ministers” (NSM), with a senior minister in the chair on issues that the Prime Minister wishes to delegate. On matters of foreign policy, the Foreign Secretary will chair; on homeland security, it will be the Home Secretary; the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster will chair on matters of resilience; the Chancellor of the Exchequer on questions of our economic security; and if it is necessary for NSM to discuss Europe or trade related issues, it will be the Minister of State at the Cabinet Office.

To keep the discussion decision focused and strategic, the core membership of NSC will be reduced to:

- Prime Minister (Chair)
- Chancellor of the Exchequer
- Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs and First Secretary of State
- Secretary of State for the Home Department
- Secretary of State for Defence
- Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
- Minister of State at the Cabinet Office (Lord Frost)
- Attorney General

Other Ministers and senior officials will join the NSC and NSM as the agenda demands. The Prime Minister will approve the agenda for the NSC and NSM, including the appropriate chair and the NSC(O) will continue to provide support to NSC and NSM. In preparing for NSC and NSM discussions - as with policy and strategy development more broadly - policy teams consult with a broad range of stakeholders including Devolved Administrations, local authorities and external experts.

IR implementation

The IR will be implemented through a series of priority sub-strategies. Each will be led by a dedicated cross-HMG Senior Responsible Officer (SRO). These officials will be empowered to work across departmental boundaries, on behalf of the NSC, to develop and deliver a strategic programme of work. These sub-strategies will replace the NSIG structure. The role and remit of Deputy National Security Advisers has not changed.

To ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of the work, sub-strategies will be integrated into the existing Government Planning and Performance Framework. SROs will report progress to the Cabinet Office regularly and the NSC will review progress overall. This will be supported by reviews and stocktakes throughout the year. We do not currently plan to make the full list of sub-strategies public, following the NSIG precedent.

Strategic Capability

You have asked about our strategy development capability. As I set out to the committee earlier this month, we continue to strengthen our strategy development processes following the conclusion of the IR, both to drive effective implementation of the review, and to position the UK at the forefront of strategic thinking on the issues that will shape the decade ahead. This will involve working with strategy teams across the national security and international policy community to improve coordination and upskill the relevant workforce. To support this effort in the CO, we are establishing a new central strategy development and delivery function within the NSS, responsible for strategy development and capabilities, delivery (including programme management, monitoring and evaluation for NSC), and a new Strategic Advantage Cell tasked explicitly with bringing sustained and rigorous challenge to our grand strategy.

You have also asked about a mapping exercise to show teams and capabilities that are of use to the NSC. The NSC can draw on all levers of government to pursue their aims as the issues require. This concept is at the very heart of our integrated review.

Developing our culture

You have also asked about our culture. I am sure you agree that an inclusive culture that encourages all types of diversity is vital to successfully implementing the IR, and I will continue to support and build on work towards this across the national security community. This work to develop national security culture is aligned to and part of wider plans for government modernisation and reform as set out in the Prime Minister and Cabinet Secretary's Declaration on Government Reform.

A focus on accountability will also form a necessary incentive for change. Ministers will be engaged collectively at earlier stages in policy-making, and more emphasis will be placed on effective implementation. This aims to encourage more flexibility and agility in the way in which departments tackle cross-cutting challenges, with clearer accountability for delivery. This is already being effected through the Government Performance and Planning Framework and Outcome Delivery Plans.

I hope this is helpful in your ongoing work and I look forward to seeing the results of your inquiry soon.

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