

House of Commons Defence Committee

CALL FOR EVIDENCE: UK, US, AND NATO
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1 James Tudor-White
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4 Call for Evidence: The UK, US, and NATO

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PROFILE

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10 Foreign Policy. Mr. Tudor-White is an International Relations Graduate from the University
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12 various webinars, conferences, discussions and calls on relevant and pertinent foreign and
13 security policy topics with a wide range of academics and global politicians.

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SUMMARISATION

2 The United Kingdom, United States and NATO face a plethora of threats which pose a
3 challenge to their stability and security, and that of their wider regions and globally. There is
4 a cohesive view that Iran, Russia, and transnational terrorism are the threats which pose the
5 greatest threat to all three. However, North Korea also presents a threat predominantly to the
6 United States, but extended to NATO as a result of article 5 of the founding treaty. The term
7 of *strategic adversary* is most fitting in reference to China. This is because it presents a threat
8 to the Western-liberal order, and is arguably a revisionist state, intent on creating and
9 morphing the international system to become bipolar or Sino-centric. Indeed, these efforts
10 have been largely successful in South-East Asia, and China's view on non-intervention
11 regarding state's domestic agendas has enabled themselves to build close relationships with
12 certain regimes. Most recently, the statement by the Chinese Foreign Minister urging for a
13 lifting of sanctions on senior Taliban officials shows their disregard to the atrocities
14 committed by those individuals, so long as it lends them greater geopolitical influence in the
15 region. Russia remains an assertive state in various domains, most prominently regarding
16 cyberwarfare and aerial incursions into member states. There are concerns amongst NATO,
17 the United Kingdom and the United States regarding the cyberwarfare and cyber capabilities
18 of Iran and North Korea to cause disruption within society, institutions, and the government.
19 However, the severity of the threat posed by North Korea is significantly less for NATO and
20 the United Kingdom, compared to threat posed and the perception of the threat posed to the
21 United States. This is a similar case regarding Iran, whilst NATO, the United States and
22 United Kingdom do not want to see a nuclear Iran, the threat posed by Iran to NATO and the
23 UK is to a degree somewhat limited in comparison to the threat posed to the United States.
24 The *Iran Nuclear Deal* is something NATO and the United Kingdom remain committed to,
25 despite the United States withdrawal under President Trump. NATO's interest and support of

1 the deal can be attributed to the role that several NATO states played in the deal, i.e., France
2 and Germany.

3 The withdrawal and conclusion of the Afghanistan war has increased the threat posed by
4 global terrorist organisations. The concerns of a resurgent Al-Qaeda and Islamic State
5 offshoots are justified and being considered within the United States and United Kingdom.
6 Concerns have also been raised in the United Kingdom about the increased threat of terrorism
7 following the collapse of the Afghan government and the need to bolster defences against
8 terrorism and increase counter-terrorism capabilities. NATO has been less vocal on the threat
9 of terrorism that the withdrawal from Afghanistan has potentially created. Regarding NATO,
10 there are varying opinions within the alliance, as each state faces their own challenges
11 regarding global terrorism and the various levels of risk within the alliance. The NATO
12 Secretary-General has voiced his opinion that the role in Afghanistan has prevented terrorist
13 attacks and now the future depends on the Taliban ensuring terrorism is not allowed to be
14 foster.

15 This report outlines the main 5 state-based security threats facing the United Kingdom, the
16 United States and NATO, as well as references to the challenges posed by climate change and
17 cyber security. Overall, there is a strong sense of cohesion on the threats, being faced,
18 however the United States has a greater perception and experience of threats, and this can be
19 attributed to their position in the international system. However, because of the nature of the
20 NATO alliance in which both the United States and United Kingdom are integral members,
21 the threats experienced by the United States, also become threats to NATO and thus the
22 United Kingdom.

1 *What are the new US Administration's priorities for US foreign, defence and security policy?*

2 **Priorities**

3 The United States has a pressing priority in the Indo-Pacific. Starting with Obama's pivot
4 to Asia, Donald Trump re-focused and rebranded establishing a greater role including
5 India. Hence, the terminology under President Trump shifted to Indo-Pacific and this
6 terminology has stuck. There are no indications in any areas of US foreign policy to
7 suggest the Biden administration will shift away from the Indo-Pacific, with focus in this
8 area likely to increase. The United States of America has several areas in which it needs
9 to pay particular focus and attention to regarding defence and security. In the Indo-
10 Pacific, the overarching threat can be found with China, who is the US' main strategic
11 rival both regionally and globally. China has proven itself to be a revisionist state, one
12 which wants to challenge the existing world order, and create a shift away from the West
13 to one which is more closely aligned with China. The Biden administration in terms of
14 foreign policy has not significantly differentiated from the Trump administration in
15 reference to China. The Biden administration has initiated a review – due to be finished
16 soon – regarding US-China relations. Currently the position in the White House regarding
17 China as a 'strategic competitor' is unlikely to change. Indeed, it is highly likely that
18 there is going to be increased focus regarding China in the White House. Before assuming
19 office Biden presented a viewpoint of moderation and suggested the need for greater
20 cooperation between the two states. This has changed within the 6 months of Biden's
21 presidency and has become somewhat hostile and confrontational. Indeed, in May the
22 National Security Council Coordinator for the Indo-Pacific [a role created by President
23 Biden] suggested that the time for cooperation between the United States and China has
24 come to an end.

1 Russia and China maintain a complex relationship, and whilst they may not be closely
2 aligned they both wish to see a weakened United States, and create a global shift away from
3 unipolarity and western institutionalisation. As a result, another priority of the United States
4 administration will be to reaffirm its commitment to global institutions and re-join treaties
5 which they left, for example the Paris Climate Agreement which President Biden signed
6 shortly after his inauguration.

7 The United States administration under President Biden is trying to conjure up the image
8 ‘America is back’ referring to a stronger presence in international institutions, a greater
9 cooperative approach with allies and doubling down on US values abroad. President
10 Biden however, despite the rhetoric is still expected to maintain a somewhat America first
11 policy, in that he will engage with foreign policy and lead foreign policy if there are
12 tangible benefits for the average American. President Biden has already showed that
13 America is no longer to be “the world’s policeman”, and foreign policy will revolve
14 around what benefits and suits the United States and to an extent its allies. The priority of
15 President Biden’s foreign policy will be doing what serves American interests, and not
16 engaging in policies which incur costs to the United States without reward. It is highly
17 important that this is recognised by the United Kingdom government, as we have already
18 seen President Biden make a few faux pas which has affected his America being a
19 “globally ally” approach. The relationship between the United Kingdom and the United
20 States has always been special, but President Biden has also shown that he will do what
21 serves the interests of his administration and the American public, and therefore this
22 means he is unlikely to make significant concessions unless it is part of a larger strategy.
23 The United Kingdom needs to be aware of this and not presume that this special
24 relationship is an automatic guarantee. Indeed, this has been evidenced with *AUKUS*,

1 which led to a diplomatic spat with the French Republic, as it resulted in their sale of
2 submarines to Australia to be cancelled.

3 President Biden has also began focusing on ending the United States '*Forever Wars*' in
4 the Middle East and this seems to be his objective to end these by the end of 2021.
5 Indeed, the withdrawal from Afghanistan [which whilst initiated through the deal
6 negotiated and signed under the Trump Administration] has been finalised under
7 President Biden and he has reiterated on various occasions that the process should not
8 have been delayed further. Additionally, as part of the *US-Iraq Strategic Dialogue*,
9 President Biden has begun the process of planning the withdrawal of the remaining 2,500
10 troops remaining in Iraq. It is also likely that we expect the foreign policy of the United
11 States to be less 'adventurist' and instead focusing on diplomatic channels and other tools
12 of statecraft to effect change.

1 *Where do the US, UK and NATO align on their understanding of global threats and their*
2 *view of how to respond? Where do they diverge?*

3 The US, UK and NATO do align on the most pressing global threats, however the recent
4 events in Afghanistan have shown a worrying lack of coherency in policy trans-atlanticly and
5 a dire need for stronger communication between all the parties involved before execution of a
6 policy, especially one which is as significant as this. There are 5 global threats presently
7 facing the United States of America, these in no order are: China, Russia, Iran, North Korea,
8 and Global Terrorist Organisations. From several “off the record” phone calls this appears to
9 be the general consensus in the US academic, political, and security fields who regard these
10 as the most pressing and potentially gravest threats. Additionally, the threat that climate
11 change poses to military capabilities and the need to take stronger action to mitigate against
12 this cannot be understated. Whilst kinetic conflicts remain a probability, the greater threat lies
13 in cyber attacks and there is a worrying trend of increasing frequency and disruptive
14 capability.

1 CHINA

2 China is the world's second largest economy, possesses significant military capabilities and is
3 becoming increasingly assertive in the Asia-Pacific region. China appears to be the most pre-
4 eminent of all threats, in one specific call I recall a distinguished individual suggesting that
5 there is a very real and high probability of a kinetic conflict between the United States and
6 China in the next 5 years. From China's actions and rhetoric, it is a revisionist state, which is
7 trying to carve its own identity in global politics. I believe the term strategic competitor is an
8 accurate term to describe Chinese foreign policy, as they try to formulate foreign policy that
9 challenges Western interests and encourages countries to engage in a deeper relationship with
10 China as an alternative. This is becoming increasingly significant with the Chinese Foreign
11 Minister urging the lifting of international sanctions on senior Taliban officials and the
12 Taliban regime. There is a consensus in both the United States and the United Kingdom that
13 China is most likely the preeminent threat facing these states. The *AUKUS* agreement
14 between the United Kingdom, United States and Australia is a clear sign that enhanced
15 cooperation is needed to create security regarding China. Despite this I do not believe that
16 China is the foremost threat facing other NATO countries. Whilst I appreciate that NATO
17 does regard China as a 'systemic challenger' to the alliance's security there are significant
18 divergent views on what this entails and to what extent. For many European NATO member
19 states China is not the pre-eminent security challenger or perceived global threat. Though, it
20 should be noted that the general mood towards China is changing within certain NATO
21 countries. An example is Lithuania, which has enacted a new policy regarding mobile
22 telephones, which includes advising individuals [especially those who work in the military,
23 defence, or government] to avoid using Chinese made smartphones, especially Huawei and
24 Xioami which could have inbuilt censorship tools or security flaws.

1 China is becomingly increasingly hostile towards Taiwan, and this is a major security
2 challenge for the United States. The norm and expectation is that they will come to the aid of
3 Taiwan in a time of crisis, though President Biden's reluctance and hesitancy to enact
4 meaningful foreign policy creates doubt about this. The rate and increase in frequency of
5 these aerial incursions especially over the past week is a point of deep concern both within
6 the United States and the United Kingdom. It is possible that this is in response to the
7 AUKUS deal, but in any case careful monitoring of this situation is necessary. A conflict
8 over Taiwan is the most probable and likely manner in which a kinetic conflict with China
9 will begin. Thus, diplomacy, dialogue, and a strong resolute message of support towards
10 Taiwan could act as a means of reducing any further escalation in this situation.

1 **NORTH KOREA**

2 North Korea should now be regarded as a nuclear state, their nuclear weapons programme
3 has been highly successful, and it is accepted that the North Korean nuclear weapons are able
4 to be miniaturised [fitted onto missile delivery systems]. North Korea has recently conducted
5 a hypersonic missile test, medium-range missile tests and anti-aircraft missile tests in
6 September this year. The most recent test results indicate that North Korea is most likely a
7 nuclear armed and capable state. There is some disagreement in the policy and research
8 circles about how advanced their missile capabilities are. In particular their Inter-Continental
9 Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) and Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs) because of
10 their effectiveness as a strategic launching mechanism. There is a strong consensus though
11 that by 2025 North Korea will be a fully nuclear armed and capable state who is able to
12 launch strategic missiles at the contiguous United States. North Korea is an antagonist of the
13 international system, and utilise weapons tests as a means of achieving leverage in future
14 foreign policy discussions. North Korea additionally uses missile tests in a manner which is
15 designed to create a sense of unease and de-stabilise the regional security. The question
16 which needs to be considered is the extent to which North Korea proves to be a threat. For the
17 United States, North Korea remains a primary security issue and one which has increased
18 because of the recent advances in North Korea's military missile capabilities. The United
19 States has frequently referred to North Korea as a "pariah state", "rogue nation", and a
20 member of the "axis of evil". Despite some of the increasingly tense rhetoric used by both
21 North Korea and the United States during the Trump presidency, significant diplomatic
22 progress was also made with the 'Singapore Summit'.

23 North Korea has become increasingly advanced in cyber capabilities, and this is extremely
24 worrisome as it has been used by the regime as a means of generating income. The cyber-
25 attack against the Bangladesh Central Bank which resulted in significant quantities of its

1 foreign reserves to be stolen, has been largely suggested to have been an attack by North
2 Korean back agents. In addition, North Korea was responsible for the WannaCry Attack
3 which caused significant disruption within the National Health Service. Whilst these attacks
4 to an extent have had flaws the ability for the North Korean regime to conduct such
5 successful attacks in recent years is a worrying sign of their potential military modernisation.

6 Regarding North Korea, I personally do not find there to be any significant overlap between
7 the United Kingdom, United States and NATO. Ultimately the three states/organisation want
8 to see a denuclearised Korean peninsula; however, relations between North Korea and the
9 UK, and many NATO states are not as strained historically as US-North Korean relations.
10 The main objective of the United Kingdom and NATO will be to prevent the potential of
11 North Korea to conduct successful cyber operations against themselves.

1 **RUSSIA**

2 The most pressing and converging threat between NATO, the United States and the United
3 Kingdom would be Russia. Russia is a spoiler in the international system meaning that it tries
4 to challenge the existing order, sow discontent within the system, and overall disrupt the
5 influence of the West to effectively act. An example of this could be seen regarding Syria,
6 where Russia supported Syrian armed forces during the civil war. Russia is a bordering state
7 of 5 NATO members, when accounting for the Kaliningrad Oblast, and thus for many NATO
8 states Russia is perceived as a potential adversary who is very close to home. Much of this
9 viewpoint can be attributed to the events which unfolded in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in
10 2014. Russia has become increasingly antagonistic towards certain NATO states, in an
11 attempt to show that it is no longer intimidated by the alliance. Russia frequently incurs the
12 aerial airspaces or flies in close proximity to them so as to trigger an interception response
13 from NATO's air forces. A pertinent example of this was on the 29th of March this year in
14 which NATO had to scramble fighter jets 10 times to intercept Russian aircraft in 6 different
15 groups. The interceptions occurred over the North Atlantic, North Sea, Black Sea and Baltic
16 Sea and required a response from several NATO states. Not only does Russia employ
17 physical capabilities to assert its power, but it is also utilising cyber capabilities, for example
18 disseminating fake news. This is becoming increasingly prominent in the Eastern Flank of
19 NATO, where the media outputs are generally using social media and online channels, and
20 infamously *Sputnik News*. Russia is also alleged [though they deny] to be responsible for
21 state-sponsored cyberattacks such as the Solar Winds hacking and the Colonial pipeline hack,
22 directly challenging US fuel supplies along the East Coast. Russia also is known to engage in
23 activity which is flagrantly contradictory of international law and norms of state sovereignty.
24 The attempted assassination and poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal and the assassination
25 of Alexander Litvinenko using radioactive polonium, paint the picture of Russia as a state

1 which has little regard for individuals lives especially those who challenge the regime.
2 Indeed, in the case of the Skripal's, a British citizen was killed with use of a chemical
3 weapon, on British soil. This is one of the most extreme acts Russia has done, and the fact
4 Russia has previously committed such an act means that we should expect Russia to
5 potentially conduct an act again in any of the NATO states and with the belief of impunity.
6 This cannot be allowed. Russia is therefore, an increasingly assertive state in the international
7 system and one which acts with a degree of hostility and a sense of impunity. That said, we
8 should not be threatened by Russia because of NATO's conventional military capabilities and
9 resolve. It is important to remember that the expenditure of NATO is significantly higher
10 than that of Russia. NATO estimates suggest military expenditure as an alliance will be
11 \$1,049 billion compared to Russia which is estimated to spend between \$60-\$70 billion.
12 Therefore, it should be appreciated that Russia is also acutely aware of this and is unlikely to
13 be willing to engage in a conventional kinetic conflict. Russia's possession of nuclear
14 weapons remains an important aspect which needs to be considered and should be viewed
15 better as a means of de-escalating a conflict, than allowing them to escalate aggression. That
16 being said, it is important NATO maintains its presence in the Eastern Flank as a deterrence
17 and this shows NATO's willingness and resolute support to defend one another especially
18 regarding Article 5.

19 I disagree with the notion that NATO should develop an Arctic policy per se. There is little
20 current reason or rationale for NATO to develop and adopt such a doctrine, at the present
21 moment in time. The United States relatively little interest in the Arctic is proof of this notion
22 as well, despite their purchase of icebreakers which is necessary considering the United
23 States only has 1 fully operational and dated icebreaker. Additionally, there is limited
24 militarisation in the Arctic, and it is unlikely that Russia would consider launching any
25 offensive behaviour towards a NATO ally in the region. Furthering this point is the relative

1 cooperation and communication between Russia and Norway to avoid any escalation of a
2 conflict and to resolve disputes. Thus, a NATO Arctic military strategy would only serve to
3 increase tensions between Russia and NATO and not provide any additional security against
4 Russia. I believe though that the United Kingdom at this present moment in time sees interest
5 in the Arctic and would further want to engage in the Arctic for security purposes. I recall a
6 Defence Committee report regarding the Arctic, which suggested it was concerned by Russia
7 increasingly militarising the region especially the Kola Peninsula. This viewpoint seems to
8 have made its way into NATO; however, I would argue that this is not a pressing security
9 challenge. Granted, Russia maintains a strong military presence in the region, but this is not
10 that the presence is for a regional purpose, indeed it is a global force based in that area for
11 technical reasons. The reason for this can be attributed to the fact that the Kola peninsula's
12 proximity to the gulf stream creates abnormally warm water temperatures in the region
13 meaning it is not covered by winter sea ice. Other areas in Russia with Arctic access would
14 be unsuitable, and the Arctic enables Russia's navy to have access to both the Atlantic and
15 Pacific Ocean without the need to passage near NATO states, such as the Bosphorus in
16 Turkey. I therefore would urge hesitancy on the parties to avoid escalation of the *perceived*
17 *but non-pressing* threat and argue that the threat of Russia remains low in the Arctic.

18 Overall, there is a strong degree of consistency regarding the policies of NATO states, the
19 United Kingdom and the United States regarding the threat posed by Russia, and this is
20 especially pertinent regarding cyberwarfare and covert acts operated by Russia within the
21 United Kingdom and NATO territories, i.e., the Salisbury poisoning. There is a collective
22 consensus within NATO, the UK and the United States that Russia is an assertive state within
23 the international system and that they are known to engage in activities which run contra to
24 the West.

1 IRAN

2 For a many years Iran has been considered to be a major threat to the United States of
3 America and this has been the case since President George W. Bush branded Iran a part of the
4 “*Axis of Evil*”, and mentioned their connections to “terrorist allies”. This is especially
5 pertinent regarding America’s long standing and close relationship with Israel. There are
6 three primary threats attributable to the Iranian regime. Firstly, Iran’s nuclear programme,
7 secondly their support and funding for terrorist organisations regionally and thirdly their
8 cyber capabilities.

9 Iran’s nuclear programme presents largely a threat to states regionally, its nuclear capabilities
10 are not yet at a stage of being launched or even being at a stage of formulation into a
11 warhead. Proliferation of nuclear weapons is a concern for states globally and the main
12 pressing fear in the United States government is that the development of weapons by Iran
13 could be used against Israel. For the United Kingdom and NATO, the notion of Iran
14 developing nuclear weapons is vehemently opposed on the basis of it destabilising regional
15 security and diminishing theirs and the United States’ regional influence. The development of
16 nuclear weapons in the region is also alarming most pertinently because of Iran’s support for
17 terrorist organisations globally. There is no concrete evidence to suggest that Iran would
18 engage with terrorist organisations regarding nuclear matters but nuclear proliferation by all
19 states increases the chance that nuclear material may enter the “wrong hands”. For NATO
20 [especially the states party to the JCPOA] and the United Kingdom the ideal position is a
21 return to the stipulations and expectations outlined in the agreement framework. President
22 Biden has also mooted the notions of engagement with Iran to achieve a nuclear deal.

23 Iran has been developing a highly sophisticated and capable cyber warfare unit, and this is an
24 increasing threat to the United States, NATO, and the United Kingdom. The United States

1 intelligence community have already assessed that the capability of Iran is that it could cause
2 significant but short-term disruption to significant and important aspects of the United States
3 government and civil society. Whilst, Iran has so far, not conducted many cyber-attacks
4 against the continental United States it has been suggested that they have undertaken
5 ‘probing’ of critical US infrastructure systems. Iran has been accused of engaging in
6 numerous cyber attacks within the wider Middle Eastern region, especially regarding those
7 connected to energy sources or Israel. Each attack would only further increase the capabilities
8 of Iran as they fine-tune and adapt existing mechanisms, meaning the threat of Iran’s cyber
9 capabilities is only like to increase.

10 Finally, Iran has been suggested to be a significant supporter of international terrorist
11 organisations, most infamously and notably Hezbollah in Lebanon. Iran is also known to be
12 operating within Iraq, supporting politicians and the major concern here being suggested by
13 some academics is that this could help fuel an increase in violence following the US
14 withdrawal. Iran has also been accused of being a major facilitator of international arms
15 transfers and this combined with their support for international terrorism means they are a
16 considerable threat within the region. However, it should be noted that relations between the
17 Taliban and Iran still remain tense and are unlikely to become friendlier any time soon. Iran
18 is concerned about the hard-line fundamentalist Sunni Muslims in power, the potential of
19 Afghanistan to become home to terrorists, and historical grievances.

1 GLOBAL TERRORIST ORGANISATIONS

2 There has always been a risk of terrorism from domestic terrorists to those who are fully
3 active within a global terrorist organisation with access to significant equipment capabilities.
4 My assessment at the moment is that the threat global terrorist organisations pose, has
5 increased significantly since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. This view has also been
6 espoused by several US military personnel who believe that the withdrawal from Afghanistan
7 and the new Taliban regime will enable the possibility of terrorist attacks occurring in the
8 United States, and there is no reason why this would not be the case in the United Kingdom
9 or other NATO states. It is very likely that we will see the reformulation of Al-Qaeda and
10 quite possibly ISIS and their affiliates within that region. From my understandings there is a
11 view in some but not all areas of the United States government that there needs to be careful
12 monitoring of the situation in Afghanistan and increased intelligence to reduce the potential
13 of terrorist attacks occurring and most importantly the pre-emption and prevention of terrorist
14 cells forming. Whilst the withdrawal from Afghanistan involved significant demilitarising
15 and cleansing of sensitive tools and equipment, there was still a significant arsenal of
16 weaponry left behind, as well as weaponry surrendered and left behind by the retreating
17 Afghan forces. This factor also increases the risk of terrorism and the threat that global
18 terrorist organisations present.

19 In addition, President Biden has announced that the planned withdrawal of the remaining US
20 troops in Iraq, as part of the ongoing *US-Iraq Strategic Dialogue* will be completed by the
21 end of 2021. There are some concerns about this policy creating a void in Iraq for
22 exploitation by terrorist organisations and Iranian backed militias. The United States Army is
23 currently largely focused on training and supporting Iraqi forces in their battle against Islamic
24 State insurgents and jihadists. A repeat of Afghanistan would significantly increase the
25 potential and likelihood of devastating terrorist attacks within Europe and the United States.

1 **Climate Change**

2 Climate change is a significant threat to all states around the globe. Whilst climate change in
3 itself is not a direct threat, it is a causal factor and a risk enhancer of threats. This means it
4 creates new security challenges and increases the risk of existing security threats. The United
5 Kingdom is becoming increasingly aware of the threat that climate change poses, and the
6 Prime Minister is using his position to lobby other states into supporting and making changes
7 to reduce and slow climate change. The United Kingdom hosting the COP26 Summit in
8 Glasgow, is another sign of this government's desire to make effective change regarding
9 climate change and taking a position of global leadership regarding this issue. Under the
10 Trump administration, the United States government was not focussed on climate change
11 issues, to the extent that they withdrew from the Paris Climate Agreement. President Biden
12 reversed this policy upon taking office and has shown his desire and willingness to tackle the
13 climate challenge aware of the domestic issues it poses and additionally the global security
14 challenges it poses. The NATO alliance has had a long interest in climate change, until the
15 2000s the focus was primarily on science and research. Since then, they have developed
16 several specific climate change reports and frameworks, and the challenges have been
17 highlighted in NATO summit statements since 2010. NATO have agreed and decided to
18 enact a climate change mitigation policy, which will look at how they as an organisation can
19 reduce their emissions and reduce energy demand and consumption within the armed forces,
20 without detrimenting capabilities of the alliance. Additionally, climate change adaptation
21 policies are being considered so as to ensure NATO's capabilities remain as strong as well as
22 increasing its resilience and disaster response capabilities.

23 Therefore, regarding the challenges posed by Climate Change there is a strong cohesive view
24 between NATO, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom should
25 maintain its leading and forefront role in voicing climate concerns. The current United States

1 administration is also more aware of the threats posed by climate change and thus we can
2 expect greater cohesive views and strategies between the three aforementioned parties. This
3 is a long-term position and climate change is something in which these states need to adapt to
4 and mitigate the potential detriments to operational capabilities. These states also need to take
5 stronger to slow the rate of climate change because of the human security issues this creates
6 globally.

1 **Cyber Security**

2 As elucidated to regarding the security threats and challenges posed by several states
3 previously, the main security challenge is cyber related. I will keep this section brief, because
4 of the challenges and threats I have already mentioned, but I believe that the challenges of
5 cyber security and the threats posed are going to significantly increase within the future. The
6 threats cover a wide range of areas and possibilities, including defence, financial, diplomatic,
7 and affecting civilian life.

8 Financial cyber-attacks are not new, the most notable being the Bangladesh Central Bank
9 experiencing a cyber-attack conducted by North Korean agents, which resulted in a
10 significant proportion of the central banks overseas funds being lost. Cyber-attacks can also
11 be used as a means of asymmetric warfare to disable and damage a state's ability to
12 successfully deploy military equipment, or even damage the functioning of civic society, i.e.,
13 the disruption caused by the WannaCry Hack [in which the NHS was not even the directed
14 target]. Cyber warfare is hard to predict, in some cases it is hard to identify the initiator of the
15 attack, and retaliation is often hard to initiate without the willingness to witness the escalation
16 of the situation. NATO have long realised the potential threats posed by cyber warfare
17 developing Centre's of Excellence designed to focus on this specific threat. The United
18 Kingdom following the WannaCry attack and the United States following the Colonial
19 Pipeline Hack are also becoming more aware of the potential damage and implications of a
20 successful cyber-attack against themselves. This is especially important considering this is
21 the most likely and potential domain of future inter-state disputes.

1 **CONCLUSION**

2 Overall, I personally would assess that the threats collectively facing NATO, the United
3 Kingdom and the United States in order are;

- 4 1. Russia
- 5 2. China
- 6 3. Global Terrorist Organisations
- 7 4. North Korea
- 8 5. Iran

9 This list is purely speculative, but from assessing what the biggest threats to each of the
10 previous actors are, it would appear that this is the order of most to least convergent on
11 shared threats. This is not to say the threat posed is equal in magnitude, but instead where
12 more states regard this actor to be a threat. Should we move away from a country specific
13 threat list, I believe the biggest threat presently facing the United States, the United Kingdom
14 and NATO are cyber-attacks. These are occurring with increasing frequency against all of
15 these states, and they have the power and capability to cause significant disruption to the
16 function of civic society. Cyber tools are used to spread disinformation with the aim of
17 fuelling distrust in institutions and the government, and also used as a weapon, whether this is
18 to attack fuel supplies, healthcare providers or even a fully scale military cyber assault. This
19 is the most pressing threat and one in which all the parties realise the potential devastating
20 effects of not responding to this scenario. It is therefore imperative that strong defensive
21 action is taken to prevent and increase resilience against potential cyber-attacks, as this report
22 has outlined that all of the states on the list are capable of launching devastating and
23 dangerous cyber-attacks. The future of warfare and aggression in states is likely to be cyber

1 and asymmetric, with the cyber nature able to mask in some cases the originator of the
2 assault.

3 Hypersonic missiles are another potential threat that must be considered, albeit currently
4 there are only a few countries which are developing them and 3 of them namely China, North
5 Korea and Russia appear on the list of strategic threats facing the block. The concern is that
6 these missiles are highly manoeuvrable and fast, thus meaning they are hard to intercept,
7 except potentially during the terminal phase. Thus, it would be in the interest for these states
8 and NATO to develop interception systems with an increased accuracy for the interception of
9 hypersonic missiles.

10 Finally, climate change is also becoming an increasing security and global threat for NATO,
11 the United Kingdom, and the United States. Whilst climate change is not a direct threat, it is
12 a threat multiplier, in that it increases the risk of certain threats, increases the danger of
13 certain threats or a combination of both. It is important therefore, that this realisation is met,
14 and this is significantly more likely under the current US administration.

15 This paper has shown a strong and cohesive view that the threats facing NATO, the United
16 Kingdom and the United States are largely homogenous as a result of their political position
17 and intertwined foreign policy.