JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

First review of the National Security Strategy 2010

Oral and written evidence

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ORAL EVIDENCE

Rt Hon Baroness Neville-Jones - (QQ 1-43)

MONDAY 4 JULY 2011

Evidence heard in Public Questions 1 - 43

Members Present

Margaret Beckett (Chair)
Mr James Arbuthnot
Sir Alan Beith
Malcolm Bruce
Lord Cope of Berkeley
Lord Fellowes
Lord Foulkes of Cumnock
Lord Harris of Haringey
Lord Lee of Trafford
Baroness Manningham-Buller
Paul Murphy
Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale
Lord Sterling of Plaistow
Baroness Taylor of Bolton
Keith Vaz
Lord Waldegrave of North Hill

Examination of Witness

Rt Hon Baroness Neville-Jones DCMG

Q1 The Chairman: Thank you very much for coming, Lady Neville-Jones. Welcome to the Committee. This is the first evidence session that this Joint Committee has held in this Parliament. As you know, our role is both a specific and potentially rather a wide one in that we are specifically charged with considering the National Security Strategy and its wide implications. We decided that we would begin this by taking evidence from former Security Ministers, so we have you today, which we very much appreciate, and we will have Lord West of Spithead in September. After that, we will take evidence from the Government. As you can see, we have quite a substantial membership and a number of colleagues want to ask questions. I am mindful that we all have limitations on our time, so we will try to be as

succinct as we can, but we hope to be able to cover some ground. You have been a long-standing advocate—I understand a proponent even—of the need for a new government security architecture. I would be grateful if you would say briefly why that is.

Baroness Neville-Jones: Certainly, Madam Chairman. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to the Committee. On your first point, it is right that for a long time I have been a proponent and advocate of the need for a national security machinery, obviously following on a national security concept. I would say that there are two broad reasons why I thought that that was where the UK ought to go. The first sprang from my experience in government as an official. In the early 1990s I was a chairman of the Defence and Overseas Secretariat, as it then was. In that position, which was occupied at Deputy Under-Secretary level, I felt that the centre of government lacked drive and authority in relation to departments and that even the capacity to co-ordinate—you will see that I feel that the centre should do more than just co-ordinate—was extremely limited if only because the Permanent Under-Secretaries, if they so chose, could in effect decline to co-operate. There was a limit to what officials could do to bring policy issues together in a form suitable for ministerial consideration.

The second reason was the march of events. It seemed to leap out at one after 9/11 that you could no longer separate—if it ever had been sensible—defence and foreign policy from domestic security. These were now deeply interwoven. Terrorism was the obvious but not the only example, frankly, of the way in which the two now interlocked. It therefore became imperative to have both methods of operation as well as a forum for consideration that brought the two together. What the National Security Council does is clearly an adaptation from American thinking, but I hope that it is fitted for the requirements of Cabinet government and not for the separation of powers. It gives an opportunity for Ministers from the relevant departments, these days very much including the home departments, to be part of national security policy-making.

Q2 The Chairman: You say that that was your view and that was why you came to be a proponent, but has your experience since led to your amending that view in any way?

Baroness Neville-Jones: If anything it has strengthened my view that we have done the right thing. I believe that the previous Government's CONTEST framework, which, as you know, we have endorsed and followed, has made a major contribution to thinking in counterterrorism. Part of its internal logic was to bring domestic and foreign together, but what was still lacking, even when the previous Government went so far as to set up NSID, was the creation of a forum within which that kind of concept could be taken fully and properly. For instance, something like PREVENT could be discussed by all Ministers with an interest in it. On the whole, the creation of the National Security Council has given us the two elements that we need for the machinery of policy-making and, I hope, the mindset that leads to looking at these issues within a national security framework.

Perhaps I might say that the one thing that has not happened—the party canvassed this in opposition—was the notion of a single budget. There is indeed the single security count, but there is no wider pooling of moneys, as they are still departmentally allocated. We need to see how that works out in practice. The previous Government tried the experiment of pooling, which I do not think worked terribly well, and there is of course a constitutional problem, which is that parliamentary committees want to see accountability to them, so perhaps this Committee may be able to do something in that area. It is a fairly difficult one and it is not easy to see sweeping solutions that are compatible with a Secretary of State's responsibilities. But we need to devise some measure of flexibility so that we can allocate

resources at mid-term or according to need, if it arises. That is because one thing that a national security concept should be able to give us in policy-making is greater flexibility than perhaps we have had in the past.

Q3 Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale: Has your experience of serving on the National Security Council since it got up and running—you have been a part of it—in any way changed your views on how it should be constituted and what business it should employ itself with?

Baroness Neville-Jones: It has been going a year, which of course is a relatively short time. During that period quite a lot of its work and its meetings, apart from the ongoing tasks of things like Afghanistan and serious consideration of countries with which we are deeply involved, such as Pakistan and of course Libya, have been devoted to the various commitments made in opposition to review various aspects of policy. It is fair to say that the National Security Council has brought about a standard of inquiry and a searching nature of questioning into the papers put before it, which I think is an improvement on what I had previously seen in government as an official. So my answer to the question is, "So far, so good". It think that it is performing quite well, but I am conscious of the fact that a year of what I hope is going to be a long-term Government is not a long time in which to test it. Some of the answers to your questions will come when we see how adequately, for instance, the National Security Council and the secretariat serving it are able to do the necessary monitoring of implementation, of which so far one has had relatively little experience given the length of time. I would give it quite high marks as far as things have gone.

Q4 Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale: When you say that it is an improvement, do you mean an improvement in comparison with Cabinet committees and departmental questioning or with the Joint Intelligence Committee?

Baroness Neville-Jones: Not really JIC. I was thinking more of my experience, which after all is some time previously, and of course one does not know what happened in the previous Government. But certainly as compared with the quality of discussion and sometimes, it has to be said, the quality of chairmanship that I experienced in Cabinet committees under the old structure, I would say that this is more rigorous.

Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale: Under the Prime Minister?

Baroness Neville-Jones: Under the Prime Minister, yes. As one of the questions that I was given notice of implies, if the Prime Minister is chairing, the quality of the Prime Minister's chairmanship is of course crucial.

Q5 Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale: Do you think that its membership is about right? Is that your impression?

Baroness Neville-Jones: I think it is. The fact of the coalition has brought one or two people in who might not otherwise have been there, and of course we have a Deputy Prime Minister. But the object of the membership is to ensure the presence of not only those departments that have traditionally been concerned with foreign and defence affairs but these days obviously the Home Office, as well as representatives such as the Secretary of State for Energy. Energy security is very important; it is an absolutely crucial element now, along with commodity security generally. The membership is really most of those who have a strong and continuing everyday interest in security issues. What the Prime Minister has done, rightly in my view, is to ensure that when a subject arises with implications that go

wider than the regular membership, the relevant Ministers are invited. For example, the Department for Communities and Local Government has come for discussions on the PREVENT strategy.

Q6 Malcolm Bruce: Thank you very much for coming in. You said at the beginning that the National Security Council needs to balance and co-ordinate domestic and international considerations, but how well does it do that? How effectively does it balance them? For example, we may have a security situation in the form of a threat to oil supplies which we feel we need to do something about, but the perception of taking action may have unintended consequences domestically. How does the NSC deal with that?

Baroness Neville-Jones: You make a very good point. In my view, one of the items that should always be on the agenda in the discussions on anything is the ramifications for other portfolios. If it is essentially a domestic issue like counterterrorism, what are the implications of one's actions and how are they going to be seen abroad, quite apart from at home, and indeed the reverse? I think that the Prime Minister is very conscious of that and does not miss a discussion about presentation. All Ministers know that it is an extraordinarily important part of successful policy-making. It would be fair to say that it is certainly a consideration in meetings. The National Security Council itself is supported by a number of sub-committees, so if something needs detailed discussion where you want to look at the relationship between domestic and foreign and the implications for each, it may well have gone through a sub-committee before it gets to the NSC itself.

Q7 Malcolm Bruce: That implies that actions may even be determined by an evaluation of the area of conflict. You also mentioned presentation. To what extent does the National Security Council discuss presentation? I can give an example. We get an awful lot of focus on what is happening in Helmand in Afghanistan, but not so much on possible improvements happening elsewhere. Is that sort of thing discussed in the National Security Council? How are things presented in a way that might lower the pressure for militants, for example, to use our engagement in Afghanistan to encourage and promote terrorism at home?

Baroness Neville-Jones: If we were discussing Afghanistan, we would certainly be conscious of where Parliament would have an interest and therefore the points that one would need to cover. You are asking what I think is another question, which is whether the National Security Council adequately takes into account the potential domestic ramifications of what is essentially a foreign policy issue, and the reverse. That is one of the tests of whether the council is an effective body. Perhaps I can put it this way: so far I would say that the Government have not fallen into the trap of failing to understand that you have to look both ways. Everyone knows—everyone here has been in government in one way or another—that the beginning of a policy or a new action is the hardest thing. I always felt when I was a senior civil servant that the decisions taken early on in a crisis were more important than the ones taken later. If you got them wrong, you spent your time taking corrective action. Therefore it is a matter of getting it right at the beginning. The Government have expended quite a lot of energy at the outset of policy issues, of which Libya is a good example, thinking through what they were trying to do before they actually did anything. We had several meetings on Libya before any action was taken.

Q8 Lord Fellowes: During the very eventful year in which the NSC has been in place, would you describe the bulk of its work as being proactive and strategic or predominantly events-driven and reactive?

Baroness Neville-Jones: The big event that has taken place during the lifetime of this Government is the so-called Arab spring, which has several different characteristics. I hope that it is fair to say that the Government have developed a strategy in relation to the Arab spring. It could not have been anticipated, so what you need to be able to do once something like this gets going is to have the capacity to be able to formulate a comprehensive response. We inherited, obviously, a good deal of ongoing business, the single most burdensome of which, given the human life involved, was our commitment in Afghanistan. The situation that the Government have found themselves in is to a significant extent an inherited one, but you will have seen that the Government have started to mould their policy towards Afghanistan. There is a clear view that it is now right to start making the transition from combat to the provision of training and support, and that policy is being pursued. The Government have tried to give strategic responses to issues and to develop immediate action within a long-term framework.

Lord Fellowes: So you could say that the council has lived up to the hopes that you had for it when you chaired the group that proposed it.

Baroness Neville-Jones: Yes, I think that it has. As compared with the quality of the decision-making I saw previously, it is an improvement.

Q9 Paul Murphy: I am interested in the relationship between the National Security Council and the Cabinet, because this is not an ordinary Cabinet sub-committee—it is chaired by the Prime Minister and has lots of Ministers on it. Is it almost an independent Cabinet? As I say, it is chaired by the Prime Minister, so it could be seen as something very different from ordinary Cabinet government. What is the relationship between them as far as strategy is concerned? Who actually owns it, the Cabinet or the NSC?

Baroness Neville-Jones: I was the only member of the NSC who was not a member of the Cabinet. Other than me, everyone on the NSC was obviously extremely aware of their Cabinet membership. Obviously I could read the Cabinet minutes, and what I observed was that there was very regular reporting to the Cabinet of NSC work. A normal report that the Cabinet would expect to get of, say, the Foreign Secretary having been abroad or an important visit to this country was reported to the Cabinet; it did not come to the NSC. Moreover, there would be a discussion led by the appropriate Secretary of State in Cabinet if the NSC was about to take an important paper. You would probably have to ask a Cabinet Minister, but I doubt whether the Cabinet has grounds for feeling that it is unaware of what the National Security Council is doing, although I think you are right to say that it is a slightly larger-than-life Cabinet committee. It has more status, I suppose, than Cabinet committees traditionally have, partly because of the breadth of its remit. However, I still think that it is definitely subordinate to the Cabinet.

Q10 Paul Murphy: As far as you know, would the Prime Minister then report the proceedings of the NSC to the Cabinet either formally or informally? It meets after the Cabinet, presumably the following week. Would the Prime Minister come along and say, "This is what we discussed and these are our findings"?

Baroness Neville-Jones: I am speaking more from reading rather than knowing, but my impression is that it would be the other way round. If the NSC was about to take an important paper, the Secretary of State concerned would speak to his or her colleagues so that he or she could hear their views. Certainly I know that to be the case for the Home Secretary.

Q11 Paul Murphy: Finally, what role do you think the NSC should play in strategic decision-making? Examples would be going into Libya and coming out of Afghanistan.

Baroness Neville-Jones: I think that it is the forum in which important questions such as that should get a full airing. There are big issues where a normal meeting may not be an adequate forum for discussion, in which case there ought to be an away day. The NSC has held such meetings. Relatively early on, it held one on Afghanistan for that purpose—that is, to go over the ground in order to establish the situation, look at the options for the future and then start guiding the policy. If the NSC is to be worth anything, it should above all be able to contribute strategic thought and context for government decisions.

Q12 Baroness Taylor of Bolton: This is very tiny but, first, do you think that the sub-committee structure is the right one? Secondly, given that everyone on the National Security Council apart from you is a member of the Cabinet, it is not like another Cabinet committee where, if a Cabinet Minister cannot attend, often a junior Minister will go. Does that happen in this case?

Baroness Neville-Jones: Yes it does. If the Foreign Secretary is abroad—it happens quite often to the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for Defence—the most appropriate Minister of State will come to the meeting. The seat is never left empty. I believe that you asked another question.

Q13 Baroness Taylor of Bolton: Yes, whether you thought that the sub-committee structure is the right one or whether that might need to be revisited.

Baroness Neville-Jones: The view that I take of sub-committees is that they ought to be adapted to circumstances as the life of a Government goes on. There are certain sub-committees that you should have permanently. For instance, nuclear policy is very important so there should be a nuclear sub-committee. We will not need the Olympics sub-committee after the Olympics, but it is very important to have it beforehand. You have, in a sense, two varieties of sub-committee. We have a sub-committee on home affairs, which takes home counterterrorism issues, and that seems right. I would say that we have not got all that many. On the whole, the Government wanted to keep the structure fairly simple and not allow an enormous proliferation of bodies in so far as that is possible. If you have the National Security Council, it is always possible—and this has happened—to direct further work to be done in possibly an ad hoc forum before it comes back to the council.

Q14 Lord Harris of Haringey: I think that you indicated that if major issues were being discussed by the National Security Council, the relevant Secretary of State would have reported to the Cabinet before you met. Did that sometimes have the effect of diminishing the quality of discussion in the council in the sense that the Cabinet had already taken a view or the issue had been exposed? Was that a problem and, if so, would a simple expedient such as reversing the order of the meetings be helpful?

Baroness Neville-Jones: It is certainly the case that I imagine that the NSC would precede the Cabinet rather than the other way around. I do not know whether it makes a great deal of difference. If there were discussions in Cabinet, I did not have the impression that, when the issues were then discussed in the National Security Council, people were inhibited from expressing their views. The discussions could be quite lively. I do not think that it is the case that somehow one has a stale meal by the time something gets to the National Security Council. What discussion in Cabinet enabled people to have was input from colleagues, which obviously formed the background to discussion in the NSC. One of the duties of the

NSC office—as is normal, it is shadowed by an official structure—is to identify the major questions that need to be answered; that is, issues to which Ministers' questions are directed. However, the Committee will know that it is almost invariably the case that not all four questions, if there are four, will be discussed equally. In the end, attention will be focused on one. It is hard for me to say exactly whether Cabinet discussion affected that, but I certainly do not get the impression that that reduced the liveliness and the desire to focus on the really difficult questions taken by the NSC.

Q15 Sir Alan Beith: I cannot quite imagine the Prime Minister and the Cabinet saying, "I am minded to escalate this to military action, but I will see what the National Security Council says this afternoon and I will tell you next week how we get on". What does happen?

Baroness Neville-Jones: You are asking someone who has not been in Cabinet. Something like Afghanistan is a matter of continual discussion in government, so you will have a discussion in the NSC with a paper taken that has been written for the NSC. Of course, Cabinet Ministers have access to NSC papers as well. That kind of discussion is often followed by a ministerial Statement and, as necessary, colleagues will be consulted before it is made in the House. There is a process and I think that it would be wrong to give the Committee the impression that the National Security Council stands by itself and is separate from the rights of Cabinet Ministers and the Government as a whole to have sufficient influence on policy in order to be able to stand behind it.

Q16 Sir Alan Beith: Where you have operations going on, as is presently the case in Libya, for example, does the National Security Council become something like the war Cabinet that we saw in the Falklands conflict? We have not restored that kind of mechanism now that we have the NSC. Does it mean that the NSC does that job?

Baroness Neville-Jones: I did not have personal experience of the management of the Falklands campaign. Certainly in the case of Libya, a sub-committee was set up, which when I left the Government was meeting twice a week. I think the Prime Minister, along with the Secretaries of State for Defence and Foreign Affairs, gets a briefing every day. The wider committee, which includes the Home Office, meets twice a week. You can imagine that all aspects would be considered: where the military situation stands, the political context, any economic or aid considerations that need to be taken into account, consular aspects, border control and immigration, the European Union side of things and communications. There is a sort of checklist of items that you would consider, which seems to be about right as a way of managing the level of our operations in Libya. I would imagine that, with a more intensive campaign such as the Falklands, you would be meeting every morning or indeed throughout the day. Libya was not so fast-moving.

Q17 Sir Alan Beith: Can the work of the NSC easily be separated as being of a more strategic character?

Baroness Neville-Jones: Yes, it can. If the full council starts getting into tactical stuff, I think that it is not doing its job, because that should be done in a COBRA-style committee. The NSC should take strategic aspects of policy that cannot be done, say, in the case of Afghanistan without having a good grasp of the tactical situation. But the council is not there to discuss the tactical situation as a major item on the agenda.

Q18 Lord Cope of Berkeley: Did you mean that the war Cabinet is a sub-committee of the Cabinet or a sub-committee of the National Security Council?

Baroness Neville-Jones: I think, although I am subject to correction here, that it is a sub-committee of the National Security Council. I am not absolutely certain and I apologise for that.

Lord Cope of Berkeley: That sub-committee dealt with the tactical questions in Libya.

Baroness Neville-Jones: Yes.

Q19 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: I want to turn to the use of intelligence. As you know, on this Committee we have a lot of people with experience in intelligence, either operationally or in its scrutiny. We are very interested in your views about the NSC's handling of intelligence and whether you think that its input into the strategy is effective or whether a single, overall director of intelligence would improve the situation.

Baroness Neville-Jones: One of the lessons that I thought we needed to learn about the relationship between intelligence and policy was that they should not be mixed; that is to say, you should not have policy guidance as intelligence. The way I have observed this operating in what I would regard as a proper fashion is when, for instance, there is a discussion on Afghanistan and there is a paper from the Joint Intelligence Committee on those aspects of the situation that are JIC-related. It draws the various strands together, since, after all, JIC work should be a composite of intelligence drawn from secret sources and from our understanding of the situation from diplomatic and military sources as well. That gives a good synthetic picture of the situation on the ground and its implications. There was no occasion that I can recall when we would have discussed Afghanistan in the absence of having such a base paper. The same would be true of a rather more tactical kind of intelligence if we were talking about Libya. The relationship between the NSC and the intelligence community is the right one. The three heads of the agencies are in attendance at the NSC and are invited to speak, and they speak frequently. The chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee is also present. So the relationship is operating properly and the important constitutional proprieties are being observed.

Q20 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Would not an overall director streamline these things?

Baroness Neville-Jones: This is a very interesting question. When we were in opposition I have to say that I was slightly tentative, but I was a proponent of such an idea. What I had in my head was the increasing need to try to draw together the strands of intelligence from different sources and to be able to talk to the Director of National Intelligence in Washington. In fact, the Prime Minister did not pursue that and not surprisingly the heads of the existing agencies did not think much of it.

Something else is happening that is important and which may significantly reduce the need for what I saw. Increasingly, the three agencies are operating on an integrated basis with integrated teams to deal with intelligence on different issues in different parts of the world. The product that comes is now integrated in its character at a much earlier stage of the game. Do we need to be able to talk to the Americans at a senior level across the board? Yes, I think we do. I have come to the view that this is one of the jobs to try to fill with someone senior and experienced, and that is probably the chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee. There are other ways of meeting the need, but I do not feel that so far the absence of a direct counterpart in this country puts us at a serious disadvantage.

Q21 Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale: I would like to ask you to turn to the National Security Strategy. In what ways do you think that it is an improvement on previous structures? With your long and distinguished career in the Foreign Office, you must know,

as I do, that from the 1970s through the 1980s and 1990s there have always been structures on which to set priorities. What has struck me when the Cabinet Office talks about the NSS is the phrase "for the first time"—for example, "For the first time, clear priorities have been set about the risks the country faces". But we know that there were always structures, sometimes called requirements. There were always priorities. The Foreign Office, the MoD and the other customers of Whitehall gave the agencies what they considered their necessities and it was worked out in a structured way. What I would like to say in a brief and more modern way is this: what is the value added in having the NSC? What improvement would you say has really come about through this structure?

Baroness Neville-Jones: You are quite right to say—and obviously you have very good experience of this—that the tasking of the agencies expressed the priorities and made them rather explicit. Perhaps I may put it this way. They still had a strong departmental focus, but I would say that the National Security Strategy changes things in two ways. One is that it brings the departmental priorities together in a single document and in a sense forces the Government to put them in order and to choose between them. What is more, as I said earlier, it is very hard now to express a national priority on a purely departmental basis because of the changed nature of security. What this document did—this is the only "first" that I would claim for it—is nail the Government's colours to the mast on priorities and which of the particular risks were the most important, taking account of their impact and likelihood. One of the techniques, which we did not pioneer—our predecessors did—was the approach to national risk assessment. I think that that is an important innovation and should be developed. At the moment it is intelligence-led. Whether that is right, I do not know, but it is an important tool for government to try to understand where it needs to put its resources.

Q22 Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale: Are there some improvements that you would like to see in how things are done?

Baroness Neville-Jones: It is very important that the National Security Council does not begin to be the only place where thinking takes place. I feel quite strongly that the National Security Council, while challenging other departments, should itself be challenged. It is very important that other departments are also thinking. I would like to see all departments have some think-tank element within them. We do not have the national security forum and I do not particularly regret that. However, it is important that departments should maintain an open dialogue and allow themselves to talk to experts in their area so that the Government do not cut themselves off from expertise. If we have learnt anything about modern government, it is that we need the resources of the whole of society to make it work properly, so it is important that the system remains open. I hope that the National Security Council machinery—the National Security Strategy and so on—does not become a form of closed shop. I am not saying that it is, but I fear that it could be. It is important that that should not happen.

Q23 Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale: What do you think about the frequency the NSS? Do you think that it should be a rolling process?

Baroness Neville-Jones: Clearly you will be reviewing it. There is meant to be an implementation board as an official function and I hope that that works. If something is not quite right, you should start to amend policy. I have to say that if a strategy is worth its salt, it should not need amendment every year, and indeed the aim should be for it to be for a Parliament. At the end of that Parliament, we should look at how far we were on track, how strategic we were and how much we got it right. Equally, if we did not get it right, we

should not be frightened to change it. My view is that one should try to write it for a Parliament and I hope that that is the discipline that would force one to be strategic rather than tactical.

Q24 Mr Arbuthnot: Last year, the National Security Strategy and the Strategic Defence and Security Review came together at a comparatively late stage and were published one after the other, one day after the other. What should happen next time?

Baroness Neville-Jones: We were, obviously, in a particular situation, which I am not going to labour with this Committee. Obviously we were under a financial cosh. It is not ideal to have to work both in parallel. I am sure that this is a blinding flash of the obvious, but the framework of the strategy is something that really ought to guide the distribution of resources in defence and security. I think that they need to interact; that is to say, while there should not be a perfect set piece on national security strategy, which is then taken as the Procrustean bed within which we shall now allocate our defence and security resources, it is highly desirable to have cross-fertilisation between the two. Next time around, I hope that we can have a bit more seriatim instead of having to do both at a gallop. Equally, I am not a believer in the Government taking ages and ages over things, because that is the way to lose momentum. I do not think that the quality of thought is improved by taking excessive time. Putting people under a bit of pressure to think intensively over a period of time produces just as good, if not rather better, results. I would not say that we should start this exercise a year ahead, but I think that having a good assessment of the success of the previous strategy—how the world has evolved and the UK's place in it, what we want to be doing and what our priorities are—is the right process when we look at resource allocation.

Q25 Lord Lee of Trafford: You referred earlier to the Arab spring. I realise that it is fairly early days, but are there any preliminary lessons that could be learnt from it? Does it mean that a new chapter for the SDSR should be considered?

Baroness Neville-Jones: I think that the Arab spring is essentially a political phenomenon to which we need to deliver a rounded response, not just a political one, although it would be politically driven. Given what we know about the structure of these societies and the reform process, which I hope the western countries can help to put in place, there would need to be an economic component and what is known in the jargon as a security reform component—trying to ensure that the internal security of this country is accompanied by the values that make it possible for us to co-operate with it. All those things are politico-economic with a strong security element within them. My view is that Libya is the exception. I do not think that it is going to be the general rule for the kind of response that one wants to make or, indeed, for the kind of response that is affordable. Does the experience of Libya justify another chapter of the SDSR? I think that my answer to that is no.

Q26 Lord Lee of Trafford: With respect, does it not go a little broader than that when one takes into account Egypt, Tunisia and some of the Gulf states? I was not particularly focusing on Libya.

Baroness Neville-Jones: My answer to your question is that, in the case of Tunisia, Egypt, the Gulf states and, for that matter, Syria, our response is essentially one that brings into deployment assets that are other than military. I do not think that it is right for us to be going down the road of having a series of military responses. I do not think that that would command international support and it is not something that the UK ought to try to do.

Indeed, those who have been the proponents of and actors in the Arab spring want to see from us forms of help and support other than military.

Q27 Keith Vaz: This does not apply to Yemen, does it? We have domestic considerations as far as Yemen is concerned. A civil war in Yemen will mean, with al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, that the problems will be on the streets of London and not just in San'a.

Baroness Neville-Jones: Indeed, and I said that there should be a strong security element. You are quite right to say, Mr Vaz, that Yemen is potentially an area where al-Qaeda, which is already established there, could become significantly more powerful. Our security interest in that is very considerable. However, the UK response is intelligence-led. It may well be security reform-led, if we can get the right sort of Government there and co-operation with them. We will obviously have a strong focus on what is going on on the ground in Yemen, but I do not believe that the UK should be using military means as a response.

The Chairman: I am conscious of the time, but we have a few more questions.

Q28 Lord Cope of Berkeley: You said that it was important that other departments should maintain an open dialogue with people outside. Is that how you see external advice coming into this whole process—via the departments rather than direct, as it were, into the national security secretariat? Looking at the list of people on the various committees and sub-committees, one sees that it is more or less the same people meeting with different hats on and slightly different cast lists. It looks awfully inward-looking in a way, particularly as most of them are in the Cabinet anyway, so the external advice part of it seems to me to be important.

Baroness Neville-Jones: I agree.

Q29 Lord Cope of Berkeley: But should it come in through the departments or should it come in direct?

Baroness Neville-Jones: It is obviously important that the National Security Council collectively, both at official and at ministerial level, should maintain a challenge function, with Ministers challenging one another to some extent. If you are going to have a thinking Government and if you want to maintain the strength and the vibrancy of Cabinet government, with the Secretaries of State taking charge of policy in their own departments, it is extraordinarily important that that should be the place where thinking about that policy domain is taking place. Obviously, that does not exclude members of the National Security Council and the secretariat having discussion and dialogue, but I am very concerned to try to ensure that we do not begin to centralise thought in one place so that the departments are relieved of it—on the contrary. It is important that, when challenged by the National Security Council, the department can stand up for itself. There should be real discussion and debate. It is important not to enfeeble the departments as a result of the creation of something. I do not want it to become a monster.

Q30 Lord Cope of Berkeley: What about outside advice? Should that come in direct to the National Security Council and its secretariat?

Baroness Neville-Jones: When we were drawing up the strategy, first of all we put it out to the allies—they were shown drafts and individuals were consulted. There was not a formal consultation process. Partly that was to do with time, but I would not exclude that in the future. The Government of the day might decide to set up a series of consultations with experts, which would partly be a way of assessing how well you had done and what you

needed to do next. I am strongly in favour of open government—don't get me wrong—but I think that it is for those in the policy areas to be the people who ensure that the latest ideas and thinking, as well as the expertise that can be drawn on, come to them. Let me give you an example. In counterterrorism, technology is a very important component of our ability to beat the enemy. It is very necessary to maintain a dialogue with those who can offer you solutions to problems. How do you do that? You do that by taking the problem to them rather than, as has traditionally been the case, unfortunately, by developing a requirement and then a specification and all the rest of it—only when you have all that do you actually go outside. You need to go outside much earlier.

Q31 Lord Sterling of Plaistow: Baroness Neville-Jones, you probably have more international experience than most in this room by far. I would find it particularly interesting to hear your views on the post of the National Security Adviser. I hear what you say about the role of the National Security Council being to implement the long-term foreign policy of what has been declared in the last year, but most of the Ministers, from the Prime Minister downwards, if I may say, are not hugely experienced in the international field and so are very reliant on advice. Do you think that in our long-term interests the first National Security Adviser should be a long-serving member of the Foreign Office and that the second one should be a long-serving member of the Foreign Office? I happen to feel that the role should be more like that of a Secretary General. I have spent a lot of my life in the United States. Given the strength and authority of many of the National Security Advisers there—they think outside the box—do you think that we are getting the best advice direct to the Prime Minister or do you think that the American system is not the one that we should follow?

Baroness Neville-Jones: In the American system, the National Security Adviser is a public figure in his or her own right. It is one of the few jobs that is not subject to advise and consent. The National Security Adviser is a powerful figure in the bureaucracy and the country. Indeed, from time to time, depending on the occupant, the post has rivalled that of the Secretary of State and other members of the US Cabinet. The constitutional position is different here. It would be perfectly possible to have a national security Minister, but I think that it is unlikely to happen. This is because of the Prime Minister's role and the care that the Prime Minister needs to have for the status of his Foreign Secretary not just in the Cabinet but externally and abroad. What does that say about the National Security Adviser? I think that in our system he or she has to be an official, or at least a non-Minister. He or she does not have to be an official. You could perfectly well, if you so chose—I would not object to this—take someone from outside, if you found the right person. He or she does not have to be from the Foreign Office. One thing that I would like to see in government generally, and between the Foreign Office and other departments, is more cross-fertilisation and career experience in other fields. The whole nature of policy tells you that you need up at the top of government and among senior officials an understanding of each other's domains and an ability to synthesise some of that information for yourself, so that FCO people spend some time in the MoD, or vice versa. It is part of the way in which HR departments ought to think these days when it comes to the appointment of someone like the National Security Adviser. One of the points that I was given warning of was the question, "How long?" I think that a Parliament is quite a good length of time; it is about as much as human flesh can bear, as the job is very burdensome. When an appointment of that type comes up, you should have, within the pool of talent available at the top of the Civil Service, a choice of people from different departments with a range of experience. But you need to breed those people—it will not happen by accident—so this needs to be a

conscious policy on the part of the departments so that they ensure that their talented people get experience that goes wider than just the department of which they are a member.

Q32 Lord Sterling of Plaistow: Given the qualifications and experiences that one feels are needed, could one see somebody from outside—from one of the great universities or whatever—doing this?

Baroness Neville-Jones: Yes, I could. I think that it would be the exception rather than the rule but I could certainly see it happening. It is not an accident that, in the US, ex-military people have done it. These are real possibilities. We should not fall into a mould. We should maintain the notion that this is a job that could be done by a variety of talent, so that we do not just go to a regular pigeon-hole to look at people. However, I believe that the system itself needs to breed the right people. I am keen on ensuring that there is a pool of talent at the top of government that contains not just the necessary grey matter but the necessary experience and understanding of all the domains. The pol-mil element of policy will always be quite important in the National Security Adviser.

Q33 Lord Waldegrave of North Hill: I think that you have answered my question already, because I was going to explore the point about whether a Minister could be in this role. You rightly said that if the adviser was to be someone of the stature of their US counterpart, they would have to be a Minister, who would be equipollent at least with the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for Defence, which would create all kinds of problems. I think that your answer to the question whether this should be a Minister is no, because the Minister would either have to be too junior or too senior. Can I explore this a little bit? All these things are fine and everything is going along swimmingly, but it is always interesting to have a thought about pathology. If at the moment there were to be a big row in the NSC, the decision would have to go back to Cabinet formally. Is it possible that the NSC could become a way for a powerful Prime Minister who is at odds with her—I do not know why I say "her"—colleagues to develop a separate forum for policy? You and I know very well what happened during the fall of the Berlin wall. Would the NSC during that period have become the Prime Minister's engine or would it have been a restraint on the Prime Minister?

Baroness Neville-Jones: My goodness. That would depend on where the balance of opinion lay. However, it would have been right out in the open at a very early stage—earlier even than with the lady about whom you are talking. One effect of the NCS is that it makes things more transparent. More people are involved and there is a more formal framework for a lot of these decisions.

Q34 Lord Waldegrave of North Hill: Do you think that the adviser—the Percy Cradock, just to take a name—will not be the Prime Minister's person but more a servant of the collective?

Baroness Neville-Jones: He has to be a servant of the collective as well, if that individual is to have any credibility. He cannot just be the Prime Minister's ear. The individual has to command the confidence of the committee as a whole. That is very important. One reason why the job is burdensome is that the occupant travels with the Prime Minister—certainly this is the case with the current occupant. I do not know how sustainable that is, to be frank. I think that the Prime Minister needs a person or people who can perform missions for him, but whether that should necessarily be the National Security Adviser is an open question.

Q35 Lord Waldegrave of North Hill: I think that you are saying—and I agree with you—that the present structure makes less likely divisions and fractures at the heart of government, which can sometimes happen.

Baroness Neville-Jones: I certainly think that if fractures are beginning to emerge, they will become obvious extremely fast.

Q36 Baroness Manningham-Buller: Lady Neville-Jones, I wanted to ask you about the effect of all this on the Home Office, where you found yourself after the election. You had not sat in the department before, with your Foreign Office experience. I wondered what you thought was the impact, if any, the effect, if any, or the change, if any, of the existence of the NSC on the Home Office and its work.

Baroness Neville-Jones: It is hard for me to compare this with a past that I did not really know, either inside or outside. The existence of the NSC has made departments such as the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence more conscious of the Home Office's responsibilities in their treatment of foreign affairs. I think that it has helped to develop and embed a counterterrorism policy that has both the domestic and the foreign component to ensure that, for example, policy on the Yemen takes the counterterrorist element into account at an early stage. I think that it has helped the Home Office to embed itself in the consideration of national security. When it comes to the formulation of major policy areas, of which there were two when I was in the department—the review of the counterterrorism legislation and the review of PREVENT, which is perhaps the more relevant example—I think that it is fair to say that the need to be able to convince other departments of the thesis that was being put forward sharpened up the drafting. The effect of the obligation to explain it to others, to get their support and to take it through the quite searching official structure and then Ministers was to produce a clearer, sharper and better-designed policy than would otherwise have been the case. I would regard that as a desirable effect of what I think the NSC should be doing, among other things, which is the challenge function before policy is made public.

Q37 Baroness Manningham-Buller: Can I press you on that? It really goes back to Lady Ramsay's question. For the first iteration of PREVENT, there was not an NSC as such, but other departments were consulted and iterations went round. There are ways of co-ordinating policy without the existence of the NSC. I think that your earlier point that it helped other departments to think about the Home Office issues is very important, but is that down to the existence of the NSC?

Baroness Neville-Jones: I entirely take your point. Indeed, if you are writing a paper on a subject such as PREVENT, which has elements that affect the justice department, education and so on, you cannot wait to discuss those elements and to circulate the drafts until you reach the NSC; it has to be done well before that. However, I think that even when the final drafting was taking place the existence of the NSC resulted in a better product.

Q38 Baroness Manningham-Buller: Has it also been a catalyst for the improvement of relations between other departments, such as the Ministry of Defence and the Home Office, which have not in my experience done quite enough talking?

Baroness Neville-Jones: That probably still has some way to go. The work that was done on something like the Mumbai-style contingency in this country brought people together who had not previously had much to do with one another and forced a process that has resulted in our having capabilities that we would not otherwise have had. That is a direct

result of the existence of the council, I think. It has made it easier to go in depth into how, for example, the Department for Transport and the Home Office deal with aviation security issues, some of which are now quite complex. It has had its virtues. The fact that other Ministers around are also saying, "Shouldn't we be dealing with this?" can be of assistance to a Secretary of State who is trying to get some help from a colleague.

Q39 Keith Vaz: You must be disappointed that the role of Security Minister was in effect downgraded when you left the Home Office from Minister of State to Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State.

Baroness Neville-Jones: That is the decision that has been made.

Q40 Keith Vaz: Why did you step down from the Government?

Baroness Neville-Jones: I am not sure that that is what I came to give evidence on. The context was set out in the exchange of correspondence with the Prime Minister. I had felt for some time that it was probably right for me to go sometime in the first part of the year.

Q41 Keith Vaz: In terms of what is happening at the Home Office, with the creation of the National Crime Agency, there is no home at the moment for counterterrorism. The Met is very keen that it should remain part of the Metropolitan Police—Sir Paul Stephenson made a speech about this a few weeks ago—but it seems that there will be an ongoing review. There is a possibility that counterterrorism will come out of the Met after the Olympic Games and perhaps be given to the NCA. What is your view on that, given that you are not part of the Government and you are a free thinker? Where do you think counterterrorism should be based?

Baroness Neville-Jones: It is important that counterterrorism has available to it the resources that I think the NCA will have at its disposal—the forensic resources and quite a lot of the back-up. I understand why the Met would like to continue to lead on counterterrorism. I am not sure that it is impossible to devise a scheme where the Met continues to have a rather preponderant role in counterterrorism while not keeping it entirely divorced from the rest of the NCA. It would be rather anomalous not to have any sort of link between something that is called the National Crime Agency and one of the most prominent forms of crime. It is a debate still to be had. The one decision that we took, which I am sure was the right one, is that you do not start having this debate before the Olympics, but after that there needs to be a genuine and open-minded discussion about how we go forward.

Q42 Keith Vaz: In your exchange with Lady Manningham-Buller, you mentioned the PREVENT strategy. Obviously the Government believe that it was not as successful as it should have been. I prefer the word "engage" to "prevent", because the way to deal with the radicalisation of communities is to try to engage with communities. Do you feel that more should be done in the future to engage with communities to try to find out what the roots of radicalism are and where they are based? Why do mild-mannered social workers from Leeds suddenly become people who are prepared to blow up fellow citizens in the middle of London? Do you think that enough has been done in that area?

Baroness Neville-Jones: Clearly, we need to understand the roots of radicalisation. There, I think, there is nothing to choose in terms of the understanding of policy or what we regard as important between the preceding Government and this one. This Government have said, "This country needs an integration strategy. We need to feel that we are one people." That

should be the role, duty and policy responsibility of DCLG. The Home Office's responsibilities have, in a sense, been narrowed to the difficult area—it needs to be dealt with and it is properly the Home Office's—of dealing with those individuals who are in danger of crossing the line into criminality, with the object of preventing criminalisation and criminality from taking place. That is not just simply engaging in the sense of "Let's have a dialogue", although dialogue is very important. "Let's have a dialogue" should mean "Let's have an argument about these things and let's have them out on the table". In our view, the framework of integration and DCLG's job in that respect are very important. The Home Office deals with something that is now narrower—it takes place in prisons and in ensuring that schools are not beginning to be places for this.

Q43 Keith Vaz: Finally, do you share the Home Secretary's view that we should be troubled by what is happening in our universities? In her statement on this, she was very clear in saying that she believed that the roots of radicalisation may well be in the universities of our country.

Baroness Neville-Jones: There have been cases where that has been so; there is a track record. Academic staff rightly say, "We stand for academic freedom and for freedom of speech". However, they also have to engage with the pastoral care of their students. In the pastoral care of their students—and it is important that they do this and that they take it seriously—they should be able to pick up some of the clues and signs of when people may be going off the rails. It is not for them to deal with that, but it is for them to invoke and get the help of those who can assist. That includes very often the chaplains at the university. I think that it is very important that there is greater awareness of the dangers.

The Chairman: Baroness Neville-Jones, thank you very much indeed. We detained you rather longer than I had hoped, but you have been very patient with us. Thank you for giving evidence. I remind the Committee that our next session will be on 14 September, when we will be taking evidence from Lord West.

Admiral Rt Hon Lord West of Spithead – (QQ 44-87)

MONDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2011

Evidence heard in Public Questions 44 -87

Members Present

Margaret Beckett (Chair)
Mr James Arbuthnot
Sir Alan Beith
Malcolm Bruce
Lord Cope of Berkeley
Lord Fellowes
Lord Foulkes of Cumnock
Lord Harris of Haringey
Lord Lee of Trafford
Baroness Manningham-Buller
Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale
Baroness Taylor of Bolton
Lord Waldegrave of North Hill

Examination of Witness

Lord West of Spithead GCB DSC

Q44 The Chair: Welcome, Lord West, and thank you very much for coming. This is the second evidence session that the Committee has had in this Parliament. We had one in the last Parliament, as you know, because you gave evidence to us. You will recall that our role is to consider the National Security Strategy, which is on the one hand rather specific as a remit and on the other hand potentially rather vague—it is certainly quite wide. We decided that one thing that we would like to do from the outset is to hear from former Ministers responsible for national security, so, as you may know, we heard from Lady Neville-Jones just before the recess. We are grateful to hear from you today and we will be taking evidence from the Government a little later in the autumn. We are particularly interested in your views because of the combination of experiences that you have had, not least as Security Minister in the Home Office, as well as your service both in the Navy and in the Ministry of Defence.

We are all eager to ask questions. Two of our colleagues apologise that unfortunately they cannot stay for the duration of your evidence, but they are keen to have the opportunity for

some dialogue—we hope that you understand that sometimes that there are prior commitments. I encourage all colleagues to be concise, as we have quite a lot of material that we would like to get through.

Thank you again for coming. One thing that obviously springs to mind is how you would characterise the main differences between the National Security Strategy that was produced under the previous Government and that produced in October 2010 by the present Government. Perhaps you could just give us an outline of your reaction.

Lord West of Spithead: First, thank you very much for calling me. It is nice to have an opportunity to talk on what I think is a very important topic. One of my sadnesses is that there is not as much difference as I hoped there might have been between the latest National Security Strategy and the one that was instigated in 2008. To lay my cards out, I am a great believer in the UK having what I always used to call a grand strategy. It sounds rather pompous and imperial, but it is not meant to be; it was just meant to be all embracing. We had not had anything like that and I was keen and felt that it was important to have what I would call in naval terms a headmark—a clear view of how we saw our nation, how we saw its place in world and how all departments could work towards that headmark.

The first National Security Strategy was, to put it in blunt terms, rather cobbled together initially. I got involved in this quite late on and it needed a lot of redrafting. The good thing about it was that it tried to embrace all the various risks and threats—all the sorts of problems that one had to consider—and it started various departments thinking about these things. It was far from a wonderful document but, my goodness me, it was the first time that we had done it and that was a very good thing, I think. Historically, there had been a perception of what Britain's place in the world was and where it was going. I am talking now back to the beginning of the last century.

For the second one, I was intent that we should try to improve it and make it more all-embracing. I had considerable difficulty in that. By then, I had a National Security Secretariat in the Cabinet Office. It was quite small and it serviced COBRA as well. All we were able to do, in terms of expanding it, was to try to get some leaching out of that document. For example, we produced the first ever national risk register. An NRA had always been produced—it was a classified document—but I was very keen, as I was in the Contest strategy, to get as much unclassified as possible so that our public could understand the sorts of threats that we were grappling with. I think that, with that national risk register, we achieved a lot. It was very useful for the local resilience forums and others.

I had hoped to get even more out of this and to start thinking in intellectually strategic terms about the issues that I have talked about: how do we perceive ourselves in this world? There were lots of statements in various documents about the fact that we need global reach and must not reduce our footprint, but there did not seem to be the intellectual background to back that up. I wanted to try to achieve that. To do that, one needed to be able to draw on other departments. We had various horizon-scanning groups—for example, in the Foreign Office—and I felt that we needed to have a little more beef within the Cabinet Office. I have to admit that we had not achieved that by the time I had finished—I was still working on it.

When I looked at the new National Security Strategy, I saw that, yes, it had given a list of the tiered threats, but it was very similar to what we had worked out for the national risk register; there was nothing very different. It had a piece about Britain's position in the world, which drew on a paper that I had produced from the National Security Forum—I am afraid that that has been got rid of, which I think is a great loss. We had produced papers on

how we perceived Britain's place in the world and Britain's strengths and weaknesses, which were drawn on for that document. But there was very little other than that. It had not gone that step further that I had hoped for. I am keeping my fingers desperately crossed that, as we review this document, we make it much more of a proper strategic document and build up on the staffs—I will not go into that now, because probably you want to ask questions about it.

I suppose that the simple answer to your question is that I do not believe that it was very different, but we are in a far better place than we were in 2007, when we had no document like this and government departments were not really thinking about some of these issues, whereas now they are. I was able to draw things out. For example, I was having huge difficulty in levering an overall cybersecurity strategy for the UK. Work had gone on in various departments, including very good work, but there was not an overall, all-encompassing strategy. By using the National Security Strategy, I was able to get that on the agenda. So some good things came out of it.

The Chair: That is very helpful. Thank you.

Q45 Baroness Manningham-Buller: Lord West, may I press you a bit on your last answer, as there are some things that I do not understand? I think that you are saying, if I can summarise, that a start was made under the last Government and progress has been made but you are disappointed with the current strategy because it is not strategic enough. If you had been drafting it or responsible for its production, what sort of questions would you have wanted it to address?

Lord West of Spithead: I think that I would have started—this was not an easy thing to do, as I started it while I was in post—to push people harder in the Foreign Office and elsewhere to try to start really thinking about how the UK sees its position in the world. How do we see ourselves? Do we believe that we are a power that really has a requirement to reach out and get involved in wars in other parts of the world to protect our nation? Do we feel that we need to be a full part of alliances around the world, bearing in mind that the last 15 years have very much shown that this can be quite an optional thing? If you look at how alliances have moved and changed, this is by no means sure. Do we believe in things like sovereignty of certain parts of our industries within this country? On quite a grand scale, what is our view on these things?

Some of these things perhaps would not be able to be reflected in detail in the document, because they are quite sensitive, but I do not believe that we have done any of this. There was resistance to doing it, I have to say. To be a flippant, I always used to talk about the big robber barons of the huge departments, where the Permanent Secretaries protected themselves very carefully and felt that they might lose some control over things that they felt were very much their own responsibility. It was difficult at times to get traction on that.

I still do not believe that we are clear on what the UK's real national interests are and how we see ourselves within this world. Where this becomes crucial is where you get statements saying, "Yes, security of the nation is the greatest and most important thing for any Government and, yes, we will get involved in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya", but is anyone looking at the totality? If that is important, are we making sure that the right sort of investments are being made and that we have the right things to enable us to do these things? I do not just mean in defence terms; I mean in industrial and political terms, the use of the BBC and all sorts of things as well.

Q46 Baroness Manningham-Buller: If you are right in your judgment that there is resistance to having that sort of high-level thinking going on in government across departments, is the explanation as simple as the one that you give—that it is just robber barons? Is it not something to do with Ministers and the Government of the day having their own views on these things?

Lord West of Spithead: As I say, I was being a little flippant. Part of the robber barons are the Ministers involved. I am sure that you will get on to the question of whether there should be a Minister within this structure of a National Security Council. I believe that there should be. I tried to do something like that, but people were not at all keen that it should happen. The Prime Minister and the Cabinet Secretary were not keen and I could understand that. If you were a Minister who was effectively what is called the national security adviser—a civil servant does that at the moment—you would be in a quite powerful position, if there was a strategy in the sense that I saw it. That puts you very much on the political map, which upsets the apple cart sometimes. I think that that is part of the problem, unless you pick someone who is extremely different and is not part of the political merry-go-round.

Q47 **Baroness Manningham-Buller:** So your view is that the current strategy does not adequately address or describe a view of our position in the world and how to balance that with our national interest.

Lord West of Spithead: I do not think that it does. I do not think that we have a clearly articulated view of what that position is.

Q48 **Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale:** In a way, you have almost answered my question or at least given a strong steer of how you might answer it. How successful do you think the NSS of either Government has been in tackling the question of how we square the circle of politicians' and Governments' political aspirations in the world and our increasingly limited resources to meet them? I am thinking of the whole concept of punching above our weight et cetera. Do you think that either NSS has helped this?

Lord West of Spithead: In theory it should have done, but I do not believe that it has. That is why I hoped, and still hope, that it will develop more. In the final analysis, I believe that people will have to use it to ask what sort of resource is needed and how important this area is. If it is really important, people might have to say that we will have to spend a little less on the national health, foreign aid or whatever. The Treasury and others need to pay attention to what is being debated. Obviously, these things will have to go to Cabinet for debate but, if the National Security Strategy were of sufficient import, I believe that it would enable decisions to be made in Cabinet about the shifting of resources. Clearly, the NSC cannot do that—Cabinet would have to do it—but I think that the NSS would have sufficient impact to enable that to happen. I was in the position of being in the Home Office, as I was the spokesman in the Lords for the Home Office. The OSCT was there, which I think functioned very well, but when it came to cyber or the NSS I was Cabinet Office. The cry in Washington always is that, if you want to know how things are happening, follow the money. Although we do not say that here, it is absolutely true. The money did not flow through those things to enable this to happen.

Q49 **Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale:** Maybe it is in the Treasury that the powerhouse should be. How far do you think that alliances, either bilateral or multilateral, are a solution to the quandary of how you achieve what you want to achieve but with increasingly limited resources?

Lord West of Spithead: Clearly, they are extremely useful. It is difficult to foresee many circumstances where one is using, for example, large amounts of force where one would not be part of an alliance, but I wrote a piece recently in which I said that over the past 15 years even well established alliances and partnerships have looked decidedly discretionary when pressure has come from either internal or external forces. I am thinking of things as simple as during the Libya conflict when the Germans abstained. What an unbelievable thing to happen! I could give lots of other examples.

I put my cards on the table and say that I believe that the United Kingdom is still a great power. We are not a superpower, but anyone who says that we are not a great power when we are in the top six in terms of economic clout, when we still have the ability to intercede around the world, when we have a highly capable nuclear weapons system and when we are a permanent member of the Security Council et cetera—I could go on—is talking nonsense. We are a great power. Therefore, I believe, we have certain requirements, because to have a stable globe—and a lot of wealth comes from that stability—we have to have a certain ability to do things overseas. Because of this uncertainty of alliances, unlike a very small country that cannot possible do this we have to have a certain ability to do some things to a minimal level without being part of an alliance. That is not to a ridiculous level. We are not America—let us not be silly about it—but we are still a substantial power in so many ways: the fact that the English language is so widely used, our education of people, the World Service and all these things.

Q50 Sir Alan Beith: This vision thing is a bit seductive, isn't it? Once you get going on that, it is very easy to establish all sorts of things that are in our national interest and then at the end of that process say, "Right, what resources do we require for that? We'll rob every other service until we have them." It is an expense-inducing way of looking at things.

Lord West of Spithead: I do not necessarily agree with you on that, I am afraid. I think that you have to articulate exactly what you feel are the really important things for the nation. Clearly you are constrained, as always, by resources in terms of money, people, equipment, skills and all sorts of things. You then have to look at your cake and cut it to try to achieve that. There is no point in driving your country into poverty. You have to have economic wealth and stability to be able to do this. That is the important part of this whole equation and it is part of the strategic overview of the whole thing. It should be part of the package of your vision of how you see things going. You must just not let that happen. That is part of the debate that then has to go on. But you have to be clear about where you are going. I am constantly having debates with people such as Matthew Parris, who thinks—he also thinks that the Prime Minister thinks like this, although I do not think that he does at all—that we should be like Denmark or Belgium. I am afraid that I completely and totally disagree, but the view is going around because we are not clear about what we want to do. Politicians and the Government should make it clear.

Q51 Sir Alan Beith: In a way, you have demonstrated my point. Who is the politician who will go around saying, "We should be Denmark or Belgium"?

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Certainly not Belgium.

Sir Alan Beith: Who will say, "We should have a narrower conception of where our national interest lies because we cannot afford anything very expensive"? Once you get into the process of trying to articulate, define and exchange views with other politicians about what the vision should be, you are pretty well bound to go for the big, aren't you?

Lord West of Spithead: I do not think that that is necessarily so. I can imagine—

Sir Alan Beith: Matthew Parris is not a politician; he is a journalist.

Lord West of Spithead: I think that one could easily say, "We don't intend to get involved in circumstances of the following type," once one has had a debate about this. It is one of the reasons why I think it rather sad that we got rid of the National Security Forum, where we were able to have debates about that with a fantastic mix of people—Nobel Prize winners, previous diplomats, the military, top industrialists et cetera. One was able to have that sort of debate. You need some clarity of vision before you even move into the other arena, because otherwise you are going round in circles at times. One gets into a position, as I fear has happened on this occasion with the Strategic Defence and Security Review, where some of the changes to defence, which is just a part of this thing, mean that we will be unable to do certain things that the NSS thinks that we are able to do. I am afraid that successive Governments have been willing to involve us in things because we have a perception of our position without being willing to spend the resources to enable them to happen properly. I think that that is extremely dangerous. It has been getting, as always, worse and worse and it will become very bad in the future if we are not careful.

Q52 Sir Alan Beith: Given that this is happening, should the National Security Strategy be cast much more in the form of a statement that decisions already taken mean that certain options are closed to us but here are the things that we can and should be doing, so that we prioritise within acknowledged limited resources?

Lord West of Spithead: There is danger in trying to draft it as one is sitting here, but I go back to what I said: one needs vision and clarity about what one sees as the things that are crucially important for the United Kingdom, after which there can be a debate around these other points. As I say, I do not think that we have really achieved that in this National Security Strategy. I am pleased that we have started to get round them and that we have encompassed these sorts of threats—it started back in 2008—and are looking at things that historically we did not. When the old Joint Chiefs OD sat in the Cabinet Office in 1945, for example, we looked at the military but we did not even address some of these other things, but these things are crucially important today. So although we have done that, I do not think that we have done the sort of intellectual work to really clarify how we see Britain and the crucial things for Britain's security.

Q53 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Are not the real, powerful barons not the Cabinet Ministers but the heads of the armed services, who look after their own interests? Yesterday, I drove through Rosyth and saw this huge piece of the aircraft carrier that is about to be refitted, but it is not going to be used. Does that not distort spending and decisions about overall national security?

Lord West of Spithead: I was amazed when I became First Sea Lord at how little power I had. I had always been told that I would have a lot of power. I had struggled from being a cadet at Dartmouth to become First Sea Lord and I was quite shocked to find that I did not have as much power as I thought I might have, because I think that I could have done some quite useful things. In fact, it was run by committees and an awful lot of other people and it was not really the chiefs who had that power. So I do not recognise that suggestion. Are there pressures within the MoD from the services, which at times are probably not well balanced? Absolutely. What do I think about the aircraft carriers? I am on record as saying that getting two large aircraft carriers is probably one of the best and most sensible decisions that has been made in the last 20 years. It was made in 1997 and it was reaffirmed almost every year as being the right thing to do in policy terms. I believe that it still is the right thing to do. The SDSR said that it was the right thing to do. I believe that we will end

up with proper aircraft on them. The way in which the programme has been managed has not been clever, but I am sure that—I hope before I die—the nation will say, "Thank goodness we have these. They have saved us and we are still a great nation." I am sure that something like that might well happen.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: I hope that you are right.

Q54 Lord Cope of Berkeley: I just have a comment to make first. When you described the role of the Minister to be in charge of national security, you seemed to me to be describing the true role of the Prime Minister. The trouble is that Prime Ministers these days—I am not talking only about the present one; I mean also his predecessors—get so dragged into the detail of every possible thing every day that they have less time to think about these things. But I wanted to come back to what you said about the national risk register. You said, quite rightly, that the previous Government published the risk register and now we have one with a bit more assessment. You also said that assessment was privately done before. Could you spell out exactly what you meant by that and what you think should happen, if the correct thing is not happening now?

Lord West of Spithead: We are now talking about a slightly lower layer. We did it with a graph, as is done with this latest National Security Strategy, on the things that had the greatest impact and were most likely. If I remember correctly, what we arrived at as the most likely thing with the greatest impact that was likely to happen in the next couple of years was a flu pandemic—and it was, if you remember. There could be lots of debate and argument about how bad it was or was not and on the reaction. My view was that I was very pleased that we had spotted that as being the most likely thing. With the actions that were taken—although maybe not every one of them was perfect and maybe there were more than there should have been—it gave us a jolly good rehearsal for when something very unpleasant comes, as it will. So I think that that worked well. That was the sort of thing that was identified and on which work was done.

As for terrorism and the types of terrorism, we were able, for example, to say that we clearly needed, because of the likelihood of something happening, to review things like the security of our crowded places—and all that work was done—as well as the security of hazardous sites and substances. Again, we spotted within those threats that those were the things that were the real threat and we were able to do all that work and tighten all that up. For example, one thing with a huge impact would be an improvised nuclear device. That is where terrorism could suddenly have an existential threat to our nation, which at the moment it does not—and that is something that one has to bear in mind when one is reacting to it. No work at all had been done on what you do if there is an improvised nuclear device. I said that that was just not satisfactory. Although none of us wanted to think of that possibility, I said that we had to do it, even though it was a very low probability according to the intelligence services' prediction at that stage, because the impact was so gigantic. Work was started on that. It enabled things like that to be broken out. Does that answer the question? I am not sure that it does.

Q55 Lord Cope of Berkeley: What more assessment would you like to see done and published than is in the latest risk assessment, which was published a few months ago?

Lord West of Spithead: In terms of the risk assessment, I am basically content. The issue that I have with it is that I do not believe that it is a grand strategy; it is not a strategy in that sense. That is the problem that I have with it. I believe that we need that and, going on from that, we need the right structure in government to enable that sort of thinking to go on.

We have horizon-scanning groups and groups within certain departments doing some of this work. I think you have to call on departments for a lot of that, but you probably need a slightly stronger secretariat within the Cabinet Office. I am not one for increasing the number of civil servants hugely, but you probably need that—with more authority to do certain things and to draw on this information. I believe that the National Security Forum was a very good thing, because it set tasks to these people to come up with papers on how important sovereignty is in certain areas, such as in crypto or in nuclear submarines or whatever it might be. They would go away and not just do the work themselves but the deep specialists who had friends within academia, and so on, would go and get work sucked in from them and you would get some very useful input. Cabinet or the National Security Council, as it now is, could disregard it, but I think that that work was very useful.

Q56 Lord Fellowes: I think you said earlier that you reckon that we are in a better place now than we were two years ago as a result of the development of the NSS. Perhaps one of the main points of the NSS was to co-ordinate thinking on defence and security policy. We read still quite frequently about open and radical disagreements between defence chiefs past and present and Ministers past and present over whether we have a comprehensive defence capability. I wonder if you could elaborate a bit on why we are in a better place than we were two years ago.

Lord West of Spithead: I think now there is a better understanding of the myriad risks that there are to our society and the relationships between them. The various departments, the bulk of them, are more in contact and more aware of those things. That is where I think there has been an improvement. Let me take the example of cybersecurity. Now there is no doubt that people are joined together much more in talking about the risks and implications, whether it is from BIS—although I do not know whether it is called BIS now, since everyone keeps changing names, but I mean the business grouping—or from the MoD, the Foreign Office or wherever it might be. There is a thing called the Office of Cyber Security. We need to talk to these people, lock in and work out what is going on, and that is happening much more. It happened with counterterrorism as well; one found, for example, that foreign policy was taking into account counterterror strategy, and so was the MoD. So events in Afghanistan and things being done on the ground there, and in Pakistan in terms of radicalisation—all these things were being co-ordinated. That has been a great improvement, because it was something that needed to be done. It was not so stove-piped.

You made the point about defence and security; in defence terms, we have steadily whittled away at our defence capability. I was talking to Field Marshal Lord Bramall the other day, who said that when he was CDS they spent 5.1% of GDP on defence. I think that is probably too much—even though I am an admiral, I think it is too much. But we are now at 2% and it is going down to 1.7%. A healthy amount for a great power is between 2.5% and 3%. Historically, if you go above 3.5% for an ordinary great power—I am not talking about funny countries like Turkey—that spells economic disaster. We have not done that; we have lived off the fat that was there before and we are now getting to the stage where it is really damaging.

Q57 Lord Fellowes: Do you think we should get used to fairly public disagreements between defence chiefs and Ministers about capabilities? Maybe it is healthy.

Lord West of Spithead: I think retired ones should be allowed to give their six pennyworth, because you can ignore them if you want to. If they are serving, they have to be quite careful. Their job is to run the military for the Government and it is actually pretty outrageous to do this. Unless there is something awful, and they are not allowed to go and

talk to the Prime Minister about it—they are stopped from doing that, although they believe that it will be damaging to the nation—I believe that generally they should button their lip and get on with it.

Q58 Lord Lee of Trafford: Moving on to "Events, dear boy", we have obviously seen major upheavals in north Africa and the Middle East since the publication of the 2010 NSS. In your view, does that require any rethinking?

Lord West of Spithead: This is the sort of strategic shock that people have talked about a lot. At the time of the SDSR, you and I wrote that there would be a strategic shock—and, sure enough, there has been one, and there will be another. That needs to be encompassed within the National Security Strategy—if you have a clear view of how you perceive your nation and the crucially important things for your nation, it enables it to encompass those. The Arab spring affects the whole of the north African littoral; then there is the demographic problems with people coming into Europe, the issue of oil supplies and so on. That whole raft of things clearly impacts on that grand strategic vision. Then there is a subset about what this all means—and there is more work that goes on down there. You can play games with that and it clearly has an impact on things like defence reviews. But if you have written your National Security Strategy properly, it should not mean that you need a total change. As it is, because we did not really include strategic shock, it has meant that we do not have a clear view of what we should do. Therefore, people are making it up on the hoof, which cannot be a good thing.

Q59 Lord Harris of Haringey: To follow on from that, in August we had some dramatic developments on the domestic front, with riots, civil disorder and so on. What is the point at which civil disorder becomes a threat to national security and should be involved in strategy?

Lord West of Spithead: That is a very interesting point and a very valid thing to fire at someone putting together a National Security Strategy. I was in touch quite a lot with the French officer or civil servant who produced the French White Paper. They took a lot more interest in this—this was back in 2008 or thereabouts; I cannot remember exactly. They talked about their army being very involved with the various départements and all these sorts of things. They made it very much part of their White Paper and strategy. I believe that we have to include that, but in very broad terms, asking whether there are certain aspects of stability that are required to ensure our national security. I think that how that is written is going to be extremely difficult. I would need to think very hard about it and it would probably take brains much better than mine to think about it. That is one area where there is a bigger political input—bigger than in some of the other areas. But I believe that it has to somehow touch on those. If we look back to Cold War days, there were things that we would have called KPs, and other points that were crucial, and you had to make sure that they existed—otherwise you country could not survive. I am not saying that we should do it in those terms, but you could look at it in the same sort of context. The sorts of things to consider is how much you want your military to be involved in this. When would you consider doing that? These are the sorts of issues that could be discussed at the grand strategic level, not the nitty-gritty of it, which MAC(P) etc would take into account.

Q60 Lord Harris of Haringey: There has certainly been discussion in the past. MI5 produced an assessment that said that the country was always four meals away from civil breakdown if there is that degree of disruption in the supply chain. Where do you draw the line between the other activities of government and issues of national security? What are

the defining characteristics of something that should be focused as part of the National Security Strategy?

Lord West of Spithead: That is an extremely difficult question to answer. Some aspects of that civil order should be addressed within it, but an awful lot of it should be the normal duties of other government departments. But an overview should rest within the National Security Strategy. I cannot give an easy answer. It is quite difficult to write that—in fact, it is more than quite difficult; it is extremely difficult—but that does not mean that one should not try to achieve it. To take it down to a very mundane and small level, with the Olympics next year it is quite likely, although I am touching wood here, that the bigger threat than terrorism might well be some sort of disorder type thing. It may not start nasty, but just because of the sheer scale it can generate quickly in those areas. So it is a very valid thing to be thinking of.

Q61 Baroness Taylor of Bolton: Can I turn to the National Security Strategy and the Strategic Defence and Security Review and the kind of relationship that should exist between them, and throw in also the spending cycle? When you were talking about 2008 you were using phrases such as "cobbled together". It was a significant start, but it was not an integrated part of anybody's spending plans or planning process. The question is in two parts: to what extent was it a problem that it was not related to spending and, once the 2008 NSS was produced, do you think that it had an impact on how Governments actually spent their resources?

Lord West of Spithead: In answer to the first question, I think that it was a problem. To be fair to various departments, you cannot change your spending pattern at the drop of a hat, and when this all came out I think that departments tried to work out what it was saying and asked themselves what they could do—but they could not really do anything. Then the following year, people in certain areas did try to do things. For example, in defence, the Green Paper was produced. In fact, the Green Paper came to the NSF, where we looked at it and talked through it, to look at the NSS and see whether it made any sense at all. So I think that people tried to do something. But I go back to the point about following the money. There was no real way to tie that together. If you have a proper National Security Strategy, it should fit in with the spending plans of departments. I do not believe that that means that the National Security Strategy is changing every year, because that view and perception of what is in the UK's national interests and how we perceive ourselves—what the really crucial things are—does not change dramatically year on year. There will be some things in the margins, which is why it is worth reviewing it every year, to look at those smaller areas. But that headmark should guide government departments in how they pursue their more detailed programmes. On this occasion, for example, I do not believe that the SDSR matched even what this NSS asked for. I just do not think that it did. It actually removed capabilities. I read the whole lot again last night—it shows what a sad individual I am, doesn't it? It does not actually tie in with that. To be quite honest, almost anyone you ask realises that. There might be all sorts of other reasons and pressures, and we can talk about money, but we should not try to pretend that it did when it did not. And that is unfortunate, because it should. That should apply to all of it.

Q62 Baroness Taylor of Bolton: I am glad that you mentioned the MoD Green Paper, because I was the Minister in the department at the time. It started to address the positions that we have talked about; if I remember rightly, it was called *Adaptability and Partnership*. It was talking about what our relationship should be with other countries with other types of problems; it talked about soft power and our influence in the world, as well as hard power.

Personally, I think that it is a great shame that we have not taken the issues in that Green Paper further forward. We did not have a debate in our House; there might have been something in the Commons. To my mind, that was the beginnings of what could have been a debate to identify that big picture that you are talking about.

Lord West of Spithead: Yes, I think that it was used in that way. In the National Security Forum, the people drafting the Green Paper came to us; we talked about areas that we felt should be addressed, because of what was being looked at in the National Security Strategy, and those were looked at. I particularly did not like the term "soft power", but I recognised how crucial were such things as the BBC World Service and the fact that English is spoken in so many parts of the world, as well as the huge amount of education we do of people from other countries and the amount of training we do in various areas. I recognised how crucial all those things were in helping our position and helping to achieve the aims for the United Kingdom. It was very useful that that was included, but it did not develop any further—it sort of stopped.

Q63 Baroness Taylor of Bolton: You can quibble at the terminology, and some people would say that it was not soft power but smart power. But from what you were saying, you would say that that kind of approach—paying attention to our influence as well as our hard power—is absolutely critical to how we protect ourselves in future.

Lord West of Spithead: Absolutely. It should be part of the package of how we perceive ourselves and how we see our position in the world. We need to use every lever that we have for the benefit of ourselves. I am all for being altruistic, but the reason why I joined the Navy and fought and things like that was because I loved the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom is the thing. That should be the focus of our Governments, as well as being nice in other ways.

Q64 Mr Arbuthnot: What in practice does all this mean for the next Strategic Defence and Security Review? If we assume for the sake of argument that the next election will be in 2015, when should the National Security Strategy begin to be worked on and when should it report? When should the Strategic Defence and Security Review begin to be worked on and when should it report? Possibly, in all this, when should the Comprehensive Spending Review begin to be worked on and when should it report? You obviously cannot have it in the same month as an election.

Lord West of Spithead: I believe that we should start now trying to produce a National Security Strategy that does the things that I said it should do. We have a lot of the ground work here now, but it still does not actually identify those things. We should start that work now and try to produce that. To do it properly with the amount of people we have got will take 12 months. That is then in place; then it sits there, with a slight tweaking every year, but that view should not change dramatically—otherwise, we have not got it right. This is not something that should change every year. It should be a backdrop that should be used in every government department, including the MoD for its next defence and security review, as a basis for how it sets out what it is going to do. There has to be the funding, so where the CSR fits in is quite a tricky one. They would almost have to be done in parallel. The NSC, with a sufficient secretariat, should produce a new National Security Strategy—although when I say it "produce" it, the Cabinet finally signs it off. They are the ones monitoring all this. As a result of that, within Cabinet there has to be a debate about whether to spend more money on BBC monitoring, for example—I am making something up. There has to be a ding-dong there, and you have to get the Treasury people to agree it. Having agreed it, you can then say, "Now let's look at the CSR and the review in the MoD's

terms". But the National Security Strategy should be sitting there in place as a backdrop for all this—a headmark for everything we are heading for in every area. Indeed, sometimes you might find that the government department comes in and says, "Look, our overall aim is to do this. Actually, I think that we should slap on tariffs to stop something happening in this area". I am just making this up, but that might be something that comes out of it—and there would have to be a debate about it.

Q65 Mr Arbuthnot: So should the CSR be shortly before or after the next election, and how long should it take?

Lord West of Spithead: I think that we should be working on how we see defence going as soon as possible, but you need a proper National Security Strategy as a backdrop on which to base things. Until you have that, you are punting at things. That is what happened slightly with this.

Q66 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Let us turn to the National Security Council. It is a fine-sounding name, but how is it different in practice from the NSID Cabinet sub-committee under the previous Government?

Lord West of Spithead: The answer is very little. I hated the NSID title. I cannot even remember what it stood for, to be quite honest; I just hated it so much as a title. I wanted from day one when I came in to call it the NSC—and I asked the Prime Minister whether we could call it that—but that was not seen as something that needed to be done, for some reason, although it is a much better-sounding name. But actually the difference is not large. However, we do have a national security adviser, which we did not have with the NSID. But for the last three months, the NSID used to meet pretty well every week on security or defence issues, and the people who were there were the CDS, the agency chiefs, the Secretary of State for Defence, the Home Secretary—all the same sort of people.

Q67 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Perhaps now the NSC involves some domestic issues, such as energy security, that were not dealt with by the NSID.

Lord West of Spithead: It had sub-committees that did that. For example, we had one in NSID on organised crime—the NSID OC. I think that there was one on energy, although I never went to it. To go back to the National Security Forum, we produced a very thorough and detailed paper on energy security for this nation, on how we should move forward and how crucially important certain aspects of it were for our security. That should have been part of our National Security Strategy.

Q68 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: And did the NSID meet before Cabinet meetings, like the NSC?

Lord West of Spithead: As I understand it, it did. But the NSID sub-committees on energy or organised crime did not meet every week. I am not quite sure what happens now, but I cannot believe that the NSC discusses those issues every week. I imagine that they are selective about what they talk about.

Q69 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: The Joint Intelligence Committee was entirely separate, was it? Or was it linked?

Lord West of Spithead: The JIC was totally separate. The only thing I would say about the JIC is that, years and years ago when I ran naval intelligence and some years later when I was Chief of Defence Intelligence, the JIC papers and process were seen as very important. They

were fed into these things, and Ministers all wanted to see the ones that related to their area of endeavour. When I came back into government, a number of people seemed not to see it as being as important as it had been. I do not know whether it was because they were getting reports first hand at NSID, or whatever, but I thought that the JIC had lost some of its thump, which was an unfortunate thing. If it loses its thump—and one of its great joys was that it took a coalesced intelligence view—you start needing a national intelligence head. I do not think that that is a good idea for us, but you need to have that if people are not paying attention to the fully assessed intelligence.

Q70 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: You said earlier that your national security secretariat also serviced COBRA. Is that right?

Lord West of Spithead: Yes, part of the NSS staff serviced the COBRA machinery.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Was that not a bit confusing, given their role?

Lord West of Spithead: I do not think so. COBRA has a kind of mystique, and I am afraid that some Prime Ministers have been guilty of adding to that, saying, "I'm calling COBRA!" It is the Cabinet Office Briefing Room A—that is all it is. I was once tasked with showing the Yemeni Government COBRA. They were not cleared to anything above strong buzz and speculation, and sitting in a room and saying, "This is a room", was rather difficult. It is a way of co-ordinating all the people who need to be involved to make decisions about a specific issue, so that those decisions can be made, and it works very well in that sense.

Q71 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: How does it differ from the NSC?

Lord West of Spithead: The NSC is a level above that. You are not looking at a specific incident or thing that is going on, whether it is not being able to get people back from the continent or an incident where some terrorists are doing something. The NSC should be looking at the very top level of these issues.

Q72 Baroness Taylor of Bolton: I just wanted to follow up on one point that you made about JIC papers and how Ministers saw them. That reminds me of an issue that some of us were concerned about a few years ago on the Intelligence and Security Committee, which was the extent to which Ministers were actually prepared for the responsibilities that they had and how they assessed the information that came to them—and, indeed, how their private offices filtered it. Do you think that is significant?

Lord West of Spithead: I think that it is an extremely significant thing. Indeed, my private office probably would not have given me any JIC papers if it had not been for the fact that I knew about them and was able to say, "Hang on! I want papers on this and this". Suddenly, the flow started. I think that is an absolutely valid point. Mind you, the reverse of it is, as I discovered when I was Chief of Defence Intelligence, that if you really wanted to get a Minister's attention, you could stick a bit of stuff that was not highly classified in a red folder with a cross on it, marked "Top Secret", and flash it to them—my goodness me, they will read it.

The Chair: Lord Harris?

Lord Harris of Haringey: I think that my point has been covered.

Q73 Malcolm Bruce: You mentioned the National Security Forum a couple of times. Do you think that it should be brought back and do you think that there is a role for getting input from outside government?

Lord West of Spithead: I absolutely do think it should be. I think that it was sad that it was disbanded. I do not think it was right that I should still chair it; I can understand a new Government not wanting a Minister from the last Government chairing it, and having a Minister chairing it was quite useful, because it meant that you could get input into Cabinet that much more easily. I think it added huge value. I was not convinced when it first started, but some of the papers that we produced were really valuable and some of the debates and discussions were very good. I think that Prime Minister Brown was surprised when he saw a couple of them, and he actually came along and listened to some of these debates. I think that they have lost something in losing that. It enabled those people, whether it was academics, or those who had great linkage into the Muslim community, or great industrialists, to go and talk to the people they knew to get feedback and even papers produced, which were then sucked in. I think that is a great loss.

Q74 Malcolm Bruce: That is obviously helpful, because it broadens the input. You have talked about soft power—you specifically mentioned the World Service and the British Council—and you also talked about robber barons.

Lord West of Spithead: I do not want to make too much of the robber barons. It was a throwaway—

Malcolm Bruce: No, but it was said in passing. You want to increase the defence budget and you specifically mentioned the NHS and overseas development assistance. We have seen and heard Governments saying that part of the justification for increasing the overseas development budget is that it enhances our national security in a whole variety of ways—and, indeed, more of the budget is going into post-conflict and fragile states. Is it not legitimate to ask you to evaluate in that context not just what the defence budget is but what the contribution is from development assistance and these other soft-power issues to reducing some of the defence requirements? The idea is that, if you prevent conflict, you do not have to buy so much equipment.

Lord West of Spithead: Absolutely, and I think that it is perfectly valid to look at that balance and see how much benefit you are getting from it. But I do not believe that work on that was done properly—and it does need to be done properly. The classic one at point is where you talk about the money going to China and some of it going to India. I have great doubts that that makes us any safer, to quite honest. There is no doubt that during the time when Labour was in power, when the DfID budget was growing and yet defence was being squeezed, or taking a slight squeeze, DfID was unable to spend the money that it was getting. Actually, the reality is that the National Health Service was finding it difficult to do that, with some extra £90 billion. I remember talking to the Permanent Secretary. So one needs to look at these things very carefully.

Q75 Malcolm Bruce: But on the India point, DfID would say that it might help India to deal with its insurgencies, because it attacks some of the exclusions that cause them. That has an implication for the stability of the Indian Government.

Lord West of Spithead: Possibly it helps them to deal with their insurgencies. I just find it extraordinary that we are giving money to a country which has a major space programme that we cannot afford and which is building a series of aircraft carriers and getting a nuclear submarine programme. A debate is required.

Q76 Malcolm Bruce: I will not get into that discussion. You have written a book—

Lord West of Spithead: It is just a chapter, to be fair.

Malcolm Bruce: You have said yourself that you want 2.5% to 3.5% to be spent on defence. Clearly there is a debate going on outside this room that says, "Cut the aid budget and transfer it to defence." You are giving comfort to that argument, I think. Or are you?

Lord West of Spithead: I am giving comfort to the argument that we should look at other budgets. If security and defence of our nation is the highest priority for any Government, and if you say that something is the highest priority, generally the money should be there to achieve it. Therefore, it might mean that you have to squeeze things. I am not just picking on those two examples; they are two examples that I gave during Labour's time, because there was huge growth in terms of wealth and there was an ability to squeeze those with almost no effect, to ensure that the money stayed going into defence. I am saying that we need to look across all of government and look at those priorities and say, "Well, maybe we need to squeeze this a little more." What is more important? I know that all of them are important to somebody, but which is the most important? That is the issue of priority, which is one of the great difficulties of government. In the chapter that I wrote, my worry was that defence is not a vote winner. All our people love our soldiers, sailors and airmen—men and women doing their duty and fighting—but actually spending money on defence is not a vote winner, for understandable reasons.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: It is in Plymouth.

Baroness Taylor of Bolton: And Rosyth.

Q77 Lord Waldegrave of North Hill: You touched on this matter earlier, so we know what your view is—the matter of having a National Security Minister, and so on. The Commons Defence Committee recommended such a thing. I am willing to be persuaded, but I have always been a bit sceptical about this. What level is this person? He is either rather powerful, in which case he is treading on a lot of toes and is going to end up having trouble with the Foreign Secretary, the Home Secretary and the Prime Minister, or he is a junior Minister, who perhaps finds something to do. You obviously did, particularly at the stage when all this new structure was being invented. I suspect that it would not have come about in such a sensible way if you had not had someone in charge of it—and you obviously did a jolly good job. But you can sort of plot the decline of British power with the increase the number of Ministers. Do we really need a Minister here and, if so, at what level? Is he the person who is just looking after the process, in which case I can see that there might be a job? Is he a relatively junior person or is he really a sort of ministerial Lord Wigg, a nightmarish figure who terrified everyone, including Mr Wilson?

Lord West of Spithead: That is an exceptionally good question. It is something that has caused a problem in my own mind, as to how one squared that. I was in a slightly strange position, in that I was asked to come into government because the Prime Minister felt that I had certain knowledge of counterterrorism and security and issues like that, more than for my political capabilities, which to be honest are probably pretty pathetic, because I am not a deep politician. That gave me a certain credibility and ability to talk to people such as the Foreign Secretary and the Home Secretary and others in a way that would have been extremely difficult for a junior member of the Government, because I had no political career to even think about. So I kept thinking to myself, "Well that's fine because it might work for me to do this, but one needs to have a process in place that would enable this to be filled in future". Then I would look at the Americans and think, "Where do we get our Condoleezza

Rice equivalent—how do we manage to achieve that?" It was not easy to see within our system how we could do that. The Prime Minister used to chair the big NSIDs and he chairs the NSC. However, as someone said, the Prime Minister is so tied up with others things that I felt that you needed someone who had his eye on the ball all the time, with these fast-moving events and things like that, yet had some political antennae as well. If you are talking about expanding this in some areas, looking at some of the civil aspects and things, there is a political aspect to all this. At the moment, the national security adviser is a Foreign Office man, and I think that before there was a big Foreign Office involvement. I think we probably need a Minister there. Initially, we would start it off with a junior one, and I think you would have to pick him very carefully, because the trouble is that he could become very awkward.

Q78 Lord Waldegrave of North Hill: The danger is that he could become awkward and have ideas above his station. People love intelligence and security and stuff—there is that sort of syndrome. Or he could become sidelined whenever anything important happened. When the stakes are upped and you have an Iraq war or the end of the Berlin Wall or something, the big boys will come in and he is really going to be left saying, "Excuse me, what about me?"

Lord West of Spithead: My experience of that is that, if you have a good person, he becomes indispensable, because he knows so much and he is so involved that when the big boys come charging in they cannot ignore him.

Q79 Lord Waldegrave of North Hill: So which department is he in? Who is he accountable to?

Lord West of Spithead: He would have to be in the Cabinet Office.

Lord Waldegrave of North Hill: So he is another Minister directly accountable to the Prime Minister.

Lord West of Spithead: Yes, he would have to be in the Cabinet Office, because he would be between the NSC and the Prime Minister. At the end of the day, the Prime Minister is clearly the person who has ultimate responsibility for all this.

Q80 Lord Waldegrave of North Hill: I can see how it could work. If you had the right person, it jolly well could. But I can also see how you could create some monsters in this area, if you were not careful. Once you get a great cuckoo in that nest who is making his own career out if it and so on, it could be jolly difficult. The other danger is that you do not want the Prime Minister to say, "Oh, Fred's dealing with all that." Fred may be dealing with it, but you want the Prime Minister to have his nose rubbed in this stuff all the time as much as possible, don't you?

Lord West of Spithead: You do, but very often he has so many things to think about. Part of the job of this man would be to make sure that the Prime Minister's nose was rubbed in it.

Q81 Lord Waldegrave of North Hill: So the question is whether it is better if that man is a Minister or the security adviser. We have quite a good history of Prime Ministers with trusted non-political advisers in this area. One can think of some who have got into political trouble, but we know that that model can be made to work.

Lord West of Spithead: I just felt that one would have much more ability to make sure that departments worked together. Then there is the danger of them becoming too powerful,

because he has the Prime Minister's ear all the time. You would have to make sure that the constraints were there to ensure that the Prime Minister did not allow that to happen. But he will inevitably be powerful. He would have to be able to go to Cabinet, even if he sat in the background keeping quiet, because he would know so much of all those crucial things. In Cabinet there might be discussions that would impact on this vision of where we want the UK to be.

Q82 Lord Waldegrave of North Hill: Is he going to be operational? Is he going to take over the roles of the Foreign Secretary and the Home Secretary in approving operations?

Lord West of Spithead: I think that I would need to think about that a lot.

Lord Waldegrave of North Hill: If he does, he is a very powerful person.

Lord West of Spithead: Yes, then he becomes one of the big robber barons.

Lord Waldegrave of North Hill: So I think he does not. I think it is terribly dangerous if he does. If he does not, he is a sort of process person. I can see that—he is the person who sees that the agenda is being attended to, and I could see that that could just about work. But we have an awful lot of Ministers in the centre there.

Lord West of Spithead: I agree with that. We had only seven admirals in London when we had the biggest fleet in the world. These things seem to happen, don't they?

Q83 Lord Cope of Berkeley: And he would have to be a thinker. A large part of his job is to think while the Prime Minister is distracted with whatever is happening today.

Lord West of Spithead: I was doing that all the time, thinking strategy all the time—proper strategy. We have become bad at doing what I call proper strategy; we have got confused about what it means.

Lord Waldegrave of North Hill: I think, with respect to my colleagues in the Commons, that this post is a better organised official post. It should not just be taken from the Foreign Office all the time; I can easily conceive it being an outsider. I am not quite convinced, but I can see the argument.

Q84 The Chair: You were nodding, Lord West, so I take it that you agree with Lord Waldegrave, because you made the point that the person who is presently the national security adviser is from the Foreign Office and his successor will be drawn from the Foreign Office.

Lord West of Spithead: I do not think that is necessary at all and it is probably quite a damaging thing.

The Chair: Is it accidental?

Lord West of Spithead: I am sure it is not.

Q85 Mr Arbuthnot: I have a couple of quick questions about the National Security Strategy and the Strategic Defence and Security Review. Do you think they have the balance right between the attention that the Royal Navy gives to our own waters, as opposed to their global role, perhaps spreading our influence abroad?

Lord West of Spithead: I do not think that it is really addressed properly in either of those documents. At the grand strategic level, it is quite important for us to make an

assessment—and it touches on it a bit in the NSS—that we are a maritime nation and how important the sea is to us, as an island. Or is that still important? I think that that needs to be developed, as an aspect of it. There were certainly three centuries when any Minister who did not understand that did not stay as a Minister and, indeed, was no longer in Parliament. But that seems to have changed quite dramatically, so we need a clear view of that. As regards the protection of our waters, that is a subset of that grand strategy. How has this changed? It is not that there is a threat of invasion from anyone, but there are all the other aspects of serious organised crime, terrorism and all those things. That should be picked up to a greater extent. Probably, the Navy is not able to do as much of that as it should. The introduction of the NMIC—

Mr Arbuthnot: You had better translate.

Lord West of Spithead: The NMIC is the National Maritime Intelligence Centre. One thing that rather shocked me when I first got involved in this arena when I was a commander was that no one actually had a clue of what was anywhere around our waters. When I went back as Commander-in-Chief Fleet some many years later, they still did not have a clue. I found that quite bizarre, so we introduced this National Maritime Intelligence Centre with the aim of having a picture of what is around our waters, because until you have a picture you cannot do anything about it. As I understand it, that is still proceeding, but I have not really followed it up. But that then enables you to do something. Have we got enough assets to do it? I think we probably have not, and that worries me somewhat. You do not need things that are very exciting to do it—you just need things there. And you need to tie in with all the other things such as HMRC and all the other people who are doing things in our waters. But it needs to be co-ordinated. My personal view, which is not because I am one of these powerful chiefs that we have talked about, is that maritime has taken a very large crunch—and for a maritime and island nation, we do that at our peril.

Q86 Mr Arbuthnot: On the co-ordination of the response to piracy, not just within the United Kingdom but between the United Kingdom and our allies, not least the European Union, and between industry, government and all of that, do you think we have got the balance right?

Lord West of Spithead: The answer is that there is a real opportunity for the UK and for this Government to really grip this and run with it. The situation has not got better; it has got worse. We have pirates operating right out as far as the Seychelles. We only need to have two LNG tankers taken in a row and it will impact on the energy supply in this country, if they are going round to Milford Haven—forget about all the other damage that could be done with them. I believe that we need a serious meeting of all the parties involved, under our auspices. We have the IMO here, after all, and we control most world shipping from here. We also need to knock some of the insurance companies' heads together. It is extraordinary that some of the Somali pirates put in a bid for the ship that they had just captured which was exactly the amount that it was insured for. The insurance rates have gone up, and the insurance companies have not suffered yet, because actually they are still making more money. I am not saying that they do this on purpose, but until there is pain they are not going to do anything about it. Let us have some real decisions about whether to put armed people on any of these merchant ships. Let us decide whether we are going to escort convoys through and do it like that. I know that the real way of resolving this is within Somalia, but that is probably beyond our remit at the moment. I certainly think we should do all these other things. I know that some of them we have started—we have Atalanta and we have done certain bits and pieces. But I believe that we

could do a lot more. This is a great opportunity for Britain and this Government to grasp it and run with it and I think that most nations in the world will be quite pleased.

Q87 Mr Arbuthnot: Is the NSC the right body at which this sort of stuff should be discussed?

Lord West of Spithead: I think that it should be discussed at the NSC and it should be part of asking how we perceive ourselves in the world, as a major maritime nation and what is important for us. With global trade, a bigger percentage of our GDP than that of any other nation in the world, apart from the little tiny ones, is traded. These are important issues for us. Let us debate this and say, "Right, we should do this," and get the Foreign Office to go away and set up the meeting, calling in all the other parties that need to be involved, on trade or whatever it might be.

The Chair: Thank you very much indeed. That was interesting and valuable.

Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP – (QQ 88-120)

MONDAY 24 OCTOBER 2011

Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP, Minister of State, Cabinet Office

Evidence heard in Public Questions 88 - 120

Members Present

Margaret Beckett (Chair)
Mr James Arbuthnot
Malcolm Bruce
Lord Fellowes
Lord Foulkes of Cumnock
Fabian Hamilton
Lord Harris of Haringey
Lord Lee of Trafford
Baroness Manningham-Buller
Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale
Lord Sterling of Plaistow
Baroness Taylor of Bolton
Lord Waldegrave of North Hill

Examination of Witness

Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP, Minister of State, Cabinet Office

Q88 The Chair: Thank you very much indeed for coming and welcome to this session of the Committee. This is our third evidence session. I do not know how much background you have been given about the evidence that we have taken in this Parliament. Obviously, we are looking at the National Security Strategy, which is both a specific but also, potentially, rather a wide brief. We have taken evidence so far from two former Security Ministers, Baroness Neville-Jones and Lord West, and are now seeking to take evidence from you in the present Government. The Cabinet Office very helpfully sent the Committee an introductory memorandum earlier in the year. We then sent them, I am afraid, rather a lot of written questions, to which you have replied with a further memorandum for which we are grateful. Obviously, all of that evidence will be published on our website. Today we want to pursue some of these issues with you. As I think you will have been shown, we have

quite a large number of questions as well as quite a large membership of the Committee. I encourage everybody to be as succinct as they can. Let me begin by asking you what use your role has been in relation to the National Security Strategy and the National Security Secretariat.

Oliver Letwin: Thank you. I sit on the National Security Council alongside many other more distinguished and important colleagues. I suppose that my role there is to look across the pattern of policies that emerge from the National Security Council and to observe how they connect with the rest of our strategies and policies, because my role in the Government is to do that in general. I have no direct reporting relationship to the National Security Secretariat, which reports to the Prime Minister. The National Security Adviser, whom I am sure you will be interviewing in due course, reports directly to the Prime Minister and is of course the secretary of the NSC. That is way above my pay grade. Of course I brief myself on the issues that come to the National Security Council with the help of the National Security Secretariat. When the NSC is engaged in a major exercise, for example the SDSR, I have involved myself in many of the questions there and in discussions with various relevant departments—in that case, particularly the Ministry of Defence, obviously.

Q89 The Chair: How does your role compare with that of the Security Minister in the Home Office, who is now, I believe, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary?

Oliver Letwin: Utterly different. The position in the Home Office is a position in the Home Office, and has a front-line responsibility under the Home Secretary for a specific part of the actions that emerge from National Security Council consideration. I think that you, as you have already said, have interviewed Baroness Neville-Jones. She will have given you a full description, no doubt, of the sorts of activities in which she engaged and in which her successor is engaging. I have no front-line operational responsibilities whatsoever. The whole point of my role is not to have such responsibilities, but rather to have a conspectus. That goes far beyond the Home Office's activities and, indeed, across of the departments that are involved, in one way or another, in the NSC.

Q90 The Chair: I find that very interesting. When we interviewed Baroness Neville-Jones and Lord West, we asked whom we should now talk to. We were rather steered in your direction as being a person who might now be engaging in some of the issues in which, as I thought, they had perhaps engaged in the past. I know that at least one of them holds the view—and you will know that the Defence Committee has recommended—that the Prime Minister should appoint a national security Minister who is separate from the Home Office, who would act as a ministerial national security adviser and sit on the council. What is your reaction to that proposal?

Oliver Letwin: The first answer that I would give is simply a fact, which is that I am not in such a position; that is not my role. The second question is one of value: should there be somebody with that role? My personal opinion is that there should not. My personal opinion is that it is better that the secretary of the committee be the official who is the National Security Adviser. You will be very aware of the distinguished record of the person who holds that post at the moment and, indeed, of that of the person who is about to replace him. The Prime Minister needs an adviser at that level, but an official who is capable of mobilising official resources and reflecting opinion across Whitehall, the agencies and our embassies, and of organising the agenda for the National Security Council in a way that I do not think a Minister could properly do. Each of the Ministers at the NSC has their own perspective. The perspective that I bring is a wide one. Others bring perspectives that are

much deeper but specifically focused on particular parts of the activity. That combination has worked reasonably well in ensuring that our deliberations are rounded and serious, and at the same time not superficial.

Q91 Lord Waldegrave of North Hill: Everyone is always in favour of a strategy for everything. Sometimes that is jolly necessary. I would like to explore a little how this strategy impinges on reality. The objectives are supposed to be, on the one hand, ensuring a secure and resilient UK, which is very good, and, on the other hand, shaping a stable world, which is also very good. You can justify almost anything under one or the other of those: you can say that attacking Afghanistan was chasing out terrorists who were attacking us, which is being a resilient UK; or you can say that attacking Afghanistan is shaping a stable world, because it is establishing, with great success, a social democracy in Afghanistan. I am just a bit worried. There is a great fashion for saying that it does not matter what the ends are and that it is the process that matters, so having a process of people thinking about strategy must be a good thing. You are really the Minister for thinking about strategy, are you not? You are called the Minister for Government Policy, which always seems to me to be a really nice thing, because all the others are not doing anything at all. I take it that that means that you are the person who tries to do joined-up government, in yesterday's cliché; you try to see that things are not falling between the gaps and that there is coherence. That is a perfectly sensible, useful and good post to have. But, taking these kinds of very broad objectives, when do they ever lead you to say, "Well, we shouldn't be doing that because it's neither ensuring a secure and resilient UK nor shaping a stable world"? How would you find such a thing that was not one of those? When the Prime Minister says, "We are going to rescue these poor people in Libya," it can be fitted into them jolly easily because so could anything else.

Oliver Letwin: You are raising an interesting and important question, of what it is to have a strategy in an extremely uncertain world, what we mean by having one and, indeed, what we mean by the sub-strategies that are involved in the SDSR or many other aspects of our security. I think the way that I would put is that you have to understand what we have not said. The most important thing about this strategy is what we are not doing in it. We could have had a strategy which said that we are devoted to having an alliance exclusively with A and B, or that we are devoted to ensuring that X and Y are achieved in the next three years, and we could then have said: "All else comes below these things; we will devote all our attention to them. If the world changes we will sublimely ignore this and continue on our path." I am parodying slightly, but you get the point. That strategy would not have evoked your question. You would have known exactly what we were going to do come hell or high water. We have precisely avoided that.

We have set out to create the basis for adaptability, flexibility and the ability to recognise that we are a kind of world which changes faster than the world did a few years back. There was a time when the realities of the Cold War meant that there were certain kinds of near-certainty, for a period at least. There were attitudes to be taken and strategies in the sense of a very persistent line of policy over a long period. We are really very much not in that world today. This is one of the most distinguished Committees in the whole of Parliament, but I doubt that the members of this Committee would 18 months ago have agreed on a prediction of what was going to happen that would have turned out to be true today. In the National Security Council, we are in the same position. We know that we are not capable of forecasting what the next 18 months—or two, three, four or five years—will hold and that there are no human beings around who are. So the strategy is about maximising opportunity, minimising visible threat and maintaining maximal degrees of flexibility and

adaptability. We then carry that into the SDSR, which is all about not plumping for this or that but rather having a range of possibilities and giving ourselves maximum military flexibility. The same is true of the way in which we administer the DfID budgets and programmes. The same is true of our direct foreign policy goals.

If you, as I am sure you may, interview the Foreign Secretary, he will tell you that we have made a clear decision in the National Security Strategy not to engage in strategic withdrawal. We have not decided to go into a laager. We have decided to engage around the world, but exactly where we put how much effort will depend on what happens in the world as we move along. In every domain, our strategy is to advance our national interests in an adaptable way against an uncertain and changing scene. I have to say that I think that that is the right and rational attitude to adopt.

Q92 Lord Waldegrave of North Hill: It sounds very rational. Could it not be summed up by saying, "We will do what we can that looks sensible at the time, with rather limited resources"?

Oliver Letwin: That is not a bad description.

Lord Waldegrave of North Hill: Fine. So long as one does not get that too muddled up with saying, "This means that we are a great power." It just means that we are trying to make rational decisions with the resources and the problems facing us on that particular day.

Oliver Letwin: Yes, although I would qualify that in two respects. First, we are not a power on the scale of the United States, China or whatever. I think that recent events have shown that where we team up in the right way with the right people in the right circumstances, we can nevertheless make a significant difference. In many spheres of soft power and trade and diplomatic relationships, we can do what is called in the jargon "punching above our weight". We can from time to time bring about results that exceed the scale of result that you might expect from a country of our size, because of our history, our natural advantages, the enterprise of our people and, indeed, the efforts of our Government. But I agree with you that this strategy is founded on the recognition that we are not able unilaterally to determine the future of the world. We have to intervene, but we have to see what we are intervening in.

Q93 Baroness Taylor of Bolton: To follow up on that to a certain extent, adaptability and flexibility were what the previous Government were saying and they have been continued successfully. But do you not think that there is a danger of overanalysing? As has been pointed out, if you do something in one category and it then turns out to be a long-term operation when you had thought it would be shorter, you can over-analyse these things and there is a great danger in that. You talked about punching above our weight. I think that we would agree with that and about being a world power, but you also said that you thought that what we were not doing would be important. Looking at some of the implications of the decisions, for example, on MoD funding, are we actually ruling out certain types of activity and intervention, so that we are adaptable and flexible, as you say, but perhaps in a more constrained way than we used to be?

Oliver Letwin: I certainly agree that there is an equal and opposite risk of over- or under-analysis. Analysis is of course important, but we have to recognise that it has limits. We have to recognise, therefore, that we cannot foretell the future perfectly and we have to

deal with things as they come at us to a considerable extent. So we pursue a line, but we are willing to adapt it according to circumstances.

I think that you are asking whether we are in a position in which our capacity to act is severely constrained by our budgets and the decisions that flow from them, especially in relation to defence. Of course there are limits imposed by the need to balance the budget and work within budgetary constraints. A good many people, a year ago or so, were making one of the more overblown claims that the budgetary constraints would prevent us from ever participating again in an effective intervention. Well, it did not take very long for it to be shown that that was not the case. Of course we could not have done what we did in Libya alone; of course we had to do it with others; of course it has to be under the right circumstances; and so forth. As a matter of fact, it was possible for us to play a significant role and to prosecute it successfully on the basis of arrangements that we had made within our budget. That typifies what one can expect over coming years. There will be limits on what we can do and the need to operate with allies but, at the same time, there will be the capacity to make significant interventions.

Q94 Lord Fellowes: When we saw Lord West last month, he differed with the Cabinet Office evidence to the Commons Select Committee on the subject of strategy. He reckoned that there should be a rethink, or restatement, of strategy with a grand strategy at its centre, encompassing Britain's capabilities, national interests and our place in the world. So those three items and a grand strategy are things that you are not doing, which you are quite happy not to be doing?

Oliver Letwin: Yes, that is absolutely right. We are not devotees of what I believe is called "grand strategy". In order to formulate something called a "grand strategy", it seems to me that you have to have a very clear view of what the world that you are going to have a strategy about will look like for at least quite a number of years ahead. The person who could have foretold the Arab spring and could have devised a grand strategy that would have guided us on exactly how to deal with it, knowing that it was going to occur in advance, is a person much cleverer, I suspect, than any of us or any human being currently alive. Therefore, in my view we need adaptability, not grand strategy.

Q95 Lord Fellowes: Would you now be saying to yourselves, "Well, we have done Libya. It was expensive but we managed to do it. We couldn't afford to do that again for another two years"? Is that how flexible you are?

Oliver Letwin: No, we are not saying that in the least. We made, almost at the same time, two clear decisions: one to intervene in Libya and the other not to intervene in Syria. That is quite an interesting contrast. Many of the things that have been said with some justice about the people who were running Libya could be said with some justice about the people currently running Syria. Certainly, some of things that have gone on in Syria have been very distressing and alarming, and we have made very strong comments about them. But we decided not to intervene. The reason is not that we are incapable of doing so; far from it. It is that the circumstances that made it possible to do so successfully in Libya are not, in our view, present in the case of Syria: it is not possible to get a United Nations resolution of the same kind; there is not the same regional backing for action; and so forth. So we are judging, case by case, not just what it would be good to do but what it is possible to achieve. If we find in another case that it is both desirable to achieve a particular goal and it would, under the circumstances, be possible to achieve it, we have the military means to do so. We have preserved one of the four or five most powerful armed forces in the world, precisely for that reason, even at a time of very considerable budgetary constraint. It is noticeable,

coming back to the earlier question, that at a time when we are reducing many departmental budgets in nominal terms we have been increasing the defence budget in nominal terms. That was for a very good reason: to give us that ability.

Lord Fellowes: So the Syrian decision was nothing to do with money or capabilities.

Oliver Letwin: No. Even if we had had unlimited funds, we would not have thought that it was at that moment appropriate to intervene in Syria and we do not judge that it would be today.

Q96 Fabian Hamilton: Can I explore that a little further? I want to know how useful the National Security Strategy has been in practice. You referred in the previous answer to Syria and Libya; they are very good examples. How did the National Security Strategy shape our responses? You have mentioned that we have sufficient capability to intervene in both. I want to know what it is in the strategy that said that we should go into Libya and support the NATO action there, but that Syria or Bahrain, for example, was wholly inappropriate for any intervention.

Oliver Letwin: I want to make two points in response to that. One is a direct answer to your question. The way that the National Security Strategy outlines our national capacities and ambitions makes it perfectly clear that we intend to operate, in general, with allies, always under international law, and under circumstances where we can generate widespread support. That was certainly an important part of the calculation that made one feasible and not the other.

I want to go beyond that, if I may. It is important not to see the National Security Strategy as if it were a sort of recipe book, from which one can draw how to make eggs Benedict. It is not like that. The National Security Strategy, the SDSR and a whole series of other important documents are there, and are important, but they are there under the aegis of the NSC. What is really important is the functioning of the National Security Council itself and the way in which it considers things in the round, continuously looks at each of the situations that emerges, understands our own history and tries to arrive at a sensible and balanced judgment—yes, one that coheres with the National Security Strategy, which is judged case by case by looking at it across the board. That is really much more important than the very words of the National Security Strategy itself.

Q97 Fabian Hamilton: I appreciate, of course, that the strategy does not have any geographical or country priorities, just thematic ones. I wondered whether the Government have any clear government-wide country priorities and, if so, whether you are willing to share those with this Committee.

Oliver Letwin: We do. I think that it is probably more appropriate if the Foreign Secretary, who you will undoubtedly interview, tells you what they are. I can tell you about the process, which is that, at pretty regular intervals, the Foreign Secretary brings forward to the NSC proposals about how we should enlarge our relationships with given countries, or how we should balance concerns of different kinds in relation to different countries. There is a continuing discussion, therefore, of a range of other countries. There are certainly particular countries with which we wish to engage either diplomatically or in terms of trade or investment, or both. One of the advantages of the National Security Council is of course that it enables us to consider both those issues simultaneously. We are not simply looking at foreign security and defence policy as if it were something disjoined from trade and investment policy. We see the two together.

Fabian Hamilton: Thank you very much. That is very helpful. We will wait to see what the Foreign Secretary has to say.

Q98 Lord Lee of Trafford: When Lord West gave evidence to the Committee, he asserted that the National Security Strategy does not include plans for strategic shock. In a sense, you have possibly answered my question when you referred to adaptability. Does the National Security Strategy, or the SDSR, need to change to take account of international developments—notably, for example, the Arab spring—or is it meant to be future proof?

Oliver Letwin: Well, nothing that human beings do, in my view, is ever future proof. There may be a time when it is necessary to adjust. But the whole point of the flexibility and adaptability that we have built in is to be more nearly future proof than it would be if we had adopted a monofocal approach, supposing that we knew what was going to happen next. I can say, and we have looked at this, that nothing that has happened in the Arab spring, for example, has caused us to revise it so far. It was sufficiently adaptable to allow us to engage in different kinds of things under different kinds of circumstances.

Q99 Lord Sterling of Plaistow: In the international world, particularly in business, 20 years would be a strange period to use as an appropriate horizon. You either have short ones for tactical purposes or, in some areas that I have been involved in such as transport, you look as far ahead as 50 years as to what kind of change there could be. If you take it that the NSC is developing a strategy on the background of a long-term foreign policy, which may have problems in between—using the shock absorbers of change, if you want—do you think that 20 years is appropriate? If I was sitting here in 1918 I might have found what happened by 1938 rather strange. That is not a very good example, but I am merely asking: why 20 years?

Oliver Letwin: The question is, of course, a good one, and the answer is that there is no perfect period—no perfect horizon—over which to plan. The reason for the choice of 20 years was a balance between a desire to capture more than just the immediate and, on the other side, a desire not to look so far into the future that we had absolutely no idea what the world might look like. That might lead you, I suppose to 10, 20 or 30 years; it is unlikely to lead you to two or three, or 40 or 50.

You then come to an important practical question: over what period are your investment decisions in large and lumpy defence and security items typically made? The answer is something like 20 years. Of course, it varies, but it takes a while to build what you seek to build, a while to deploy it and a while for it to become less useful than you hoped that it would be at an earlier stage. Twenty years captures, at any rate, a good part of that cycle. If you had a planning horizon that was much shorter than 20 years, when you had a document like the SDSR you would find it very difficult to know what to do because you would be unable to determine the shape of things without passing beyond your planning horizon. If you had a much longer horizon, you would find it very difficult to fill because you could not make decisions about equipment today that you would want 50 years from now. So 20 years seemed a relatively natural period.

Q100 The Chair: This is of course related to the time horizon for your risk assessment. You may have noticed that in our written questions we specifically asked for a chart giving an indication of how risks were plotted in the matrix for the NSS. You did not respond to that request one way or the other. Are you now able to tell us that you will be able to let us have such a chart? If there is a problem—if the material is classified, or whatever—perhaps you could give it to us in confidence.

Oliver Letwin: I have inquired about this. This chart is not my personal possession. I am told that the Cabinet Office believes that we could put before your Committee a version of it that does not reveal some of the things that are in it. Perhaps arrangements could be made between your officials and ours to try to do that. If it would help, I could give some description of the way in which it is built up and the kind of thing it is in advance of your seeing it, but that is entirely a matter of whether you want to hear that.

The Chair: I am inclined to say that we should perhaps look at it first. Otherwise we might spend some time on something that will not mean much to us until we see it. I am very grateful to you, and I know that the Committee will be, too. Obviously, it will help us to understand how your conclusions about this were arrived at.

Q101 Malcolm Bruce: You said two things: you said that you had set a 20-year time horizon and you asked how anybody could have predicted what has happened in the past 18 months. Yet the Government have made a clear prediction about what they think they can do in Afghanistan four years ahead—namely, withdraw our troops. You excluded that from the national security risk assessment. Was that a wise thing to do? Or, to put it the other way around, what analysis was made to say, "We have enough certainty about what is going to happen in Afghanistan to be able to exclude it," given that, for example, the situation in Pakistan is deteriorating and the porosity of the border between the two is well known to be a source of trouble? Indeed, in a different context, Pakistan, by 2014 or 2015, will be the largest recipient of overseas development assistance. There seems be a certain unclear analysis involved in all that.

Oliver Letwin: No, I think that there is a very clear analysis associated with it, but I apologise if it has not become transparent. Perhaps, without going into the details of the risk register, I should begin by saying one thing about it. Because it looks at the probability and impact—two axes on a graph—of specific events that affect our national security, it is not looking at decisions within our control. It is looking at the question of what may come and hit us, which is precisely not under our control. It is asking the questions, "What is the chance of it occurring?" and "What is the impact if it does occur?"

The question of the withdrawal of British troops at a given date is resoluble in the sense that it is under our control. Of course, the consequences of doing so are another matter, but the decision on whether to do it or not is one that we can ourselves make. Our analysis of the situation in Afghanistan, about which we did a lot of thinking before that crystallised, took very carefully into account the rate at which we thought we could withdraw without prejudicing the ability of the Afghan state, the Afghan National Army and so forth to establish themselves to a degree that would give them a proper chance of stabilising the country, and, on the other side, the extent to which our presence might become part of the problem rather than part of the solution. We balanced those out and came to the view that we had to set a date that was not very far out but, on the other hand, was far enough so that it could be done in an orderly and proper fashion and be consistent with building up the security forces of the Afghan state. None of that is a matter of judging what hits you; it is a matter of judging what you can achieve, knowing what we did know—the rate of recruitment that one could engage in for the Afghan National Army and so forth, which was something that we could actually analyse.

Q102 Malcolm Bruce: I understand that as a rationale for the decision, but I still do not really understand why that would not be included in the national security risk analysis. Clearly, the bit that we can control is our troops. The consequences, as you rightly say, are

much less predictable, particularly if the situation deteriorates within the region. At what point will the National Security Strategy say, "Actually, we have to put the decision that we have taken back into consideration because things are happening within the region that may alter the implications"? Or is that a done-and-dusted decision that cannot be revisited even though it is four years ahead and anything might happen between now and then?

Oliver Letwin: I do not think that there is in human affairs such a thing as a decision that cannot be revisited, but our present plan is very firm and clear. We have the intention to withdraw our front-line activity by that date. We do not yet know of anything that would persuade us otherwise.

Q103 Mr Arbuthnot: On timing, the National Security Strategy, the Strategic Defence and Security Review and the Comprehensive Spending Review all followed each other on successive days in October last year. Do you think that that was a good thing? Do you think that the strategy should be driving the resources or the resources the strategy? Or should all be done in parallel? For next time around, how do you think we ought to get the timing of this done?

Oliver Letwin: I am now going to offer you a personal view. I do not think that the Government have come to a settled position about how to conduct the next review. I am sure that Sir Peter Ricketts, for example, will have very interesting things to say about this. From my own point of view, the conclusion that I derive from that process is that it is impossible to make rational decisions about all sorts of the matters concerned without reflecting both on what you trying to achieve and on the resources with which you are endowed. These have to be balanced off against one another. It seems to me, therefore, that the decision to do it contemporaneously was right.

Q104 Mr Arbuthnot: I see. One thing that was decided by the National Security Strategy was that certain budgets should be given relative protection in the spending review. One of them was the Department for International Development. One of them was the security and intelligence agencies. Was there a decision by the National Security Council to give a relatively low priority to the Foreign Office? If so, why?

Oliver Letwin: No, there was not. Perhaps I could explain how we saw these various things. There were some things that we were persuaded were extraordinarily important to defending our security but on which, because of the speed with which circumstances had changed, we were not, as a country, spending anything like what we felt we needed to spend. A classic example is cybersecurity. Twenty years ago, I suspect that very few people were talking about it at all; 10 years ago this country was not spending very much on it; five years ago maybe it ought already to have been thinking of doing so but it still was not. We looked at the situation and came to the conclusion that there was good evidence that we needed to spend a very much larger amount of money on that. We made a very positive decision to do so. It is a quite a different case from, but nevertheless produced the same sort of result as, our commitment, which is both moral and prudential, to increasing the DfID budget to 0.7% of our GNI. That, again, produced a very large increase in that budget, which, incidentally, has a very strong effect on our ability to intervene with soft power and to create conflict resolution and stability in circumstances where that is very often a much better value-for-money exercise than trying to intervene militarily in complex situations. So there were various very specific items that received large increases of funding.

It is true that the Foreign Office was not among those, but not because we do not think that the Foreign Office is enormously important. Our embassies abroad do an enormously

important job. Again, when the Foreign Secretary comes here—I know that I am speaking in the presence of a former Foreign Secretary, but I suspect that there will be agreement between the two of them when he comes—he may well express his view that, certainly, it was possible to increase their effectiveness and he has been setting about doing that. We attribute enormous importance to our diplomatic effort. The question was, when looking right across the field at many other important things—schools, hospitals and so forth—what we could achieve by way of efficiencies and still increase the scope, reach and effectiveness of our Foreign Office. The decision that we came to on that budget—which, incidentally, is not quite as much reduced as it may look from the figure, because £0.3 billion of it switches across due to the World Service changes, which is not increasing in nominal terms—was simply a judgement about the efficiencies that could be achieved, rather than any suggestion that the Foreign Office was low on our list of priorities. It is very high.

Q105 Baroness Taylor of Bolton: You said earlier that no one could have anticipated the Arab spring; I think that is a fair comment with which we would all agree. To turn to other topical things, the memorandum from the Cabinet Office tells us that the scoring for every risk includes economic impact. That is very topical at the moment, given the current economic turmoil and problems in the eurozone. Do you think that the National Security Strategy gave enough attention to some of the consequences that might flow from a major economic crisis? Do you see that as a potential generator of security risks to us in the UK?

Oliver Letwin: I would distinguish between three things. First, do certain kinds of physical events that constitute security risks also have the potential to create severe economic damage? The answer is clearly yes. That is one of the criteria that were used to evaluate the impact of risks. The second question is whether, under certain very extreme circumstances, economic events could generate security risks. Undoubtedly, one could imagine such things, but they would need to be very severe indeed. We are, notwithstanding all the difficulties in the world around us and the difficulties that we ourselves face today, still a rich nation and capable of defending and securing ourselves. Even quite severe economic misfortunes in the world leave us able to do that. That is of course one of the reasons why securing our economic prosperity is the biggest single contribution that we can make to securing ourselves. We do not see prosperity as in any sense in conflict or tension with security. On the contrary, we see it as the absolute bedrock of being able to secure ourselves. So long as we remain reasonably prosperous, we can secure ourselves. The third question is whether there are any events on the horizon that would, with any realistic prospect of occurring, be so economically cataclysmic that they would impoverish us and make us incapable of securing ourselves. We do not think so. We are certainly concerned about many aspects of the global economic situation, but we do not think that it threatens our security at the moment. It simply makes life more difficult for us.

Baroness Taylor of Bolton: It certainly makes life more difficult. I think you are very sanguine about that potential but, because we are going on to a section about civil disorder and crisis management, perhaps I should leave it to colleagues to pick up some of those points.

Q106 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: That is my cue, I think. We have until now been talking principally about defence and national security. Given the riots that took place on the streets of many of our cities during the summer, and given that you are looking right across the whole spectrum of government activity, are the Government now giving more consideration to the threat of civil disorder to national security?

Oliver Letwin: We do not see the riots that occurred as a national security issue. We see them as an issue of crime and disorder. We take then enormously seriously. Those of us around the Cabinet table have been having a whole series of discussions in a very particular setting, more or less on a weekly basis for some weeks, continuing since the riots, to look at all sorts of aspects of our national response to those riots. There are very deep-seated issues, such as problem families and early interventions. There are more immediate issues, such as the formation of gangs and how we deal with them. There is a whole range of other questions about the operation of our courts and our criminal justice system, which we are clearly capable of accelerating under those circumstances; a good question is why they are incapable of accelerating in general. There are many issues that we have been considering, but they all fall, in our view, under the heading of how we prevent crime and disorder in this country, not how we secure national security. There are, of course, circumstances under which the two might get connected. In Northern Ireland, for example, there are certainly times when it is difficult to make that distinction. In the case of those particular riots, however, we do not see any evidence at all that they were terrorists attempting to destabilise the state. They were people engaged in criminal activity of one kind or another, which needs to be dealt with by both prevention and effective police action.

Q107 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: But criminal gangs—and, indeed, terrorists, as you rightly say—can take advantage of the disorder created. I am not predicting this, but I fear that there may be demonstrations by the anti-cuts and anti-capitalist movements that become very difficult to control. We have already seen some of those demonstrations, which could be exploited and become an increasing threat to national security. Are you preparing to deal with those?

Oliver Letwin: First, we very much hope that those who disagree with the Government's fiscal stance—which is a perfectly legitimate matter of debate in a democracy—are not about to turn that into violent demonstration. We have seen no sign of that so far. There have been many manifestations of disagreement, but they have been entirely peaceful. We very much hope and expect that they will continue to be so. There are, of course, some people who are manifesting displeasure about the entirety of capitalism; I think that is going on at the moment outside St Paul's Cathedral. Again, I do not see any sign that that is turning into a violent matter. I am sure that when you interview Sir Peter Ricketts, and if you interview the Home Secretary, they will want to say things about the steps that are taken to make sure that we have an adequate response to any civil disorder that turns into a threat to our security. I do not see any sign of those things doing so at the moment.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Presumably, the security services would be watching very carefully and, if it became a threat to national security, would report to the National Security Council, to Ministers and to others.

Oliver Letwin: Members of the Committee will be aware that the security services continuously report to Ministers on whatever they see as a threat to national security.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: I hope that you are right. I was just wondering if you might go back and have another look at it. It might be building up more dangerously than you appear to think.

Oliver Letwin: Well, I hope that it does not.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: So do I.

Q108 Baroness Manningham-Buller: At least, Minister, you acknowledge that there may be a grey area, where what looks like civil disobedience or crime—I am not disputing that that is the correct analysis of what we saw in the summer—can move into something that will stretch national security. I am thinking, for example, of the tanker drivers' strike under the last Government, when we were a very short way from not being able to operate hospitals and a whole lot of other things. It seems to me that Governments need to think about that grey area, where things are neither absolutely clearly national security nor absolutely clearly crime. I think that there is always going to be that slight grey area, so I welcome your comment on that.

Oliver Letwin: The first thing that I ought to say is that there is a distinct air of grandmothers and eggs here, because I am conscious that I am speaking to someone who knows a great deal more about this than I am ever going to. Of course I accept that there are particular actions that are not in themselves violent but that can nevertheless pose a threat to national security. I think that you personally will be aware that the national security risk register certainly looks at some of those items, as it needs to. Indeed, the planning done by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat looks very specifically at how we should respond to those sorts of events, and very appropriately so—if that is what we are talking about, it is very much a centre of attention. I agree with you that there are times—the Northern Ireland example that I cited is one such—when it is difficult to distinguish the criminal from the terrorist. I was merely saying that I do not think that the particular examples that Lord Foulkes mentioned fall into that grey area.

Q109 Baroness Manningham-Buller: As a supplementary, I want to ask you about the relationship between COBRA and the NSC. In the heady days of my youth, COBRA met about two or three times a year. This was not because there were fewer crises; it was because that was the way it was done then. I have the impression today, although I am probably being unfair, that we get told that COBRA has been summoned with great regularity. Maybe this is for very good reasons and COBRA is thought to be a helpful forum for deciding on various things, but I still—partly because I am not used to the NSC—have difficulty seeing the relationships, including with the Chiefs of Staff, who have had to manage a number of military campaigns. I understand where the JIC fits in, but I would like you to talk me through it and to reassure me that the distinct functions of each bit of the machinery are focused and working well together. Sometimes it looks from the outside that there is activity for the sake of activity, so I would like you to reassure me that that is a wrong impression.

Oliver Letwin: It certainly is a wrong impression. We are much too busy to want to generate more activity for the sake of it. Indeed, one of my tasks in life is to try to avoid unnecessary activity. Clearly the Joint Intelligence Committee has its own role, which, as you say, is essentially unchanged. It is there for the collation and analysis of evidence from intelligence. There is a very clear separation between the National Security Council and the kind of operational meetings that occur in COBRA. I will come to one other point in a moment, but let me just describe that clear separation. The National Security Council is an ongoing conversation between a settled group of Ministers, with others attending from time to time from departments that become relevant as the conversation proceeds, and almost always with the agencies and the CDS and sometimes with the police represented. What we are discussing in this continuing conversation are the short, medium and long-term policy responses to the world as it evolves, not how to deal with a particular operational question—

Baroness Manningham-Buller: Which goes to COBRA and the Chiefs of Staff.

Oliver Letwin: Yes. Where particular operational issues arise—today something is happening and something has to be done about it—COBRA may be called by the Prime Minister and it may well be chaired by the Home Secretary or whoever is relevant. It is there to receive information, to make operational decisions, if they fall to the Government to make, to deal with other people who have to make those operational decisions if it falls to them to make them, and so forth. That is completely separate from the NSC except in so much as the NSC will have, with the approval of Cabinet, determined the resources that are being used to deal with the operational questions that are before COBRA and will have set the main policy lines that may be being applied.

Between these two, there is another kind of animal, which is a sub-committee of the NSC. A classic one is NSC-L, which was formed to deal with what was clearly going to be quite a long period of supervision of the Libyan engagement. It was not an immediate operational committee, because the operations were being determined by the MoD and commanders in the relevant locations, but nevertheless its aim was to achieve a consistent set of actions and to make sure that all departments were brought together—for example, the Department for International Development needed to be brought from a very early stage into the question of planning for the aftermath. There are those three things: the NSC, which settles the broad lines of policy; sub-committees of it where necessary—very restricted numbers—to deal with prolonged engagements; and COBRA to deal with immediate operational issues.

Baroness Manningham-Buller: So the sub-committees will not last for ever; they will be created for particular issues like Libya and presumably will not need to continue after a period.

Oliver Letwin: Correct. That is broadly right, although there are one or two exceptions, one of which is the NSC Emerging Powers Sub-Committee, which is looking at a quite different set of issues—this goes back to earlier questions—about what our long-term ambitions should be in relation to emerging markets.

Baroness Manningham-Buller: I am unclear what the sub-committees are. Is that classified information or could it be shared with the Committee?

Oliver Letwin: I am terribly sorry but I do not know whether there is any classification of that. I do not believe that there is; in fact, I believe that they are on the website, but this can be checked.

Q110 Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale: Minister, I wonder whether you could do something similar for me about the role of the National Security Adviser. I understand part of it but I am not sure that I am quite clear about all of it. As you know, we had the Cabinet Office papers, which refer to the limited capacity of the secretariat—I would be interested to hear about that, as well, if you wanted to say something. The National Security Adviser was from the Foreign Office, as you know, and he will be succeeded by somebody from the Foreign Office. Do you think that that might in a way slightly pervert the concentration on to overseas rather than domestic threats? I recognise from what the Cabinet Office has said things that seem to indicate that he has subsumed or taken over the role of what was the intelligence co-ordinator. I understand that he is the Prime Minster's adviser on international and domestic security issues et cetera, but the papers also say that he is the principal accounting officer for the single intelligence account and is responsible for co-

ordination of the intelligence community, including "line management" of the heads of intelligence agencies. Is that just clumsy drafting? It surely cannot be that the NSA is a "line manager" for the chief of the Secret Service, the director-general of the Security Service and the head of GCHQ, can it?

Oliver Letwin: You will need to ask Sir Peter about the exact relationships that he has with those people, but what the Cabinet Office memorandum says is accurate. The role of the National Security Adviser, about which Sir Peter obviously knows a great deal more than I do—quite properly, he does not disclose to me everything that he says and does involving the Prime Minister and other Ministers—is very clear. It is to ensure that the NSC does its work properly. He is its secretary and he sets its agendas by consultation with the Prime Minister. He also acts as the Prime Minister's primary adviser in all these areas. I do not think that the fact that the background of the first and now the second National Security Adviser is the Foreign Office has meant—at least in the case of the first one, of whom I have had considerable experience—any prejudice against being concerned with domestic security. On the contrary, he has been very concerned indeed with domestic security, as well as international security. Indeed, one of the main points of the NSC apparatus is to make it clear that these two are not independent of each other. As you will see when you interview him, that is a point that he very much takes on board. I have dealt a good deal with his successor in his capacity as the UK Representative to the EU and my impression is that he is of the same cast of mind—I am sure that the Prime Minister would not have appointed him if he had not been. It is very important to us that these things be knit together. It is also important that the National Security Adviser serves not just the Prime Minister but the NSC as a whole, as that enables him to interact in an appropriate way with the Home Secretary, the Foreign Secretary, the International Development Secretary and so on. That makes the National Security Secretariat not a body that is trying to supplant any of the departments—this is a very important point—but a body that is trying to serve the interests of co-ordination across the departments. That is one reason why we kept it small and, indeed, why it is being reduced rather than enlarged in size, apart from fiscal necessities. We have never had the idea that it should become a large department that tries to displace the experts. The experts have their expertise, which needs to be respected.

Q111 Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale: Thank you. I quite accept that the details of what Sir Peter Ricketts, the NSA, does with the intelligence agencies do not come into general conversation to the NSC, but this document from the Cabinet Office is not classified and is rather specific about roles that he has to fulfil vis-à-vis the intelligence community and I am just very surprised at them.

Oliver Letwin: All I can say is that I am not surprised, but you will have to ask him, as I say, how it works in practice.

Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale: But you know that the heads of the intelligence agencies—this is enshrined in law, is it not?—have, via ministers, direct access to the Prime Minister.

Oliver Letwin: You undoubtedly know more about these laws than I do. What I am very clear about is that access to the Prime Minister, which is the crucial practical question, is amplified and not reduced by the National Security Council. There they are on a regular basis, week by week, and indeed at other ad hoc meetings. They play, in my experience, a very active role. It may help you if I say that the Prime Minister's normal modus operandi at these meetings is to do something that is perhaps annoying to politicians at first—he starts by asking the experts and comes to the politicians only after we have all heard what the

experts have to say. We have found that enormously educative. They do not always agree with one another, which is also educative. Because it is a continuing conversation, we have all got to know one another quite well and it is a very open conversation. It is one in which very frequently the minds of Ministers going into the meeting are not wholly made up and are changed by what the experts have to say to us. I would say that there is a much closer liaison between the heads of the agencies, the Prime Minister and other senior Ministers in relevant fields now than there would have been in the absence of this form of National Security Council.

Q112 Lord Harris of Haringey: Perhaps I could just follow up on a comment that you made en passant about the National Security Secretariat not duplicating existing government departments and having a limited capacity. The question that I would like to understand is how this works in terms of ensuring that things do not fall between the cracks or that there are not three or four government departments that think that they are leading on a particular topic. Perhaps you could illustrate the answer by telling us how responsibility for cybersecurity is governed. Who leads on cybersecurity? Is it the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Defence, the Home Office, the Foreign Office, or the Department for Business, because of its concerns about the way in which the markets operate and so on? Who actually is responsible and how do you make sure that it is co-ordinated?

Oliver Letwin: I think that I can tell you the answer to the second question, which partly illustrates the answer to your more general question, about which I will perhaps say more in a moment. The implementation of a cyber strategy is the responsibility of my twin, Francis Maude, the Minister for the Cabinet Office. He was charged with that specific responsibility by the National Security Council and, I think, in particular by the Prime Minister writing to him following a National Security Council.

Lord Harris of Haringey: But does he attend the National Security Council?

Oliver Letwin: No. He is charged with carrying out that specific role on behalf of the National Security Council. The National Security Council has made decisions about the budget being allocated and has made certain policy decisions, but Francis is charged with coming up with a strategy. I have no doubt that when he is ready to present that, he will do so to the National Security Council. As I mentioned in response to a previous question, there are numerous occasions on which specific Ministers, who either have specific departmental responsibilities or have been given a specific remit, will come to the National Security Council to present their findings or analysis or to engage in a discussion that we need to have with them. He will of course be assisted in that work both by the National Security Secretariat and by others, including GCHQ, evidently. If I can turn to the more general question—how do the National Security Secretariat and the National Security Adviser help to ensure that things do not fall between the cracks—I would say that their main task is to make sure that things do not fall between the cracks. They are not trying to be the interlocutor on behalf of Britain with foreign Governments; that is the task of the Foreign Office. They are not trying to fight wars; that is the task of the MoD. They are not trying to work out the plan for specific aid proposals; that is the task of DfID. What they are trying to do is to make sure that all those things add up in the way that the National Security Council has asked for them to add up and to bring to the National Security Council issues that relate to each of those things when they conflict with one another or when they appear to conflict with our general strategy.

Q113 Lord Harris of Haringey: I think that I understand how it is supposed to prevent things from falling through the cracks, although the question is whether it is adequately resourced to do that, but I am still slightly unclear about who mediates if different government departments think that they leading on a particular topic or purport to be leading on it. There is an article in one of the newspapers today from a senior official in the Ministry of Defence, implying that that person is in charge of cybersecurity. There are people in the Cabinet Office who talk as though they are in charge of cybersecurity. The Foreign Secretary is holding an international conference on cybersecurity. How do they mediate if people are not necessarily clear as to who is in charge?

Oliver Letwin: All I can tell you is that although in each of the relevant domains there are almost always several different people who have an interest—this is true, incidentally, across government as a whole, as everyone present will be aware—in this domain I have yet to find a case in which there has been a who-does-what dispute. Perhaps partly because of the excellent work that the National Security Adviser has done, although there have been plenty of discussions with differing views about what should be done, there has not been a conflict about who should do it.

Q114 Mr Arbuthnot: One issue that some of the Committees face is not that there is a dispute about who does what but that it is not clear to others whether anybody has a particular role. The Defence Committee is doing an inquiry into the threat posed by either electromagnetic pulses or solar weather and it is quite difficult for us to find a Minister whom we should call in front of us in order to give evidence about that. Whom would you recommend? Would you like to come yourself?

Oliver Letwin: No. I would recommend a technique rather than an answer, which is to phone up Sir Peter, who is extraordinarily good at knowing who is doing what, and ask him to name a Minister or Minsters to come to you. This is exactly the sort of thing that I am talking about. One of his roles is to hold knowledge about who is involved in what and to ensure that they are working together appropriately where necessary. So it is to him that you should address yourself for those inquiries.

The Chair: Lord Sterling, you have a question.

Lord Sterling of Plaistow: I have question 17, but this is question 16, isn't it?

The Chair: I beg your pardon; I have skipped Lord Harris.

Oliver Letwin: A role dispute.

Q115 Lord Harris of Haringey: I am sorry. I overextended with the previous question, but I think that the Lords may be about to have a Division. When we saw Lord West, he expressed great sadness about the disappearance of the National Security Forum. The Government have chosen not to continue with it. Could you tell us why? I was very interested in the written answers that talk about the National Security Secretariat doing work in partnership with think tanks, academia, international organisations and so on. Perhaps you could give us examples of where that has happened and what the products were.

Oliver Letwin: I cannot speak about the National Security Forum. It is not an item with which I have been familiar, because it is not in place at the moment. I think that you need to ask Sir Peter why he took that view.

Lord Harris of Haringey: I think that it was a ministerial decision.

Oliver Letwin: Fine. You could indeed ask William Hague or others who were involved; it was not a decision in which I took part. But I can illustrate what we have done in the last 18 months or whatever to involve experts from outside government in challenging what we were doing and considering what we might do in one field or another. One example that I would give is that at an early stage—I think that this is a matter of public record—in the discussions that we had about Afghanistan, the Prime Minister held a meeting at Chequers over quite a number of hours, in which the format was that the National Security Council members were there, as were the principal advisers from the intelligence agencies and so forth. A group of very informed people outside government who had long experience of Afghanistan and some people who had diplomatic or military experience of Afghanistan who were current employees of the state came and gave their views in a very open way—their views were not the same as one another's—about what we should be concerned about, what the true situation was and what different plans might lead to. They were at a certain point asked to leave the room and we began a discussion in the light of what they had said. Another example that I can give you, although only at second hand, was that, in the formation of the SDSR, officials at the National Security Secretariat and, I gather, a whole series of officials from other departments met on repeated occasions with outside experts of one kind and another to bat to and fro ideas and questions that had arisen. These are the sort of informal but useful challenge processes that we welcome.

Lord Harris of Haringey: Presumably, given the Government's commitment to openness and transparency, a list of these organisations, the occasions on which they were consulted and what their expertise was seen to be is being put on the public record.

Oliver Letwin: I do not know the extent to which those discussions were matters of public record or were believed to be things that needed to be kept confidential. As I say, I think that it is a matter of public record that people were brought to Chequers to offer their views.

Lord Harris of Haringey: It might be appropriate for this Committee to have that information, Chair.

Q116 Lord Sterling of Plaistow: Minister, taking it that you are in effect the Minister for the strategic policy of the Government—that is how I see your role—I want to ask the following question. The memorandum points to the role that overseas aid plays in conflict prevention. I have always felt very strongly about this. Twenty-five years ago I was a senior adviser in the Government, particularly on the subject of overseas aid and how it was handled, which was unlike the way in which aid is handled by the French Government, the American Government and certainly today by the Chinese Government in a major way. Over the next 20 years—we have talked about the strategy—nearly £200 billion, inflation proof, of aid will be handed out. When you see that and the way in which it is getting a life of its own, how does it relate to a policy of what is called soft power? Also, perhaps you could explain why, as time goes on, we have to be part of the 0.7% club. I feel strongly that this is getting mixed into a defence aspect of the country and its interests. When you look at the list of the fragile states that we support, you find it extremely difficult to see the connection between some of them and the UK interest. Is the commitment universal or specific to UK security? A huge amount of money is now being pushed out. I have been around—

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Chair, given the Division, are we going to come back?

The Chair: I was going to ask you that. If enough people are prepared to come back, we should, because that was an important question. Is that okay with you, Mr Letwin?

Oliver Letwin: Yes.

The Chair: Okay, go and vote.

The Committee was suspended for a Division in the House of Lords.

On resuming—

Q117 The Chair: Mr Letwin, if you do not mind, we will resume.

Oliver Letwin: Of course. Make I take this opportunity to clarify two points? The first is that I am advised that the sub-committees of the National Security Council are indeed on the website, so they are very far from being classified; they are public and the information should be easily obtainable. Secondly, I am told that it is possible for us to provide some details of a number of engagements with external advisers. That will be furnished to you by the Government.

The Chair: Thank you. That would be very helpful. We will move on quickly to Lord Foulkes's question and then pick up where we were.

Q118 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Minister, the UK Government at ministerial level have regular meetings and liaison with the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish Administrations. As the SNP seek to move towards independence, is that becoming more difficult? Do you anticipate that it will become more difficult?

Oliver Letwin: As you know, the Government take the strong view that the union is hugely advantageous.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: I agree with you.

Oliver Letwin: I am conscious of that. We also take the view that it is ultimately a matter for the people of Scotland to decide on their future. We have not come across any practical difficulties arising at the moment and we do not anticipate at the moment any arising, but that of course is entirely dependent on something that we do not know, which is just what form of action is proposed and what form of action, if any, will receive the approval of the Scottish people.

Q119 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: First of all, I agree that it is right that we should be working together with them, because we have a mutuality of interest, as we saw at Glasgow Airport, when we worked very closely together. But if the SNP do move towards greater independence, suppose that the threat came from a separatist body in another country with which they had some sympathies. That might create difficulties in exchanging information and working with them. Also, they want rid of the Trident base on the Clyde and there might be real threats to national security on the Trident base on the Clyde that we, as the UK Government and Parliament, would be concerned about but that they might actually sympathise with. Can you see that there is a potential for difficulties and a conflict of interest?

Oliver Letwin: I am afraid that you asking me to speculate about hypotheticals that have not arisen. Our aim at the moment is to engage in fruitful co-operation and we will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: But is not the job of a Minister to anticipate problems that might arise? For example, I am deeply concerned that Gus O'Donnell has said that it is okay for Sir Peter Housden, the Permanent Secretary in the Scottish Executive, to advise the Scottish Executive on matters that are reserved to the United Kingdom, such as the constitution, foreign affairs and defence. That means that you could have a senior civil servant responsible to Gus O'Donnell advising the devolved Administration on policies that are directly contrary to the United Kingdom Government's policies. In your case and in our case, these could be issues that affect national security.

The Chair: That is an important issue, but I think that we are straying a little, given that our time is quite confined. I do not know whether there is anything that you very briefly want to say in response, Mr Letwin.

Oliver Letwin: The only thing that I can really say is that that is a question that you need to address to the Cabinet Secretary and not to me.

The Chair: Perhaps you would now like to address Lord Sterling's question.

Q120 Lord Sterling of Plaistow: I am sorry for being so long-winded in trying to come to it, but it is something that I feel strongly about. I was in Mozambique the other day, seeing how China has completely dominated the whole of natural gas and is putting down roads and so forth. In every country that I have gone to, one after the other China is getting in with the purpose of serving the interests of China. All I am saying is that it has become very romantic to be involved internationally. As I turn round to some of the youngsters and say, "I have a job for you in Brixton," they do not look so excited. As a Minister, you are interested in the strategic aspects of these funds. Are you strongly supportive of the belief that spending those sort of moneys is in this country's interest? Should we not at least say, "If you want a desalination plant, we will build it, we will control it and we will run it"? I would just like to get your views on the use of overseas aid, given what we had to cut back in the defence programme last year on what I call real defence. This notion of soft power in some format is being exaggerated in my view and I would like to have your views on that.

Oliver Letwin: The short answer is that I am totally supportive of the Government's absolute commitment to moving up to and achieving the 0.7% of GNI as the amount spent on ODA. That is a commitment of the Government, not just an aspiration; it is something that we are intending to do and are doing. Our view is that that is justified both on moral grounds and on prudential grounds. We take the view that, although we have our difficulties, we are an immensely rich country by comparison with those that are receiving aid and certainly by comparison with those people in those countries that are receiving aid. We believe that we have a moral duty to help them out of the conditions of life, and indeed death, in which they find themselves. We also think that there is a strong prudential case for aid in the long term. We believe that helping countries that are very poor to become wealthier will make the world intrinsically more stable and more friendly to us and to other liberal democracies. Specifically, we also think that money spent on conflict resolution and stabilisation is money very well spent, and we have been increasing the proportion of the aid budget devoted to that.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Given that there is another Division, I will declare the meeting at an end, but I would like to say how grateful we are to you. We are sorry for the disruption right at the end. I know that Mr Bruce would have liked to press you a little further on that point. Perhaps, if you feel able to, you could send us a brief note expanding on what you were just saying, but I leave that in your hands. Thank you again very much for your evidence to the Committee.

Sir Peter Ricketts – (QQ 121-159)

MONDAY 5 DECEMBER 2011

Evidence heard in Public Questions 121 - 159

Members present:

Margaret Beckett (Chair)
Mr James Arbuthnot
Lord Cope of Berkeley
Lord Fellowes
Lord Foulkes of Cumnock
Lord Harris of Haringey
Lord Lee of Trafford
Paul Murphy
Richard Ottaway
Mark Pritchard
Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale
Baroness Taylor of Bolton

Examination of Witness

Sir Peter Ricketts, National Security Adviser, Cabinet Office

Q121 The Chair: Could I call the Committee to order and welcome you to the Committee, Sir Peter? You very helpfully gave us our introductory briefing on an informal basis last March, and we have asked you and your colleagues a number of questions over the period. I suppose this is your valedictory session, certainly at this Committee, on the public record before you move to what I hope will be a very enjoyable job in the New Year.

Sir Peter Ricketts: Thank you very much.

Q122 The Chair: That is the polite bit. However, I have to begin by saying to you how very dismayed the Committee is that the update we had been hoping to see—indeed, we postponed a meeting of the Committee in order to give more opportunity for that update to be produced—is not before us, and there is no indication as to when it will be. To make matters worse, on Thursday the Libya report was published, of which the Committee had been given no advance warning. That is a particularly sore point, because had we known about it and had the chance to put aside some time to scrutinise it, it might well have shaped some of the questions that we put to you. We are very unhappy about the combination of those things.

Thirdly, we have asked for some more detailed information about the methodology and the approach of the risk assessment. We completely understand that the Government might want to keep some of that confidential—and we would be happy to take evidence on the basis of confidentiality—but we would ask you to think again about that as part of that whole package of the Committee being adequately supported by information from the Government to do the job that you have asked us to do.

Sir Peter Ricketts: Chair, first of all I apologise that you do not have the annual update on the SDSR; I understand that you postponed this session so that you would have it, and I am sorry that it is not available. It will be available in the next few days. The reason is that it has taken longer than we first hoped to get it cleared around ministerial offices, Ministers and the Prime Minister. I think that shows the interest Ministers have in what we are doing on the SDSR. It has also been a very busy time; I know that is not a good excuse, but it has probably taken us longer than expected to get all the Ministers to clear it. It is now almost there and will be published within the next few days. I am frustrated and sorry that I have to appear before you without your seeing it. I say that in all sincerity. We have worked very hard in the last week to try to get it out so that it was available to the Committee.

On the Libya lessons learnt, again I hold my hand up and apologise that we did not give you advance notice. We had been planning to do that for some weeks, so we should have told you it was coming.

Q123 The Chair: This is the second time that this has happened to this Committee, so let us hope that third time will be luckier.

Sir Peter Ricketts: We will make sure that we get it into our system that we give the Committee advance warning when we are publishing these things.

Q124 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Chair, I do not understand Sir Peter's comments that, because it has taken so long, it shows how interested Ministers are. Surely the opposite could be the case if it is always going to the bottom of their in-trays and not being dealt with.

Sir Peter Ricketts: I think they could have just ticked it, put it in their out-tray and sent it on, but each of the Ministers concerned has wanted to read it carefully and has had changes to make to it. That has all taken time, and I think it does genuinely reflect interest in and being keen to make sure that Parliament gets a fully up-to-date account of how we have got on in implementing the SDSR.

The Chair: Thank you. This is the fourth evidence session that the Committee has had in this Parliament. Obviously, we have this slightly unusual remit and, as you will probably know, we have heard from former security Ministers, Baroness Neville-Jones and Lord West. We have also had an interview with Mr Letwin, which was constructive and useful, but he seemed to think a number of the questions that other people had steered us to ask of him were not actually his job. Therefore, we are continuing to explore some of these issues.

I have dealt with the question of producing the report. We will now move into the questions, and I remind colleagues that, for Sir Peter's and our own sake, we should be as expeditious as we can be.

Q125 Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale: I would like to ask if you could just describe for us the role of the National Security Adviser in a brief overview of how your work is divided

day to day. There are a couple of points I would like to ask you about that, but perhaps I will let you say your piece first.

Sir Peter Ricketts: The way I look on this job, I have three hats. One is I am the secretary of the National Security Council and I prepare the meetings; I consult the Prime Minister and other Ministers about the agenda; I have a meeting of Permanent Secretary representatives of all the departments on the NSC; we meet before the NSC to prepare the papers and the agenda; and then I am secretary of the meeting and responsible for implementation and follow-up. That is one role. The second role is effectively as a foreign policy adviser to the Prime Minister. Because of my background, he looks to me for advice; I attend his meetings in London; I travel with him when he goes oversees; and I act as his senior adviser on foreign affairs.

The third function is heading the Secretariat in the Cabinet Office. In particular, I have a responsibility that I know you asked Mr Letwin about, Baroness Ramsay, which is that I hold the budget for the intelligence agencies; I am the principal accounting officer for that, and I do the line management, the annual appraisal and oversight of the three agency heads. I have a responsibility for the intelligence community; while each of the three agency heads has their own responsibilities in their own fields, I have the responsibility to make sure they are working effectively together.

Q126 Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale: Could I just follow up on that point? Is it not constitutionally slightly odd that you are writing the confidential annual reports of the heads of the intelligence agencies? For example, the head of the MI5 used to have their annual report written by the Home Secretary; the Home Secretary did it himself. Is it not slightly odd to have the annual reports written by someone who is in the position you are? You have been an ambassador and you are going to be an ambassador in Paris, so you will be moving from a position where you are writing the Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service's annual report, and once you are ambassador in Paris you will not even write the annual report of the head of station in your own embassy, because, as you know, that is how the system works. Do you find it slightly odd that somebody in your position would be writing the annual reports of the heads of the three intelligence agencies when they should really have a direct line up to Government? I notice it said in the Cabinet Office paper they do an annual report to the Prime Minister, but that is not quite the same thing. Do you not find it slightly odd that you are doing that?

Sir Peter Ricketts: No, I do not. First of all, each agency head has their statutory right of access to the Prime Minister. They are accountable for policy to their Secretary of State, and the Committee knows that the Secretaries of State have a particular relationship with the agency heads. That is clear, but the agency heads are also Permanent Secretaries of departments in the same way that I was a Permanent Secretary of the Foreign Office. Most of the other Permanent Secretaries are line-managed by the Cabinet Secretary, Gus O'Donnell, who writes their annual reports.

Since I am a senior Permanent Secretary now—I have been Permanent Secretary of my own department—Gus asked me to take on the line-management responsibility for the three heads of agencies since I see far more of their work than the Cabinet Secretary does; I work with them all the time. In doing that, of course I consult the Secretaries of State of the departments, but every Permanent Secretary in Whitehall, including the agency heads, has a civil service line manager who writes their annual appraisal. It seemed to the Cabinet Secretary, and the Prime Minister agreed, that it made sense for this job to oversee the

work of the three agency heads rather than the Cabinet Secretary, who has to do all the other 25 Permanent Secretaries in Whitehall.

Q127 Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale: I was not suggesting the Cabinet Secretary should do it. It just seems a departure from what was the procedure in the past. You talked about the Director-General of the Security Service, the Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service and the Director of GCHQ as Permanent Secretaries; that was not really how I think they were thought about, and it is perhaps an interesting Civil Service way of looking at them. However, there has been a change, because it was indeed, for example, the Home Secretary who wrote the annual report for the head of MI5. I will not go on about this, but there has been a change, and I am not sure when it happened and how exactly.

Sir Peter Ricketts: I cannot tell you that, I am afraid.

Q128 Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale: Okay. I was wondering to what extent you at the NSC have the power to initiate policy.

Sir Peter Ricketts: My role gives me a number of functions. First of all, I can convene; I can call meetings and bring people together to tackle problems. Because I am close to the Prime Minister, I know what the Prime Minister is looking for in policy—the issues he is focusing on that he expects me to go and carry forward in Whitehall. Given that, I am in a position to put on the agenda to raise issues that I think need tackling, but I do not have the executive responsibility; that rests with the departments, but I can and do certainly initiate.

Q129 Paul Murphy: Sir Peter, all your considerable experience has obviously been in the realm of foreign affairs. The first point I would like to put to you is: do you think that because you have been a distinguished Foreign Office official, so will your successor in this job be? How about the domestic side of this job? Have you been able to co-ordinate and deal with those issues as effectively as you would like to? The second point relating to that is that you have touched on the fact that you were foreign policy adviser to the Prime Minister. I am assuming that is the same type of job that Sir David Manning had. Do you find that there is any sort of conflict between that role and the role for which you are in front of us today?

Sir Peter Ricketts: Just on the second point: no, I do not think so at all. As you say, a part of the national security agenda is foreign affairs, and that is a part that I have particular background in. Therefore, it makes sense for me to be playing a role that has traditionally been played over many years of a senior official close to the Prime Minister who is there to be his adviser and counsellor, and take part in his meetings with foreign heads of state and Government. It is one role that integrates perfectly well within the National Security Council. We are finding that we will often be discussing issues of international policy, foreign policy or security policy, where knowledge of what the Prime Minister has been doing and saying with foreign leaders is very helpful. I think those two fit very well together.

In terms of experience, you are clearly right: I am short of experience of the domestic, Home Office area of activity. I do not think anybody coming into my role would have a perfect background of complete knowledge of the entire spectrum. I came with quite a lot of defence, security and intelligence in my background. Sir Kim Darroch, who will be replacing me, comes with a lot of foreign policy and European experience from the recent past. It could well be that his successor will come with more of a domestic security background. I do not think you will ever find an individual who has complete experience of the totality. I obviously depend very heavily on Helen Ghosh, and other officials in the

Home Office, and Jonathan Evans and the Security Service in helping me give enough priority to the domestic security issues.

Q130 Paul Murphy: Finally, following that up, do you think there is a case for the adviser staying longer in the post?

Sir Peter Ricketts: Yes, I suspect that Sir Kim will spend longer. I came to this job having already done four years as Permanent Secretary in the FCO; he will come back fresh from a posting overseas, and I think he will probably do longer than I have.

Q131 Lord Cope of Berkeley: I think Sir Kim Darroch has been the UK Representative in the EU in his most recent experience. As I understand it, and from my recollection when I was involved, which was a while ago now, that will have involved him with virtually every government department coming through Europe, except for defence and the intelligence agencies. Does his experience before UKREP fit him more for that? You will appreciate there is a slightly underlying worry in the Committee that this should not primarily, or certainly not solely, be a Foreign Office matter; it is much wider than that, and we are very concerned about the other defence and domestic aspects.

Sir Peter Ricketts: Indeed. First of all, as you say, Sir Kim, given his job in UKREP, will come with far more recent experience of the justice and home affairs area, the domestic security area, than I will have had, so he will bring a slightly contrasting experience there. When I first worked closely with him, 12 years or so ago, he was the FCO lead on the whole Balkans conflict—Bosnia and Kosovo—so dealing with conflict issues, and dealing very closely with the MoD and the intelligence community at that time. He has done conflict and defence work in his background, but not in recent years. As I say, I do not think anybody will have covered the entire waterfront within the last few years.

Q132 Lord Lee of Trafford: Sir Peter, putting the degree of experience to one side and looking at it in a more fundamental sense, what would be the pluses and minuses of a job similar to yours being done by a Minister with a seat on the NSC, rather than by—in the nicest way—a civil servant such as you?

Sir Peter Ricketts: It will always have to be a judgment for the Prime Minister whether he wants to have a Minister or a senior official in this role. My own opinion is that it has worked quite well with a senior official. Why do I say that? National security is effectively made up of foreign affairs, defence, home office matters and intelligence. If you have a Minister, they will inevitably overlap at ministerial level with the responsibilities of the Foreign Secretary, the Defence Secretary, the Development Secretary and the Home Secretary. I have great respect for Ministers, but my experience is that, if you give two Ministers overlapping responsibilities for the same thing, it is not always a recipe for harmony.

Q133 Mark Pritchard: We have a Minister with the title International Security Minister at the MoD, Gerald Howarth, and we also have a Counterterrorism Minister at the Home Office, James Brokenshire. Are they just titles?

Sir Peter Ricketts: They are leading on particular parts of the overall spectrum—Mr Brokenshire on counterterrorism in particular, and Mr Howarth particularly on defence diplomacy and the international issues in the MoD. I think that is a bit different from having somebody in my position, where there would inevitably be a risk of some friction with the senior departmental Ministers I think.

Q134 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Sir Peter, you have a very low opinion of Ministers.

Sir Peter Ricketts: On the contrary—it is a very high opinion of Ministers.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: If you as a civil servant can manage to do the job and not upset the heads of the Civil Service in Defence, Foreign Office and the Home Office, why cannot the Minister do it?

Sir Peter Ricketts: As I say, it will always be a judgment for the Prime Minister whether he wanted to appoint a Minister in this role. I am giving you my opinion that a Minister in my job would be more likely to lead to friction with departmental Ministers than having a civil servant in the job.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: They are not as good as civil servants then.

Sir Peter Ricketts: It is not so much that they are good or not, but there would be a question of who reports to the House of Commons on an issue that is national security but which actually covers foreign affairs. I can see a lot of potential friction.

Q135 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: For a while we had Lord West in the last Government, and Baroness Neville-Jones at least started to bring things together in terms of national security. Why has there not been a similar appointment following Baroness Neville-Jones's resignation?

Sir Peter Ricketts: Mr Brokenshire has taken on Baroness Neville-Jones's role in the Home Office.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: In exactly the same way?

Sir Peter Ricketts: Not entirely, because Mr Francis Maude has taken over responsibility for cyber in the Cabinet Office, so the role has been divided in part. There is still a Minister responsible for all the different parts of Baroness Neville-Jones's portfolio.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: How many Ministers do we have now dealing with one aspect or other of the national security strategy?

Sir Peter Ricketts: There are Ministers in each of the departments that sit on the National Security Council.

Q136 Lord Harris of Haringey: I wanted to just move us on from that very interesting area to talk about the National Security Secretariat. Obviously, this is fairly modestly resourced; it relies on departments to do research to inform discussions. Indeed, I think in the material you supplied us you said very clearly there was a limited capacity to undertake analysis and commission wider work. Could I just ask what the process is by which you initiate requests for additional research when you see gaps, and how do departments respond? Perhaps you can give some examples so we can understand it better.

Sir Peter Ricketts: There are various different ways of doing things. For example, one of the commitments in the SDSR was to work out a national space strategy, and we have recently formed a team in the Cabinet Office bringing together experts from the MoD world, the commercial space world and other civil servants to produce a national space strategy under the leadership and co-ordination function of the Cabinet Office. That is an ad hoc team that has come together, will produce a strategy and will then disperse again.

Because we have weekly meetings of the NSC at Permanent Secretary level, we have an opportunity both to look at what the NSC is doing and more widely to cover issues that are not on the NSC agenda, and that is an opportunity to spot gaps and to commission departments or an intelligence community to go away and do further work on a particular subject.

Lord Harris of Haringey: What do you do when there is no clear departmental lead, as was the case, for example, until Francis Maude's appointment in terms of cybersecurity or for something like electromagnetic pulse?

Sir Peter Ricketts: Part of our function is to spot where there may not be a lead and where we need to find a lead, and then to implement that. In the case of cyber, we had Pauline Neville-Jones. When she moved on, Francis Maude and the Cabinet Office took over ministerial lead responsibility, partly because we were very keen to make sure that there was ministerial oversight of this new cyber programme that the Cabinet Office has responsibility for and was set up as a result of the SDSR. Spotting those gaps is part of our role and determining, if it is clear, as it was on space security, which department has responsibility for a space strategy in this country. We have now organised a ministerial lead, Mr Willetts, the Universities and Science Minister, supported by the MoD. We have pulled together a team to write that strategy. If there were a problem about ministerial lead on electromagnetic pulses, we could make sure that we can find the appropriate person there.

Lord Harris of Haringey: Does the departmental lead follow the Minister? Will the department leading on a particular area of activity be the one where the Minister is located, as it were?

Sir Peter Ricketts: It works best like that, yes, but you would normally have to get other departments to work alongside them.

Q137 Lord Harris of Haringey: Could you talk to us about what the benefits would be of the National Security Secretariat having the capacity to do its own thinking as opposed to being dependent on inputs from the member departments?

Sir Peter Ricketts: I would not want to suggest that we did not have the capacity to do any thinking. That is not fair; we do what we can.

Lord Harris of Haringey: It is of limited capacity. Sorry.

Sir Peter Ricketts: Yes, it is limited. It is extremely high quality, but it is limited in terms of numbers. In the current climate in Whitehall, to try to increase the Cabinet Office's capacity to do reflection, research and analysis at the centre would be quite hard work. At the moment all departments, including the Cabinet Office, are having to reduce the number of civil servants, and so that is a pressure on all of us. Therefore, I think we would have to demonstrate really clearly that it was not being well done in departments. I do not feel that; I feel that, provided you can bring together the really good people thinking about research and policy in the Home Office, in DfID, the MoD and the FCO, and draw on the best of them, you do not actually need a large staff in the Cabinet Office to do it as well.

Lord Harris of Haringey: You are saying, then, that you are reliant on Civil Service advice and you do not seek advice from external sources.

Sir Peter Ricketts: Yes, we use the Civil Service, but for example when we were doing the National Security Strategy or the SDSR, as I think Mr Letwin reported to you in his letter,

we drew heavily on the expertise of RUSI, Chatham House, IISS and a number of other outside commentators and researchers in the national security area.

Lord Harris of Haringey: That was for the purpose of producing the strategy, presumably. What about on a continuing basis? For example, is there a mechanism whereby the National Security Council can benefit from advice from those outside the Civil Service in terms of its day-to-day discussions and meetings?

Sir Peter Ricketts: Yes. Not day to day but from time to time we have drawn on, for example, outside experts in talking about Afghanistan. We have brought in experts who are knowledgeable about Afghanistan to participate and make sure that we are taking the full range of views that are available on Afghanistan policy.

Lord Harris of Haringey: Did they give those views directly to the National Security Council or through the departmental processes?

Sir Peter Ricketts: We have had sessions where we have had outside experts come directly to the National Security Council. That is a good format.

Q138 Mark Pritchard: Sir Peter, do you think the partial or total collapse of the euro has any national security implications?

Sir Peter Ricketts: I think you saw in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement that the Government are doing contingency planning across the whole range of scenarios. The NSC is not involved in that work, which is being done elsewhere in the Government, but we would obviously keep in view, in terms of horizon scanning, any potential implications for national security, as I think Mr Letwin said when he appeared before you.

Q139 Mark Pritchard: In a recent speech, the Foreign Secretary said, "The life savings of millions of Europeans could be at risk", in relation to the wider eurozone crisis. Do you think if that was the case, and there was a run on the banks, for example, this country could see civil disorder? Is there scenario planning in Whitehall for such a scenario?

Sir Peter Ricketts: I do not want to speculate about any possibility of that, and I would just refer back to what the Chancellor said, which is that the Government are doing contingency planning for the whole range of possible scenarios.

Q140 Mark Pritchard: I have a final question and a slight aside on counter-piracy and wider issues that fall under your remit. Despite the deployment of a variety of naval forces, whether it be individual countries', European or NATO forces, piracy is actually going up rather than down—the incidents are up rather than down. Do you think, given the publicised routes of cruise ships along the Horn of Africa en route to other parts of the world, there is a possibility that the activities of either criminal groups working alone or terrorist groups, or, indeed, those two groups coming together, could escalate to cruise ships, because they are not being penalised for attacking other ships in the majority of cases—they are often slapped on the wrist and let go? That certainly is a national security risk for British citizens who are in the top three of cruise ship users.

Sir Peter Ricketts: If I could just broaden out from that, I think the whole issue of Somalia, with piracy as one symptom of a deeper problem in Somalia, is an example of an issue that the National Security Council has gripped in recent months. You may have seen that the British Government has called an international conference on Somalia in February, and the

aim of that is to look at the problem of piracy, but also the problems of which it is a symptom—the problem of state failure, the risk of terrorism.

Q141 Mark Pritchard: Forgive me—the Government has a grip of it? How can it have a grip if incidents are up rather than down? I know it is not just a UK Government issue; it is an international issue. There is not an international legal framework at the moment; there is no UN representative for counter-piracy. I am just a bit puzzled about how we have a grip of it.

Sir Peter Ricketts: If I can just finish my answer, we have taken the initiative internationally to call an international conference in London to look at all aspects of the Somalia issue, including piracy, the terrorism that lies behind it and the state failure that lies behind it, to try to corral more international effort. I will send you the figures on incidents of piracy because I believe they are going down, not going up, as a result of the action of the international coalition naval forces. You might have seen an incident the other day when the Royal Navy was able to stop a pirate ship that was in the process of taking over a fishing vessel in the area. It did not slap the pirates on the wrist; it took them to the Seychelles and has put them into the justice system. I believe that the number of incidents is going down. There is still an extremely worrying situation in Somalia—piracy is a threat—but that is exactly why the Prime Minister has taken the initiative and why we will be having a conference here in London in February to try to bring international opinion together.

Mark Pritchard: And on cruise ships in particular, are you concerned about an escalation? I am.

Sir Peter Ricketts: I think any piracy in that region is a threat to shipping of all kinds.

Q142 Richard Ottaway: Following on from Mr Pritchard's questions on piracy, the Department for Transport is tomorrow publishing guidance on the use of armed guards on board British-flagged vessels. Is that something you would have been involved with?

Sir Peter Ricketts: Yes. We noted that no ship that has carried armed guards has, certainly in the recent past, been intercepted by pirates. Therefore, we concluded that one way of helping to keep British shipping safe in that area was to amend the regulations to allow them, with proper controls, to carry armed guards.

Richard Ottaway: I shall read the guidance with interest.

Q143 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Very briefly: Sir Peter refused to speculate on problems that might arise from the eurozone crisis; Oliver Letwin said he did not think civil disorder over the summer raised any issues; neither has talked about energy supply. Is the Government not looking at national security through the prism of foreign policy and defence, and forgetting about all the other aspects of it?

The Chair: If I may, I am going to move on to Lord Fellowes's question, because I think one almost flows from the other.

Q144 Lord Fellowes: Can I draw on a couple of things that Mr Letwin said when he came here? The first was that he made much of the impossibility of forecasting events, and the importance of adaptability and getting the responses right. If he is right, would it not be better for the time and resources spent on designing a National Security Strategy for these unforeseeable events to be spent on response?

Sir Peter Ricketts: I think what Mr Letwin was saying was that we will not be able to predict individual events; we will not be able to tell you where the next crisis will arise, and, if we had sat here in December last year, we would not have told you that the next crisis would arise in the Arab world and in Libya. However, we know that there will be a continuing series of international crises and they will require adaptable armed forces to deal with them. We have also given priority to issues like counterterrorism and cyber, so without trying to produce a recipe that tells us exactly where the next crisis will happen, the National Security Strategy has been helpful in directing work to produce our capability to deal with the crisis wherever it happens. I think it has been worthwhile and I think the prioritisation of the risks in the National Security Strategy is worthwhile.

Q145 Lord Fellowes: You reckon it has already been proving its worth. He did say that he thought the decision not to intervene in Syria was nothing to do with either money or defence resources. Do you agree with that?

Sir Peter Ricketts: Yes, I think the decision not to intervene in Syria was because Syria is a very different case. If you look at Libya, we had urgent appeals from a wide range of the people in Libya; we had a direct invitation from the Arab League for NATO to intervene; we had an explicit authorisation under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to intervene. None of those conditions applies in Syria, and I do not think any of them will apply, so it is a very different case. It is not the availability of resources; the fundamental nature of the situation is different.

Lord Fellowes: Do you think an intervention in Syria would have been unpopular with the democratically minded Syrians or not?

Sir Peter Ricketts: We have not had any clear expression of interest.

Lord Fellowes: You have not had any indication.

Sir Peter Ricketts: The Syrian opposition is much more divided and diverse in its views than the Libyan opposition were.

Q146 Mr Arbuthnot: You said earlier, Sir Peter, that we drew heavily on the expertise of RUSI in drawing up the SDSR. RUSI did a survey, and they asked 1,543 people from the defence and security community whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: "The UK now has a strategy for its national security that is appropriate to the geopolitical challenges the country faces." Only 31% agreed with that, 59% disagreed and 10% were undecided, so one could say that 69% did not agree that we had a security strategy appropriate to the geopolitical challenges the country faces. What went wrong?

Sir Peter Ricketts: It is true we did not submit our National Security Strategy to a vote of the members of RUSI, but we drew on the expertise of the director of RUSI, who helped us a lot. I am not sure that the Government will ever be able to produce a strategy that satisfies everyone that it is adequate to the conditions of the time.

Q147 Mr Arbuthnot: On shrinkage of influence, the National Security Strategy says, "Britain's national interest requires the rejection of any notion of the shrinkage of UK influence in the world," yet it decided that we would cut defence spending, cut Foreign Office spending and cut BBC spending, so surely that rejection of the shrinkage of UK influence in the world is not really tenable, is it?

Sir Peter Ricketts: I do not think that is what the Foreign Secretary meant by using the phrase. He was talking not about the amount we spent on defence or the Foreign Office but about our political will to be an active, engaged country that is making a difference to the problems of the world. Since the arrival of this Government, you have seen Britain taking a lead on Libya; you have seen Britain taking a lead in Somalia; we are very prominent in combating the Iranian nuclear weapons programme, which is partly why we suffered what we did in Tehran last week; we are the second largest contributor in Afghanistan and very central to policy on Afghanistan and Pakistan; you have seen the new Government significantly step up our engagement with the Gulf, with India, with Australia and Canada, and many other countries. I would make the case that this is an active, engaged policy that is playing a leading role in many national security issues. I do not think it is just a question of how much we spend on defence, which is anyway still the fourth largest defence budget in the world.

Q148 Mr Arbuthnot: I was not suggesting it was just a question of how much we spent on defence, but, if you are also reducing Foreign Office spending and BBC spending, that may be why the then Chief of Defence Staff, now Lord Stirrup, said that he did not buy that statement in the SDSR when he came in front of the Defence Committee. Did that disappoint you that he did not buy it?

Sir Peter Ricketts: Lord Stirrup and others are absolutely entitled to their own opinion. The track record of the Government over the last 18 months has shown that we have not been shrinking strategically; we are still in the forefront of countries making a difference on international peace and security.

Q149 Richard Ottaway: Sir Peter, you have been talking about a thematic approach. As I understand it, you also have a country list of priorities. How do you draw up that list, and do you include friend and foe alike on the list?

Sir Peter Ricketts: I do not really recognise that.

Richard Ottaway: It was Mr Letwin who told us that.

Sir Peter Ricketts: The trouble is there are a whole series of different prioritisations depending on what we are talking about. If we were talking about conflict work, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and countries in the Middle East would be at the top of our priority list. If you were talking about trade and investment and Britain's prosperity, there would be a different list of countries. The countries that the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have been visiting in the last year are a pretty good guide to that. If you are talking about development, it would be the list of countries in the bilateral aid review that the Development Secretary has conducted. I do not recognise the idea that there is one overall prioritisation; it depends entirely on what issues you are talking about.

Richard Ottaway: So there is not a specific list then.

Sir Peter Ricketts: No. I am sure there are many lists of countries, depending on what criteria you are talking about. In some, Afghanistan would be at the top and in others Afghanistan would be at the bottom.

Richard Ottaway: Exactly. You have mentioned Afghanistan in the context of conflict prevention. Do you approach conflict prevention universally or do you focus on a number of particular countries?

Sir Peter Ricketts: No, we focus on countries. The National Security Council has spent a long time on Afghanistan; we met 62 times on Libya during the Libya conflict; we have met often to talk about Pakistan or Iran. In the conflict prevention area, we are talking country-specific.

Q150 Baroness Taylor of Bolton: Can we look to the future a little and the next National Security Strategy? It has been suggested to us that work on that should begin now and that there should be long-term build up to it. Do you have in your mind any cycle in terms of work to step back and have an overall look at what the strategy should be? How do you respond to the criticism that existed when last year the National Security Strategy and the SDSR were produced at the same time as an overall spending review, and the idea that the spending review drove the two strategies, rather than the two strategies having the call for an area that is as important and critical to the whole country as that?

Sir Peter Ricketts: Thank you very much. My own feeling is that the right pattern is to have an updated SDSR every Parliament and probably to have a National Security Strategy every Parliament as well. The Government have committed themselves to an SDSR once a Parliament, and it would seem to me to make sense to have a National Security Strategy on the same timing. If you do it too often, there is a risk that it is no longer a strategy but a short-term response to the latest wave of events. We did have three iterations of the National Security Strategy in three or four years; I think that is too frequent. If a strategy is to mean anything, it has to have a little bit of shelf life, but I absolutely agree that it needs to be prepared in detail and in depth. If we moved on to a pattern of having one per Parliament, it would perhaps allow work to start two years ahead on the research and the detailed analysis that would build up to then completing the National Security Strategy. My own advice would be to start well upstream, but aim to do one a Parliament. That fits well.

In terms of how it fits with the cycle of a spending round, again it will always be for the Government of the day to decide. I do not think it was actually a mistake to have the two running in parallel, because if we had had the alternative of completing the spending round and then turning to the strategy and the SDSR, the budget would have been fixed and there would have been no opportunity to argue for more for defence or the Home Office as a result of the strategy work. Having a process where you are debating the spending priorities at the same time as you are debating the strategy does allow Ministers to look across and decide whether their spending priorities are right in relation to the strategy that they are discussing. Actually, in the concluding phases of the SDSR, some departments got extra money because Ministers concluded that the issues were so important—counterterrorism was one example and cyber was another. There are some advantages, but a future Government would need to think carefully about the sequencing of that.

Q151 Baroness Taylor of Bolton: How do you deal with the criticism that did exist, not least I think from the Defence Select Committee, that Ministers have such a steep learning curve, especially when there is a total change of Government, obviously, and whether, at that point very early on in the Parliament in their ministerial roles, they are really fully aware of all the issues? Does that not mean that, especially when you have a senior civil servant who has been the key person—because it has not previously been a Minister doing that job—that stacks all the influence and power in the person who holds your position?

Sir Peter Ricketts: I can only speak from my experience in this last round, and I do not feel that at all; I feel that this was very much led by Ministers and the decisions were taken by Ministers. The problem of doing an SDSR and a National Security Strategy towards the end

of a Parliament is that you might well then find, if there were a change of Government, that you would have to do them again early in the new Parliament. There is no easy solution, but I think the Government's commitment at the moment is to produce one SDSR per Parliament, and that to me makes sense.

Q152 Baroness Taylor of Bolton: Do you think there is a case for involving a wider political spectrum than just those in government? We have a Coalition Government, but, on national security, should in fact other people be brought in to potentially have some influence as well as just briefings that do occur—for example, to the Leader of the Opposition?

Sir Peter Ricketts: Yes, I do. Especially if one had a couple of years of run-up to the next National Security Strategy, there ought to be all sorts of consultation done with groups outside government—parliamentarians, NGOs, churches, business and everybody who has an interest to make sure that it is as broadly founded as possible.

Baroness Taylor of Bolton: And this Committee.

Sir Peter Ricketts: Parliamentary Committees, absolutely.

Q153 Lord Cope of Berkeley: On this question of whether you should do the Security Strategy before the spending round or the other way round, in one sense it would be best, after all, to decide the strategy of what you need to protect against and what you want to achieve, and then to decide on how to spend the money in order to achieve it. I can see that, if you do it that way round, you might find that you had devised a strategy that you could not afford in total. Is that not an argument for doing the two together, which is actually what happened, although I suspect slightly more by the way the events turned out than by consideration of the order in which they should be?

Sir Peter Ricketts: I think I broadly agree, but the experience we had was that it was a two-way dynamic process between Ministers setting their spending round priorities and the National Security Council, with many of the same Ministers sitting on it, looking at the risks, our prioritisation and what we should do about it. As I say—I quoted an example—in the cybersecurity programme, Ministers were so impressed with the threats that faced us in the cyber domain from criminals and states that they carved out extra money in the final stages of the settlement for a cyber programme. I do not see how you would have done that if you had settled the money first and then come back to the strategy later.

Q154 Lord Harris of Haringey: The evidence we have received tells us that the National Security Council focuses on strategic questions of government policy, although it may impinge on ongoing operations, but it leaves operational decision-making to military command or to COBRA. The material you have published on the Libya crisis talks about the National Security Council sub-committee being an effective vehicle for driving the campaign. Later it talks about it enabling Ministers to make rapid, well-informed decisions. That begins to sound rather more tactical or operational than strategic. How successful is it in practice to maintain that separation?

Sir Peter Ricketts: I think you are right. When it comes to conflict, I find that Ministers want to be very closely involved in the decision-making. That is why we set up a separate NSC (Libya), which ran parallel with the regular weekly NSC meetings, so that we did not lose sight of the strategic issues that Ministers were looking at week by week. It gave the Prime Minister and other Ministers an opportunity, as the note says, to drive progress and to ensure that all aspects of government were fully joined up behind the political objective

of the conflict in Libya. That is often true. What is normally true when the Government moves to military conflict is that Ministers find that they need to be very closely involved in the operational decision-making because, in this 24/7 media age, anything that happens, even at a tactical level, can very rapidly escalate and become an issue that Ministers need to deal with.

Q155 Lord Harris of Haringey: That happens when there is armed conflict. Does it happen when there is less intensive deployment of our Armed Forces? For example, is that something that you think inexorably starts to happen in terms of a presence in Afghanistan as opposed to the Libya conflict?

Sir Peter Ricketts: Because we have been in Afghanistan for 10 years now, the policies are more fully developed and settled, and the structures to deal with them are there. Where you are starting with a new conflict, and you have to make policy on and integrate the diplomatic dynamic, the development area, the military operations, the intelligence that goes with that and the foreign policy to hold an international coalition together, there are a whole series of issues that Ministers wanted to follow very closely. That is why we found the NSC (Libya), which was a more operational forum, to be a very useful vehicle.

Lord Harris of Haringey: So the criteria are that it is current conflict—it is fresh. What if it were a sustained terrorist campaign? Would that engage Ministers in operational decision-making?

Sir Peter Ricketts: I think it inevitably would, yes. If we were looking at the risk of a major terrorist attack, Ministers would want to be very closely involved.

Lord Harris of Haringey: Do you think that is healthy in terms of the professional expertise of the military or the police?

Sir Peter Ricketts: It is in the natural order of things. If you look back to the Second World War, for example, Ministers were extremely close to the operational decision-making at every stage, and did not understand the difference between political decision-making and the tactical detail. They saw the whole thing as a single whole, and I think that is still true. In my experience, Ministers are very careful to respect the operational responsibilities of, say, the senior police commander of a terrorist operation or the Chief of Defence Staff in relation to the Armed Forces, but they want to set the political direction on each of the operational issues that come up.

Q156 Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale Sir Peter, I wonder if you could help us to have a picture as to how the NSC actually fits into the whole question of setting priorities first of all for the departments—the FCO, MoD, DfID and so on—and the priorities of requirements on the intelligence agencies, which have in the past been and, I would presume, inevitably have to continue being customer departments, like the FCO or MoD, after you have set the priorities for the intelligence agencies. How does the NSC fit into that whole picture?

Sir Peter Ricketts: Just to take your second point first, the NSC is a very good and convenient vehicle for Ministers to look at and decide on the resources and priorities for the intelligence agencies. From my experience, in the past the R&P process was always a bit of an orphaned child. Now with the NSC there is an opportunity, first of all at the Permanent Secretary level and then in the full ministerial meeting, to look at the proposals for how the intelligence community should target their effort, which is what this is, against

the priorities in the NSC and make sure that they are aligned, and if necessary say, "Actually, we want you to put more effort into this area and accept that you will have to do less here." One of the effects of the NSC has been to bring the intelligence agency heads and intelligence world closer to Ministers and policy-making because they are invited to sit on the National Security Council and are able to participate in discussions every week. Ministers and the intelligence agency heads are more familiar with what the intelligence community can do to help illuminate policy.

For the R&P process, we use the National Security Council to take the final decisions and set it. For departmental priorities, each department's priorities go well beyond the national security area, except perhaps the MoD; I suppose the MoD is entirely taken up with national security, but the FCO, DfID and the Home Office have others as well. They set their own priorities through the normal departmental mechanism. Some of those are relevant to the NSC and others are not.

Q157 The Chair: Sir Peter, we asked for some evidence from the department about the risk matrix, and we were trying to get a feeling for the validity and the methodology behind the risk assessment. Could just tell us, briefly if you would like, how specific was the material put before the National Security Council? Did they have a specific diagram or information indicating exactly where each risk fell on those balance assessments and with particular scores? How were those scores arrived at?

Sir Peter Ricketts: I cannot remember the precise nature of the document, but they had a very detailed and very highly classified document that went through a large number of national security risks and set out alongside them the consideration they had been given in terms of their possible impact, the likelihood of them happening and, therefore, where they would come out in the matrix work that had been conducted. Yes, they did—they saw a detailed and highly classified document.

The Chair: I think we are all very pleased to hear that. You will not be surprised to learn that in that case we would like to see it, if only on a confidential basis.

Sir Peter Ricketts: May I take away the request? I will need to consult Ministers about that.

The Chair: I thought you might.

Sir Peter Ricketts: I will do that, of course.

Q158 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Sir Peter, am I right in thinking that you have not yet done anything about the security implications of the increasing demand for Scottish independence and what might arise if that were to be granted?

Sir Peter Ricketts: No, we have not discussed that in the NSC.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Why not?

Sir Peter Ricketts: It has not arisen. If somebody wanted to bring the issue, we could no doubt discuss it, but we have not.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: You have heard that the SNP control the Scottish Administration?

Sir Peter Ricketts: Yes.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: And you do know that it is their policy to seek independence from the United Kingdom.

Sir Peter Ricketts: I do, and I know the policy—

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: And, having that knowledge, you do not think that any security implications might arise if there were a conflict, for example, about the division of oil reserves or the national debt or if the policy of the Scottish Government was different from the United Kingdom's on, let us say, deployment of Trident or membership of NATO.

Sir Peter Ricketts: I can imagine a whole series of policy issues that arise, yes.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: But you have not yet started to think about them.

Sir Peter Ricketts: No. I am very conscious of what the policy of the current Government is on maintaining the United Kingdom as a whole. To answer your question, we have not done any specific work on that.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Is that not a bit complacent?

Sir Peter Ricketts: I do not believe so, but if Ministers wish us to do some policy work, we will do it.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: You are not going to advise them on it.

Sir Peter Ricketts: No, I have no current intention to do so.

Q159 Mark Pritchard: My question is on a separate issue but, given we are on Scotland, very briefly, and given your preamble that you are the senior foreign policy adviser, could I suggest the nuclear issue with our submarines is something that you may or may not wish to advise members of the National Security Council on? Also consider the possibility that, if there were an independent Scotland, it would be very difficult to sustain the argument—although I would try as an individual and lowly Back-Bencher—that the UK should retain its seat on the UN Security Council. I think there are some potential serious foreign policy consequences not too far over the horizon for this nation, and our seat on the UN Security Council as England would be very difficult to defend, however justified, against the European Union, which has permanently wanted a seat on the UN Security Council. I concur and I agree with the noble Lord.

Finally—and thank you, Chair, for allowing me to ask this question—I think it was maybe two years ago that the Director-General of the Security Service gave a speech in which he set out his concerns about certain foreign Governments and states trying to intercept through cyber and telecoms activities some commercial, defence and intelligence secrets of this nation. In recent weeks we have heard allegations of journalists hacking into the phone of a former Northern Ireland Secretary who deals with highly classified material, and that of the head of state, Her Majesty the Queen, and members of the Royal Family. Given the amount of money and personnel of GCHQ in Cheltenham and different places around this country, and given the support for the Security Service, do you share my concern that, if journalists can hack into the phone of the Royal Family and a Northern Ireland Secretary, so could enemies of this state and this country?

Sir Peter Ricketts: I share the concern about the cyber threats that this country faces, both from terrorists, criminals and, potentially, states.

Mark Pritchard: Were GCHQ and the Security Service asleep on duty?

Sir Peter Ricketts: To be honest, I have not looked into that question, and I would need to look into it to be able to give any possible answer.

Mark Pritchard: Has a review been ordered or undertaken to ask questions why journalists were allowed to hack into the phone of the Royal Family? Are there national security implications because of that in your view?

Sir Peter Ricketts: As I say, I have not looked at that. I would need to look into it to give you a properly informed reply.

Mark Pritchard: Is that something you might look into, given that I have raised it in this Committee?

Sir Peter Ricketts: Of course I will.

The Chair: Sir Peter, thank you very much for coming and giving evidence to us today. I am sure the Committee all wish you extremely well in your new responsibilities. We will be following up with some further questions in writing, as I think you would probably anticipate. We are very grateful to you for your time.

Sir Peter Ricketts: Thank you very much. I will be following up on the things that I undertook to as well.

The Chair: Thank you.

WRITTEN EVIDENCE

Cabinet Office 01

1. INTRODUCTION – (purpose of the note)

The Joint Committee requested a written memorandum to provide a brief overview of the role of the National Security Adviser (NSA) and the National Security Council (NSC) and the National Security Strategy (NSS) and its relationship with the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR).

2. BACKGROUND

i National Security Strategy

The NSS and SDSR together comprise the Government's strategic decisions about defence and security. They cover both domestic and overseas elements of security. The NSS focuses on the country's "ends" or objectives, while the focus of the SDSR is the "ways" and "means" to achieve them.

For the first time we have a British national security strategy which provides priorities for action and which fed directly into decisions about resources. It takes account of the need to reduce the deficit and restore our economy. For the first time, it sets clear priorities amongst the risks the country faces. It identifies four Tier One risks: terrorism, cyber security, international military crises, and national disasters such as floods. It gives a clear focus to the Government's effort.

The NSS explains that our national interest comprises our security, prosperity and freedom and that these are interconnected and mutually supportive. National Security is about protecting our people, including their rights and liberties. Promoting civil liberties and upholding the rule of law are fundamental principles which underpin our approach to national security.

ii Overview of the NSS and SDSR process

The NSC considered the National Security Strategy first. This allowed the findings of the NSS to feed directly into the SDSR decision-making process. Together, the documents set out the Government's strategic decisions and priorities on security and defence. The NSS provides an assessment of the strategic context, Britain's place in the world and an analysis of the risks and opportunities we face. The SDSR sets out the ways and means to deliver the ends set out in the NSS. This includes identifying the forces and capabilities required to deliver those priorities. Each were fully discussed in the NSC and presented to Cabinet.

iii The National Security Risk Assessment Process (NSRA)

This is the first time that Government has ever undertaken a comprehensive assessment of all national security risks to the UK. Subject matter experts, analysts and intelligence specialists were asked to identify the full range of existing and potential risks to our national security which might materialise over a five and 20 year horizon. All potential risks of sufficient scale or impact so as to require action from government and/or which had an

ideological, international or political dimension, were assessed based on their relative likelihood and impact. Impact was assessed based on the potential direct harm a risk would cause to the UK's people, territories, economy, key institutions and infrastructure.

The process for developing the risks, assigning their relative positions and prioritising them was a cross-Government process, consulting subject matter leads across many departments, senior officials, permanent secretaries and ministers. Discussion of the process and the risks was broadened beyond Government through a number of meetings, workshops and papers. These enabled debate which advanced the extent and depth of the NSRA throughout the process.

The NSC considered the outcomes of the risk assessment, analysis of our role in the world and our current state of vulnerability to risks, in order to identify our national security priorities. The NSC allocated them into three tiers (Annex B). All of the risks are of significant concern and require some government attention. The NSRA informs strategic judgement. It is not a forecast. It is a tool to aid prioritisation of the risks with the most pressing security concerns in order to identify the actions and resources needed to deliver our responses to those risks.

iv <u>Strategic Defence and Security Review</u>

For the first time a UK government took decisions on its defence, security, intelligence, resilience, development and foreign affairs capabilities together in the round. SDSR sets out how we will deliver the priorities identified in the National Security Strategy. It describes how we will equip our armed forces, our police and intelligence agencies to tackle the threats we expect to face in the future.

Implementation of the SDSR is coordinated by the Cabinet Office through a cross-departmental Implementation Board which monitors progress, risks and issues. The SDSR commits to provide six monthly progress updates to the Prime Minister and NSC and an annual public statement on overall progress report to this Committee and Parliament. Regular forums with NGO's, civil society and the private sector will be held, led by departments. We are committed to conducting an SDSR in the next Parliament.

3. ROLE OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER

The National Security Adviser is head of the National Security Secretariat within the Cabinet Office, which supports the National Security Council and the Prime Minister in the full range of national security issues across Government and ensures that departmental work is effectively co-ordinated. The National Security Adviser chairs a weekly meeting of National Security Council Departments at Permanent Secretary level that allows for strategic priority setting, a closer alignment between strategic policy making and the work of the Joint Intelligence Committee and agreement on issues which do not need Ministerial attention.

4. THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

i <u>The composition and terms of reference for the Council</u>

The Council meets weekly, usually following Cabinet. It is supported by the National Security Adviser who is responsible for the coordination of advice and the implementation of decisions reached by the Council.

Membership and terms of reference of the National Security Council and its sub-committees are attached at Annex A. Ministers who are not members of the Council are invited to attend if a discussion directly affects their departmental interests. Senior officials, including the Chief of Defence Staff and Agency Heads, are also regularly invited to provide expert advice.

There is also a meeting of senior civil servants, called NSC (Officials), which meets weekly to coordinate NSC work. This is chaired by the National Security Adviser. Membership is made up of the Permanent Secretaries to members of the NSC. Additional invitees are invited as required.

ii <u>A brief description of how it operates and the underpinning rationale</u>
NSC provides the forum for collective discussion of Government's objectives in all aspects of the UK's security and how best to deliver them. It normally considers one or two issues, on the basis of papers prepared in advance. Afghanistan is considered every two weeks. Key departments with security-related functions are all represented: Foreign and Commonwealth Office; HM Treasury; Home Office; Ministry of Defence Department for Energy and Climate Change; Department for International Development and the Cabinet Office. Cabinet Ministers in other Departments not principally engaged with security issues also attend Council sessions as the subject matter requires.
The discipline of systematic, weekly consideration of national security priorities in a Ministerial forum chaired by the Prime Minister drives a more coherent approach to collective consideration of strategy across Government Departments. The NSC ensures Ministers consider national security in the round.

5. SUPPORTING STRUCTURES

i <u>Inter-departmental Committees</u>
Lead ministers, accountable to the NSC, take responsibility for coordinating priority areas of work to deliver the national security tasks. They work with all departments with a stake in the issue. They are supported by officials who lead work across government and in partnership with others including the private sector, non-governmental organisation (NGOs) and international partners.

A series of inter-Departmental committees at senior official level support and inform NSC. They culminate in a weekly meeting of NSC (Officials) at Permanent Secretary level, chaired by the National Security Adviser. The National Security Secretariat in the Cabinet Office monitors progress on the SDSR and its officials seek to de-conflict disputes or differences of perspective between Departments through the senior official level NSC (O) group before they are put before the NSC.

NSC (O) allows strategic priority-setting, a closer alignment between strategic policy making and the work of the Joint Intelligence Committee, and agreement on issues which do not need Ministerial attention. Within individual departments, Secretaries of State also chair departmental boards, which provide strategic leadership.

ii <u>National Security Secretariat- Organisation and Role</u>

The NSA is head of the National Security Secretariat within the Cabinet Office, which supports the National Security Council and the Prime Minister in the full range of national security issues across Government and ensures that departmental work is effectively co-ordinated.

The National Security Secretariat was created out of the existing teams in the Cabinet Office, reorganised to support the work of the NSC.
There are currently two Deputy National Security Advisers. One is responsible for the defence and foreign affairs portfolio, the other devoted to intelligence, security and resilience issues. The team that was drawn together within the National Security Secretariat to develop the National Security Strategy (NSS) and Strategic Defence and Security (SDSR) Review has disbanded. The National Security Secretariat now has five Directorates: Foreign and Defence Policy; Strategy and Counter-terrorism; Security and Intelligence; Cyber Security & Information Assurance; and Civil Contingencies. The Secretariat currently employees around 195 staff. Structural changes are underway, which will see a reduction in staff by around 25%, and a reduction in Directorates from five to four over the course of the Spending Round.

iii <u>National Security Secretariat role in policy development and delivery</u>
In most cases, the responsibility for initiating and delivering policy rests with Departments. The National Security Secretariat coordinates the development and implementation of policy for decision-making at the NSC, delivers specific projects, for example on cyber security and acts as the central sponsor, both for funding and policy, for the Intelligence agencies.

The National Security Secretariat prepares for National Security Council discussions in conjunction with Departments. The Secretariat prepares the agenda of the NSC for the Prime Minister's agreement, after discussion with Departments. It ensures that Departments develop policy advice on issues of concern to the Prime Minister and the members of the NSC. It also provides advice to the Prime Minister, the National Security Adviser, on complex or contentious policy issues. Where responsibilities are spread between a number of Departments, the Secretariat will perform a coordination role as required.

Annex A

<u>Membership and terms of reference of the National Security Council and its sub-committees</u>

National Security Council

<u>Membership:</u>

Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service (Chair) (The Rt Hon David Cameron MP)
Deputy Prime Minister, Lord President of the Council (Deputy Chair) (The Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP)
First Secretary of State, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (The Rt Hon William Hague MP)
Chancellor of the Exchequer (The Rt Hon George Osborne MP)

Secretary of State for the Home Department; and Minister for Women and Equalities (The Rt Hon Theresa May MP)
Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP)
Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (The Rt Hon Chris Huhne MP)
Secretary of State for International Development (The Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP)
Chief Secretary to the Treasury (The Rt Hon Danny Alexander MP)
Minister of State – Cabinet Office (The Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP)
Minister for Security (The Rt Hon Baroness Neville-Jones)

Terms of Reference:
To consider matters relating to National Security, Foreign Policy, Defence, International Relations and Development, Resilience, Energy and Resource Security.

NSC (Threats, Hazards, Resilience and Contingencies)

Membership:
Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service (Chair) (The Rt Hon David Cameron MP)
Deputy Prime Minister, Lord President of the Council (Deputy Chair) (The Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP)
First Secretary of State, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (The Rt Hon William Hague MP)
Chancellor of the Exchequer (The Rt Hon George Osborne MP)
Lord Chancellor, Secretary of State for Justice (The Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke QC MP)
Secretary of State for the Home Department; and Minister for Women and Equalities (The Rt Hon Theresa May MP)
Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP)
Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills (The Rt Hon Dr Vincent Cable MP)
Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (The Rt Hon Chris Huhne MP)
Secretary of State for Health (The Rt Hon Andrew Lansley CBE MP)
Secretary of State for Education (The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP)
Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP)
Secretary of State for Transport (The Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP)
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (The Rt Hon Caroline Spelman MP)
Secretary of State for International Development, (The Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP)
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (The Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP)
Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport (The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP)
Minister for Security (The Rt Hon Baroness Neville-Jones)

(Restricted attendance for intelligence matters to: Prime Minister (Chair), Deputy Prime Minister (Deputy Chair), Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary of State for the Home Department, Secretary of State for Defence.)

Terms of Reference:
To consider issues relating to terrorism and other security threats, hazards, resilience and intelligence policy and the performance and resources of the security and intelligence agencies; and report as necessary to the National Security Council.

NSC (Nuclear)

Membership:

Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service (Chair) (The Rt Hon David Cameron MP)
Deputy Prime Minister, Lord President of the Council (Deputy Chair) (The Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP)
First Secretary of State, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (The Rt Hon William Hague MP)
Chancellor of the Exchequer (The Rt Hon George Osborne MP)
Secretary of State for the Home Department, and Minister for Women and Equalities (The Rt Hon Theresa May MP)
Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP)
Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (The Rt Hon Chris Huhne MP)

Terms of Reference:

To consider issues relating to nuclear deterrence and security.

National Security Council (Emerging Powers)

Membership:

First Secretary of State, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Chair) (The Rt Hon William Hague MP)
Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills (Deputy Chair)
(The Rt Hon Dr Vincent Cable MP)
Chancellor of the Exchequer (The Rt Hon George Osborne MP)
Secretary of State for the Home Department; and Minister for Women and Equalities (The Rt Hon Theresa May MP)
Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP)
Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (The Rt Hon Chris Huhne MP)
Secretary of State for International Development (The Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP)
Chief Secretary to the Treasury (The Rt Hon Danny Alexander MP)
Minister for Government Policy – Cabinet Office (The Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP)
Minister of State – Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr Jeremy Browne MP)
Minister of State for Security and Counter-Terrorism (The Rt Hon Baroness Neville-Jones)

Terms of Reference:

To consider matters relating to the UK's relationship with emerging international powers.

ANNEX B
NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY: PRIORITY RISKS

TIER 1 - the most pressing risks to the UK over the next five years
Terrorism
Cyber attack
Major natural hazards and accidents
International Military Crisis

TIER 2 – The next highest priorities:
CBRN - state-led
Instability And Conflict Overseas
Organised Crime

Cabinet Office 01

Space security

TIER 3 – The next highest priorities after Tier 1 & 2
Conventional military attack on UK
Significant increase in flows of terrorsits, organised criminals, illegal migrants etc across our border
Energy Security and Resources
Accidental Release Radioactive Material
Article 5- Attack By A State On Another Nato Or EUMember
An attack on a UK overseas territory as the result of a sovereignty dispute or a wider regional conflict.
Other resources ("Short to medium term disruption to international supplies of resources (for example, food, water) essential to the UK")

February 2011

Cabinet Office 02

The questions below (in bold) were supplied by the Committee to the Cabinet Office

The NSS

1. Why is the NSS organised around a discussion of potential security risks, without also including an assessment of possible opportunities (political, economic and technological) for enhancing the UK's interests, together with the policies (such as trade promotion, science and education policy, international development and soft power) that may be needed in order to pursue these opportunities?

The Government's National Security Strategy (NSS) explicitly deals with opportunities as well as risk. Protecting our national interest is at the heart of the strategy. Its key purpose is "to use all our national capabilities to build Britain's prosperity, extend our nation's influence in the world and strengthen our security." Part 2 of the NSS focuses on the opportunities offered by Britain's distinctive role in the world and discusses the particular skills and strengths that we can bring to bear through our comparative advantage as a central player in many global networks including economic, diplomatic and technological. Our openness offers a unique set of opportunities and the strategy rightly sets out our ambitions for our country in the decades to come – Britain will continue to play an active and engaged role in shaping global change. We will maintain our global presence and the ability to project our power and values around the world.

However, a key issue for our national security is interconnected and complex range of risks that an increasingly globalised world presents. Our security and prosperity are interconnected and mutually supportive. So the NSS must also focus on how we address those risks, advance our interests and protect our security in a co-ordinated and strategic way. That is why it identified priorities upon which our national security effort would be focused and which informed the policy, resource and capability decisions of the SDSR. Indeed one of the key 'National Security Tasks' set out in the strategy focuses on continuing to identify and monitor national security risks **and** opportunities.

2. Can the Government provide the Committee with more detailed information of how the priority risks, listed on page 27, were assessed on likelihood and impact over the next five and twenty years? In particular, could the Government provide a chart showing how these risks were plotted in the matrix presented on p. 27?

Details of the methodology used in the **National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA)** were published as an annex to the National Security Strategy. This is the first time that Government has ever undertaken a comprehensive assessment of all national security risks to the UK. Subject matter experts, analysts and intelligence specialists compared, assessed and prioritised all major disruptive risks to our national interest of sufficient scale or impact to require action from government and/or which have an ideological, international or political dimension. Using five- and twenty-year perspectives, we identified and analysed a full range of risks. The plausible worst case scenario of each risk was then scored in terms

of its likelihood and its potential impact. Impact was assessed based on the potential direct harm a risk would cause to the UK's people, territories, economy, key institutions and infrastructure. In order to compare the likelihood of one risk against another and to make relative judgements, these plausible worst case scenarios were plotted on a matrix.
This analysis was used to enable the **National Security Council (NSC)** to consider the outcomes of the risk assessment, our assessment of our role in the world and our current state of vulnerability and preparedness for risks in order to determine our national security priorities. The NSC prioritised groups of risks into three tiers. All require attention and there is Government action to address all of them. But clear prioritisation helped with decisions on resources in the SDSR.

The process for developing the risks, assigning their relative positions and prioritising them was a cross-government process, consulting subject matter leads across many departments, senior officials, permanent secretaries and Ministers. Discussion of the process and the risks also drew in advice from external experts through a number of meetings, workshops and papers. These enabled debate and a challenge function.

3. Can the Government explain in more detail why it decided to exclude risks 'directly related to a conflict in Afghanistan, since we are already engaged there' from the NSRA (page 26)? Were all other 'immediate security issues' similarly excluded? How do these exclusions inform, and limit, resource prioritisation decisions?

The NSC took current commitments into account when considering defence and security resources. The purpose of the NSRA was to give Ministers a strategic view of <u>future</u> risks and inform high-level decisions about <u>future</u> resource allocation and force structures.
The decision to exclude current military operations in Afghanistan reflected the fact that the Government is already deeply engaged in dealing with the threats to our national security which arise there. The purpose of the NSRA is to look ahead to future risks, assess the likelihood of them happening and the impact if they did occur.

4. How does the NSRA prioritisation matrix take account of UK comparative advantage?

The NSRA risk matrix was compiled by plotting all risks against their probability and impact. In measuring each of these, the UK's resilience or vulnerability to those risks was assessed and scored. These assessments took account of our comparative advantage where it contributes to our <u>resilience</u>. For instance, as clearly identified in the NSS, our political, economic and cultural authority far exceeds our size (NSS p4). Apart from having world-class capabilities in defence, intelligence, trade and intellectual property, the UK has a web of relationships across the globe, is an important member of key multilateral fora and plays a major role in shaping international institutions (NSS p22). The scores determine where each risk is placed on the overall risk matrix, which provided the baseline for NSC discussions about prioritisation. The risks which the UK must mitigate, opportunities which we should exploit, and comparative advantage on which we can build are brought together and feed into NSS Part Four 'our response', which sets out eight National Security Tasks – that is, the ways in which we will act to achieve our national security objectives – as well through to the resourcing decisions in the SDSR itself.

5. Did the Government take account of the risks that a major future economic crisis – for example in the Eurozone or other major trading and investment partners – might have on national security?
The National Security Strategy did take account of risks to the UK which would constitute, or contribute to, a major future economic crisis to the UK in the NSRA The Committee's attention is drawn to the recognition in the NSS that our security and prosperity are indivisible. The scoring for every risk in the NSRA includes economic impact (both in the first 12 months and thereafter, to capture downstream harm). The Government is also committed to refreshing the NSRA every two years, which provides further opportunities to take account of emerging risks, including economic risks, which may impact upon our national security.

6. Why was a decision made to limit the NSRA to a 20 year risk horizon? What assumptions on risks beyond 2030 were made in order to underpin the capability decisions (for example on defence equipment) announced in the SDSR?

We decided that 20 years was as far as we could reasonably look ahead, and that the level of certainty beyond that timeframe became too great for detailed risk assessment. This matches the decision in the SDSR to take the UK's national security arrangements up to the 2020s. In Defence's case, and in part due to the long lead times for procurement, the SDSR designed an outline force structure which we will aim to deliver for the 2020s (SDSR para 2.a.1). To do this effectively we had to look at possible threats in the 2020s, and therefore required, in general, a 20 year timeframe. The NSS also committed us to refreshing the NSRA every two years, helping to ensure that the Assessment has a rolling 20 year horizon and that corrections can be made for unforeseeable events or strategic shocks. Of course for certain parts of the defence programme, particularly the future nuclear deterrent it has been necessary to consider the strategic situation beyond the 20 year horizon.
Studies looking as comprehensively as possible beyond 20 years, such as the MOD's 'Global Strategic Trends' report and future scenarios for force testing, used by the MOD (and others), were used to inform our assessment of the longer term strategic context set out in the NSS and SDSR.

7. Why does the NSS not set out geographical and country priorities, as well as thematic ones? Has the Government identified such priorities centrally, or are such priorities devolved to departmental level (as summarised in relation to the FCO, for example, on SDSR page 66)?

The National Security Strategy sets a coherent framework for all HMG security activity, grounded in a thorough understanding of our interests and with flexibility to respond to emerging threats, challenges and opportunities. The priorities set out in the National Security Strategy are consistent with the risks set out in the National Security Risk Assessment, and the consideration of opportunities and comparative advantage in part two of the NSS. On the basis of that framework individual Government Departments such as the FCO, DFID and MOD develop geographical and country priorities based upon their particular roles and policy responsibilities. Many of these either directly relate to, or touch upon, issues of national security and several arise from the NSS/SDSR process.

Some examples are as follows:

An FCO-led process develops cross-Government country strategies and the NSC and NSC Emerging Powers Sub-Committee (NSC(EP)), have already agreed the strategies for several key countries/regions.
The geographical priorities for international development were determined during DFID's Bilateral Aid Review. The Secretary of State for International Development, as a member of the NSC, led the process of Ministerial consultations during the Review.
The Terms of Reference of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) include: 'to contribute to the formulation of statements for the requirements and priorities for intelligence gathering and other tasks to be conducted by the intelligence services'[1] which takes account of country and geographic factors.
In defence the Security Co-Operation Group (SCOG) considers security challenges facing the UK and provides policy direction on the MOD response. The output is a prioritised list of countries with which the UK should engage to mitigate potential threats and support current operations.

8. Can the Government set out the main ways in which, in its view, the new NSS represents an improvement on the NSS framework developed under the previous government?

The new National Security Strategy represents an improvement on previous national security strategies in three ways. Firstly, in the risk assessment process leading up to the 2010 NSRA, the Government made choices among all the major domestic and overseas national security risks to the UK. This gave a clear focus to the Government's effort and is a key difference from previous national security strategies.

Secondly, the NSS and SDSR were developed alongside the Spending Review and driven by a reappraisal of our foreign policy and security objectives and the role we wish our country to play, as well as the risks we face in a fast-changing world. The UK has a pressing requirement to reduce its fiscal deficit and it would have been untenable to arrive at unaffordable choices. The NSS and SDSR shaped the contribution to the Spending Review of key Departments involved in national security, notably MOD, FCO, Intelligence Agencies, as well as parts of DFID and Home Office. For the first time we have a national security strategy which provides priorities for action and which feeds directly into decisions about resources. The previous Government's 2008 National Security Strategy - and its 2009 update - were unconnected to resource decisions.

Thirdly, the 2010 NSS and SDSR together comprise the Government's strategic decisions about defence and security in the round. The NSS focuses on the country's 'ends' or objectives, while the focus of the SDSR is the 'ways' and 'means' to achieve them. The NSS explains that our national interest comprises our security, prosperity and freedom and that these are interconnected and mutually supportive. The SDSR sets out our approach to all of these risks and gives detailed information about the resources we will dedicate to tackling them.

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[1] National Intelligence Machinery Booklet published Nov 2010 (on Cabinet Office Website). The 'Requirements and Priorities' (R&P) are specifically for the collection of secret intelligence and as such are not a definitive statement of the UK's foreign priorities. The R&P are refreshed annually and kept under regular review.

9. How does the Government give effect to the integration of domestic and international security within the workings of the NSC and the formulation of the NSS?

The National Security Council provides the forum for collective Ministerial discussion of the Government's objectives in all aspects of the UK's security (both domestic and international) and how best to deliver them. The Terms of Reference for the Council are: 'To consider matters relating to National Security, Foreign Policy, Defence, International Relations and Development, Resilience, Energy and Resource Security.' Key departments with security-related functions are represented on the Council, and Cabinet Ministers in other Departments not principally engaged with security issues also attend Council meetings as the subject matter requires. The discipline of systematic, weekly consideration of national security priorities in a Ministerial forum chaired by the Prime Minister drives a more coherent approach to collective consideration of strategy across Government Departments. The National Security Adviser, supported by the National Security Secretariat in the Cabinet Office and in discussion with Permanent Secretaries from the relevant Government Departments, ensures that the NSC agenda covers a mix of both domestic and international issues.

This approach of considering national security in the round is reflected in the National Security Strategy. The strategy is underpinned by a reappraisal of our place in the world, and an assessment of the opportunities and risks we face, both domestic and overseas. This analysis informed decisions about the priorities upon which the Government national security effort should be focused at home and abroad.

10. How does the NSS seek to balance its 'adaptable posture' with the pressure for a long-term and more predictive approach to strategy?

Given the uncertain world we face, the NSS and the SDSR made strategic decisions about capabilities and put an emphasis on adaptability in how they would be used. The National Security Strategy does not set out to predict exactly who will do what, when. The Strategy instead, takes an over-arching view of national security based on an assessment of the UK's comparative advantage, as well as the opportunities and key security risks we are likely to face 5 and 20 years ahead to ensure we meet them with a flexible and resilient response. This assessment is not intended as a forecast. Conflict prevention is also at the heart of the Strategy, which makes a clear commitment that the UK will work to shape a stable world by applying all our instruments of power and influence to tackle potential risks affecting the UK or our direct interests overseas, at source.

The National Security Secretariat monitors national security-related horizon scanning across Whitehall to update senior officials on important development in the 10 key SDSR policy areas. Horizon scanning like this focuses on timelines of various years ahead, but nearly always more than 5 and sometimes up to 30. It feeds into both the annual National Risk Assessment (maintained by the Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat) and the biennial National Security Risk Assessment.

The SDSR

11. What is the evidential basis on which the Government bases its statement (page 9) that 'national security budgets have been given relative protection in

the Spending Review? In particular, how do planned reductions in spending on defence, the FCO, and the security and intelligence agencies compare with plans for total DEL?

National security departments (MOD, SIA, FCO) have in total received more favourable settlements than the average for all departments. Table A.9 in the Spending Review 2010 publication (http://cdn.hm-treasury.gov.uk/sr2010_annexa.pdf) sets out Total Departmental Expenditure Limits (TDEL). It shows that while Total DEL will fall over the SR period from £378.2bn to £369.1bn, Defence will see TDEL rise from £32.9bn to £33.5bn, and the Single Intelligence Account from £2.0bn to £2.1bn. FCO will see their headline budget fall from £1.6bn to £1.3bn but this partly reflects the transfer of the BBC World Service to the BBC in the final year of the SR period: the World Service budget in 2014-15 is £0.2bn, so this should be added to the £1.3bn for a like for like comparison. DFID TDEL rises from £8.1bn to £11.5bn.

12. What alternatives to the 'adaptable posture' (pages 9-10) were considered by the National Security Council? What impact would these alternative frameworks have had on the UK's ability to respond to different risks, and on the balance of national security capabilities?

The Council considered two alternative posture options to the adaptable approach. One option placed more emphasis on protecting the UK from imminent threats. The Armed Forces would have been configured for protecting the homeland and for short, sharp interventions overseas but would not have been capable of conducting stabilisation operations. There would have been cuts to all military capabilities. The other option placed more emphasis on protecting the UK by acting at distance. The Armed Forces would have been configured for long-term stabilisation operations but not for interventions.

However, in considering how to meet the NSS objectives of a secure and resilient UK able to shape a stable world, the National Security Council chose an adaptable security and defence posture which they judged would best support our security interests in the years ahead and would be most able to get the Defence budget back into balance. This 'adaptable posture' is capable of conducting a range of tasks and responding flexibly to the unexpected. The three postures described an overall national capability of different emphasis, but scaled to present approximately equal cost ("same size, different shape").

13. How was the estimate of £1.9 billion of 2010/11 ODA spent on 'tackling conflict and instability' (page 46) derived? Which government departments were responsible for this ODA and how much was spent jointly (eg through the Conflict Pools)? Which countries were included in this estimate? How is UK ODA channelled through multilateral organisations treated for the purpose of this calculation? Does the Government intend to publish an annual estimate of how much ODA falls within this definition? How will the Government assess the effectiveness of this expenditure (particularly the pooled funding, and has it estimated how its performance compares with other major donor states or organisations?

The £1.9 billion figure was an estimate based on forecasts of expenditure for 2010/11 from all ODA-eligible DFID bilateral and Conflict Pool programmes in fragile or conflict-affected states. Provisional ODA expenditure figures are available in DFID's Annual Reports and

Accounts for 2010/11[2]. Provisional ODA expenditure for the joint conflict settlement for 2010 was £163.8m comprised of £111.6m from the Conflict Pool and £52.2m from the Peacekeeping Budget. DFID accounted for the vast majority of UK ODA during 2010/11 but a number of other Government departments/agencies also provide ODA. For example, in addition to the figures above, the FCO provides support to many fragile states through its human rights, counter terrorism and other strategic programmes and through the work of its staff in Posts overseas. Some elements of these activities are ODA-eligible and on these the FCO spent £43m of ODA in fragile or conflict-affected states in 2010/2011.

DFID's methodology for identifying countries as fragile or conflict affected captures a wide range of political, social, economic and security factors. It draws on data from the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment, the Failed States Index and the Uppsala list of countries recently affected by conflict. The list of countries identified as fragile or conflict affected was updated in May 2011 and will be formally reviewed every two years.

The countries on the list at the time the £1.9bn was calculated were:
Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Haiti, Iraq, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Laos, Liberia, Burma, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

ODA given as non-earmarked core contributions to multilaterals was not included within the £1.9bn estimate. ODA directed through a multilateral agency to a specific fragile and conflict affected country was included. All ODA is covered by the UK Aid Transparency Guarantee. Details of ODA spending on a country-by-country basis are published annually in Statistics on International Development[3] and DFID will publish the percentage of UK ODA spent in fragile and conflict-affected states in its Annual Report and Resource Accounts.

For individual interventions, DFID assesses the effectiveness of its ODA expenditure in fragile and conflict affected states through monitoring and evaluation arrangements set out in its Business Cases. The Coalition Government has also implemented a UK Aid Transparency Guarantee and set up the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (which reports to Parliament through the International Development Committee) to enable stronger scrutiny of the UK's ODA expenditure. DFID's Bilateral and Multilateral Aid Reviews set out how the Coalition Government plans to bring a stronger results-focus and improved evidence base into all of its programmes.

The Government set out its approach to tackling conflict and instability in the Building Stability Overseas Strategy which was published in July 2011. The strategy sets out how the government intends to improve the effectiveness of its efforts by strengthening the whole of government approach and more effectively prioritising our efforts. The effectiveness of the Conflict Pool activities at project level is measured through the lead Department's own monitoring and evaluation systems. Conflict Pool programmes operate in some of the most difficult environments in the world (such as Afghanistan and Somalia), and we recognise the need to improve the measurement of impact and draw more on external expertise and

[2] http://www.DFID.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/departmental-report/2011/Annual-report-2011-vol1.pdf p113
[3] http://www.DFID.gov.uk/About-DFID/Finance-and-performance/Aid-Statistics/Statistic-on-International-Development-2010/

data. As set out in the Building Stability Overseas Strategy we will implement a systematic cross-Government reporting framework for activities supported by the Conflict Pool. We have not made an estimate of how the Conflict Pool performs compared to other donors, however, the US Government has been very interested in learning lessons from the UK in designing their own equivalent mechanism – they regard the UK approach as a good model. The Independent Commission for Aid Impact, the National Audit Office and the Economic Affairs Committee of the House of Lords will all review the Conflict Pool during 2011/12.

14. By including reference to the need for a broad spectrum of capabilities needed 'to respond to the low probability but very high impact risk of a large-scale military attack by another state', the SDSR appears to shift emphasis (compared with the NSS) towards longer-term risks. Does the SDSR make assumptions on risks beyond 20 years, and base capability decisions upon this?

Certain defence equipment programmes require assessment of strategic trends even further than 20 years ahead. But the force structure set out in the SDSR was designed to meet the country's requirements in the 2020s.

State-led threats are identified in Tier 3 of the NSS list of priority threats to our national security. Capabilities required to tackle such threats if they are military, are built up over time. As outlined in Chapter 5 of the SDSR and in NATO's Strategic Concept of November 2010, our bilateral and multilateral commitments to partners (especially through NATO Article V) require us to plan for collective defence options as part of our response to the broad range of existing and new security challenges, even if the probability of an attack which requires us to invoke Article V is low.

15. What role do government-controlled instruments of UK soft power – such as the British Council, BBC World Service, encouragement of overseas students in the UK and humanitarian relief – play in UK security policy?

The BBC World Service and the British Council have their own separate objectives. But they make a significant indirect contribution to the achievement of our security objectives by building the UK's reputation and influence with other governments and overseas opinion formers, by spreading our values and by promoting the development of more stable, democratic societies more likely to support and less likely to threaten our security and other interests. Government-funded activities such as humanitarian relief programmes and the encouragement of overseas students best build credibility and trust when they are not tied to foreign policy objectives.

The recently published Building Stability Overseas Strategy sets out how the UK can enhance its own security and prosperity by contributing to stability and helping prevent conflict overseas, using our diplomatic, development, military and security tools, and drawing on Britain's unique experience, relationships, reputation and values. The SDSR sets out how the UK plans to increase to 30% the amount of UK official development assistance (ODA) directed towards fragile and conflict affected countries. This will help tackle some of the drivers of instability and help some of the poorest countries address the root causes of their problems, build responsible and accountable governments, and strengthen security and justice overseas. The Government plans to maximise the effective use of Defence assets for soft power by developing a joint FCO-MOD Defence Engagement Strategy, as the Foreign and Defence Secretaries announced before the House of Commons Defence Committee on

the 9th March 2011. Other relevant activities which make a significant contribution to HMG's influence overseas include: the FCO's strategic communications work, which maximises the soft power impact of our reputation and establishes relationships which help progress UK objectives; DFID funding for the BBC's international charity, the BBC World Service Trust; the FCO's digital networks, which allow us to reach and engage with thousands of people around the world and the Wilton Park conference centre – supported by the FCO and DFID - which facilitates difficult conversations in a positive environment, establishing and managing relationships with leading international thinkers, tapping into a wider network of non-state actors and bringing them together.

The NSC

16. Can the Government set out the main issues and themes covered by the National Security Council? Which aspects of foreign policy are covered by other Cabinet Committees? How does the remit and membership of the NSC differ from that of the National Security Committee, established under the previous Government? How many Cabinet Office staff support the NSC at present, and does this compare with staff assigned to support the previous National Security Committee?

The NSC considers a broad range of domestic and international issues relating to UK national security. It brings together the key Ministers, as well as military and intelligence chiefs to cover foreign policy; defence; international relations and development; resilience, as well as energy and resource security. Since its formation in May 2010 it has met 55 times and has discussed a full range of issues, including Afghanistan, the Middle East and North Africa and Counter-Terrorism, as well as the National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security review.

Other Cabinet Committees consider specific international issues, for example the European Affairs Committee (and its sub-committee), which considers issues relating to Europe, and the Trade and Investment Committee consider HMG's policy on Trade and Investment overseas. The NSC also has a sub-committee with responsibility for the UK's relationship with emerging international powers.

The distinctiveness of the NSC is partly its composition and partly the systematic way in which it has set policy on the whole range of issues covered by the National Security Strategy. It has met almost weekly since May 2010, with the Prime Minister chairing almost every meeting. The purpose of the Council is to ensure that Ministers consider national security in the round, not as separate blocs. This discipline of systematic, weekly consideration of national security priorities in a Ministerial forum chaired by the PM is already driving a more coherent approach across Government Departments and demonstrates the high priority this Government, and in particular the PM, gives to national security matters.

This is underpinned by a more formalised system of senior official support for NSC than was in place under the previous administration. This Government appointed a new National Security Adviser within the Cabinet Office, Sir Peter Ricketts, who chairs a weekly group of senior officials at Permanent Secretary level [NSC(O)], to discuss and coordinate NSC work. This provides an additional forum for the coordination of national security business and preparation for NSC discussions. Together NSC and NSC(O) have created powerful

structures at the heart of Government to allow us to react quickly and effectively to new and evolving threats to our security and to ensure that resources are deployed to the best effect.

To ensure the smooth running of NSC and NSC(O) meetings, as well as related sub-groups these structures are supported by a small Council Secretariat (with a core of 2 people) responsible for coordinating operational matters. More broadly, the National Security Secretariat (NSSec) coordinates advice and policy analysis across Government in support of the NSC, Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and National Security Adviser. NSSec comprises approximately 200 individuals across several teams (although around 70 of these work in the Civil Contingencies Secretariat, dealing with domestic resilience). The Secretariat works closely with relevant Government departments, and in particular with their strategy units. In its turn NSSec is supported by several organisations, including the Cabinet Office Assessment Staff and the wider analysis community across Government, including the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC), Intelligence Agencies and horizon-scanning community. These structures were similar when this support was provided to NSID.

17. Does the NSC have any formal decision-making role in relation to the initiation of military operations and, secondly, to their actual conduct? Specifically, what role has the NSC been playing in relation to developments in the Middle East and North Africa and operations in Libya?

In line with the Ministerial Code, formal decisions in relation to commitment to military intervention are taken by Cabinet. Since the 2003 Iraq conflict, the convention has also been to debate military intervention in the House of Commons. The Government is currently exploring options for formalising this convention so that it is binding on future governments. The NSC has no formal decision-making role in relation to the initiation of military operations, but as the Cabinet Committee with responsibility for national security and foreign policy strategy its views would be taken into account by Cabinet.

The NSC regularly discusses strategic matters in relation to ongoing conflicts. For instance, it discusses Afghanistan every fortnight. Military operational decisions are taken by military commanders in line with that strategic guidance.

Developments in the Middle East and North Africa were considered frequently by the NSC during the 'Arab Spring' and continue to be discussed regularly. A designated sub-committee NSC(Libya) (NSC(L)) has been set up for Ministers to consider the whole range of issues in relation to the conflict in Libya. It has met more than 55 times since the start of the crisis.

18. Is the NSC responsible for contingency planning in relation to possible future foreign interventions?

Through the NSS and SDSR, the NSC set the strategic approach and ensured that Departments have the capabilities to meet those requirements. The NSC does not directly plan future foreign interventions but guides the work to be carried out by Departments. Departments individually and collectively carry out long term planning and regular review of where intervention may be appropriate.

19. Is there any defined relationship between the NSC and COBR?

The NSC is a Cabinet Committee in which Ministers consider questions relating to UK national security, foreign policy, domestic and international security, defence, intelligence, counter-terrorism, civil contingencies and development, and to align national objectives in these areas. It focuses on strategic questions of Government policy, including those related to our active deployments. COBR, in contrast, is the Government's crisis management facility which is activated in cases of emergency, and focuses on crisis management and co-ordination.

20. What is the relationship between the NSC and the Chiefs of Staff Committee and how might this be affected by the Levene reforms?

The purpose of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (Operations) is to enable CDS to formulate his military strategic advice to the Defence Secretary and the NSC, and to support him in his role as strategic commander of operations, as directed and within the parameters set by the Defence Secretary and the NSC. This is not affected by the Levene reforms. However, the reforms will see the establishment of a Chiefs of Staff committee (Armed Forces), to enable and require CDS to understand the Service Chiefs' views on non-operational matters, before attending the new Defence Board. This will not impact on relations with the NSC.

21. What plans, if any, does the Government have for consulting externally with regard to the work of the NSC?

The Government consults widely in the formulation of policy, including with external bodies. These consultations inform policy decisions taken by the NSC. The NSC has also, on occasion, invited experts from outside government to attend meetings for specific discussions. This will continue on an ad hoc basis.

The **National Security Secretariat (NSSec)**, which supports the NSC and the NSA, frequently commissions assessments from the JIC, JTAC and lead Departments (including FCO, MOD, HMT, HO, DECC DFID etc) to inform NSC discussions. It is supported by strategic advice and expertise across Whitehall, including work conducted in partnership with organisations outside Government such as the private sector, think tanks, academia and wider international organisations.

22. Does the Government envisage enabling the NSC secretariat to undertake its own analysis or to commission independent studies?

The **National Security Secretariat (NSSec)**, has a limited capacity to undertake analysis and commission wider work. But the primary role of the Secretariat is to support the NSC rather than to duplicate the work of other departments.

23. What competences is the Government seeking when appointing the National Security Advisor? Will he/she always be drawn from the FCO?

The National Security Adviser (NSA) is the Prime Minister's adviser on international and domestic security issues. He is secretary to the NSC and is responsible for, co-ordinating policy advice and decision making across Government and managing the National Security

Secretariat in support of the Council. The NSA is also principal accounting officer for the Single Intelligence Account, and is responsible for co-ordination of the intelligence community including line management of the Heads of Intelligence Agencies.

The NSA will need to have the competencies and experience to fulfil this role. The appointment of Sir Peter Ricketts and his designated successor Sir Kim Darroch were made by the Prime Minister on the advice of the Cabinet Secretary. Future appointments could be drawn from a range of Departments and Agencies.

24. What is the logic which retains CDS and the three intelligence chiefs as advisors to the NSC, but none of the departmental PUSs?

CDS, as the Government's primary military adviser, and the Agency heads are invited to NSC to provide expert advice to Ministers. They are not members of the NSC. Other senior officials are also invited regularly to attend NSC when an issue relates to their particular area of expertise. This includes departmental PUSs who have attended NSC on a number of occasions to present issues to Ministers and provide expert advice.

Additionally, the National Security Adviser chairs a weekly meeting of permanent secretaries (NSC(O)) to discuss, co-ordinate and prepare NSC business. CDS and the Agency Heads are also members. NSC(O) allows strategic priority-setting, a closer alignment between strategic policy making and the work of the Joint Intelligence Committee, and agreement on those issues which do not need Ministerial attention. This group therefore acts as another formal channel of PUS advice to the Council.

25. The NSC is a cabinet committee: how does the Government see this relationship working in practice?

As for all Cabinet Committees, the conclusions of the NSC are circulated to Cabinet each week. Issues can be, and often are, raised to Cabinet if required. The Prime Minister chairs both Cabinet and the NSC and non-NSC members (including Ministers) are invited to attend NSC when an issue relates to their particular area of expertise.

26. What will be the role of the new US-UK Joint Strategy Board, and what new benefits will it bring?

On the 25th May, the Government announced the creation of a UK-US Joint Strategy Board. The Board will enable a more guided, co-ordinated approach to analyse the 'over the horizon' challenges we face in the future and also how today's challenges are likely to shape our future choices. It is designed to integrate long-term thinking and planning into the day-to-day work of our governments and our bilateral relationship, as we contemplate how significant evolutions in the global economic and security environment will require shifts in our shared strategic approach.

The Board is co-chaired by the US National Security staff and the UK National Security Secretariat, and will include representatives from the (US) Departments for State and Defence, the FCO, the MOD, the (US) Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the UK Joint Intelligence Organisation. It will report to the UK and US National Security Advisers and will be reviewed by them to decide whether to renew its mandate.

September 2011

Cabinet Office 03

The following letter was sent by Oliver Letwin MP after he gave oral evidence.

POINTS ARISING FROM EVIDENCE SESSION ON 24 OCTOBER 2011

When I attended your Committee on the 24 October, there were a number of points raised by Committee members upon which I undertook to provide more detail in writing.

1. National Security Risk Assessment

First, the Committee requested a chart giving an indication of how risks were plotted in the matrix for the National Security Strategy. An illustrative diagram is enclosed with this letter, along with the list of the priority risks as set out in the National Security Strategy. By way of explanation of I thought you might find it useful to have a brief summary of the methodology we adopted to produce the National Security Risk Assessment.

A wide range of national security risks were identified and analysed at five- and twenty-year horizons. The plausible worst case scenario of each risk was then scored in terms of its likelihood and potential impact. Impact was assessed based on the harm a risk would cause to the UK's people, territories, economy, key institutions and infrastructure. In order to compare the likelihood of one risk against another, these plausible worst case scenarios were plotted on a matrix of likelihood and impact.

This analysis was used to enable the risks to be grouped in a way that reflected the priority and treatment that the National Security Council (NSC) wished to give them. Three groups or 'tiers' were adopted, each reflecting both likelihood and impact. All of the risks in the three tiers require attention and there is Government action to address all of them. Higher priority does not automatically mean greater resources, since some capabilities are inherently more costly than others; and some are already better resourced than others. Existing capabilities are also a factor, and vulnerability and preparedness were taken into account. But overall, the risks in the top priority band drive a prioritisation of capabilities.

There are no plans to update the National Security Strategy (NSS) in the near future. But HMG has undertaken to update the NSRA biennially. The 2012 NSRA update will review the risks to our national security, taking into account any new information which might materially affect the selection and assessment of national security risks. It will in effect 'roll forward' the 5-year and 20-year risk assessment by 2 years. It will, as far as is practical, draw upon the National Risk Assessment (NRA), which focuses in the most significant civil emergency risks, and on other more detailed Departmental risk assessment and Government horizon scanning work. The criteria for inclusion of a risk in the NSRA will be drawn from our national security interests as articulated in the 2010 NSS national security objectives. But the review will also provide Government with an opportunity to update and adjust this and other aspects of risk assessment methodology in the NSRA.

2. Sub-committees of the National Security Council

The Committee also sought details of the various sub-committees of the National Security Council. These are available on the Cabinet Office website. I have included a summary below. Full details of membership and terms of reference are attached in an annex.

As I explained in my evidence, the National Security Council is focussed on collective discussion and decision making in respect of strategic national security issues. The following permanent sub-committees deal with the more detailed policy matters relating to those issues:

- NSC (Threats Hazards, Resilience and Contingencies): Chaired by the Prime Minister (the Deputy Prime Minister acts as deputy Chair).
- NSC (Nuclear Deterrence and Security): Chaired by the Prime Minister (the Deputy Prime Minister acts as deputy Chair).
- NSC (Emerging Powers): Chaired by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Deputy: Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills)

Other sub-committees may be established when a particular issue requires prolonged and detailed engagement by Ministers: for example on Libya, a specific sub-committee NSC (Libya) was formed in March of this year, chaired by the Prime Minister (with the Deputy Prime Minister deputising) to consider matters relating to the implementation of United Security Council Resolution (UNSCR)1973 (2011)

3. **National Security Adviser: relationship with heads of the Intelligence Agencies**
I thought it might also be useful, in light of discussion during the session, to clarify the relationship between the National Security Adviser and the heads of the three intelligence agencies.
As the National Security Adviser to the Prime Minister, and a senior Permanent Secretary, Sir Peter Ricketts is responsible for writing the personal annual staff reports for the Heads of each of the three intelligence Agencies. The Heads are also separately required to provide an annual report to the Prime Minister. These reports centre on the operational delivery and health of their organisations and are copied to the relevant accountable Minister.

4. **External engagement during the development of the NSS and SDSR**
The Committee was also interested in examples of engagement with external organisations during the development of the National Security Strategy and the Strategic Defence and Security Review.

The Cabinet Office oversaw a strategic programme of stakeholder engagement between relevant Government Departments (including the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and those in the wider national security community. There were extensive and ongoing discussions with key think tanks and academic institutes, NGOs, industry organisations and international partners (notably the US and France). The Ministry of Defence also proactively invited contributions to the SDSR and received over 6000 responses from the public, MPs, members of the Armed forces, academics, and public servants within and beyond Defence.

For illustrative purposes the following are some specific examples of the engagement activity undertaken by the National Security Secretariat in the Cabinet Office during the development of the NSS and the SDST. Rather than naming individual attendees, details of organisations have been provided.

- On the 12 July 2010: the Director of Strategy in the National Security Secretariat Cabinet Office, chaired a workshop attended by senior representatives from Chatham

House, RUSI, the International Institute for Strategic Studies, and Kings College London, as well as other influential individuals within the national security community, to discuss the scope of, and approach to, the National Security Strategy, focusing on both the key strategic questions the strategy needed to address, and the risk management approach to national security.
- On the 26th August 2010: the Director leading the SDSR in the Cabinet Office, along with the Director of Strategy chaired a second workshop with representatives from the same institutions as outlined above (as well as individual attendees) to discuss the emerging outcomes of the Strategic Defence and Security Review.
- On the 11th October 2010, the Director for Strategy in the Cabinet Office chaired a further meeting, again with the same organisations and individuals attending to discuss elements of the draft National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review.

5. **Overseas aid and its role in conflict prevention**

Finally, the Committee requested more detail on the Government's policy on overseas aid and its role in conflict prevention. The Government is committed, even in these difficult economic times, to keeping our promise to increase aid to help the world's poorest people. The SDSR recognised the important contribution that development can make to helping countries break out of a cycle of conflict. The commitment to spent 30% of Official Development Aid in conflict affected and fragile states will reduce poverty and support development in some of the poorest countries in the world, which is not only morally right but it is also an investment in our security.

Increasingly the threats the UK faces will stem from or be associated with events elsewhere. Instability and poverty can fuel terrorism and other security threats, so by tackling those threats at source, and addressing the root causes of instability before they escalate into full blown conflicts or materialise on UK shores is good for our security. It is estimated that every £1 spent on conflict prevention saves the international community £4 in responding to the conflict. The Government set out its approach to tackling conflict and instability in the Building Stability Overseas strategic which was published in July 2011. The Department for International Development also led Bilateral and Multilateral Aid Reviews early this year which set out plans to re-draw the aid map to concentrate our efforts on countries where UK aid will pound for pound achieve the best results.

The risks were allocated to 'tiers' 1-3 taking into account both likelihood and impact.

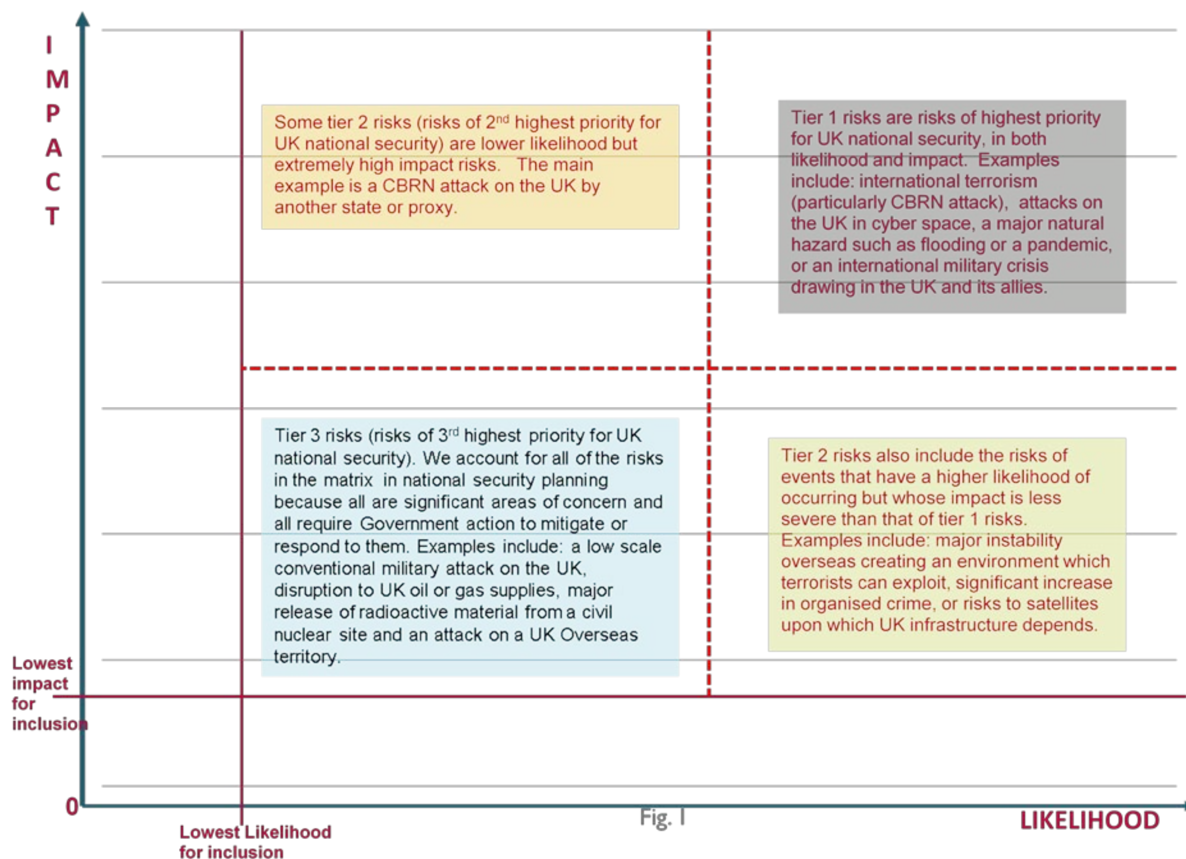

Fig. 1

National Security Strategy: Priority Risks

Tier One: The National Security Council considered the following groups of risks to be those of highest priority for UK national security looking ahead, taking account of both likelihood and impact.

International terrorism affecting the UK and its interests, including a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear attack by terrorists; and/or a significant increase in the levels of **terrorism relating to Northern Ireland.**

Hostile attacks upon UK cyber space by other states and large scale cyber crime.

A major accident or natural hazard which required a national response, such as severe coastal flooding affecting three or more regions of the UK, or an influenza pandemic.

An international military crisis between states, drawing in the UK and its allies, as well as other states and non state actors.

Tier Two: The National Security Council considered the following groups of risks to be the next highest priority looking ahead, taking account of both likelihood and impact (For example a CBRN attack on the UK by a state was judged to be low likelihood but high impact). An attack on the UK or its Overseas Territories by another state or proxy using **chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) weapons.** Risk of **major instability, insurgency or civil war overseas** which creates an environment that terrorists can exploit to threaten the UK. A significant increase in the level of **organised crime** affecting the UK. Severe **disruption to information received, transmitted or collected by satellites,** possibly as the result of a deliberate attack by another state.
Tier Three: The National Security Council considered the following groups of risks to be the next highest priority after taking account of both likelihood and impact. A large scale **conventional military attack on the UK** by another state (not involving the use of CBRN weapons) resulting in fatalities and damage to infrastructure within the UK. A **significant increase** in the level of **terrorists, organised criminals, illegal immigrants and illicit goods trying to cross the UK border** to enter the UK. **Disruption to oil and gas supplies** to the UK, or price instability as a result of war, accident, major political upheaval or deliberate manipulation of supply by producers. A major **release of radioactive material from a civil nuclear site** within the UK which affects one or more regions. A conventional **attack by a state on another NATO or EU member** to which the UK would have to respond. An **attack on a UK overseas territory** as the result of a sovereignty dispute or a wider regional conflict. Short to medium term disruption to international supplies of resources (e.g. food, minerals) essential to the UK.

National Security Council

Membership

- Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service (Chair) (The Rt Hon David Cameron MP)
- Deputy Prime Minister, Lord President of the Council (Deputy Chair) (The Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP)
- First Secretary of State, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (The Rt Hon William Hague MP)
- Chancellor of the Exchequer (The Rt Hon George Osborne MP)
- Secretary of State for the Home Department; and Minister for Women and Equalities (The Rt Hon Theresa May MP)
- Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Phillip Hammond MP)
- Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (The Rt Hon Chris Huhne MP)
- Secretary of State for International Development (The Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP)
- Chief Secretary to the Treasury[4] (The Rt Hon Danny Alexander MP)
- Minister of State – Cabinet Office (The Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP)

Terms of Reference
To consider matters relating to National Security, Foreign Policy, Defence, International Relations and Development, Resilience, Energy and Resource Security.

[4] Attends in his role providing Ministerial support to the Deputy Prime Minister in the Cabinet Office.

<u>NSC (Threats, Hazards, Resilience and Contingencies)</u>

Membership

- Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service (Chair) (The Rt Hon David Cameron MP)
- Deputy Prime Minister, Lord President of the Council (Deputy Chair) (The Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP)
- First Secretary of State, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (The Rt Hon William Hague MP)
- Chancellor of the Exchequer (The Rt Hon George Osborne MP)
- Lord Chancellor, Secretary of State for Justice (The Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke QC MP)
- Secretary of State for the Home Department; and Minister for Women and Equalities (The Rt Hon Theresa May MP)
- Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Phillip Hammond MP)
- Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills (The Rt Hon Dr Vincent Cable MP)
- Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (The Rt Hon Chris Huhne MP)
- Secretary of State for Health (The Rt Hon Andrew Lansley CBE MP)
- Secretary of State for Education (The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP)
- Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP)
- Secretary of State for Transport (The Rt Hon Justine GreeningMP)
- Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (The Rt Hon Caroline Spelman MP)
- Secretary of State for International Development, (The Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP)
- Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (The Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP)
- Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport (The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP)

(Restricted attendance for intelligence matters to: Prime Minister (Chair), Deputy Prime Minister (Deputy Chair), Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary of State for the Home Department, Secretary of State for Defence.)

Terms of Reference:

To consider issues relating to terrorism and other security threats, hazards, resilience and intelligence policy and the performance and resources of the security and intelligence agencies; and report as necessary to the National Security Council.

Operational Meetings

When meeting to consider the Government's response to civil emergencies the Terms of Reference will be as follows:

To consider, in civil emergencies, plans for the protection of life, the continuity of everyday activity, and the restoration of disrupted services.

In general the Chair will be taken by the Secretary of State of the Government Department with lead responsibility for the particular issues being considered. Ministers, Departments and organisations, including the Devolved Administrations, will be invited to attend depending on the contingency.

NSC (Nuclear Deterrence and Security) (restricted attendance)

Membership:

- Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service (Chair) (The Rt Hon David Cameron MP)
- Deputy Prime Minister, Lord President of the Council (Deputy Chair) (The Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP)
- First Secretary of State, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (The Rt Hon William Hague MP)
- Chancellor of the Exchequer (The Rt Hon George Osborne MP)
- Secretary of State for the Home Department, and Minister for Women and Equalities (The Rt Hon Theresa May MP)
- Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Phillip Hammond MP)
- Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (The Rt Hon Chris Huhne MP)

Terms of Reference:
To consider issues relating to nuclear deterrence and security.

National Security Council (Emerging Powers)

Membership:

- First Secretary of State, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Chair) (The Rt Hon William Hague MP)
- Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills (Deputy Chair) (The Rt Hon Dr Vincent Cable MP)
- Chancellor of the Exchequer (The Rt Hon George Osborne MP)
- Secretary of State for the Home Department; and Minister for Women and Equalities (The Rt Hon Theresa May MP)
- Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Dr Phillip Hammond MP)
- Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (The Rt Hon Chris Huhne MP)
- Secretary of State for International Development (The Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP)
- Chief Secretary to the Treasury (The Rt Hon Danny Alexander MP)
- Minister for Government Policy – Cabinet Office (The Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP)
- Minister of State – Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr Jeremy Browne MP)

Terms of Reference:

To consider matters relating to the UK's relationship with emerging international powers.

18 November 2011

Cabinet Office 04

The following letter was sent by Sir Peter Ricketts after he gave oral evidence.

When I attended your Committee on the 5 December 2011 there were a number of points raised by Committee members upon which I undertook to provide more detail in writing.

Counter-piracy

I undertook to provide the Committee with the most recent figures on numbers of piracy incidents. First, I thought it might be useful to set out by way of background some additional detail on the Government's counter-piracy work:

Before action by international maritime forces to counter piracy off the coast of Somalia began in 2008, the threat was generally confined to the Gulf of Aden. Up to 25,000 ships a year pass through the Gulf on their way to and from Suez with cargoes that include around 30% of the world's oil. As a result it was a key target for pirates and the significant risks led several major shipping companies to seriously consider routing south of Africa despite additional costs that would inevitably have reached petrol pumps and supermarkets. However, the UN sponsored Gulf of Aden Internationally Recognised Transit Corridor, and the accompanying security effort by world Navies, has now virtually eliminated successful attacks in this area. The operation to keep open a global trade artery has been an unqualified success. The same is also true when it comes to protecting World Food Programme aid shipments to Somalia.

The pirate response has been to operate more widely across the Indian Ocean, sometimes using captured vessels as pirate 'mother' ships. It is impossible for the security forces to provide blanket coverage of such a vast area and increasingly our efforts have been concentrated on disrupting so-called 'Pirate Action Groups' near their bases and in mother ships. The prime defence for individual merchant vessels is the adoption of internationally agreed Best Management Practices (BMP). It is assessed that around 80% of ships now follow these recommended measures to prevent pirate attacks. In the areas of highest risk, BMP are increasingly reinforced by the use of armed guards from Private Security Companies, something that the PM has announced will soon be an option for British shipping companies. No ship carrying armed guards has ever been successfully pirated.
In terms of statistics, numerous organisations track piracy and the recorded figures can vary significantly. Some include every reported incident, while others demand more corroboration. What is consistent, however is the downward trend shown in these figures provided by the Defence Intelligence Staff:

- 2009 - 47 seizures, and 143 other unsuccessful attacks
- 2010 - 45 seizures, and 141 other unsuccessful attacks
- 2011 - 20 seizures, and 124 other unsuccessful attacks

According to the US-led coalition maritime force, currently the pirates are holding 8 vessels and around 200 hostages as opposed to 21 vessels and approximately 550 hostages 12 months ago.

Of course it is too early to claim victory; there is still enough of the current season remaining for the trend to change and pirate tactics continue to evolve. In particular, average ransoms per vessel have gone from USD2.5m in 2009 to USD4.4m this year (the record for an individual ship was USD5m in 2009, and is USD11m this year). Nevertheless, the evidence suggests the pirate's business model is under pressure and this *may* have contributed to the recent increase in kidnaps.

Looking ahead, the Somalia Conference that the PM will host in London on 23 Feb will be an opportunity to agree more sharing of intelligence and analysis with international partners. This will allow resources to be concentrated efficiently against the vulnerabilities in many different facets of the pirate business model, including logistics, finances and operations. We will also continue to work with the shipping and marine insurance industries to promote the use of the highly effective BMP. This includes the cruise line sector, although their high sided, fast and manoeuvrable ships are among the least susceptible to pirate attack**.**

Phone hacking allegations

The Committee also asked about the alleged hacking of phones of members of the Royal Family and the former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Peter Hain MP. As the Committee will be aware specific allegations of phone hacking are currently subject to a special Metropolitan police investigation known as Operation Weeting. In parallel the Prime Minister announced the Leveson inquiry to examine the role of the press and police in relation to alleged the phone hacking. The first part of this inquiry, is as you know focussing on the culture, practices and ethics of the media. Similarly, it would not be appropriate for the Government to pre-empt the outcome of either the police or Leveson inquiries at this stage, but of course careful consideration will be given to the eventual findings of both, including any national security implications.

The Government takes all threats to security very seriously including those to electronic data. A range of measures to protect sensitive and personal information are laid out in the Security Policy Framework. In addition the recently published National Cyber Security Strategy details how the Government is working to protect all of its networks and defend our national infrastructure from cyber attacks. The strategy is aimed at mitigating the UK's vulnerabilities and the different threats we face in cyberspace. Good information assurance and network defence measures are the starting point for this. Work being carried out in this area includes:

- GCHQ and its Cyber Security Operations Centre working to improve our understanding of the threats and vulnerabilities and identify what measures need to be put in place to combat them;
- working with companies that own and manage our Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) to ensure key data and systems continue to be safe and resilient;
- expanding government advice to include a wider range of organisations;
- working through the government ICT strategy, ensuring that we build and maintain appropriately secure government ICT networks; and
- sharpen our ability to identify the nature an attribution of cyber attacks and improving information sharing across government and industry partners to ensure key data enhancing defence against hostile acts.

Cabinet Office 04

The National Cyber Security Strategy also works to address the wider of issue of how business and the public can protect themselves from cyber attacks. The joint Government, law enforcement, business and the public sector Get Safe on Line initiative aims to provide independent and user-friendly advice to help the public use the internet confidently and securely.

Finally, the Committee requested an in confidence copy of the material Ministers considered as part of the 2010 National Security Risk Assessment. As I explained during my evidence, this information is highly classified. I undertook to consult Ministers about what additional material we might be able to provide the Committee. I, or my successor Sir Kim Darroch will write to you again on this point in the New Year.

21 December 2011

Cabinet Office 05

The following letter was sent by Sir Kim Darroch

Additional questions from the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy

Following the evidence given by the Minister for Government Policy, Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP, and the then National Security Adviser, Sir Peter Ricketts, to the Committee in October and December 2011, further questions were put by the Committee to the Cabinet Office. I am grateful for the interest which the Committee shows in the issues concerned and attach at Annex A to this letter the Government's response to those questions.

With reference to Question 23, the answer recognises that there are sensitivities involved in releasing details of the precise topics discussed. The Government and the United States have agreed, however, that a confidential note can supplement the answer provided at Annex A. That note is appended to this letter as Annex B.

In following up his 5th December 2011 appearance before the Committee, Sir Peter Ricketts indicated that he would consult Ministers about what additional material concerning the 2010 National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA) it might be possible to provide to the Committee. In the present case, the Government are willing to answer specific questions about the risks to national security assessed in the NSRA, as we have already done in the evidence sessions and:in the answers to Questions 3 and 15 in the list of additional questions now posed. The published National Security Strategy of October 2010 n fact contains much of the material considered by Ministers as part of the 2010 NSRA. Pending further consultations on the precedent which release of a Cabinet Committee paper might set, however, we are not able to provide the text in this case.

Annex A

Additional questions for the Cabinet Office

1. **Since it is known that previously the Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary reported personally on the heads of the intelligence services, when and how did this change? Will Sir Kim Darroch line manage them? (One of the reasons Sir Peter Ricketts gave for thinking it was appropriate for him to do this was that he had been a Permanent Secretary. Sir Kim Darroch has not been.)**

The Prime Minister has overall responsibility within government for intelligence and security matters and for the three security and intelligence Agencies. Day-to-day Ministerial responsibility for the Security Service lies with the Home Secretary and for SIS and GCHQ with the Foreign Secretary. The Home Secretary is accountable to Parliament, and therefore to the public, for the work of the Security Service; the Foreign Secretary has the same accountability for SIS and GCHQ.

The Heads of Agencies have a formal requirement to report to Ministers. Each Agency Head has a separate statutory requirement to make an annual report on the work of their organisations to the Prime Minister and the relevant Secretary of State and may at any time report to either of them on any matter relating to their work. However, the Agency Heads have a statutory responsibility for the operational work of their Agencies and are operationally independent from Ministers.

The relationship between the Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary and the relevant Agency Heads is not a line management relationship. The lines of accountability outlined above have not changed, and there is no intention for them to change in the future.

Sir Peter Ricketts, as National Security Adviser, took on responsibility for writing the personal annual staff reports for the Heads of each of the three intelligence Agencies when the post was created. Sir Kim Darroch will, as Sir Peter's replacement, take on this responsibility.

2. The SDSR says that the Government will produce a National Security Communications Strategy (p68). Is this complete and can the Committee see it?

A new National Security Council communications team is currently looking at developing communications strategies for individual policy areas covered by the NSC. These will be internal documents which will aim to generate communications activity for a range of national and international audiences via different channels in support of NSC policy objectives.

3. Who has the ministerial lead on electromagnetic pulses?

Action to prevent hostile threats such as high altitude nuclear explosions and use of non-nuclear EMP (electro-magnetic pulse) devices is implemented through a number of coordinated activities principally aimed at preventing the causes of EMP, and not EMP itself. These include cross-Government work on Counter Proliferation, which is led by the Foreign Secretary, and the nuclear deterrent, which is led by the Defence Secretary. The last National Security Risk Assessment suggested that the combination of likelihood and impact of the risks specific to EMP did not justify separate, duplicative governance mechanisms. Instead, the range of threats of which EMP is either a by-product or the principal element are managed coherently by the National Security Council, chaired by the Prime Minister.

Non-preventable, naturally occurring EMP caused by extreme space weather events is one of a number of hazards that can affect national infrastructure assets in the telecommunications and energy sectors, among others. The Ministerial lead for the security and resilience of the national infrastructure sectors lies with the departments with responsibility for oversight of the sectors themselves. The Cabinet Office is also developing a National Space Security Policy, which is being overseen by the Minister for Universities and Science and the Minister for Defence, Equipment, Support and Technology

4. Has NSC discussed the collapse of the Eurozone, the riots, the impact of increased devolution, or phone hacking? If so, when?

The NSC has not discussed the collapse of the Eurozone nor discussed riots, devolution or 'phone hacking. The Summer 2011 unrest was dealt with in COBR, and 'phone hacking remains the subject of a police investigation. The Constitutional Affairs team in Cabinet Office is responsible for all work relating to devolution.

5. Who decides what is put on the agenda for the NSC?

The NSC agenda is produced by the Secretariat of the National Security Council on a quarterly basis for submission to the Prime Minister. The agenda is shaped by proposals from departments, as well as in consultation with Number 10 and the Deputy Prime Minister's office, and is kept sufficiently flexible to respond to urgent priorities and enable the NSC to oversee HMG's policy response to national security crises.

6. What work has the Government undertaken on the possible implications of greater independence for Scotland for the UK's security and security policy? Has the NSC been involved in this work?

The National Security Council has not considered this issue.

7. To what extent is the NSC's time spent on longer term strategy work, as opposed to on policy work or managing current events? Please give the Committee some examples of the longer term strategy topics that the NSC has discussed, and some idea of the time frame that constitutes "long-term".

NSC discussions regularly look at strategic issues – HMG's policy position for Afghanistan post 2014, for instance, and its strategy for managing a range of bilateral relations. Rapidly moving current events, however, sometimes require a more tactical focus and the NSC has, where required, provided shorter-term direction. During events in Libya, for instance, the Council took on a more managerial function and the NSC met daily to provide direction to the campaign. The NSC has met at short notice to discuss Syria and Egypt, and agree follow-on policy and consular work in response.

8. Can you give any examples of "blue-skies thinking" the NSC has commissioned work on or discussed?

The NSC draws on a wide range of advice and analysis produced by departments on the NSC. Departments frequently engage outside experts and consider alternative approaches when formulating policy advice to the Council. Separately, the NSC Officials (non-ministerial) group meets quarterly in an informal setting to reflect on issues outside the rhythm and routine of the regular NSC schedule.

9. The Committee is looking for evidence of outside engagement of a sustained and substantive variety, and Ministers of the NSC receiving advice from external experts directly. Can you provide specific examples of such engagement?

The NSC has been briefed by external experts on Afghanistan and Pakistan as part of the NSC's consideration of Afghanistan in June 2010 and in December 2011. Additionally, senior departmental officials and Ambassadors in-country, frequently brief the NSC on developments on the ground. Ministers on the NSC may of course consult experts in preparation for the NSC and the normal conduct of their business. Foreign Office Ministers held a series of seminars on Pakistan with external experts over the course of 2011.

10. We have been told that NSC (Libya) met more than 50 times: why was this necessary? Was it responsible for directing operations rather than overseeing strategy?

Real-time military, intelligence and diplomatic assessment of the situation, including from theatre, gave Ministers as clear an understanding as possible of the detailed context in which to take decisions, to identify areas where further action or advice was required, and to enable them to make rapid, well-informed decisions that were co-ordinated across Government.

11. Sir Peter Ricketts said that the NSC shaped the collection priorities for the secret and intelligence services. How does the NSC identify emerging risks on which it wants data collecting? To which bodies does it turn for information and guidance?

The NSC shapes secret intelligence priorities through the annual JIC Requirements and Priorities (R&P) round which considers priorities on a rolling three year basis. Emerging risks are considered as part of that process. The national security strategic risks are set out in three tiers as part of the National Security Strategy (NSS). The JIC R&P is in effect the method by which the government draws together the generic risk identified by NSS and the countries/groups which are most relevant to that risk – including the emerging risks. Although this is a long-established Cabinet Office-led process, it has recently been sharpened to make it directly relevant to the NSC, and to give the intelligence agencies clearer guidance on where they should focus their efforts. Intelligence collection priorities for 11/12 were considered by the NSC in January 2011, the first time in recent history that Ministers had been consulted. Following that, last year's review into the central national security and intelligence machinery supporting the NSC (the Central Intelligence Machinery) confirmed that JIC priorities should be set by NSC priorities (with the proviso that the JIC should also have a remit to bring issues of emerging concern to the attention of NSC), endorsing the new approach.

Because of the sensitivity of secret intelligence collection, think tanks and academia are not directly consulted. Their contributions are of course taken into account indirectly through their engagements with JIO and JTAC, which are both deeply involved in this process. The National Security Secretariat, together with the JIO, then pull this analysis together to determine an overall set of collection priorities which also take into account the opportunity cost of collection (different countries/organisations are varyingly susceptible to intelligence activity). As part of this year's R&P round, experts are specifically being asked to identify those areas which they believe are emerging risks and will be substantially more important in three years' time.

Prioritisation of intelligence collection also supports the SDSR/NSS recommendations of a flexible posture. Although the JIC R&P provides the framework for prioritisation, the intelligence agencies are also tasked on issues identified by Ministers in the NSC and elsewhere. The JIC can assign a temporary intelligence watch to countries/groups which spike in interest between JIC R&P rounds. There is however, no comprehensive process for the NSC itself to identify emerging risks.

12. How does the Government define "strategy" and how does it see this as different from "a plan" or "policy"?

Strategy in Government is a process of identifying what we want to achieve and how we will achieve it - focusing on those issues that really matter and choosing the most coherent balance of ends, ways and means to deliver on our priorities. This process of choice - ideally choice made with insight – is about deciding which ends are realistic given the ways and means available as well as selecting which ways and means will best deliver those ends. Strategy must also be underpinned by a realistic understanding of the current context, the opportunities and threats we face and a sense of how that context might change over time. In Government, strategy describes the level above policy. Strategy describes the ends we are seeking to achieve. Policy is the ways in which we will achieve those ends.

In the case of national security, this means defining our long term national interests within both a global and domestic context (ends), understanding the resources at our disposal (means) and applying those resources in specific ways in order to achieve our objectives (ways).

13. Does the Government have a definition of "national security"? We have been told that the riots were not a national security issue, but the NSS includes flooding and industrial accidents (e.g. paras 3.41 and 3.42). Please explain where you draw the boundaries of "national security" and why.

The Government does not have any rigid 'thresholds' or 'definitions' for national security; but, broadly speaking, incidents of civil disorder which are localised geographically and in terms of scale, and which do not constitute a continuing or serious threat to our national interests or way of life, are generally not considered national security issues. There are some instances where the NSC might have an interest - in instances of rioting in Northern Ireland, for example, where dissident terrorist groups might seek to exploit public disorder around the parading season to mount attacks; but there are no hard and fast boundaries.

14. The first half of the NSS is largely concerned with the maintenance of UK influence. How does the Government define "influence"? Who does it want to influence?

As the National Security Strategy made clear, in an increasingly interconnected, networked and rapidly changing world, we need to project our influence abroad to protect our interests at home. The Government considers influence to mean our ability to have an effect on the beliefs and actions of others, which in turn leads to action in support of our interests or greater acceptance of our own actions. Much of our influence derives from our ability to attract others, rather than coerce them, to support our interests. Many of the Government's interactions with other governments and non-state actors around the world

involve seeking to influence them. This can range from bilateral negotiations on a specific policy issue to maximising the opportunities presented by the 2012 London Olympics to promote British trade, tourism and values. The Government seeks to have influence around the world in the short, medium and long term, through many different approaches, and with a wide range of audiences. These include, but are not limited to: foreign governments, through both bilateral relationships and multilateral organisations; foreign decision-makers and opinion-formers; public audiences in foreign countries; and British audiences including Parliament and the public.

15. The NSS Tier One risks include "an international military crisis between states drawing in the UK and its Allies" while Tier Three risks include "a conventional attack by a state on another NATO or EU member to which the UK would have to respond". Can the Government explain the difference between an "attack by a state" and a "military crisis between states"? Why is the first a tier one risk and the second a tier three risk?

The 2010 National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA) was produced to assist Ministers in prioritising risks to inform the 2010 National Security Strategy by assessing the impact and likelihood of the key strategic risks which threaten UK national security interests. To ensure that the 2010 NSRA was a proportionate yet robust strategic planning aid, the 'Plausible Worst Case' for each risk was identified. The 'Plausible Worst Case' articulates the worst outcome of each risk type that the UK would plausibly expect to face, and also the risk's cause. The 'Plausible Worst Case' therefore enables mitigation planning as well as response planning.

The Plausible Worst Case selected for the 'international military crisis between states drawing in the UK and its allies' was a regional conflict which would draw in multiple states, and involve the UK, our allies, our trading partners and countries in which there are UK diasporas and/or other interests. The scenario would lead to, or increase, instability overall and threaten UK national interests.

The 'conventional attack by a state on another NATO or EU member' is a more specific risk. The selected Plausible Worst Case for this risk is an armed attack to which the UK would be obliged to react due to invocation of treaty provision, either individually or as part of a collective response.

The 'international military crisis' is a Tier One risk because it was assessed to be both plausible and capable of having a significant impact on UK national security interests. A deliberate attack by a state on a NATO or EU country was assessed to be a Tier Three risk, taking into account both the likelihood and impact of a successful attack, in the plausible worst case scenario.

16. The *Libya crisis: national security adviser's review of central coordination and lessons learned* report talks about the need for "integrated briefing" for Ministers. Are there resource implications for the NSC in this?

No; this is about using existing resources as efficiently as possible to ensure the most effective briefing for Ministers, drawing on inputs from across Government Departments and Agencies.

17. The *Libya crisis* report talks about the Strategic Communications Synchronisation Group. What is the role of this group and its purpose?

The synchronisation group is designed to ensure that the covert part of Strategic Communications is fully synchronised with the broader cross-Government direction provided by the Strategic Communications Team headed by the NSC. It is chaired by an appropriate senior NSC/Cabinet Office official and attended by Government officials and MOD and agency personnel responsible for the delivery of messaging.

18. The *Libya crisis* report talks about a "small communications team" to sit in the Cabinet Office and support the NSC. Is this aimed at improving communication within government, or at improving government communication with the UK public or with the outside world more generally? What is its relationship with the Strategic Communications Synchronisation Group?

The NSC communications team works primarily on strategic communications in close partnership with relevant Government departments in support of NSC priorities. Key audiences are UK and international. The Strategic Communications Synchronisation Group forms a part of the HMG strategic communications efforts.

19. The *Libya crisis* report says that effective "strategic communications" were central to the campaign. How does the Government define "strategic communications"?

The Government definition of strategic communications is: the systematic and co-ordinated use of all means of communication to deliver UK national security objectives by influencing the attitudes and behaviours of individuals, groups and states. Communications covers words, images and public actions. It includes public information, public affairs, information operations, defence diplomacy, soft power activities and diplomatic lobbying.

20. The *Libya crisis* report called for the Government to be "ready to review long standing policy such as the recognition of States not Governments". Does the Government intend to do this and publish the conclusions?

During the Libya crisis, the Government made an exception to the policy of recognising States, not Governments, to recognise the National Transitional Council of Libya as the Government of Libya, for the reasons set out in the Foreign Secretary's statement of 27 July 2011. This decision reflected the NTC's increasing legitimacy, competence and success in reaching out to Libyans across the country. Through its actions the NTC showed its commitment to a more open and democratic Libya and was working to achieve this through an inclusive political process. It remains our view, however, that it will generally be appropriate to recognise only States. The Government's attitude on the question of whether an entity is to be treated as a Government falls to be inferred from the nature of the dealings, if any, which we have with it, and in particular whether we are dealing with it on a normal Government-to-Government basis. The lesson that we take from the Libya experience is that we should be ready to consider making an exception to the general policy of not recognising Governments, should an appropriate situation again arise.

21. The Strategic Defence and Security Review: First Annual Report says "The SDSR committed to producing integrated strategies for the countries and regions of greatest significance or risk. For priority countries and regions, the NSC has approved these government-wide strategies for systematically pursuing wider national objectives. These strategies are regularly reviewed to respond to ongoing developments and track progress towards objectives and drive individual country plans, which have been developed for each country where there is UK representation." Please supply the Committee with an example of one of these integrated strategies.

For classification reasons we are unable to share copies of country strategies with the Committee. FCO officials would, however, be happy to offer an in-confidence briefing session on such a paper.

22. The Committee understands that there is now a "formal strategic thinking network" where representatives from each national security Department strategy unit meet. Can you tell us more about this network? Does it have terms of reference? What work has been undertaken?

The 2010 SDSR included a recommendation to "coordinate the work programmes and improve collaboration" between departmental Strategy Units through the creation of "a more formal strategic thinking network" (para 6.6). The resulting 'Strategy Network' builds on an existing informal group and has met on a fairly regular basis under a rotating chair. The main benefit of the group has been the sharing of work programmes and the resulting ability to identify areas for greater cooperation. It has also provided a useful forum for updating members on issues of common interest such as the JIC R&P and the UK/US Joint Strategy Board.

23. Please provide an update on the UK-US Joint Strategy Board. Is its role to develop a joint strategy for the US and the UK? If so, what has it achieved so far? How many times has it met since its creation? What was discussed?

The UK-US Joint Strategy Board (JSB) was established following President Obama's visit to the UK in 2011. Its role is to facilitate discussions on issues of mutual interest between staff working in the UK National Security Secretariat and the US National Security Council, supported as necessary by officials from other departments. As such, it complements the existing regular discussions between UK and US officials on a wide range of foreign policy and national security issues. It met once in 2011. We have agreed with the US not to disclose the precise topics discussed by the JSB.

7 February 2012

ADS Group Limited

- **ADS welcomes the steps taken by the Government, building the work started by the last Government, to put National Security at the heart of Government and to build stronger structures to create coherence amongst the many Government Departments and agencies involved in ensuring the security of the UK citizen. It believes there are strong arguments to continue developing these structures and, in particular, to ensure that they are linked effectively to industry.**

- **The National Security Council (NSC) should develop a stronger sense of ownership for engaging the UK-based defence and security industries on national security issues. New mechanisms should be established and maintained which will allow the UK Government to maximize the benefits it gains from industry's contributions to national security.**

- **The National Security Secretariat in the Cabinet Office should engage the defence and security industries on the full range of security risks that are identified in the National Security Strategy; the innovation and investment of industry are important components of mitigating these effectively. We encourage the NSC to oversee the development of suitable mechanisms of engagement between Government and the defence and security industries.**

- **There would be value in the National Security Adviser and/or his deputies engaging with the defence and security industries on a regular basis; taking account of the risks and opportunities that industry sees in the area of national security.**

- **It is understood that the NSC has created under its auspices a cross-government senior official group on Science & Technology. At a time when resources are under pressure, urgent consideration should be given to achieving appropriate industrial representation on S&T issues within the structures of the NSC; this is important so that Government and industry can work together to avoid duplication of research and achieve more effective pull through to the frontline.**

- **The NSC and the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy should develop and maintain an active interest in overseeing the**

implementation of the Government's forthcoming White Paper on Technology, Equipment and Support for UK Defence and Security.

- **Industry would welcome greater levels of transparency around the Government's requirements and policy priorities in so far as they relate to the defence and security industries. The Government should also remain committed to providing adequate levels of, and develop appropriate new forecast investments in, all aspects of national security capability including defence, counter-terrorism, security, intelligence, resilience, cyber security and policing.**

1. ADS SUBMISSION CONTEXT

1.1 ADS is the trade organisation advancing the UK AeroSpace, Defence, and Security industries with Farnborough International Limited as a wholly-owned subsidiary. ADS also encompasses the British Aviation Group (BAG) and jointly sponsors, with Intellect, UKspace.

1.2 ADS was formed on 1 October 2009 from the merger of the Association of Police and Public Security Suppliers (APPSS), the Defence Manufacturers Association (DMA) and the Society of British Aerospace Companies (SBAC). ADS comprises around 900 member companies within the industries it represents. Together with its regional partners, ADS represents over 2,600 companies across the UK supply chain.

1.3 779 companies within the membership of ADS (i.e. 85% of our members) have registered their interest in the defence sector and many are heavily engaged with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in the provision of world leading capabilities to the UK's armed forces. Defence employs around 110,000 people directly, generating over £21bn in 2010 with the sector supporting a total of 314,000 jobs directly and indirectly. It is responsible for £35bn in total economic contributions according to Oxford Economics research.

1.4 Around 450 companies within the membership of ADS are heavily engaged in growing security, resilience and policing markets, at home and overseas, for which there are many interfaces with UK Government, the police service, the other emergency services and operators of the Critical National Infrastructure (CNI). Security-related SME's (small/medium sized enterprises) maintain a heavy focus on upper tier technologies and comprise over 90% of the ADS membership. A recent survey completed by ADS found that its members generated around £1.8bn worth of business in the UK security market during 2010.

1.5 The UK's defence and security industries are hi-tech and innovative sectors which are well placed to provide technology, equipment, services and systems in support of the UK's military and civil security efforts, and in tackling the full range of security risks facing the UK and its allies. They are also significant contributors to the health of the UK economy. Recent research by the UKTI Defence & Security Organisation (DSO) stated that in 2010 the UK maintained its position as the second largest exporter of new defence products and services. The UK won almost £6bn of new defence business, increasing its

share of the global defence market to 22% compared with 18% last year, and £2bn of new security business. Security exports grew by over 8% from the previous year, maintaining UK's fifth place in the world.

1.6 ADS and its members continue to work with partners through representative bodies in the defence sector and the UK Security and Resilience Industry Suppliers' Community (RISC) to highlight to Government departments the leading capabilities that industry can provide to the UK's armed forces, security agencies and first responders, and the opportunities that exist for these sectors to contribute to the national priority of economic growth. RISC is also building stronger links with the UK universities to bring industry and academia together to support national security.

1.7 In the view of ADS, it would be beneficial for the structures of the National Security Council (NSC) to take into consideration the many contributions of industry in providing for the UK's national security and resilience, and in fulfilling the economic potential of the UK. Therefore, ADS welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy's call for written evidence.

2. ADS SUBMISSION TO CONSULTATION

2.1 ADS welcomes the steps taken by the Government, building the work started by the last Government, to put National Security at the heart of Government and to build stronger structures to create coherence amongst the many Government Departments and agencies involved in ensuring the security of the UK citizen.

2.2 ADS welcomes the coalition Government's publication of the National Security Strategy (NSS) and its decision to create the NSC in 2010. It believes there are strong arguments to continue developing these structures and, in particular, to ensure that they are linked effectively to industry. A number of actions would improve the implementation of the NSS and the NSC's interaction with the defence and security industries.

2.3 It is to be welcomed that the Cabinet Office stated to a recent Parliamentary inquiry that "The inclusion of non-government experts in the Government's strategy making process is important as a stimulus and challenge to its thinking and provides additional expertise where it may not exist within government." It is also encouraging that the National Security Secretariat (NSSec) in the Cabinet Office has chosen to engage the UK-based defence and security industries on the security and resilience of the UK's space assets. This is important progress but ADS would encourage the NSSec to engage the defence and security industries on the full range of security risks identified in the NSS; the innovation and investment of industry are important components of mitigating these effectively.

2.4 Whilst we would note that some Government departments engaged in aspects of National Security and Resilience such as the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (OSCT) of the Home Office are engaging industry proactively, ADS believes that there is room for improvement when it comes to how the NSC and its associated structures consult the private sector. On defence issues, the Government's principal mechanism for engaging industry has changed recently but through the Defence Suppliers' Forum, Government continues to engage with industry. On security issues, there is productive dialogue between the Home Office and industry through the UK Security and Resilience

Industry Suppliers' Community (RISC), but more could be done to harness industry's contributions on the full range of national security issues in a coherent and strategic manner. We encourage the NSC to oversee the development of suitable mechanisms of engagement between Government and the defence and security industries.

2.5 It is the view of ADS that the NSC would benefit from a direct conversation with industry on the contributions it makes (and/or could make) to important areas of UK national security. The NSC would benefit, for example, from an understanding of how the private sector helps to ensure the resilience of cyberspace through initiatives such as the joint Intellect and ADS Virtual Task Force, and how it has been contributing to Olympic and Paralympic security issues. Industry understands and accepts the importance of the "Lead Department" model for the implementation of national security policy but ADS believes there would be benefit in a greater awareness of existing initiatives at the NSC level. ADS recommends that the NSC – and the NSSec which supports it – should develop a stronger sense of ownership for engaging the UK-based defence and security industries in the formulation and operation of national security policy. New mechanisms should be established and maintained which will allow the UK Government to maximize the benefits from industry's contributions to national security. For example, in view of the post-holder's responsibilities for coordination of national security and resilience policy, there would be value in the National Security Adviser and/or his deputies engaging with the defence and security industries on a regular basis; taking account of the risks and opportunities industry that sees in the area of national security.

2.6 ADS fully supports the view of RISC that a "senior responsible owner" (SRO) should be appointed in Government to lead the implementation of the proposals on national security and resilience in the forthcoming White Paper which follows the consultation on Equipment, Support, and Technology for UK Defence and Security (ESTUDS). This should provide a very cost-effective means of ensuring that the White Paper is implemented in a coherent manner, and that industry is engaged effectively. ADS encourages the Government and the Joint Committee to accept the merits of RISC's recommendation and its accompanying idea that this SRO should report to the NSC through Ministers.

2.7 Industry understands that in addition to individual departmental mechanisms the Government has created a cross-government senior official group for Science and Technology (S&T) under the auspices of the NSC. It is encouraging that the NSC has established this forum but we are not aware of a mechanism at present for this group to consult industry. ADS believes that it is important for Government to find the right channels to take industry into its confidence on S&T issues; a dialogue is needed both in terms of how the private sector develops sensitive national security capabilities and also with regards to how it should work with Government to protect them. It is the view of ADS that the Government will not be able to deliver this aspect of its national security policy alone; industry is a significant investor in S&T for the UK's national security purposes. We recommend that urgent consideration is given to identifying appropriate industrial representation on S&T issues within the structures underpinning the NSC; this is important so that Government and industry can work together to focus their limited resources for the future.

2.8 Industry welcomes the establishment of the Emerging Powers sub-committee within the confines of the NSC. It is particularly encouraging that the Secretary of State for Business is a member of this important forum. Industry believes that this would be an

appropriate forum for executive direction towards the national security-related aspects of the coalition Government's focus on commercial diplomacy and exports. Given the emphasis that the Government is placing on the UK export agenda, and on how to stimulate growth in the economy, ADS believes that there would be benefit to be had from involving the Minister for Trade within the NSC (Emerging Powers) sub-committee.

2.9 ADS welcomes the idea that the NSC should oversee the completion of a Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) every five years. It will be important for the SDSR to follow, and be resourced in line with the priorities within, the publication of the NSS. We also understand that the Government aspires to match requirements with resources with a (minimum) real-terms increase in the defence budget of 1% per annum from 2015; we encourage the Joint Committee to hold both this and future Governments to account on such a commitment.

2.10 ADS believes that both the NSC and the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy should develop and maintain an active interest in overseeing the implementation of the Government's forthcoming White Paper on Technology, Equipment and Support for UK Defence and Security that we understand will be published later this year. This is important because there are concerns in some parts of industry that the White Paper may lack the strategic approach industry believes is needed to deliver its contributions to UK defence and security. The House of Commons Defence Select Committee has historically maintained a strong focus on the scrutiny of the MoD's defence equipment programme and associated industrial policy: The Joint Committee should recognize the importance of industrial contributions to the wider range of national security issues, and consider including within its terms of reference the scrutiny of these aspects of Government policy.

3. CONCLUDING REMARKS

3.1 ADS's principal recommendation is that the NSC should develop stronger mechanisms of engagement with the UK-based defence and security industries. Strong dialogue is needed to ensure the innovation of industry can be harnessed in support of national security and to generate the capabilities that are needed to mitigate the security risks that have been identified within the NSS.

3.2 ADS believes that the NSS - and the NSC which oversees it – should seek to deliver greater levels of transparency around the Government's requirements and policy priorities in so far as they relate to the defence and security industries. The Government should also remain committed to providing adequate levels of investment in all aspects of national security including defence, counter-terrorism, security, intelligence, resilience, cyber security and policing.

3.3 The combination of sustained investment in national security with stronger dialogue between the NSC and industry will help to ensure that the UK market can in some senses continue to act as a platform from which the UK defence and security industries can improve their export performances overseas, in line with the Government's stated priority to support the UK's economic recovery.

30 September 2011

Dr Jim Broderick, Daneshill Associates LLP

Introduction

It is clear from the debate so far on the new National Security Strategy (NSS) that the adoption of this strategic approach is regarded as a "radical rethinking of security" which is "innovative" and, for some analysts, represents a "massive step forward" in UK security policy in the 21st century. Certainly the attempt to provide a more integrated approach to security outlined in the Strategy is to be welcomed, as is the recognition that 'risk' and 'risk management' are organising concepts which can be utilised in seeking to make sense of a myriad set of complex security issues facing the UK in the contemporary era.

But, while the Strategy is an important step forward, it remains only a first step in what should be regarded as an evolving process. Indeed, in many ways, the task of working through the implications of the Strategy in policy and operational terms is only just beginning. In the short to medium term it is clear that we are entering a vital period for the further development and implementation of the approach outlined in the Strategy and how this debate unfolds will profoundly shape the security posture of the UK for decades to come.

In earlier sessions of this Committee and in the Commons Defence Committee's deliberations on the Strategy a number of concerns have already been expressed. In particular that: (a) the National Security Strategy is more a 'methodology' than a strategic approach, (b) that the National Security Council may not be able to gain 'traction' in Whitehall and that it needs a larger separate secretariat and, (c) a lack of clarity as to how longer term risks are to be identified and evaluated.[5]

A number of further issue-areas might be usefully examined in relation to this debate. Broadly speaking these can thought of under the rubric of 'emergent risk' arising from the structure of the Strategy itself (as well as the security apparatus it specifies). Three key themes initially suggest themselves

i. The potential for the ordering and prioritisation of risks as outlined in the Strategy to create pressure for the NSC to develop into a permanent 'war cabinet' perpetually engaged in fighting 'risk wars' at home and abroad
ii. A need for greater transparency in how risk identification and evaluation processes are being formulated.
iii. Criticality of Parliamentary oversight in the implementation of a risk-based approach to UK security.

Obviously these are large areas of concern and an exhaustive examination of each is beyond the scope of this submission (indeed the very purpose of this brief is more to suggest areas

[5] See Defence Committee, "The Strategic Defence and Security Review and the National Security Strategy", 6th Report and Uncorrected Oral and Written Evidence. London: HMSO, July 2011. Also National Security Committee, Uncorrected Evidence, 4th July 2011.

of further enquiry rather than provide extensive written argument). But some preliminary comments can be made here:

Emergent Risk

(i) 'Ordering' of risk

As can be seen from earlier evidence sessions, the NSC's initial preoccupation has been with operations in Afghanistan.[6] No doubt, recent events in Libya and elsewhere in the Middle East will also have featured highly. But, although such a focus is obvious and understandable, it also reveals that, from the very outset, the pace and indeterminacy of events abroad are exerting constant pressure to 'react' on the part of the NSC. If one accepts that globalisation and 'individualisation' are forces creating conflicting pressures on the security function of the late modern state this is serious cause for concern.

Indeed, the approach adopted in the National Security Strategy may well be a contributing factor to such pressure. By seeking to 'order' and make sense of complexity through the prism of 'risk assessment' there emerges a powerful incentive to evaluate all security concerns as 'risks' to be ranked and then 'managed'. The fear that ignoring even 'signals' of threats will incur enormous security costs, coupled with the seeming 'power' of the risk assessment process to create a sense of structure in an uncertain world, is a combination of factors which will inevitably act as a powerful influence on decision-makers. In this regard, concerns about the 'method' of the NSS do not go far enough because the Strategy contains, within its risk-based approach, a potential for the creation of a 'global battlespace' in the minds of security practitioners. What is meant here is that events (or signals, or populations for that matter) become refracted through a prism of 'assessment' that orders and ranks them as security risks. 'Risk management' then becomes a strong rationale for increasing levels of intervention. If risks are 'rationally' identified then decision-makers will find themselves bound to seek 'management' solutions as the costs of inaction become too high to bear.

Nowhere are these contextual pressures more apparent than in the 'recognition' of cyber-warfare as an emerging security threat. The development of technology, and our increasing reliance on technical systems to ensure the viability of critical national infrastructure has brought with it enormous benefits. But, it also engenders a new vulnerability which, as the Strategy specifies, is a serious risk to the security of the UK. Yet the 'sphere' in which cyber attack might occur transcends any recognisable geopolitical borders. Therefore, 'new' forms of response are required that, similarly, have to be able to cross what we might previously have conceived as recognisable and 'legitimate' (geo-)political thresholds. Here in a nutshell is the dilemma which the National Security Strategy seeks to address but, potentially, which it can actually make more intractable. The pace and indeterminacy of events (and their structuring as 'risks') creates powerful incentives for action while simultaneously eroding thresholds (or checks and balances) which are supposed to impose limits on what 'legitimate' state intervention means. Along with cyber-warfare, we also have 'new' terrorist threats which are seemingly ubiquitous, at once local and external in structure, and networked in operation. The Strategy therefore seeks to evaluate this 'risk' and then draw together different strands of action, ranging from overseas aid and military intervention,

[6] National Security Committee, Uncorrected evidence, September 2011

intelligence coordination through to 'domestic' response strategies. In doing so it also risks 'militarising' the civil sphere and engaging in actions that transcend our understanding of the 'domestic' and 'international' in security terms. 'Normalcy' (or peace) becomes replaced by a state of permanent 'exception' (with military/security intervention within and across borders being necessitated and driven by constant perceptions of expanding threat).

(ii) Transparent Evaluation

Hence transparency in how risks are identified and evaluated becomes a critical issue. Certainly an innovation of the Strategy is the attempt to systematise and understand the interrelationships of complex threats through risk assessment. Indeed, the creation of a National Risk Register is an interesting development which resembles the evolution of the Local Risk Register process that for a number of years has been used to bolster local resilience to hazards. But, as with Local Risk Registers, the use of such a framework is not without its problems.

One key issue here is that the definition of risk as contained in the Strategy (risk = likelihood x impact) remains contestable and implies an 'objectivity' of calculation that may be misleading. If nothing else what this definition excludes is the need for an agreed 'schema' among stakeholders by which the specific calculations contained in evaluations of 'impact' and 'likelihood are commonly understood. This aspect of risk identification is frequently overlooked as it requires consideration of a range of cognitive, cultural, organisational and interpretive factors which complicates the assessment process and undermines the certainty of the 'risk' in question. In other words, the Strategy, as with so many attempts to codify risk, leaves itself open to misinterpretation. Its systematic and codified hierarchy of risk implies certainty and objectivity where none may exist. As such, *despite the overt warning contained in the Strategy itself regarding the limits of risk identification*, there is a clear danger of the NSS being construed as offering guarantees of security which is neither its intent nor design.[7]

This leads to a further concern regarding the risk multiplier effect inherent in the 'method' of the NSS. As noted earlier, worries have already been expressed regarding the ability of the new security apparatus to take adequate account of longer term risks. And, as noted above, there are also other pressures on decision-makers to adopt a reactive and short term stance to security risk. However, it is highly unlikely that the list of 'identified' risks to be dealt with will shrink or recede over time. Instead, as the assessment and horizon scanning function matures it seems most likely that the list of identified security risks will (a) become more complex in nature as further vulnerabilities to 'existing' risk become apparent and (b) new risk categories become added to the list of security threat. Hence there does appear a potential for an ever expanding process of risk identification and assessment. Moreover, such a process may not only miss key 'long wave' security problems it may even collapse under its own weight. In other words, ever more 'risk' becomes ever more unsecured despite increasingly urgent attempts to produce the 'full spectrum capability' required by our own evaluations.

[7] Cabinet Office, "The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom", London: HMSO 2008 and HM Government, "A Strong Britain in Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy", London, HMSO, 2010.

(iii) Criticality of oversight

This logic also sheds light on questions such as will the NSC be able to gain sufficient 'traction' in Whitehall and whether it needs a large secretariat to do so. If one accepts the logic of the preceding argument there will be ever increasing pressure for the NSC to develop its staffing and resources as the scale of risk becomes ever more apparent. Such a tendency of course brings with it very familiar problems of 'groupthink' and the development of a silo mentality in which other Departments are seen as rivals to be contended with – a view that will no doubt be reciprocated by existing agencies. It is likely that some expansion of the Secretariat will be desirable given that the range of risks and their interdependencies even as currently outlined in the Strategy are complex enough. But, it is rare for the answer to any policy or operational problem to be 'more bureaucracy'! Indeed, as has been noted in Defence Committee deliberations, the operational problem of 'traction' may not be related to the eventual size of the NSC structure at all. Instead, the 'joined up' thinking inherent in the Strategy might simply prove to be fundamentally incompatible with the silo-based Departmental structure of Whitehall.[8]

Given these concerns, a potential way to address staffing and 'traction' issues (and promote an integrated approach to security) might lie in a significant advantage already enjoyed by the NSC – its location in the Cabinet Office. In relation to Civil Contingencies for example, the Cabinet Office has for some time functioned as a sort of 'meta-Department' seeking to coordinate activities across a range of domains. This model has applicability for the NSC secretariat. Rather than passively allowing the development of yet another silo-based security fiefdom – or seeing an agency structure develop which inevitably becomes locked in fruitless competition with other 'big beasts' of Whitehall – an organisational culture which embodies a 'networked' approach to security should be actively encouraged. One could envisage this being undertaken by a fairly small secretariat that focuses upon identifying specific nodes of expertise within other Departments (and indeed the wider public and private sector) and activates clear channels of communication and coordination across policy domains. Use of short-term secondments from other agencies (again not necessarily restricted to Government Departments) might be another desirable operational norm to establish. In other words, the NSC secretariat could become a coordinating centre of a wider governance network that has the ability to adapt and coalesce in different ways to address varying problems.

However, such a culture will not take root unless it is deliberately promoted and the longer the delay the harder an effectively networked outcome will be to achieve. The National Security Advisor will certainly be critical to this (as will the scrutiny of Parliament). But, at present, the role of the National Security Advisor remains dangerously underspecified. In fact a description of the role and function of this particular official does not overtly appear in the Strategy documentation at all. How that role evolves will of course depend very much on the needs of the Chair of the NSC but, certainly in organisational terms, this officer will have an enormous influence on the organisational culture and function of the secretariat going forward. That must remain a key concern for any body tasked with the oversight of security policy.

Finally, it is worth noting one other aspect of the evaluation of risk which does not overtly appear in the Strategy. That is what is meant by 'acceptable risk'? This term is possibly one

[8] Defence Committee, op. cit.

of the most controversial (and explosive) imports from the lexicon of risk management into the security realm. Already one can identify evaluations of 'acceptable' risk in recent Defence Committee hearings as decision-makers and analysts seek to balance ends, ways and means in delivering security. But, how 'acceptability' is defined has enormous consequences because it rests on an often hidden calculation of how risks are therefore to be distributed among population groups (both at home and abroad). This is one of the central dilemmas facing the modern state; how to regulate and distribute risks, which cannot be fully controlled or eradicated, among populations. Who decides this 'acceptability', and how those decisions are made and scrutinised, is absolutely critical to the development of the Strategy.

This reinforces the centrality of the Parliamentary oversight role in the development and implementation of the Strategy. Clearly Committees such as this one have to negotiate a difficult balance between effective oversight and legitimate sensitivities regarding the release of information. Yet, the method underpinning the Strategy, because it rests on a form of empiricism and quantification, does impart at least a degree of verifiability. In this sense, perhaps the Parliamentary Committee might wish to conceive of itself as performing a quasi 'risk audit' role which seeks to judge how priorities within the Strategy are being set, how well resilience is being promoted and whether sufficient checks and balances against creeping militarisation of decision-making are in place. In other words, it is suggested that the central task of the future work of this Committee should be to act both as public arbiter – and auditor – of how 'acceptable risk' is being conceptualised in the security realm and what are the effects of this on the delivery of security for the UK.

Conclusion

The National Security Strategy does represent something of a departure for security thinking in the 21st century. Its aims of drawing together what were hitherto seen as 'separate' or unrelated spheres of activity and developing an integrated approach to security are to be welcomed. However, within its risk-based approach there lies a powerful (and potentially destructive) logic which must be carefully scrutinised and critically evaluated on an ongoing basis.

The Strategy also faces profound barriers in relation to effective operational implementation. Disjunctures between ends, ways and means are already apparent and further tensions are likely to appear. However, at this early phase of development, decision-makers still have a great deal of room for manoeuvre. There does exist a real opportunity to foster a genuinely effective form of security governance based on the integrated approach outlined in the Strategy. But this depends on a careful fostering of an appropriate organisational structure and culture if the good intentions of the Strategy are to be realised in practice.

September 2011

Professor Nigel Lightfoot

Executive summary
One of the greatest threats to National Security is from international terrorists using chemical, nuclear or biological weapons. As an international expert in the field of biological threats, I submit that the Committee might consider the appropriate preparation for the threat of an anthrax attack in the UK.

My submission considers the policies for use anthrax vaccines and compares the relative merits of the only two licensed anthrax vaccines in the world, one developed in the UK and one in the USA. Both vaccines were developed in the 1950's to protect workers in woollen mills and were found to be effective. They are now used to protect military personnel against the threat of biological weapons. The USA also holds a stockpile for civilian defence. Data on the UK national stockpile is not in the public domain .

A deliberate release of anthrax presents a real danger since its release will not be known until the first cases occur. Antibiotics may then be required for up to 60 days. In the UK this course of antibiotics can be reduced to 28 days if a post exposure vaccine is administered at the same time as the first dose of antibiotics.

The important difference from other biological agents is that if disseminated in the environment spores of *Bacillus anthracis* will remain viable for many years and pose a significant problem for recovery from a terrorist attack.

The key component of both vaccines is a protective antigen, but both differ in the levels of protection and in the reaction of patients when vaccinated. As these vaccines were developed in the 1950's their key components were not well characterised and research is now underway to develop a recombinant protective antigen. Trials indicate that these more defined vaccines are not as effective as the original vaccines. Research into other components in these vaccines might improve their immunogenicity.

The UK and the US share a common history of stockpiling vaccines for the civilian population – the Joint Committee might consider whether stockpiles of one or both vaccines are desirable and whether, to reduce cost, such stockpiling might be undertaken with trusted partners in Europe.

Anthrax vaccines: policies for use

Issue

1.01 The threat of an anthrax terrorist attack is real and several governments are developing response plans to deal with such a catastrophic event. This includes antibiotic stockpiling as well as government coordination and readiness of the health services. The course of antibiotics required to protect the civilian population is 60 days but this can be shortened to 28 days if a course of anthrax vaccine is started at the same time as the course of antibiotics. The responders who will continue to be exposed to *Bacillus anthracis* spores in the environment will need to be protected by the use of antibiotics **and vaccine.**

Recommendation

2.01 The UK should consider, with European Union Member States, whether a stockpile of anthrax vaccines should form part of their response. As it is probable that any attack will not be launched on all Member States shared stockpiles can be considered. The US and UK governments have stockpiled anthrax vaccine.
Data on the UK stockpile is not in the public domain. Other governments have not but recognise that vaccine will be required for an effective response.

Background

3.01 Three forms of human disease occur as the result of infection with *Bacillus anthracis*, cutaneous anthrax, intestinal anthrax and inhalational anthrax.
Naturally acquired anthrax continues to occur in humans around the world and is usually acquired from infected animals, animal products such as skins or wool, or from the environment, that has been contaminated by the carcasses of animals dying from anthrax.

3.02 As recently as August 2011, there was an ongoing outbreak of intestinal anthrax in Bangladesh where 610 cases have occurred since 2009, there are 21 cases of cutaneous anthrax in northeast China associated with infected cattle and 12 cases of cutaneous anthrax in northwest Viet Nam associated with infected buffaloes. There is an ongoing series of cases and deaths in heroin users in the United Kingdom. A single case of inhalational anthrax has been diagnosed in Minnesota in the United States, investigations point to an environmental source. Also there are infections in cattle in Sweden associated with past animal burial sites.

3.03 *Bacillus anthracis* is therefore present in animals, in the environment and in laboratories around the world.
The threat of a deliberate release of *Bacillus anthracis* continues. It was in earlier years considered to be a potent biological weapon and was weaponised by several nations. The organism is easy to work with; it is stable and robust in its spore form and can be disseminated as an aerosol. The Japanese sect Aum Shinrikyo prepared and attempted to disseminate an aerosol form of *Bacillus anthracis* but they used a vaccine strain that would not cause illness and their dissemination apparatus was crude and ineffective. It is known that Al Qaeda expressed an intention to use anthrax as a terrorist weapon. Determined attempts to obtain highly pathogenic strains were made by their operatives in the 1990s and "recipes" were reported to have been found in Afghanistan.
The important difference from other biological agents is that if disseminated in the environment spores of *Bacillus anthracis* will remain viable for many years and pose a significant problem for recovery from a terrorist attack.
The threat assessments of the UK and many western Governments include anthrax as a high priority bio-threat agent with the requirement for prevention, preparedness and response plans including stockpiling of medical countermeasures.

Therapy

4.01 Natural infections

Control of exposure
Pre-exposure vaccination

If exposure and infection does occur there are three therapeutic opportunities, antibiotics, anthrax specific immunoglobulin and anthrax vaccine.
Bacillus anthracis infections can be effectively treated by a range of antibiotics including the penicillins, however all *Bacillus anthracis* strains are totally resistant to the cephalosporin group of antibiotics. Antibiotic only treatment is usually effective in cutaneous anthrax. The treatment of inhalation anthrax is much more difficult and intensive supportive therapy is necessary due to the onslaught of the anthrax toxins. Anthrax specific immunoglobulin can be an effective therapeutic agent in reducing the impact of the toxins.
Anthrax vaccine is not considered necessary for treatment of individual cases nor for their nursing and medical attendants; person-to-person transmission does not occur.

4.02 Terrorist attack

A deliberate release of a *Bacillus anthracis* aerosol over a population presents a different and enormous problem, many thousands will be exposed and a covert attack will not be detected until the first cases occur. There will then be a race against time to provide antibiotic treatment to those persons still in the incubation phase, 2-7 days, to prevent the onset of illness. This is known as post exposure prophylaxis (PEP). An antibiotic stockpile will be required and usually this stockpile consists of ciprofloxacin or another flouroquinolone antibiotic. This class of antibiotics was chosen because of its pharmacodynamics and low toxicity; ciprofloxacin is well absorbed by the oral route and achieves high tissue and intra-cellular levels in the lungs. Experiments in animals have demonstrated that this post exposure prophylaxis has to be continued for a total of 60 days because the inhaled anthrax spores can remain dormant in macrophages and are only killed by the antibiotic when they germinate into vegetative organisms. In the UK this course of antibiotics can be reduced to 28 days if vaccine is administered at the same time as the first doses of antibiotic; antibodies are produced by this time and protect against late germinating spores. The US has not adopted this policy

Recovery from an attack

5.01 The spores of *Bacillus anthracis* are extremely resistant in the environment, surviving for many years. Although the risk of continuing inhalation anthrax from spores in the environment is minimal the risk of cutaneous anthrax will be considerable. Immunisation with anthrax vaccine offers the best long-term protection for those involved in the recovery.

Anthrax Vaccines Considerations for Stockpiles
Introduction

6.01 There are only two licensed anthrax vaccines available, the United States' anthrax vaccine adsorbed (AVA) and the United Kingdom's anthrax vaccine precipitated (AVP). The key component of both vaccines is protective antigen (PA), however the manufacturing processes are different and although both utilise the supernatant of a controlled culture of an avirulent, capsule deficient, strain, there are differences between the two vaccines. AVA contains a higher level of PA than the British AVP but the AVP has higher concentrations of lethal factor (LF) a, edema factor EF and some surface proteins which may contribute to a greater reactogenicity of the British vaccine.

6.02 Both vaccines were developed in the 1950's to protect workers in woollen mills and indeed were found to effective in reducing the incidence of anthrax in humans occupationally exposed; they continue to be used for this purpose. It is now impossible to carry out formal efficacy studies in humans and animal studies are utilised together with biochemical characterisation of the vaccine and the response.

Comparison
Chart 1

US BIOTHRAX (AVA)	**UK ANTHRAX VACCINE (AVP)**
Manufacturer Emergent Biodefense Operations Lansing Inc., Lansing, MI 480906	*Manufacturer* Health Protection Agency, Porton Down, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP4 0JG
Composition BioThrax, Anthrax Vaccine Adsorbed, is a sterile, milky-white suspension for intramuscular injections made from cell-free filtrates of microaerophilic cultures of an avirulent, nonencapsulated strain of *Bacillus anthracis*. The production cultures are grown in a chemically defined protein-free medium consisting of a mixture of amino acids, vitamins, inorganic salts and sugars. The final product, prepared from the sterile filtrate culture fluid contains proteins, including the 83kDa protective antigen protein, released during the growth period and contains no dead or live bacteria. The final product is formulated to contain 1.2 mg/mL aluminium, added as aluminium hydroxide in 0.85% sodium chloride. The final product is formulated to contain 25 µg/mL benzethonium chloride and 100 µg/mL formaldehyde, added as preservatives.	*Composition* The active ingredient in the vaccine is a sterile filtrate of an alum precipitated anthrax antigen containing protective antigen (PA) and small amounts of lethal factor (LF) and edema factor (EF) in a solution for injection. The other ingredients are aluminum potassium sulphate, sodium chloride and purified water. The preservative is thiomersal (0.005%).
Efficacy A controlled clinical trial was carried out in the 1950s among workers in goat-hair mills in New Hampshire, USA, (Brachman et al., 1962). Although the study did not have sufficient power to accurately measure protection against pulmonary anthrax, no cases occurred in the vaccinated group compared with five in the unvaccinated.	*Efficacy* There have been no formal efficacy trials with the UK vaccine. In 1958, the introduction of vaccine successfully controlled cutaneous anthrax at a government wool-disinfecting station in Liverpool (Hambleton et al., 1984).
Safety The vaccine has been found very safe to use with no serious adverse events reported. Local reaction at the injection site can occur	*Safety* The vaccine has been found very safe to use with no serious adverse events reported. Local reaction at the injection site can occur
Capacity The US government has ordered 3.42 million	*Capacity* Current production capacity is not known

doses of anthrax vaccine in addition to its earlier order of 14.5 million doses. The orders will be completed during 2011

License
Approved by the FDA
US License No. 1755
It is also licensed in India and Singapore and is undergoing licensing in Germany
Indications
It is supplied for pre exposure immunisation in those at high risk of exposure and to the military for protection against anthrax as a biological weapon. The US government have stockpiled 27 million doses to provide a strategic stockpile for civilian biodefense

Course
The vaccine is given by intramuscular injection and the primary course is 0.5mL at **0 and 4 weeks and 6, 12 and 18 months** followed by a single booster dose given yearly.

Shelf Life
Storage Conditions
Away from light at +2^{0}C to +8^{0}C
It should not be frozen

although HPA recently reported problems with production. They state that they are about to recover production and will produce 200 thousand doses this yearIt is available for pre-exposure use in those occupations exposed to anthrax. It is used for protection of military personnel and stockpiled for civilian use in the event of a bioterrorist attack.
License
The UK product licence (PL 1511/0058) is held by the UK secretary of State for Health, Department of Health HP3A, 133-155 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8UG.
Indications
It is supplied to the Department of Health for occupational health purposes and to the Ministry of Defence to protect service personnel from the use of anthrax as a biological weapon.

Course
The vaccine is given by **intramuscular injection** and the primary course of four single injections at **0, 3, 6 weeks and 6 months** followed by a single booster dose given once a year.

Shelf Life
Storage Conditions
Away from light at +2^{0}C to +8^{0}C
It should not be frozen

Other Vaccines

7.01 No other licensed vaccines are currently available.
Considering that these current vaccines were developed in the 1950s when their components were not well characterised, there is research underway to develop a recombinant expressed PA (rPA). Trials indicate that these more defined vaccines are not as effective as the two culture supernatant vaccines AVA and AVP. It may be that the smaller levels of other anthrax cell components in these vaccines improve their immunogenicity.
A recently reported phase 1 trial in healthy adults found that an adjuvanted anthrax vaccine enhanced and accelerated the immune response compared with the vaccine without the booster. The vaccine used in the study was Emergent BioSolutions' BioThrax (anthrax vaccine adsorbed). The booster used in the study is a CpG DNA adjuvant. The adjuvanted vaccine increased antibody response six- to eightfold and speeded response by 3 weeks. No adverse events were reported, and the adjuvanted vaccine seemed well tolerated.
Researchers concluded that the adjuvanted vaccine might shorten the immunization course

and shorten the time to protection, which they say could be useful for postexposure prophylaxis.[9] [10]

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[9] Brachman PS, Gold H, Plotkin SA et al. (1962) Field evaluation of a human anthrax vaccine. Am J Public Health 52: 632–45.
[10] Hambleton P, Carman A and Melling K (1984) Anthrax: the disease in relation to vaccines. Vaccine 2: 125–32.

Mark Phillips, RUSI

I. Introduction & Summary

1. The Coalition Government made a top-level change to the way government formulates, directs and manages national security policy by establishing a National Security Council in May 2010. The establishment of the National Security Council – a body which meets with greater frequency and more formality, has a greater breadth of scope and attendance, and is more premised on integration across government departments than previous Cabinet Committees – undoubtedly poses questions and challenges for the intelligence community, particularly regarding the relationship between intelligence assessment and policy making.

2. Here a broad distinction must be made between strategic intelligence which informs government policy/policy making impartially, and the need to engage Ministers on issues of operational intelligence for authorisation, clarity about immediate collection priorities and other purposes. The NSC can handle both types of intelligence, as demonstrated by the recent conflict in Libya. This evidence is concerned with the former.

3. The relationship between intelligence assessment and policy making has been the subject of enquiry in the past, notably the Butler Inquiry, and is likely to be an issue that features prominently in the forthcoming report of the Chilcot Inquiry.

4. The government itself recognised that the NSC might pose challenges for this relationship. In January 2011, the Cabinet Office launched a study to determine how to maximise the effectiveness of the central national security and intelligence structures in light of the creation of the NSC. The study reported in October 2011.

5. While the Cabinet Office study has resulted in some welcome changes, such as better aligning the NSC priorities with the Joint Intelligence Committee's Requirements and Priorities (R&P) process, putting the wider assessment capability across government at the direct disposal of the NSC and changing the way assessments are presented, these do not necessarily address some systemic issues within the intelligence community which were first alluded to in the Butler Report.

II. Butler Report

6. Beyond the specific focus on intelligence relating to Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programmes, Butler made a number of significant recommendations and comments about the (i) process and nature of intelligence assessment, and (ii) the nature of the relationship between intelligence and policy making.

7. Recommendations included that:

    - The all-source Defence Intelligence Staff be integrated more closely with the rest of the intelligence community and resourced to meet wider national priorities and support other agencies.

- The size of the Assessments Staff should be reviewed, including whether there should be a career stream for analysts.

8. Commentary noted that:

- The JIC's objectivity could be in danger of being compromised by the presence of more policy heavyweights on its membership, and, though recommending no changes at present, implied that this could become more of an issue in the future.
- The use of intelligence for the purposes of collective government was limited: assessments and briefings were not given to all Cabinet ministers, which limited collective and wider discussion.
- The language of JIC assessments should be reviewed, given the importance of subtleties to good policy making.

9. The then government's response was limited: it said that the central R&P process should be applied to the DIS, though the staff would primarily focus on MoD needs which could differ; expanded the Assessments Staff by a third and appointed a Professional Head of Intelligence Analysis to promote best practice for analysis careers, training and methodology (in practice, as double-hatted with the JIC Chairman, the role is performed by an executive deputy); and provided further opportunities for those receiving assessments to be aware of the extent and depth of information drawn upon and any minority or alternative hypotheses.

III. Recent developments: Cabinet Office study

10. These responses did not address more fundamental issues that were implied in the recommendations and commentary of the Butler Report, including:

- The use of intelligence to support an ever increasing number of policy areas across government, and how this can best be managed and facilitated through the NSC/JIC process and within the context of the reporting lines and authorisations of the single agencies, and given that individual agencies (even those subject to the R&P process) have a significant amount of discretion in terms of setting priorities and tasking themselves.
- The fact that intelligence functions are no longer confined to the traditional agencies, and therefore what representation law enforcement (and potentially other) bodies should have on the central intelligence machinery (including at JIC level).
- The issue of the relationship between individual agency heads and Ministers, including the Prime Minister, as part of collective government.
- How intelligence should be used by Ministers and other policy makers.
- The fact that the UK had neglected its validation and assessment capability at both agency and national level – that there are issues of alignment and jointery (if not integration) between the agencies themselves.

11. The Cabinet Office Study, *Supporting the National Security Council: The central national security and intelligence machinery* (October 2011), provided an opportunity to look at these issues afresh. The most notable recommendations are that:

- The NSC's priorities will be the lead driver for the JIC agenda, achieved by the NSC (Officials) meeting overseeing the tasking of the JIC.
- JIC products need to be more focussed, accessible and tailored to the Prime Minister/Ministerial readership and need to outline policy implications of analytical judgements.
- Ministerial knowledge of intelligence products and their use should be improved.
- The wider assessment capability, including Defence Intelligence and the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, should be put more directly at the disposal of the NSC, through commissioning from the Chief of Assessment in the Cabinet Office.
- The business plans of other assessment bodies should be aligned with the NSC's priorities, while respecting their operational independence.

12. These are welcome recommendations, though how they are implemented will affect their effectiveness. For example, in relation to the JIC R&P, it is worth noting that Permanent Secretaries have always had a role in setting these through the Permanent Secretary's Committee on the Intelligence Services and, under Labour, an officials' committee. It is not clear whether the membership of NSC (Officials) reflects the full cadre of Permanent Secretaries as it might once have done, despite the fact that intelligence supports an ever increasing range of policy areas.

IV. Outstanding issues

13. However, there are potentially a number of remaining issues. One relates to the Cabinet Office recommendation on the future "day-to-day" functioning of the JIC. The other issues are systemic and relate to the governance, management and utility of intelligence community on a cross-government basis, and the relationship between agency heads and the Prime Minister/Ministers.

14. *Status of the JIC.* The Cabinet Office recommendation that 'the needs of the NSC are best supported by the JIC meeting in two formats, at a Principals and a Sub-Principals level', does give some cause for thought. The intention is that the Principals (senior JIC members) will meet monthly to focus on key NSC priority issues of a high level strategic nature, while Sub-Principals will meet more frequently to focus on issues of importance to policy Departments or more tactical short term assessments. Some commentators have been critical over recent years of the apparent downgrading of the status and authority of the JIC. It is not clear whether this recommendation will redress this problem or make it worse. The NSC also handles issues of tactical and short term nature, as demonstrated by Libya, and it is not clear how assessments of this type will be provided to the Council under this new arrangement.

15. *Assessment capacity and capability.* The tendency of governments has been to tinker with the existing set-up by: increasing resource allocation to a small extent; establishing an analysis techniques course and academic programmes with key universities; and, more recently, trying to increase capacity by having the Assessments Staff adopt critical thinking methods and creating a cross-government challenge group for intelligence assessments. While these changes meet some of the smaller recommendations made by Butler they do not deal with the issue of critical mass for the Assessments Staff. There is also the unaddressed issue of a potential

career stream, which arguably becomes more important as agencies and the Cabinet Office tackle difficult challenges: how to re-skill their staff to meet the demands of the internet age; how to ensure continuity of operational experience in key areas and over the long term (particularly given redundancies); what balance to strike between generalists and specialists.

16. *Governance, management and utility: Ministers.* The current reporting lines for the intelligence and security agencies are to the Home Secretary (for the Security Service) and Foreign Secretary (for the Secret Intelligence Service and GCHQ), except in the case of activities in Northern Ireland where responsibility lies with the secretary of state for Northern Ireland. These Ministers authorise the operational activities of the agencies. However, the intelligence community provides products capable of supporting a wider range of government departments and policies, in diverse areas such as climate change, energy security, economic well-being, international development, extremism, community cohesion and integration, and operates within a context where the distinction between 'home' and 'abroad' no longer holds. This places importance on the need for the intelligence community's activities to be consistent with overall government policy direction and for the linkages between different actions and policy areas to be taken into account in decision-making. In some areas, it is also the case that ministerial responsibilities do not fit within the reporting lines of the agencies. For example, the Cyber Security Minister is responsible for cyber-security and information assurance – which are the primary tasks of GCHQ but becoming more relevant to the work of SIS and the Security Service – yet has no role in authorising activities in this area.

17. Moreover, there is a noticeable trend for government departments to expect the intelligence community to not just provide informative products, but to take action based on those products and influence events in line with policy priorities. This is not entirely new, but the expectation that this will occur, more frequently and in a larger number of areas, requires other departments to be more aware of what the intelligence community is doing and for government to collectively take a closer oversight role of the activities of the agencies and set the framework within which they operate, not just the responsible ministers.

18. Even if final legislative authority still rests with certain ministers, the relevant NSC sub-committee on intelligence provides the forum in which broader collective consideration and decisions in respect of authorisations can and should take place. Its membership should therefore be reviewed. There is also scope for the involvement of more ministers in the oversight of the Single Intelligence Account (SIA) and JIC R&P.

19. *Governance and management: official level.* Following the 2010 General Election, the role of Accounting Officer for the intelligence community (and Single Intelligence Account) transferred from the Cabinet Secretary to the newly created post of National Security Adviser. In addition, the NSA assumed responsibility for the Cabinet Office's Intelligence Secretariat. It can be argued that the NSA's breadth of responsibilities precludes him from giving the detailed attention that is necessary in this area. It is also not clear that the position's responsibility for the Intelligence Secretariat is consistent with the Butler Report's emphasis on separating intelligence from policy; a distinction must be made between the process of 'national security

policy-making', which is the role of the National Security Council supported by the NSA and which the intelligence community takes direction from (and can advise), and that area of policy which sets the framework (for example, legal) *for* the activities of the intelligence community and in doing so provides context for intelligence assessment. The latter, according to Butler, should be kept separate from policy-making but is currently the responsibility of the NSA. In addition, the current arrangement confirms a separation between the Single Intelligence Account process and JIC R&P process (they are owned by different officials), which raises the question of how effective the Cabinet Office study recommendation that the NSC and JIC R&P are aligned will be: what degree of discretion will individual agencies have within the SIA?

20. Furthermore, there are questions of inter-agency strategy and strategic engagement with international partners that need leadership. Inter-agency strategy encompasses the need for joint tasking, strategies and teams between different organisations working in the same area, as well as the need to shift towards shared support services such as human resources, IT, estates and cross-community career planning. The intelligence community has gone some way in this direction, but nonetheless at the direction of the agencies. However, government should drive these existing streams of collaborative working further. It is not clear that the NSA has the time or capacity to provide leadership in this area.

21. In relation to foreign partners, a number of other intelligence establishments have created a director of national intelligence post spanning the entire intelligence community. For the UK, this raises a question about how the intelligence community in total is able to engage with international interlocutors at a strategic level. The JIC chairman is not really able to perform this external role and agency heads therefore enjoy taking the lead abroad. The picture is further complicated by existence of the director general responsible for the Intelligence Secretariat, who reports to the NSA. The difficulties this poses were identified by the case of Binyam Mohamed, which challenged the control principle: no one agency or individual was able to take the lead in dealing with this at a strategic level with the US.

22. It follows from each of these considerations that there is a combined need for:

- Advice on a continuing basis to the NSC and its machinery that maintains separation of accountability between intelligence assessment and policy for the intelligence community on the one hand, and national security policy-making on the other.
- Strategic direction of the intelligence community as a whole, including in the areas of tasking, resource allocation and shared support services.
- Someone with an ability to speak with authority for the entire intelligence community with foreign interlocutors.

There could be the potential to consolidate these roles in the form of the JIC Chairman, who would take responsibility for the SIA and Intelligence Secretariat.

23. *Relationship between agency heads and PM/Ministers.* A final consideration is that each agency head is in attendance at NSC meetings, as well as the JIC Chairman. Given

the changes that will result from the Cabinet Office study, it is not clear if there will be a single assessment presented to Ministers for issues considered to be "tactical" or short term by the JIC Chairman. There is an additional problem in relation to strategic assessments: while agency heads are rightly able to elaborate further after the presentation of a single cross-government assessment,[11] their attendance at every meeting even where this might not be required could inadvertently encourage participation in actual policy-making. This would not be consistent with Butler. Extensive preparation for weekly NSC meetings could also distract them from managing issues internal to their agencies, such as morale and operational balance. These issues might reinforce the need for a strengthened JIC Chairman role as outlined above.

9 January 2012

[11] However, as intelligence products are increasingly integrated at a much earlier stage due to inter-agency teams, the requirement for the agency heads to each be represented for a joint product is not as clear.

Dr Sue Robertson

1. Introduction

1.1 I was until October 2010 the Subject Matter Expert on the Electronic Support Measures (ESM) system for the Nimrod MRA4. I worked, on behalf of the Ministry of Defence, on the evaluation of the system and advised on changes to the system. My previous role had been to carry out the same function on the Merlin Mk1 helicopter programme.

1.2 The enormous capability gap left by the cancellation of the Nimrod MRA4 programme and the subsequent total destruction of the newly-built aircraft led the Commons Select Committee on Defence to come to the following conclusion in its recent report (August 2011) on the MRA4:

> "We deeply regret the decision to dispense with the Nimrod MRA4 and have serious concerns regarding the capability gaps this has created in the ability to undertake the military tasks envisaged in the SDSR."

1.3 The MRA4 was not just a submarine-hunter, it was capable of a variety of roles from ship surveillance to search and rescue. It could act as a communications and disaster co-ordination platform and perhaps its most important role would have been as an ISTAR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance) platform in support of operations in Afghanistan.

1.4 The production of an accurate tactical picture could have contributed hugely to the safety of our troops. We were about to undergo a step-change in the quality and quantity of Electronic Intelligence (ELINT) data recorded by the MRA4 for the population of strategically important databases for the Air Warfare Centre. A key component of the UK ISTAR capability has been lost with the demise of the MRA4.

1.5 However, it is the lack of maritime surveillance capability which forms the basis of this evidence as this particular role of the Nimrod MRA4 is vital to our national security. The government has not addressed this significant capability gap and is at odds with global thinking on the need for maritime patrol and coastal protection.

2. Ship Surveillance

2.1 As an island nation we are heavily dependent on shipping for our international trade with 95% of British trade by volume and 90% by value being transported by sea (source: Chamber of Shipping)

2.2 The increase in the possibility of terrorist attacks also means that we need to protect our shores more now than at any time in recent years. The platforms that have been proposed to carry out the Nimrod roles do not have the coverage to be able to effectively monitor shipping around the UK, (see Annex A) and there is no effective network of land-based surveillance radars in place.

2.3 Table 1 ranks countries of the world by coastline length. The numbers and types of Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) operated by each country are also shown.

Rank	**Country**	**Coastline (km)**	**No. of MPA in service**	**No. of MPA on order**
1	Canada	202,080	4 CP-140	
2	Indonesia	54,716	12 NC-212	6 CN-235
3	Denmark inc. Greenland	52,387	3 Challenger 604	
4	Russia	37,653	>100 Su24MR >100 IL38 + many others	
5	Philippines	36,289	2 F-27	? CN-235
6	Japan	29,751	110 P-3	80 Kawasaki P-1
7	Australia	25,760	18 P-3	6 P-8
8	Norway	25,148	6 P-3	
9	United States	19,924	154 P-3	117 P-8
10	New Zealand	15,134	6 P-3	
11	China	14,500	4 Y-8 MPA, 2 Y-8J, 4 SH-5	
12	Greece	13,676	6 P-3	
13	United Kingdom	12,429	**0**	**0**
14	Mexico	9,330	7 C212	10 N235
15	Italy	7,600	7 Atlantique	4 ATR 72
16	Brazil	7,491	16 EMB 110	9 P-3
17	Turkey	7,200	10 ATR 72, 9 CN 235	
18	India	7,000	8 TU-142, 5 –IL38	16 P-8
19	Chile	6,435	3 C-295, 4 P-3	5 C-295
20	Micronesia	6,112	0	
21	Croatia	5,835	5 AT802	
22	Solomon Islands	5,313	0	
23	Papua New Guinea	5,152	2 CN-235	
24	Argentina	4,989	6 P-3, 2 P-95, 2 Beechcraft	
25	Iceland	4,988	0	
26	Spain	4,964	20 CN-235,7 P-3, 3 F-27	
27	Madagascar	4,828	0	
28	Malaysia	4,675	4 Beechcraft	4 CN-235
29	Estonia	3,794	0	
34	France	3,427	27 Atlantique	

Table 1; List of Countries ranked by Coastline Length (source data = CIA World Factbook) and Maritime Patrol Aircraft in Operation and on Order

2.4 The United Kingdom appears at number 13 in table 1 and as can be seen, countries 1 to 20 all have maritime patrol capability. Two of our nearest neighbours, France and Spain, each have over 25 MPAs, and have coastline lengths one third of that of the UK.

2.5 However, the UK is not the only country in the table that does not carry out airborne maritime surveillance. We share this short-coming with Micronesia, the Solomon Islands and Iceland – all of which have no military capability at all and have to rely on their neighbours and allies to provide for them.

2.6 It is part of the UK government stated strategy for maritime surveillance that we also rely on neighbours and allies, but the difference is that Micronesia and the Solomon Islands do not say that they have a "Full Spectrum Defence Capability" as the Prime Minister has claimed.

2.7 Although our neighbours and allies may be prepared to help the UK out by providing some information on activities around the coast of the UK, it is unlikely that they would come to our aid in the defence of any of the 14 British overseas territories, especially the Falkland Islands.

2.8 Madagascar appears at number 28 in table 1 and does not have maritime patrol aircraft, however it does have strategically important land-based maritime surveillance equipment, installed by India, to allow protection of the "country's sea lanes of commerce" (Annex B). Indonesia also has land-based maritime surveillance to protect the extremely busy shipping route through the straits of Malacca.

2.9 The only other country in the table with no MPA capability is Estonia which has 20 coastal defence radars covering the entire length of its coastline.

2.10 No such network of radars is in operation in defence of the UK coastline.

2.11 The importance of maritime surveillance is efficiently summarized on the web-site of the Canadian navy:

"As a nation with only one international land border, yet over 240,000 km of coastline, safeguarding Canada's maritime approaches is vitally important to our national security. The Navy works in close cooperation with other government departments to deal with a range of security threats to Canada, including the threats of terrorism, illegal resource exploitation, pollution violations, narcotics trafficking and illegal immigration. The Navy safeguards Canadians at home by:

- conducting surveillance of Canada's coastal areas;
- determining who is operating in our waters, why they are there and what they are doing;
- providing government with the means to find, intercept and board suspicious vessels at sea before they reach Canadian territory; and
- providing government with the means to take military action to defeat any armed threat to Canadian security posed by other nations or terrorists.

Figure 1; Extract from the web-site of the Canadian Navy (www.navy.forces.gc.ca)

2.12 Canada is not alone in recognising the need for maritime suveillance. There are orders for maritime patrol aircraft from many countries spanning the globe. Some of the nations which have either recently ordered MPA or are about to do so include Bangladesh, India, Iran, Italy, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Pakistan, UAE and Vietnam. Annex C shows more detail of the reports of these MPA orders.

2.13 Shortly after the decision to scrap the Nimrod MRA4 the French government announced an upgrade to their fleet of 27 Atlantique MPA, to ensure that the aircraft will remain in service past 2030. The Atlantiques are to receive a new digital sonobuoy acoustic processing system and upgrades to the mission computer and surveillance radar. The new equipment is designed to improve the ability to track threats, including submarine periscopes in high sea states.

2.14 It is fortunate for the UK that France took this decision as a French MPA has already had to provide assistance when the factory fishing vessel Athena caught fire on 3rd November 2010, 230 miles from the Scilty Isles, but inside the area for which the UK has responsibility for Search and Rescue.

2.15 Another example of the gap in maritime patrol capability has meant in recent months the UK has had to borrow MPA from the USA to protect our naval ships duing the Libya confict.

2.16 It is likely that the Olympics in London next year will require the good-will of our neighbours and allies to provide protection from possible ship-borne hazards.

3. The "Traditional" Threat - Submarines – the ASW role of the Nimrod

3.1 Over 40 countries operate submarines and many, such as China, North Korea and Iran are still building them. Table 2 shows the numbers of submarines which are currently known to be in service in the navies of the world.

			Submarines					Submarines	
	Country	Missile	Attack	Total		Country	Missile	Attack	Total
1	USA	18	53	**71**	22	Pakistan	0	5	**5**
2	North Korea	0	62	**62**	23	Sweden	0	5	**5**
3	China	6	52	**58**	24	Spain	0	4	**4**
4	Russia	16	32	**48**	25	Germany	0	4	**4**
5	Japan	0	18	**18**	26	Canada	0	4	**4**
6	Turkey	0	14	**14**	27	Egypt	0	4	**4**
7	South Korea	0	13	**13**	28	Holland	0	4	**4**
8	India	0	12	**12**	29	Chile	0	4	**4**
9	Iran	0	12	**12**	30	Israel	0	3	**3**
10	Unite Kingdom	4	7	**11**	31	Argentina	0	3	**3**
11	France	4	6	**10**	32	South Africa		3	**3**
12	Greece	0	9	**9**	33	Taiwan	0	2	**2**
13	Colombia		9	**9**	34	Indonesia	0	2	**2**
14	Australia	0	6 (12 Planned)	**6 (12 planned)**	35	Portugal	0	2	**2**
15	Norway	0	6	**6**	36	Malaysia	0	2	**2**
16	Italy	0	6	**6**	37	Algeria	0	2	**2**
17	Peru	0	6	**6**	38	Ecuador	0	2	**2**
18	Singapore	0	6	**6**	39	Venezuela	0	2	**2**
19	Vietnam		6	**6**	40	Croatia	0	1	**1**
20	Brazil	0	5	**5**	41	Ukraine	0	1	**1**
21	Poland	0	5	**5**					

Table 2; Countries which operate Submarines

3.2 It was reported in the Daily Telegraph (27-aug-10) that Russian submarine activity around UK waters had reached levels not seen since 1987. Russian Akula submarines were attempting to track Vanguard class submarines which carry the UK nuclear deterrent. It is understood that the Russians stood off Faslane, where the British nuclear force is based, and waited for a Trident-carrying boat to come out for its three-month patrol to provide the Continuous At Sea Deterrent.

3.3 Within days of the cancellation of the MRA4 there were two more publicly acknowledged "submarine incidents":

- The submarine "Astute" went aground in full view of any ship, foreign submarine or aircraft who cared to look and we have no idea who was looking!
- A Russian submarine was "lost" during an exercise involving Nato aircraft. The Akula submarine disappeared after being sighted in the North Sea. Two US Orion P3 aircraft which were taking part in the Nato Joint Warrior exercise tried to find the submarine, but failed to locate it.

3.4 Here is what a Royal United Services Institute analysis report (by Lee Willett, January 2011) has to say about the loss of the MRA4 ASW capability:

"The submarine threat is a significant national security issue, not just a Cold Warrior's hangover."

"Despite MoD statements that Nimrod's roles will be covered by other assets, no other assets deliver its specific capabilities. The UK's ASW web hence has a particular, and significant, hole in it."

"In Nimrod, the refined sensor capabilities - both actual in the MR2 and planned in the MRA4 - together with the aircraft's range, speed and endurance, gave the UK an asset which could operate from strategic to tactical levels. Operating in all three environments - air, surface and sub-surface - it could reach targets, even distant ones, quickly and could maintain pressure on the target while vectoring in other assets."

"The Type 23/Merlin package does not match Nimrod's capability."

3.5 The proliferation of submarines of non-allied nations indicates an increasing threat and greater need for surveillance and monitoring.

4. Counter-piracy

4.1 The actions of pirates in the Gulf of Aden pose an increasing threat to world trade and could potentially have a great impact on the UK in terms of denying passage of essential resources.

4.2 During 2010 there were 104 pirate attacks resulting in the capture of 51 vessels, 39 of which were still being held on 1st January 2011. Table 3 gives details of the 39 vessels which were being held hostage on 1st January 2011 including 15 cargo vessels and 6 tankers.

4.3 The number of people held by pirates as a result of the capture of these ships exceeded 740.

	Ship Name	Date Captured	Country of Ownership	Ship Type	Number of Crew Held Hostage
1	Socotra	25-Dec-09	Yemen	Cargo	6
2	Al-Shura	10-Feb-10	Yemen	Fisher	9
3	Iceberg	29-Jan-10	UAE	Cargo	24
4	Jih-Chun Tsai	mar 2010	Taiwan	Fisher	14
5	Rak Africana	30-Mar-10	UAE	Cargo	26
6	Prantalay 11	18-Apr-10	Thailand	Fisher	26
7	Prantalay 12	18-Apr-10	Thailand	Fisher	25
8	Prantalay 14	18-Apr-10	Thailand	Fisher	26
9	Daisy	20-Apr-10	Liberia	Bulk Carrier	21
10	Tai Yuan	06-May-10	Thailand	Fisher	28
11	Al-Dhafir	06-May-10	Yemen	Fisher	7
12	Marida Marguerite	08-May-10	US	Tanker	22
13	Eleni P	12-May-10	Greece	Bulk Carrier	23
14	Golden Blessing	28-Jun-10	China	Tanker	19
15	Motivator	04-Jul-10	Greece	Tanker	18
16	Suez	02-Aug-10	Egypt	Cargo	24
17	Oblig	08-Sep-10	Greece	Tanker	18
18	Nastra Al Yemen	14-Sep-10	Yemen		9
19	Asphalt Venturer	28-Sep-10	UAE	Cargo	15
20	Golden Wave 305	09-Oct-10	South Korea	Fisher	43
21	Izumi	10-Oct-10	Japan	Cargo	20
22	York	23-Oct-10	Greece	LPG Tanker	17
23	Al-Nassr	26-Oct-10		Fisher	10
24	Polar	30-Oct-10	Liberia	Tanker	24
25	Choizil	26-Oct-10	South Africa	Yacht	3
26	Aly Zoufecar	03-Nov-10			29
27	Hannibal	11-Sep-10	Tunisia	Tanker	31
28	Yuan Xiang	12-Nov-10	China	Cargo	29
29	Dul-Nurain	17-Nov-10	Yemen	Fisher	
30	Comoran	18-Nov-10	Comoros	Fisher	2
31	Albedo	26-Nov-10	Malaysia		23
32	Kantari	30-Nov-	Sri Lanka	Fisher	

		10			
33	Jahan Moni	05-Dec-10	Bangladesh	Bulk Carrier	26
34	Panama	10-Dec-10	US	Container	23
35	Renuar	11-Dec-10	Panama	Cargo	24
36	Orna	20-Dec-10	UAE	Bulk Carrier	19
37	Thor Nexus	24-Dec-10	Thailand	Cargo	27
38	Shiuh Fu	25-Dec-10	Taiwan	Fisher	26
39	EMS River	28-Dec-10	Germany	Cargo	8

Table 3: Vessels held by Pirates on 1st January 2011

4.4 So far during 2011 there have been at least 49 pirate attacks resulting in the capture of 25 vessels.

4.5 International efforts to counter piracy require military assets in the form of ships and maritime patrol aircraft to be made available from collaborating countries.

4.6 The Allied Maritime Headquarters in Northwood co-ordinates counter-piracy operations and its News Release of 12 August 2010 illustrates the international collaboration efforts for tackling piracy:

> **"LONDON: Today, a Japanese Maritime Self Defence (JMSDF) maritime patrol aircraft located a pirate skiff with seven suspected pirates on board. The suspected pirates were preparing to attack merchant vessels transiting the International Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) in the Gulf of Aden. Within minutes a helicopter from the Danish warship ESBERN SNARE from NATO's counter-piracy task force intercepted the skiff. Subsequently the suspected pirates threw their weapons overboard and surrendered."**

4.7 It was expected that the UK would make use of the Nimrod MRA4 in operations against piracy, but instead it is able to contribute only one war-ship to the counter-piracy operations.

4.8 However, piracy attacks are on the increase and the lack of UK resources, particularly in the form of Maritime Patrol Aircraft is a major short-coming which appears to have been ignored by the government.

5. So what can be done to protect the UK coastal borders?

5.1 With the destruction of the Nimrod MRA4, the possibility of regaining maritime patrol capability in a timely manner has gone.

5.2 However, there may be some possibilities for monitoring of shipping on an opportunistic basis by fitting Electronic Surveillance equipment to the new aircraft types that are planned for introduction to service in the next few years.

5.3 The A400M, to replace the RAF Hercules C-130 fleet, have been ordered with the first aircraft expected to be delivered in 2013. The aircraft will have a defensive aids suite, but the sensor capability could be enhanced to provide electronic surveillance for monitoring of shipping.

5.4 The A330 MRTT (multi-role tanker aircraft) has a range of over 8000 nautical miles. The RAF expect to operate a fleet of 14 A330 by the second half of this decade to replace its existing fleets of TriStar and VC10 aerial refuelling aircraft. The aircraft requires very little internal modification from the standard A330 passenger-carrying configuration, meaning that there is ample room for fitting manned surveillance equipment.

5.5 The use of these aircraft types in secondary roles for maritime reconnaissance may prove to be the most cost effective way in which the coast of the UK can be protected in the near future.

September 2011

Annex A

Roles of Nimrod and the Capabilities of Government Proposed Substitutes
A.1 The government proposes to use Merlin Helicopters, Type 23 frigates and C130 aircraft to fulfil the many roles of the Nimrod. The following table shows the roles which the MRA4 would have carried out and the capability of each of the alternative platforms against each of the roles.

Asset / Task	Nimrod MRA4	Merlin Mk1	Type 23	C130
Submarine Detection (ASW)	Yes - 6000nm range with 15 hour mission time	Yes - 200 nm range with 90 minute mission time	Yes	No
Shipping Surveillance	Yes - to 260nm at 40000 ft	Limited Sensors	No	Limited – no adequate sensors
Fleet Protection	Yes	Yes	Limited range	Limited - no adequate sensors
ISTAR (Support of Troops in Afghanistan)	Yes	No	No	No
ELINT data gathering	Yes	No	No	No
Counter-terrorism	Yes	No	No	Perhaps
Weapons deployment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes?
Search & Rescue	Yes - 2400nm range for 3 hours search	Limited – 300 nm range with 1 hour search	No	Limited - 600 nm range with 2 hours search
Emergency Communications	Yes	No	No	Yes
Overseas Maritime Patrol	Yes	No	No	No
Counter-pirate operations	Yes	No	No	No
Protection of Trident Submarines	Yes	Limited range	Limited range	No
Protection of Future Carriers?	Yes	Limited range	Limited range	No

Table A; The Roles of the Nimrod MRA4 and Platform Capabilities

Annex B – Reports of Land-based Maritime Surveillance Installations

B.1 India activates first listening post on foreign soil: radars in Madagascar

Manu PubbyTags :Posted: Wed Jul 18 2007, 00:00 hrsNew Delhi, July 17:
India has activated its first listening post on foreign soil that will keep an eye on ship movements in the Indian Ocean. A key monitoring station in northern Madagascar, complete with radars and surveillance gear to intercept maritime communication, was quietly made operational earlier this month as part of Indian Navy's strategy to protect the country's sea lanes of commerce.

The monitoring station, under construction since last year when India took on a lease from Antananarivo, will link up with similar naval facilities in Kochi and Mumbai to gather intelligence on foreign navies operating in the region. "A naval asset with limited anchoring facilities has been activated. It will facilitate possible manoeuvres by the navy in the region," a ministry official said.

While the station will also monitor piracy and terrorist activities, its primary aim is to counter the growing Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean Region. The station is India's first in southern Indian Ocean that is gaining importance due to increasing oil traffic across the Cape of Good Hope and the Mozambique Channel route preferred by super tankers.
www.Indianexpress.com

B.2 US Envoy Dedicates Maritime Radar Equipment for Indonesia

Source: ANTARA News, Thursday, July 1, 2011

Jakarta (ANTARA News) - US Ambassador to Indonesia Cameron R. Hume dedicated $56 million in coastal and shipboard radar systems at a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Batam Regional Maritime Command Center on Wednesday (June 30).

The systems included 16 coastal radars, 11 shipboard radars, one set of headquarters equipment and two regional command centers, according to information on the official website of the US embassy here Thursday.

The Indonesian and US governments actively collaborated in the planning and installation of the systems. Indonesia can now boast one of the world`s longest Integrated Maritime Surveillance Systems, the embassy said.

The network covers more than 1,205 kilometers of coast line in the Straits of Malacca and approximately 1,285 kilometers of coast line in the Sulawesi Sea.

The intent of the donation is to ensure Indonesia has an initial operating capacity to detect, track and monitor vessels passing through Indonesian and international waters,the US embassy said.

This capability will help Indonesia combat piracy, illegal fishing, and smuggling of goods and people as well as provide situational awareness to maintain Indonesia`s border security and fight terrorism.

Annex C – Reports of Orders for New Maritime Patrol Aircraft

C.1 Italy Signs for ATR72 Maritime Patrol Aircraft

By TOM KINGTON, ROME
Published: 22 Dec 15:24 EST (20:24 GMT) 2008

Alenia officials said Dec. 22 that they had reached an agreement with Italy's defense procurement office to deliver four ATR72s maritime patrol aircraft to the Italian Air Force starting in 2012. The Air Force will combine with Italian Navy crews to operate maritime patrol flights and take the pressure off Italy's aging Atlantique patrol aircraft.
Source: www.defensenews.com

C.2 Indonesia

Defense Ministry puts a contract order of three units of Dirgantara Maritime Patrol CN235-220 aircraft, for Indonesian Navy, which totally covers US$ 80 million.
The three CN235-220s are part of the total six units ordered by Indonesian Navy in the 2010- 2014 Strategic Planning to fullfil the concept of Minimum Essential Force.
Source: http://www.defencetalk.com/indonesian-navy-orders-maritime-patrol-cn235-220-aircraft-23328/#ixzz1XSKnSuiK

C.3 Vietnam gets new coast patrol planes amid sea spat

Aug 3, 2011
HANOI - VIETNAM has received the first of three new coastal patrol planes, according to the aircraft's manufacturer, as it further upgrades its maritime defences amid tensions in the South China Sea.
Vietnam's Marine Police have taken delivery of their first propeller-driven C212-400, Madrid-based Airbus Military said in a statement dated on Monday.
Airbus Military did not give the purchase price of the aircraft but said a second C212 will be delivered later this year followed by a third in 2012.

Source:www.straitstimes.com

C.4 Persuader Patrol Planes for Mexico

One of Mexico's important acquisition programs is EADS-CASA's popular CN-235 MPA maritime patrol aircraft, which currently serves with Spain, Colombia, Ireland, Turkey, and the US Coast Guard. Indonesia's Digiranta has built them for Indonesia, Brunei and the UAE, and recently added South Korea's Coast Guard as a customer
Source:www.defenseindustrydaily.com, August 3rd 2010

C.5 New Maritime Patrol aircraft for the UAE

Posted on 26 April 2009 in Defence
Bombardier Dash-8 Q300s will be converted to provide the UAE with possibly the world's most advanced Maritime Patrol Aircraft. Jon Lake reports.
The UAE has at last signed a contract for a new maritime patrol aircraft, letting a $290 million (AED1.071 billion) contract with Provincial Aerospace to "supply modifications for

two Maritime Patrol Aircraft".

C.6 Iran manufactures maritime patrol aircraft

TEHRAN, Aug. 27 (Xinhua) -- Iran's Defense Minister Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi said Saturday that the Islamic Republic is manufacturing maritime patrol aircraft, the local satellite Press TV reported.
The aircraft is equipped with optical and radar subsystems and is capable of operating for long durations, the defense minister said.
http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/ , 28-08-2011

C.7 India

In December 2005, after an attempted buy of P-3s fell through, India's navy floated an RFP for at least 8 new sea control aircraft. Bids from a variety of contenders were submitted in April 2007. The plan was for price negotiations to be completed in 2007, with first deliveries to commence within 48 months. Subsequent statements by India's Admiral Prakash suggested that they could be looking for as many as 30 aircraft by 2020.
By January 2009, India had picked its aircraft: the 737-derivative P-8i Poseidon, a variant of the P-8A that's readying for service with the US Navy as the P-3's successor.
Source: www.defenseindustrydaily.com

C.8 Malaysia

DATE:25/03/10
SOURCE:Flight International
Malaysia to order CN-235 maritime patrol aircraft from Indonesia
By Leithen Francis

Malaysia is planning to sign a letter of intent in April for four Indonesian Aerospace CN-235 maritime patrol aircraft.

C.9 Malta Orders New Maritime Patrol Aircraft

13 January 2011
The Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) have signed a contract with Aerodata for the procurement of a second maritime patrol aircraft, the King Air B200.
The aircraft will perform missions including detection, identification and coordination operations and will perform an additional role in the protection of EU southern external borders.
The aircraft will be delivered to the AFM in March 2012, according to the *Times of Malta*.

C.10 Bangladesh orders Ruag Dornier *turboprops*

by Staff Writers, spacewar.com
Dhaka, Bangladesh (UPI) Jul 28, 2011

The Bangladeshi navy has purchased two new upgraded Dornier 228NG turboprop aircraft from Ruag Aviation for maritime patrol and rescue missions.

Ruag, with headquarters in Bern, Switzerland, said the order is the first by the Bangladesh navy for a fixed wing maritime patrol aircraft. Delivery of the aircraft -- "a completely modernized and improved version of the Dornier 228-212" -- is expected for e

World Vision UK

World Vision is a child focused Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, their families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. We are the world's biggest local charity, working in nearly100 countries to improve the lives of about 100 million people worldwide. We work in some of the most fragile and insecure environments, such as South Sudan, Afghanistan and DRC, providing humanitarian and development assistance to those most affected by the UK's National Security Strategy.

We are pleased to make this submission to the Committee which will address the opportunities and threats in linking development assistance to the national security agenda. Providing greater coherence to HMG's engagement with fragile states, and mainstreaming the development agenda, is both an opportunity and a risk. We are pleased with the continued commitment to poverty reduction from HMG, and feel that this is essential if the UK is to be effective in helping other countries build stability. However, there is a risk that this agenda could 'securitise' aid, or create the perception that UK aid is linked to short term foreign policies, and there should be a strong commitment to avoid this.

1. The National Security Strategy and the UK's ODA

1.1 The national security agenda increasingly shapes the UK's official development assistance (ODA). This reflects the reality that ODA does not occur in isolation from the UK's diplomatic and defence agendas, and there is a need for 'policy coherence' in ensuring that the different arms of the UK government are working with rather than against each other in promoting development[12]. The fact that no lower income conflict affected country is on track to reach the Millennium Development Goals[13] is clear evidence that conflict drives poverty, and that reducing conflict contributes to poverty reduction. At the same time poverty is a key contributing factor to instability and so poverty reduction is a strategic long-term investment in preventing conflict in the future.

1.2 Each of the arms of government has a distinct contribution to make towards the UK's security and confusing these contributions can undermine the overall benefit to the UK's security. Trying to use ODA to further short term security objectives can risk undermining its ability to reduce poverty. **We support the principle, enshrined in the International Development Act, that ODA must continue to be exclusively focused on poverty reduction.**

1.3 Our research shows that positive engagement between NGOs and the military can increase humanitarian space, for example by NGOs providing training to military personnel on key issues such as civilian protection. Where the military remain unaware of the implications of its action upon NGOs humanitarian space shrinks and both NGOs

[12] Matthew Lockwood and Sarah Mulley, with Emily Jones, Alex Glennie, Katie Paintin and Andrew Pendleton (2010) Policy Coherence and the Future of the UK's International Development Agenda: A report to World Vision UK by the Institute for Public Policy Research

[13] The World Bank's 2011 World Development Report notes that poverty rates are, on average, more than 20 percentage points higher in countries where violence is protracted than in other countries. (World Bank (2011) World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development (http://wdr2011.worldbank.org/)

and civilians are worse off. For more information please see our report "Principled Pragmatism".[14]

1.4 We welcome the way in which the Nation Security Strategy highlights these linkages, and the clear commitment to 'promote development and combat poverty to reduce the causes of potential hostility'.[15] We also welcome the way in which the Strategy focuses on the needs of fragile states.

1.5 We are pleased that DFID is included on the National Security Committee (NSC) as an equal partner and we believe there is great value in DFID's actions being informed and coordinated with the actions of other government departments. However **it is important to maintain the check that the council should not be able to override ODA allocation decisions which should be based on poverty reduction criteria.**

2. Building Stability Overseas Strategy

2.1 We welcome the publication of the HMG strategy on building stability overseas. We feel it is a well articulated expression of why increased stability overseas will benefit the UK, and outlines the approach the UK will take to working in fragile states. As such it is broadly in line with our, and the wider NGO communities, aspirations for working in fragile states.

2.2 However, we also feel that it is light on detail. Specifically, we feel that it could more explicitly focus on how HMG will ensure that local people's voices are heard and how they can influence key decisions that will affect them directly. **It is very important that approaches to building stability should be based on the real experiences of people on the ground, and aimed at ensuring security for them, rather than being too focused on national level (state-to-state level) interventions and engagements only.**

2.3 Whilst we welcome the BSOS commitment to focus on further developing early warning systems, to spot potential conflicts or shocks early, it is equally important that HMG should be able to generate the political will to direct attention and resources towards to those areas in time to avert disaster. For example, existing early warning systems accurately predicted the current drought in the Horn of Africa. However, the international community was unable to mobilize sufficiently to prevent it from happening. **HMG should articulate how it will aim to prevent similar situations arising in the future.**

2.4 Overall UK based NGOs have enjoyed strong engagement with all three major BSOS departments (DFID, FCO and MoD) on discussions around how BSOS can effectively be implemented. We are in the process of jointly designing a series of workshops to examine specific issues in more depth. We look forward to continued close and constructive engagement on this issue.

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[14] Dr Edwina Thompson, *Principled Pragmatism: NGO engagement with armed actors,* (World Vision International, 2008), p. 34, http://www.worldvision.org.uk/upload/pdf/Principled_pragmatism.pdf
[15] National Security Strategy, p. 25

2.5 We would also like to highlight the dangers that an insensitive application of 'Value for Money' principles have for ODA contributing to the UK's security. Bodies such as the Public Accounts Committee are rightly asking DFID to address the 'value for money' of its activities, but there needs to be a clear recognition that ODA is a long-term investment and the value it generates is often difficult to quantify, at least in short-term time frames. In particular, operating in more fragile contexts has higher costs than operating in more secure environments. As such **it is important across government that Value for Money in ODA is not just about reducing unit costs, but a positive outcome to input ratio, and that there will always be higher risks and potential leakages when dealing with fragile contexts.**

Summary of Recommendations

1. We support the principle, enshrined in the International Development Act, that ODA must continue to be exclusively focused on poverty reduction
2. The National Security Council should not be able to override ODA allocation decisions which should be based on poverty reduction criteria
3. Approaches to building stability should be based on the real experiences of people on the ground, and aimed at ensuring security for them, rather than on national level interventions and engagements only
4. HMG should articulate how it will aim to prevent situations similar to the Horn of Africa crisis arising in the future
5. Value for Money in ODA should not be just about reducing unit costs, but a positive outcome to input ratio

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