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a guide to

NATIONAL
SECURITY

*threats, responses,
& strategies*

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A Guide to National Security

Threats, Responses, and Strategies

Julian Richards

With contributions from Lord Carlile of Berriew,
Andy Dancer, and Sir Ian Andrews

Preface

My early years of awareness of foreign affairs and national security were formed largely in the 1970s and 1980s. If you had asked me then which issues constituted national security concerns for the UK, I would have pointed first towards the threat of nuclear oblivion initiated by the Soviet Union. I would also have identified the threat of terrorism from the IRA, both within Northern Ireland and in public spaces within the UK. In 1982, there was the brief anomaly of the seizure of the Falkland Islands by Argentina, and the bold military venture to take them back. At that time, I remember having breakfast before going to school, listening to reports on the radio of events in the far South Atlantic. These included Brian Hanrahan's famous report from an aircraft carrier, in which he circumvented restrictions on reporting of operational details by saying of a group of Harrier fighter jets returning from a sortie over the Falklands that he 'counted them all out, and counted them all back'.[1]

Nearly a decade later, I was listening to the radio again, this time to reports of NATO fighter jets flying into Iraq to repulse Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. The Soviet Union had not yet completely collapsed, but was in the process of doing so, with the Berlin Wall having been breached to unleash a wave of democratic transformation across Eastern Europe. The Cold War was more or less over, but the security picture to follow was not yet clear.

State-on-state conflict, plus some domestic terrorism, therefore, would have headed my list of national security concerns during my youth. If asked the same question now as to what constituted national security concerns in the UK, I would probably recount a much longer list of issues and threats, encompassing several different strands of terrorism; threats of involvement in military conflicts overseas; threats from domestic unrest and extremism; cyber-security threats; and possibly the risk of natural disasters or accidents, to name but a few.

The issues we have gathered together under the umbrella of national security concerns have broadened considerably in the few years since the end of the Cold War. The picture is fairly unrecognizable from what we would have imagined in the 1980s. A government's National Security Strategy written at that time would have looked very different from one written in 2012.

This book explores the processes and developments which have shaped this transformation over the last three decades, and critically examines

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[1] See B. Hanrahan and R. Fox, *I Counted Them All Out, and I Counted Them All Back: The Battle for the Falklands* (London: BBC Books, 1982).

processes of politicization and securitization that have delivered the new strategic vision.

The book takes as its point of reference the National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review delivered by the newly elected government in the UK in late 2010. I argue that this process of strategic review is more than just a milestone in the gradual development of securitization during the post-Cold War period. It is also a review that claims many firsts. It claims to be one written in a truly strategic way, where the exigencies of budgetary considerations are placed to one side in favour of an in-depth and objective risk assessment. This is a bold claim given the almost unprecedented downward pressure on defence budgets in the light of the global financial crisis that has unfolded since 2008. Of the many casualties of the latest review are the Harrier jets that were so iconic in the Falklands campaign, and which have now been consigned to the history books.

The 2010 strategic review also tackles a particular political issue within the UK government of the right way to deal with major national security issues in a modern democracy. The trauma of the second campaign in Iraq, in 2003, was made worse—claim the current government—by the manner in which the Blair government of the time had instituted a new culture of 'sofa government', in which chats with the Prime Minister and the role of unelected special advisers set the course. This was hardly the way, claimed the Conservatives, that major issues of foreign policy in which British troops would be committed to war should be decided at the top of government. The 2010 strategic review therefore comes with the establishment, for the first time under this name, of a new National Security Council. This is set to end the sofa government model and reinstitute a proper process of collective Cabinet decision-making on major national security issues.

In these ways, the 2010 strategic review in the UK marks a particularly significant juncture in the process of national security strategizing in the post-Cold War era. As such, this process not only provides a number of fascinating and critical points for those interested in the UK's own national security posture, but also provides much of value to anyone involved in such issues across the Western world in the contemporary era of globalization. There is much with which the UK is grappling that will ring bells in Washington, Paris, and many other places.

The production of this analysis requires a number of people to be thanked. First, the experts who provided specific advice and comment for the text of this book deserve special thanks, and specifically Sir Ian Andrews, Lord Alex Carlile, and Andy Dancer. Numerous other officials in the National Security Secretariat in London, and in Local Resilience Forums in various parts of the country have also provided invaluable expertise and advice. In terms of the book itself, Lucy Alexander, Emma Hawes, and colleagues at Oxford University Press must be thanked for providing patience, good humour, and professionalism. Finally, my family, as ever, have provided the most important support in terms of

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encouragement and understanding, and my father has added to this some forensic proofreading. Without all of this, the book would never have seen the light of day.

Julian Richards
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Abbreviations

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
AQAP	Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP	Afghan National Police
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BERR	Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
BNP	British National Party
BSOS	Building Stability Overseas Strategy
BTC	Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan pipeline
BTWC	Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention
CADO	Community and Diversity Officer
CBRN	chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons
CCS	Crisis Contingencies Secretariat
CDSN	Conseil de défense et de sécurité nationale
CESG	Communications-Electronic Security Group
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIRA	Continuity Irish Republican Army
CJEF	Combined Joint Expeditionary Force
CNI	Critical National Infrastructure
CNN	Cable News Network
COBR	Cabinet Office Briefing Room
COIN	Counter-Insurgency
CONTEST	Counter Terrorism Strategy
CPNI	Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSOC	Cyber Security Operations Centre
CWC	Chemical Weapons Convention
CYBERCOM	Cyber Command (United States)
DCDC	Development Concepts Doctrine Centre (Ministry of Defence)
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DCOG	Defence Cyber Operations Group
DDR	disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration
DECC	Department of Energy and Climate Change
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DfID	Department for International Development
DOPC	Cabinet Defence and Overseas Policy Committee

EC	European Community
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDL	English Defence League
EEC	European Economic Community
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
ENISA	European Network and Information Security Agency
ERRF	European Rapid Reaction Force
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Pakistan)
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FIEP	France, Italia, España, Portugal (Police union)
FOB	Forward Operating Base
FSB	Foreign Security Service (Russia)
G8	Group of Eight leading industrialized nations
G20	Group of Twenty leading finance ministers and central bank governors
GCHQ	Government Communications Headquarters
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPS	Global Positioning Satellite
HMS	Her Majesty's Ship
HVT	High Value Target
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
IED	improvised explosive device
IISS	International Institute of Strategic Studies
IMINT	Imagery Intelligence
INSTINCT	Innovative Science and Technology in Counter Terrorism
IRA	Irish Republican Army
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISC	Intelligence and Security Committee
JIC	Joint Intelligence Committee
JIO	Joint Intelligence Organisation
JRRF	Joint Rapid Reaction Force
JTAC	Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre
LAA	Local Authority Agreement
LeT	*Lashkar-e Toiba* (Pakistan)
LIC	Low Intensity Conflict
LIFG	Libyan Islamic Fighters Group
LRF	Local Resilience Forum
MI5	Security Service
MI6	Secret Intelligence Service
MOD	Ministry of Defence

MP	Member of Parliament
MRBM	Medium-Range Ballistic Missile
MSU	Multinational Specialised Unit
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCA	National Crime Agency
NDS	National Directorate of Security (Afghanistan)
NGO	non-governmental organization
NHTCU	National High-Tech Crime Unit
NI35	National Indicator 35
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
NRA	National Risk Assessment
NSC	National Security Council
NSID	National Security, International Relations and Development Committee
NSRA	National Security Risk Assessment
NSS	National Security Strategy
NSSB	National Security Strategy Board
NSSM	National Security Study Memorandum
NWS	Nuclear Weapons States
OAE	Operation Active Endeavour
OCSIA	Office of Cyber Security and Information Assurance
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OPCW	Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
P5	Permanent Five members of the UN Security Council
PASC	Public Administration Select Committee
PCeU	Police Central e-Crime Unit
PEO	Prevent Engagement Officer
PIRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army
PRM	Presidential Review Memorandum
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PVE	Preventing Violent Extremism
RAF	Royal Air Force
RIRA	Real Irish Republican Army
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary
RUF	Revolutionary United Front (Sierra Leone)
RUSI	Royal United Services Institute
SDSR	Strategic Defence and Security Review
SEAD	Suppression of Electronic Air Defence
SFOR	Stabilisation Force in Bosnia and Herzogovina
SOCA	Serious Organised Crime Agency
SRU	Security Resilience Unit
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TPIM	Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measure

TTP	*Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan*
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UKBA	United Kingdom Border Agency
UKTA	United Kingdom Threat Assessment
UKTI	United Kingdom Trade and Industry
UKUSA	United Kingdom–United States of America intelligence agreement
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
WMD	weapons of mass destruction

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Introduction

The 2010 National Security Strategy—breaking new ground

At the end of 2010, the newly installed UK government (a coalition of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats which had taken power from the Labour Party in May) published a new National Security Strategy (NSS), entitled 'A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty'. A day later it published a comprehensive Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), and the day after that, its first spending review. The NSS and SDSR, which link closely together, constituted the first major review of the UK's defence strategy since 1998, which was itself the first major foreign policy-led review in the post-Cold War period in Britain, delivered by the new Labour government at a time when military operations were under way in the Balkans. The NSS and SDSR were the product of a new National Security Council (NSC), the first time Britain had established such an institution under that name, although it was built on an existing National Security Secretariat within the Cabinet Office. The new Conservative Prime Minister, David Cameron, had established the NSC on the first full day in government, in line with a pre-election pledge, reflecting the importance he attached to this area of government.

Although the UK has experienced a number of major defence reviews in the past, including the 1994 Defence Costs Review in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War, the 2010 NSS and SDSR were heralded as being a first in many respects. Officials in government claim that the 2010 reviews were the first to be properly based on a considered strategic risk assessment, drawing on the expertise of a wide range of analysts, and were thus the first such reviews that were truly 'strategic' in the proper sense of the term.[1] They were also more than just a defence review, but were the

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[1] Interview with National Security Secretariat official, August 2011.

first time a complete review of the UK's capability and posture against the widest range of security threats had been fully considered. Finally, the reviews were intended not to be simply musings on the nature of contemporary security threat, as many previous reviews could aptly be described, but as rigorous and structured documents that drove security policy and allowed government to make sensible decisions about resources and actions.[2] The timing was also significant and novel, in that the spending review came after the strategy review (albeit very closely after), which meant that the one could not be unduly influenced by the other. Theoretically, the strategy could not have been constrained and shaped by the available resources but considered objectively, and the subsequent decisions on spending allocations across defence and other sectors could not drive strategy, but rather work in the other direction.

These were bold claims, and, as I will discuss, they have proved to be fiercely contested ones. In many ways the whole process was conducted under a certain air of crisis, as the financial implications of the global economic slowdown after 2008, and the subsequent discovery of a massive budget deficit at the heart of the government's finances, coloured all discussions about policy and expenditure. Security and defence were not to be exempt from such considerations, as every area of government foresaw a bleak period of cutbacks and belt-tightening. Some critics have suggested that this means the NSS and SDSR could not be entirely objective.

This book provides a comprehensive analysis of the NSS and SDSR of 2010, exploring what they say about threat, strategy, and policy in twenty-first century Britain. It also explores the processes and debates that underpin the launch of the new strategies, including the NSC and its formulation at the centre of government decision-making. The detail clearly says much that is specific to the UK, not least contemporary conceptions of where Britain sees itself as rightfully being in the twenty-first century, globalized, and multilateral world. It also touches on issues of security threat and perception within the UK itself, not least in relation to domestic terrorist threats and issues. Beyond the shores of the UK, however, the 2010 NSS and SDSR processes are also fascinating case studies in contemporary threat perception and strategizing, which have parallels with, and implications for, any industrialized nation getting to grips with how to structure and refocus its security and defence capabilities in the contemporary world, not least during the midst of a global financial earthquake that threatens to reverberate for some years to come. In some ways, as Clarke argues, we are no longer in the post-Cold War world, but in the 'post-post-Cold War era'.[3] Such a condition of postmodernity is uncharted territory indeed. In this way, this study should provide much of interest to practitioners, analysts, and

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[2] Ibid.

[3] M. Clarke, 'The United Kingdom's Strategic Moment' in M. Codner and M. Clarke (eds), *A Question of Security: The British Defence Review in an Age of Austerity* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 9.