



# **VIEWS AHEAD OF IR21**

**Integrated Review of Security,  
Defence, Development and  
Foreign Policy**

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# IMPLEMENTING THE UK'S INTEGRATED REVIEW OF SECURITY, DEFENCE, DEVELOPMENT AND FOREIGN POLICY

**With a few weeks remaining before the UK Government unveils its long-awaited 'Integrated Review', designed to take a far broader view of the nation's role in the world, leaders are turning their attention to how they will implement the transformational changes ahead. Time is short, but they will rarely have more time to think than they have now.**

Earlier this year, the Government launched what it called "the deepest and most far-reaching reassessment of our international, defence, diplomacy, development and national security strategy since the end of the Cold War". Unlike the previous 'defence-centric' review cycles, this one will take a far broader view of the UK's role in the world.

The Integrated Review aims to set a bold 2030 vision, yet we are living in unfamiliar times. Extended forecasts are increasingly unreliable and leaders are striving to formulate strategy in the midst of a global pandemic.

The review faces two primary vectors of uncertainty that are outside the Government's control: geopolitical trends and the global economic recovery. We've used our unique *FutureWorlds™* approach to frame four feasible futures that can be used for scenario planning to test whether the UK's diplomatic and security ecosystem is sufficiently adaptive to meet the various challenges the nation may face over the coming decade. A simplified extract is shown opposite.

These futures signal markedly different scenarios but point to common requirements: the ability to adapt to hybrid threats, secure information advantage and apply a human-centric response. Next-generation leaders will need to prioritise these characteristics for their departments to be suitably adaptive and capable of maintaining competitive superiority.

The following 10 viewpoints will be relevant no matter which of these future scenarios confronts the UK over the next decade.







## 1. NATIONAL RESILIENCE – LEVERAGING CITIZEN POWER

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**Resilience embeds the control of risks (such as malicious threats and natural hazards) with the readiness to respond and recover quickly from emergencies and disruption. It requires government, industry, communities and individuals to co-ordinate resources and skills, and the establishment of a reserve of volunteers trained in resilience who can rapidly mobilise in an emergency.**

To build this co-ordinated approach, the UK should seek inspiration from the Finnish model; running national resilience exercises that bring together leaders from Government and business for three weeks a year, and running tabletop exercises to explore scenarios that need the combined skills and resources of industry and state to pull together. This builds relationships so that in the event of a crisis, leaders know who they can call upon and can access the diverse expertise needed to solve the most complex problems.



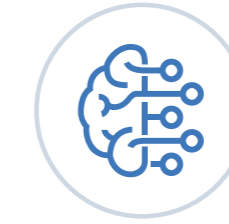
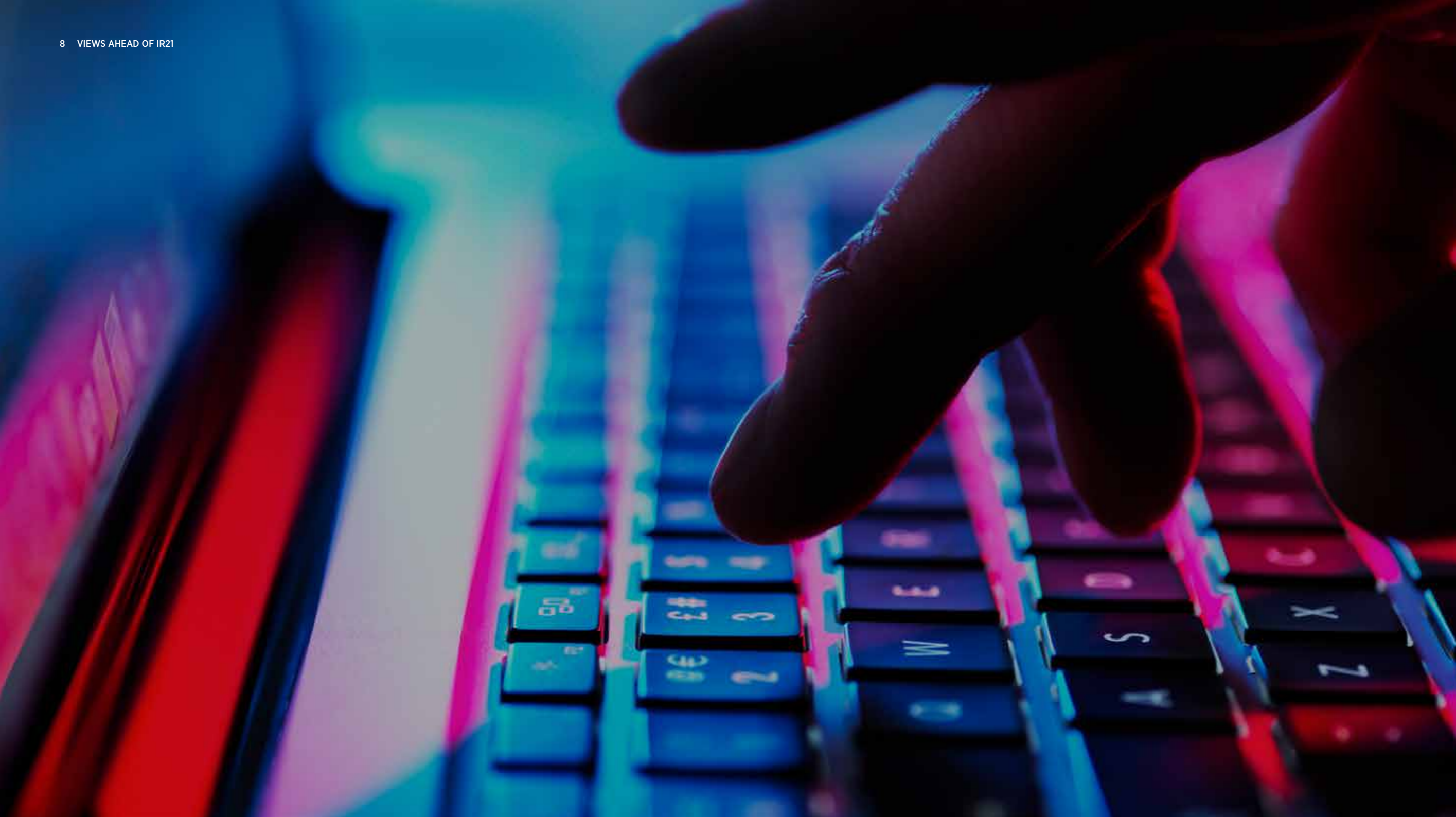
## 2. INFORMATION ADVANTAGE – A DIGITAL JEWEL IN THE CROWN

**The information age offers a new path to global influence through information advantage, tackling emerging threats such as hybrid warfare, disinformation, and online harms. The Integrated Review presents an opportunity to place far greater emphasis on the first three steps in the observe, orientate, decide, act (OODA) loop – the concept that the actor who completes the loop fastest, or can get inside their opponent’s decision-making cycle, will gain the advantage.**

Instead of competing for scarce resources and human talent by duplicating data exploitation platforms in every department, agency and police force, the UK should establish a new digital ‘jewel in the crown’ national security capability. This would provide central co-ordination and better sharing of data acquisition, exploitation, knowledge management and information governance assets across the entire security landscape. The UK needs a domestic-focused data exploitation capability to complement GCHQ’s foreign intelligence focus. This would equip every department with the information they need to respond more effectively and efficiently to security challenges using shared situational awareness developed from common platforms and skills.







### 3. CYBER – APTITUDE AND ADAPTIVENESS

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**The UK's cyber infrastructure and skills aptitude base is vital to protecting and promoting it as a secure place to live and work. The pace of change of technology, and the cyber threat and opportunity that accompanies it, means the UK has to be able to constantly adapt and improve to stay ahead of our adversaries. This applies both to technology and skills. These high-value assets offer an important channel of global influence by helping to tackle emerging threats such as intellectual espionage, electoral interference and denial of critical services, as well as exerting more proactive, potentially offensive, measures when the need arises.**

There is an opportunity to radically rethink how the UK attracts, selects and trains the next-generation cyber workforce. Attracting a more diverse workforce calls for stereotypes to be challenged, recruiting for aptitude rather than a traditional STEM education, and bringing in broader neurodiversity. Then, tools such as simulation and virtual reality offer an opportunity to increase training capacity, speed of delivery and professional standards.





## 4. SPACE – EXPLOITING THE FIFTH DOMAIN

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**In December 2019, world leaders welcomed the recognition of space as the fifth operational domain – alongside air, land, sea and cyberspace. The ability to exert global influence through space capabilities is now widely recognised, as is the need to counter space threats posed by adversaries. With its world-leading aerospace engineering expertise, the UK has an opportunity to capitalise on the economic-industrial space technology boom, and to build and shape the systems and regimes that will provide and protect sovereign information advantage.**

Satellite acquisition tends to start with choosing satellites, then orbit, then payload. We suggest reversing this for a ‘payload-centric’ disaggregation mission strategy, whereby payloads are hosted by friendly-nation or private owner satellites. Combining these enablers will allow the UK to realise a more affordable and resilient set of capabilities, improving system interoperability between allies, industry and the UK, and disincentivising competitor threats.







## 5. HOMELAND SECURITY – KEEPING OUR OWN HOUSE IN ORDER

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**Following nearly two decades of ‘upstream’ military intervention to contain threats such as terrorism and drugs production before they reached the UK’s shores, recent experience has increased the focus on home-grown threats such as radicalisation, lone-actor terrorism and serious organised crime. This has raised awareness of the role of illicit finance as the universal enabler for terrorism, crime and many state-sponsored threats. And yet, the structure of the UK’s security and policing sector is largely unreformed, numbering over 70 independent organisations, all pursuing broadly similar capabilities, and competing for the same scarce skills and talent, albeit to meet different mission priorities.**

There is scope for more ambitious reform of the homeland-focused departments. It’s an opportunity to rationalise, delayer and consolidate capabilities such as digital forensics and the tools and tradecraft for tackling cybercrime – building them once and re-using them repeatedly in different ways.





## 6. DATA LITERACY – BUILDING A NEW KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

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**Building a high-value, knowledge-based economy will call for a workforce and education strategy that prioritises cyber, space and modern technologies. The UK will need to create more attractive career paths for digital, data and technology specialists and the ability to move easily between Government and industry. This would lead to lasting links between Government, public sector and academia as they develop varied careers in challenging roles.**

Founding a National Data Science Academy that provides an approved apprenticeship and universally applicable training would allow all departments to attract, recruit, train, develop and share talent. It's an approach Switzerland has taken with the Swiss Data Science Center, launching a string of academic projects, industry collaborations and the creation of a software platform for data science.







## 7. GLOBAL INFLUENCE – USING ALL THE LEVERS OF HARD AND SOFT POWER

**Post-Brexit, the Government is aiming for a more active, self-confident ambition in global affairs, especially with respect to China and the Indo-Pacific region. Traditional thinking naturally turns to exploiting the UK's new carrier strike capabilities for maritime presence, but the Royal Navy and supporting assets will be severely stretched maintaining a credible presence on two fronts, assuming the UK continues to prioritise its primary North Atlantic obligations.**

This will require a generational investment to rebuild the UK's diplomatic engagement in the China/Indo-Pacific region, and a comprehensive full-spectrum approach that leverages international development, humanitarian aid and the surgical application of niche military capabilities (from submarines to special forces). This needs to sit alongside a growing emphasis on the Australia/New Zealand aspects of the UK's 5-Eyes intelligence relationships.





## 8. ENGAGE AND INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION

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**The UK remains a cultural superpower, exporting fashion, literature, film and music, and is a centre for design and innovation that benefits from the ubiquity of the English language. This will be a tough lever of statecraft for the traditional 'military-industrial complex' to fully grasp, yet it represents one of the most potent opportunities to capitalise on a watershed generational shift.**

To engage and inspire the next generation the UK will need to channel the creative energy of the 1990s, with the boost in national pride from hosting the London 2012 Summer Olympics, and the industrial co-operation that delivered the Nightingale hospitals and the UK Ventilator Challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic.







## 9. PRESERVE OUR PLANET – THE FOURTH NATIONAL SECURITY OBJECTIVE?

**In 2020 there had been Australian wildfires, school children striking over climate change, a global pandemic and the effects of climate change worsening. We've also seen marked improvements in air quality following sharp falls in emissions as the number of journeys by vehicles and planes was significantly cut during lockdown. This has shown a glimpse of the cleaner, healthier environment possible if the world shifts away from fossil fuels.**

The UK's 2020 Presidencies of both the UN Climate Change Conference and the G7 created the perfect opportunity for environmental leadership. We've seen departments such as MOD drive this type of leadership-led change with its zero/low carbon and circular solutions for UK defence, which offers a new way of looking at how global resource imbalances can destabilise countries and lead to the need for intervention. We believe the Integrated Review should ensure its focus extends to climate emergency side-effects – from human slavery and trafficking to famine, drought, poverty, conflict and the resulting instability, border and security risks.





## 10. ALLIANCES – A COUNTERBALANCE TO ‘ZERO SUM’ THINKING ON CHINA

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**The UK has played a leading role in international diplomacy and coalitions through its membership of the UN Security Council, NATO and the 5-Eyes intelligence alliance. But the UK will need to harness the power of new political, industrial and cultural alliances to realise its ‘Global Britain’ ambition.**

To expand the UK’s existing alliances, three actions are required. First, establishing the ‘D-10’ group of leading democracies (the G7 plus South Korea, India and Australia), which would connect North Atlantic and Indo-Pacific democratic allies and partners. Second, expanding the 5-Eyes alliance to balance containment of China on security fronts with necessary co-operation on trade, investment and environmental issues. And third, an expanded purpose and role for the Commonwealth.







## A ONCE IN A GENERATION OPPORTUNITY

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**In a world where threats and natural hazards are evolving quickly, there are clear opportunities to radically rethink how to build, share and enable capabilities to keep the nation and its citizens safe. From our unique experience working across the areas covered by the Integrated Review, we see common challenges that can be addressed centrally to improve efficiency and reduce costs.**

A coherent, whole ecosystem approach is needed to prioritise funding for systems and capabilities that make a measurable contribution to global influence, and consolidating tools and capabilities to reduce duplication and enhance efficiencies. It calls for a cultural transformation to build a joint mindset of trust across historically disparate organisations and enable common career paths.

The UK has the opportunity to develop its systems and people to make them more adaptable, significantly improve and accelerate information sharing, and provide the modern organisations, roles and career paths that attract, recruit and retain the nation's best.





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