REFORMUK

NATIONAL SECURITY REVIEW

Terms of Reference

November 2026

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Foreword by Angus MacIntyre

In my 40 years of service in His Majesty's Armed Forces, I was deployed to Northern Ireland, Afghanistan, Iraq, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Somalia. I was with the 17th/21st Lancers, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, attached to the Royal Marines and the Parachute Regiment, and then with the RAF Regiment.

I have seen service with all three branches, in very different conflicts, and I have helped to coordinate Britain's response to the war in Ukraine. I am proud to continue my work on the security of this nation as Armed Forces spokesman for Reform UK, and I am proud to be launching Reform's landmark National Security Review. The threats our country faces are stark and I will never flinch from confronting them.

What I see today is a world at its most dangerous since the end of the cold war, and a government posture that fails to acknowledge this. Russia, China and Iran present growing threats to our national security, and internal divisions are undermining our ability to meet them. Making Britain secure will require a collective national effort, and a fundamental reshaping of our strategy.

The Policy Guide below sets out the terms of reference for Reform UK's National Security Review. It details exactly how we will go about conducting the review, which aspects of national security we will focus on, and what we will consider relevant to the cause of greater National Security.

These terms will inform the consultation process that I am beginning today. We will be listening to experts from industry, former services personnel, and Whitehall insiders to ensure that we strike the best strategy for British defence and security, and to ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated.



Angus MacIntyre
Shadow Armed Forces Minister

Foreword by Nigel Farage MP

Over the last twenty years, Britain's armed forces have been cut to the bone. We now find ourselves in a dangerous world where we are ill-prepared to deal with the threats posed by Vladimir Putin's Russia, China's revanchist designs on Taiwan, and the terrorism sponsored by the Iranian regime.

In the days since Angus joined Reform I have seen an outpouring of support from the veterans and serving personnel who recognise that there is finally a frontbench politician with the experience and understanding of the armed forces necessary to reverse their managed decline.

Britain is heading towards defencelessness. Our armed forces have been gutted, our nuclear deterrent is creaking and our borders are wide open.

The man charged with securing our defence, Wes Streeting, has no military experience whatsoever. The Chancellor won't even give him the resources our brave troops need to protect us either.

Unlike the old parties, we are clear-eyed about the threats from Russia, Iran, China and the rising threat from Islamist extremists. And unlike Andy Burnham, we'll give our armed forces the urgent funding they need now - not years down the line when it's too late to deter aggressors.

We won't ever take a backwards step. The safety of the British people must always come first.

This National Security Review will be the first step in this process. Britain is broken. Britain needs Reform.



Nigel Farage MP
Leader of Reform UK

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Objective

The objective of the United Kingdom is to be the principal power in Europe, and one of the great powers of the world. In order to be safe and prosperous in the 21st century, we need to protect our borders and have the strength to defend ourselves and to promote our interests abroad. Instead of a nation in decline, we must be a nation on the rise once again.

Reform's approach to international affairs and national security has a triple purpose: to uphold national sovereignty, including the inviolability of the border; to protect the British people from threats at home and abroad; and to help secure the conditions for prosperity through the active promotion of British business interests, including exports and inward investment.

This is hard-headed and pro-British. It is patriotic realism.

Summary

The old world order is over and Reform's National Security Review, led by our Shadow Armed Forces Minister Angus MacIntyre, will recognise and confront the challenges Britain faces: hostile state actors, porous borders and Islamism, and the parlous state of our armed forces and defence industrial base. The principles behind the review are as follows:

1. We must protect our borders before we do anything else
2. Britain's priority is the Euro-Atlantic region
3. Alliances remain central to British power, but they must be practical rather than performative
4. We must ensure internal cohesion and allegiance to the Crown
5. Security is deterrence through denial
6. Defence will get a bigger budget but the MoD must fix its own finances too
7. British diplomacy should serve the national interest not global well-being
8. International spending should directly support British interests

A Dangerous World

The world is in a new era of great power competition. The 'rules-based international system' is giving way to a harder environment defined by power, national interest and transactional diplomacy.

Against this backdrop, Russia, China and Iran represent fundamental threats to the security of the West. Russia in particular seeks to harm Europe, directly through its war in Ukraine and indirectly through 'grey zone' activity and undeclared hostilities in the cyber and maritime domains. In recent years we have seen the Russian Navy target our vital submarine cables, provoke the RAF and commit aggressive cyber-attacks on our critical infrastructure. As the head of MI5, Ken McCallum, recently warned, Russia's espionage and use of proxies make it "aggressor number one".[1] Russia is the greatest immediate state threat to the security of the United Kingdom and is already waging hybrid warfare against us.

Iran remains the largest state-sponsor of terrorism around the world, including in the UK. Tehran threatens our energy security, sends agents to our country via small boats, and continues to fund extremist Imams to radicalise our population and threaten British Jews. Iran's continued quest for nuclear weapons threatens not just regional but global security.

China's rise poses the longer-term challenge. We recognise China for what it is: a tyrannical regime. An invasion of Taiwan would not only be disastrous for the Taiwanese people, but also threatens to crash the global economy. We therefore support the United States' principal foreign policy mission - to contain this threat - by resisting Chinese subversion (and the threat of China's client state, Russia) in the Euro-Atlantic.

The United States remains the UK's greatest ally. America's strategy, set out in the 2025 National Security Strategy, to dominate the Western Hemisphere is good for Britain's security. However, the US's principal focus is, understandably, on the Americas, the Arabian Gulf and the Indo-Pacific region, not Europe. That requires the UK and European countries to increase their defence spending urgently.

In an age of great power rivalry, small and 'middle' powers suffer the effects of inconsequence: economic disadvantage, less agency and greater vulnerability. The way to be safe and prosperous is to be strong.

The United Kingdom is well placed to become the principal power in Europe. Power consists of military might but also of economic heft, cultural reach and diplomatic influence. We aspire to be stronger in all these respects than every other European country.

With the right leadership, the British government can defend the homeland, dominate the waters around our islands, and project force both onto the European continent and - selectively - further afield. We can attract investment and talent, reinforce London's status as the West's principal business centre outside the US, and be Europe's technology and AI superpower. And we can effect change subtly through our historic ties in the English-speaking world, our cultural exports and our diplomatic network

In short, we can be a confident, self-respecting and respected nation once more, unapologetically pursuing our own interests - our security and prosperity - as a great power that puts its own people first.

To achieve this goal, however, certain facts need to be faced and certain hard decisions taken.

[1] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c60rl5vwpk02o

Hard Decisions

1. We must protect our borders before we do anything else.

The government's first duty is the security of the homeland. We believe that the situation in the Channel is a national security emergency. A state that cannot stop an invasion of over 200,000 unvetted, fighting-age men crossing the English Channel illegally and in plain sight over the last eight years, is a state that has failed in its most essential responsibility.

As per our plans in Operation Fortress and Operation Restoring Justice, a Reform Government will stop the boats within the First 100 Days.[2] Every vessel carrying illegal migrants will be intercepted by the Royal Navy and everyone on board such a vessel will be returned to their country of departure.

Operation Restoring Justice is a five-year emergency programme intended to identify, detain and deport all illegal migrants in the United Kingdom. We will pass the Illegal Migration (Mass Deportation) Bill, detain and deport illegal migrants, and sanction countries which refuse to take back their nationals.

Furthermore, upon entering government, Reform would suspend the asylum system and grants of humanitarian protection entirely for a full parliamentary term, voiding all current applications and automatically rejecting any new applications, and reviewing all asylum grants going back 5 years.

2. Britain's priority is the Euro-Atlantic region.

'Global Britain' is either meaningless, or it is dangerous. Either it simply means the UK, like every developed nation, has trading links with the whole world, or it suggests we spread our power so thinly that our core interests - the prosperity and defence of the realm - are neglected.

Reform will replace global posturing with applying the UK's strategic weight deliberately and selectively. Influence does not come from ubiquity; it comes from concentrating national power where it counts. We must therefore choose where to focus our finite resources.

Britain will anchor its security in Europe, the North Atlantic and the High North, and safeguard the free passage of trade and energy supplies on which our economy depends.

We will engage the Indo-Pacific chiefly through trade, technology and partnerships rather than symbolic deployments. In the Middle East, policy will be guided by realism, focused on stability, energy security and limiting 'conflict spillover' that harms British interests.

We will always maintain the sovereign ability to defend our overseas territories and crown dependencies and will always maintain full British sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar. We will reverse The Conservatives' and Labour's Chagos deal and restore full British sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory, including Diego Garcia.

While we value our shared history and relationships with the Commonwealth, it must benefit Britain as well, and be resolutely forward-looking. We do not owe our former colonies any reparations for slavery.

[2] https://www.reformparty.uk/policies

3. Alliances remain central to British power, but they must be practical rather than performative.

A Reform Government will prioritise alliances and partnerships that share intelligence, build real military capability, secure supply chains, and act meaningfully together both in crises and in sustained competition with our common adversaries.

NATO remains indispensable to European security, but it must continue to adapt to a world in which European allies carry more responsibility. Britain is the only European country with a nuclear capability fully committed to NATO, and that contribution must be properly recognised in how the Alliance shares roles, responsibilities, burdens and industrial opportunity within Europe. A Reform Government will ensure that the balance of Britain's NATO contribution reflects both our nuclear commitment and our high-end military, intelligence and cyber capabilities.

Our policy should be 'NATO First', not 'NATO Only'. While we must urgently expand our armed forces to support our NATO commitment, we must not promise the supply of forces that would, under the NATO Force Model, pass to the command of the alliance and no longer be available for national tasks. It is essential to maintain a sovereign reserve, ready for any defence task including support for the civil authorities in an emergency. Britain must always be able to defend itself.

Our focus on the Euro-Atlantic region entails close, dynamic alliances with European nations. It does not entail a return to the defence, political or economic structures of the European Union, or a 'rule-taking' dependency. Our relationship with the EU - in the light of the likely election of sovereigntist governments across Europe in the coming years - should be on the basis of the free cooperation of independent nation states.

International legal arrangements shall not curtail the independence of the United Kingdom to act with sovereign intent to secure our borders and our people, and to protect our troops on the battlefield. We will leave the European Convention on Human Rights, and the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights and the International Criminal Court, and derogate from other relevant treaties such as the Refugee Convention.

The United Nations has become a talking shop and a forum for posturing. We recognise the value of our permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council, and would use our veto in our national interest, but we recognise that global security and prosperity demand rapid cooperation between the countries that share interests - including, most of all - an unabashed preference for freedom.

4. We must ensure internal cohesion and allegiance to the Crown.

The security of the United Kingdom depends as much upon the cohesion, resilience and spirit of the British people as the capabilities of the armed forces. Security demands a 'whole of nation' approach that harnesses the full range of civilian as well as military resources.

Cohesion means that the whole country is in agreement on the fundamentals of life in Britain, and acknowledges its loyalty to the Crown. We expect everyone living here to support Parliamentary democracy, the rule of law, and the freedom of the individual.

The threat from Islamist terrorism and extremism remains dangerously high. Recent waves of migration and our porous borders have only made this problem worse. Deliberate action is needed to reduce the threat of Islamist terrorism and to bring the whole country together in the cause of our common security and prosperity.

The achievement of national unity must be undertaken urgently, with determination and without fear. If foreign nationals represent a threat to our security, they can expect to be deported, as we have outlined in detail in Operation Restoring Justice.

We will also ban the Muslim Brotherhood and ensure that programmes like Prevent are focused on the real threats Britain faces, especially Islamist terrorism, and mandate home searches in cases of repeat referrals.

Immigrants and their descendants often have a strong loyalty to Britain and a positive respect for family and community. But versions of Islam and diaspora groups that are hostile to Britain, restrict the rights of women, and deny the right of anyone to live their own lives with freedom of conscience and association, are a threat to the United Kingdom and will not be accepted.

5. Security is deterrence through denial.

The most immediate practical challenges to Britain's security exist below the threshold of what we would recognise as an armed attack. Our infrastructure, energy systems, food supply, data networks and the other critical foundations of daily life are chronically vulnerable. The prosperity of the British people depends on trade, investment, industry, technology and jobs. A country exposed to economic coercion cannot act with confidence in the world.

For too long British strategy against our adversaries has been 'deterrence through response': the capability to launch an attack in consequence of an attack on us. The power to respond - or indeed to initiate action when that is required - is a vital part of the armoury we need. But especially in an era of 'sub-threshold' warfare a more important deterrent is denial: the likelihood that an attack on the United Kingdom will fail.

A Reform Government will set a deliberate course to rebuild Britain as a true great power through steady strengthening of the country's economic and industrial base. This will support the defence, security and tech industries which produce the kit that keeps us safe. It will also insulate us more effectively from economic shocks and from deliberate action by our enemies to harm us.

Hardening the target does not mean a retreat into 'fortress Britain'. Our security is bound to the stability of the Euro-Atlantic region and to the protection of the international systems on which our economy relies, including sea lanes, energy flows and financial infrastructure. Britain will act where these interests are engaged and be more selective where they are not.

6. Defence will get a bigger budget but the MoD must fix its own finances too.

For thirty years successive governments have imagined we can defend ourselves on the cheap: that Russia no longer posed a threat, and that the US would continue to underwrite our security through its commitment to NATO. Those assumptions have been proved wrong.

The UK must spend 3% of GDP on defence by 2030 - up from the roughly 2.5% we are spending now - and 3.5% by 2035.[3] This is a floor, not a ceiling. It is still considerably less than we spent in the Cold War (around 5%) - let alone the Second World War (40%). If we want to avoid the costs of full-scale conflict, we should invest soon to create a proper deterrent to all our potential enemies.

But an uplift in spending is futile unless the Ministry of Defence has fixed its own finances, and radically improved its procurement policy. Budget size matters less than spending effectiveness.

[3] https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8175/

That requires an era-defining shift away from failed procurement systems and towards equipping our forces with both traditional and cutting-edge capabilities that work now - not promises that might, or might not, deliver exquisite or gold-plated equipment decades from today. Our focus should be on the rapid production, fielding, and spiral development of the technology that wins wars and deters aggression.

Whilst the armed forces must and will get bigger, our urgent needs include fixing our nuclear submarines; missile and undersea defence, with sovereign targeting rather than reliance on the US; intelligence, cyber and space capabilities; rapidly deployable and potent land, air and maritime power (manned and unmanned); expanded - and legally protected - Special Forces; and a nuclear deterrent that is affordable and viable.

The first priority for defence spending is defence people. A Reform Government will invest meaningfully in armed forces personnel and their families, improving recruitment and accommodation. And we will always stand by our veterans. Reform UK will end lawfare against our troops once and for all.

7. British diplomacy should serve the national interest not global well-being.

British foreign policy should define and defend British national interests, rather than supposed global values and soft power. Instead of promoting 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion' abroad, the Foreign Office must catch up with the new era of transactional diplomacy. This includes negotiating economic bargains as part of agreements on defence and development. This is the traditional model of foreign policy which helped make the United Kingdom great.

We need our diplomacy to be more hard-headed and commercially focused, with representatives overseas expected to generate tangible economic benefit at home. Foreign policy must work directly to further national prosperity and national strength and should not be used as a platform for maximising ill-conceived conceptions of our "global reputation" or human rights agendas that undermine our security.

8. International spending should directly support the British national interest.

Serious nations pursue hard interests, not soft values. It is not the job of the British government to help other countries flourish for their own sake; nor to subsidise climate change projects in countries that won't pay for them themselves; let alone to preach DEI and alternative cultural norms at distant societies with their own traditions.

Our £1 billion cap on foreign aid will ringfence bilateral aid to Ukraine, cover our commitments to retain our seat at the UN, World Bank, IMF and other multilateral fora, be used to promote British interests abroad, and preserve a fund for genuine disaster relief.

The government's job is to promote British business and defend British security. We must carefully examine whether international development can grow our trade, strengthen military alliances and help deliver UK priorities such as deportation of all foreign national offenders and illegal migrants. If not, we should not ask taxpayers to pay for it.

Conclusion

Great powers are not declared - they are created. Reform UK will set Britain on that path steadily and deliberately. We should be strong at home and credible abroad, acting with clarity, discipline and confidence in the interests of our people.

Contribute to our consultation

To contribute to the development of our National Security Review, please scan the QR code below and complete the online form.



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