

Rethinking Security

for a just and peaceful world

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Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
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06 March 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

Re: External Consultation on the Integrated Review

We welcome your recent announcement of the launch of a far-reaching Integrated Review of foreign policy, defence, security and international development, to be led by you and your office. It is very much our belief that UK security policy and strategy have not been fit to respond to the challenges that the people of the UK and world face.

We particularly welcome your personal commitment of 26 February to “utilise expertise from both inside and outside government” to strengthen the Review and to offer “constructive challenge to traditional Whitehall assumptions and thinking.”

As you may be aware, there was much criticism of the strategic defence and security review (SDSR) processes conducted in 2010 and 2015 for the lack of meaningful opportunities for civil society organisations and citizens to engage with them. We welcome the Joint Committee on National Security Strategy's recommendation in its report on the last SDSR (*HL Paper 18, HC 153*) that the next review “allow more time for review and for engagement with external experts,” and that, “Such engagement must, however, be more than a tick-box exercise and must include a robust examination of the substance of the security strategy.”

Rethinking Security is a network of experts on peacebuilding, security and disarmament policy and practice, which includes many of the most experienced and active NGOs working in the field. We also have connections to many groups and individuals at the local level with a keen interest in the review and a desire to engage with it. Among other original research, we have published a comparative analysis of 20 national security strategies from European and North American countries, including recommendations on best practice.ⁱ

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We are concerned that the Review should be able to access and be challenged constructively by this wealth of expertise. It is our view that consultation should be open to the public without exception to have its say. This should include an open call and accessible forum for submissions to the government by individuals and civil society groups.

We would therefore very much welcome your response to the following questions:

- What is the timeline for the Review and its various phases?
- What is the government's plan to engage with and consult civil society on the Integrated Review?
- How will the results of consultations outside government be fed into the Review and its conclusions?
- By what mechanism may organisations and individuals not actively consulted by the government make submissions to the Review?

Thank you in advance for taking the time to respond to these questions. I enclose a copy of our comparative study of national security strategies which I hope your team will find interesting and of use.

We look forward to engaging with you and the Review as it progresses.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Reeve

Co-ordinator, Rethinking Security

Rethinking Security is a network of academics, campaigners and non-governmental organisations including Campaign Against Arms Trade, Campaign For Nuclear Disarmament, Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy, Conciliation Resources, Forces Watch, International Alert, Movement for the Abolition of War, Oxford Research Group, Peace Direct, Quaker Peace And Social Witness, Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network, Saferworld, Scientists for Global Responsibility, United Nations Association – UK, and War on Want.

ⁱ McKeon, Celia (2018) *Contrasting Narratives: A Comparative Study of European and North American National Security Strategies*, *Rethinking Security*.

<https://rethinkingsecurityorguk.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/contrasting-narratives-march-2018.pdf>