

News Release

Date: 13.08.2021 - for immediate use

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GLOBAL BRITAIN 80 YEARS AFTER THE ATLANTIC CHARTER

Saturday 14th August marks the 80th anniversary of the original Atlantic Charter. Agreed in the thick of war by Winston Churchill and President Roosevelt, this sketched out a common UK-US position on rebuilding and reordering the world after the cataclysm of the Second World War.

In a [new article](#) for Rethinking Security, Richard Reeve looks into the New Atlantic Charter signed by Boris Johnson and Joe Biden in June and finds a gaping hole where the original Charter's commitment to delegitimise use of force once stood.

The article analyses the New Atlantic Charter in the context of the UK government's recent Integrated Review and the MOD's new Integrated Operating Concept as well other current legislation.

It finds that the UK appears to be steadily pursuing the revision of international law away from its post-WW2 delegitimation of aggression and towards the restoration of its 'right to fight' to retain its privileges in a more competitive world.

See: [Reclaiming the Right to Fight: Global Britain and International Law](#)

Rethinking Security Co-ordinator and author Richard Reeve said:

"Something vast has been signed away in the New Atlantic Charter. The two powers that defined the United Nations have here forsaken the principle that the use of force is illegitimate in international relations."

"Defence Secretary Ben Wallace has said that the armed forces must now 'compete below the threshold of open conflict' and 'no longer be held as a force of last resort'. Yet negating this situation of generalised, normalised warfare is exactly what the post-1945 order under the UN Charter was supposed to ensure."

"So when the Integrated Review says that the UK 'will move from defending the status quo within the post-Cold War international system to dynamically shaping the post-COVID order', we should be wary. While the Review's explicit framing is of systemic challenge from China and opportunistic disruption by Russia, Iran and North Korea, its implicit message is that Global Britain is determined to restore its legal 'right to fight' to retain its privileges."

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. Rethinking Security Co-ordinator, Richard Reeve is available for comment – 07811 362054
2. The Rethinking Security media page and factsheet is at www.rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/media
3. The article: **Reclaiming the Right to Fight: Global Britain and International Law** can be viewed online at <https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/2021/08/12/reclaiming-the-right-to-fight/>
4. All Rethinking Security's policy work on the Integrated Review, can be viewed at <https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/policy-makers/>
5. About Rethinking Security:
 - Short description – Rethinking Security is a network of peace and security practitioners and experts.
 - Long description – Rethinking Security is a network of organisations, academics and activists working together for security based on justice, co-operation and sustainability.
6. Member organisations:
 - Campaign Against Arms Trade
 - Campaign For Nuclear Disarmament
 - Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy
 - Conciliation Resources
 - Forces Watch
 - International Alert
 - Medact
 - Movement for the Abolition of War
 - Northern Friends Peace Board
 - Peace Direct
 - Quaker Peace And Social Witness
 - Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network
 - Saferworld
 - Scientists for Global Responsibility
 - United Nations Association – UK
 - War on Want

Our work also benefits substantially from the active participation of academics from the universities of Bradford, Coventry, Kent, LSE, Oxford Brookes and York.