



## News Release

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### **INTEGRATED REVIEW CONSULTATION BELIES 'OPEN SOCIETIES' RHETORIC**

A new [briefing paper](#) from Rethinking Security and the United Nations Association UK (UNA-UK) analyses the external consultation that was supposed to inform this year's *Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy* and concludes that in important respects it marks a new low in attempts to engage society with foreign and security policy.

In failing to put people at the centre of security policy-making, and in ignoring the perspectives of those most acutely experiencing injustice and insecurity, it not only misses the opportunity for an important and necessary national conversation, it also guarantees ineffective strategy.

While the Integrated Review venerates open societies as part of the DNA of Global Britain, security policy-making in the UK remains essentially closed. Such an approach is more in keeping with the authoritarian regimes denigrated by the Review than with the open democratic societies that the UK Government will today be promoting at the Summit for Democracy.

This briefing compares the practice of the Integrated Review with previous security reviews, drawing on published methodologies and information gained from a series of Freedom of Information requests. Looking at public consultation, engagement with external expertise, and engagement with Parliament, it aims to inform better practice and contribute to Rethinking Security's [Alternative Security Review](#) project.

#### **Co-author Richard Reeve said:**

*"Despite the PM's assurances that the Integrated Review would seek external challenge to traditional Whitehall assumptions and thinking, it is hard not to conclude that external engagement was included only as an afterthought."*

*"Given the far-reaching policy announcements that were made while the Review was still in progress, we conclude that the eventual public consultations were not only inadequate and inconsistent with the government's own guidelines, but were also conducted in bad faith."*

#### **Co-author Ben Donaldson said:**

*"On public consultation the Integrated Review reaches a new low. We are repeatedly told that "openness" and "democracy" lie at the heart of "Global Britain" yet the process to define the strategy was decidedly closed. This disconnect between policymakers and the public misses an opportunity to build trust and inhibits the whole-of-society response we need tackle threats like pandemics and climate change."*



**ENDS**

**Notes to Editors**

1. Rethinking Security Co-ordinator, Richard Reeve is available for comment – 07811 362054
2. The full briefing can be read at <https://rethinkingsecurityorguk.files.wordpress.com/2021/12/briefing-external-consultation-and-the-integrated-review-09dec2021.pdf>
3. The Rethinking Security media page and factsheet is at <https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/media/media-factsheets/>
4. More details on the Alternative Security Review are available at <https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/find-out-more/alternative-security-review/>
5. All Rethinking Security's policy work on the Integrated Review, can be viewed at <https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/policy-makers/>
6. 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.
7. Member organisations
  - Campaign Against Arms Trade
  - CND
  - 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.