

Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy

Select Committee Announcement

Committee Office, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
Media Enquiries: Alex Paterson patersona@parliament.uk 020 7219 1589

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CALL FOR EVIDENCE

The Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy would welcome written submissions on the next National Security Strategy (NSS), which is expected to be published after the 2015 General Election.

The Committee aims to publish a report at the end of the year in time for the Government to respond before the General Election.

The Committee is particularly interested to hear views on the following by the **end of September**.

The UK's national security priorities

In 2010 the JCNSS said:

[The NSS] does not yet present a clear overarching strategy: a common understanding about the UK's interests and objectives that guides choices on investment across government departments, including domestic departments, as well as guiding operational priorities and crisis response. Such a strategy must be based on a realistic vision of the UK's future position in the world. (Paragraph 46)

In 2014 the JCNSS said:

A clear vision of the UK's goals and role in the world is essential for a good NSS. The Prime Minister expressed a clear vision for the UK and its place in the world in his oral evidence, but it is not one we recognised from the 2010 NSS. (Paragraph 42)

What should be the UK's national security priorities for the next twenty years, and how should these steer the next NSS?

The UK's place in the world

In 2010 the JCNSS said:

A key point of the NSS is to set priorities, and to guide choices in an era of diminished resources. While such a strategy may contain aspirational elements it must also be realistic. The NSS simultaneously recognises the rise of new global powers, shifts in the centres of economic activity, and reduced resources in the UK, while at the same time asserting "no reduction in influence". This is wholly unrealistic in the medium to long term. (Paragraph 30)

In 2014 the JCNSS said

We repeat that expecting there to be no shrinkage in the UK's influence is wholly unrealistic. Any national security strategy based on this is wishful thinking rather than credible strategy. While the Government should seek to maximise its influence, no amount of spending money carefully can change the overall picture; in the long term, the UK and its allies are in relative decline on the global stage. (Paragraph 47)

Should the UK plan to maintain its global influence? Should we aim for a national consensus on the UK's future place in the world?

Strategic choices

In 2010 the JCNSS said:

We accept that the NSS is not a "recipe book" which dictates our response to every event, but we would have expected to have seen some evidence that it had influenced decisions made since the SDSR, including the Government's responses to the Arab Spring. We have found no such evidence...If the current strategy is not guiding choices then it needs to be revised. (Paragraph 41)

In 2014 the JCNSS said:

We recommend that, as part of its planning for the next NSS, the National Security Secretariat should develop a methodology which enables the impact and likelihood of risks to be considered alongside the amount of government effort and resources that are being deployed to mitigate it. (Paragraph 29)

How can the next NSS be made most useful in guiding decisions in Government and long-term spending decisions?

International relationships

In 2010 the JCNSS said:

The Government needs to decide if the UK will continue to be as involved in US military action as we have been in the past if the US focuses on Asia-Pacific. If the US is moving towards viewing Europe as a producer rather than a consumer of security, and reducing its capability to mount long term stabilisation missions, it raises more questions as to what we can expect from the US and what the US expects from the UK. (Paragraph 60)

In 2014 the JCNSS said

The 2015 National Security Strategy will need to take account of the continuing uncertainty about the UK's role in Europe. (Paragraph 32)

Which will be the UK's critical international relationships over the next 20 years?

How should the 2015 NSS handle the uncertainty over the UK's role in Europe?

Risks and contingency planning

In 2014 the JCNSS said

In our work we have become concerned that in some areas the Government seems genuinely not to have any contingency plans. This is dangerous and unwise. (Paragraph 34)

What are the main risks to the UK's national security? Is the Government's horizon-scanning effective, and are our national contingency plans adequate?

Scope

In 2010 the JCNSS said:

We are not convinced that the Government gave sufficient attention in the NSS to the potential risks that future international economic instability might pose for UK security. (Paragraph 67)

How broadly should the NSS define national security?

We welcome submissions covering these topics, or concentrating on individual subjects or risks which the NSS should address. The Committee would like to receive submissions by the **end of September 2014**.

SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN EVIDENCE SHOULD:

- If possible, be provided electronically in MS Word or Rich Text format by e-mail to JCNSS@parliament.uk. The submission should contain your full postal address and contact details. If you have any queries on the submission of evidence contact Susan Ramsay, Committee Assistant, tel: 0207 219 2712 or JCNSS@parliament.uk.
- Begin with a one page summary if it is longer than six pages
- Have numbered paragraphs
- Avoid the use of colour or expensive-to-print material.

Submissions can also be sent by post to the Commons Clerk of the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.

Individuals and organisations interested in submitting written evidence to the Committee may find the [Commons: Guide for Witnesses](#) useful.

PLEASE ALSO NOTE THAT:

- Material already published elsewhere should not form the basis of a submission, but may be referred to within written evidence, in which case a hard copy of the published work should be included. If a number of published documents are sent to accompany written evidence, these should be listed in the covering email.
- Written evidence submitted must be kept confidential until published by the Committee, unless publication by the person or organization submitting it is specifically authorised.

- Once submitted, evidence is the property of the Committee. The Committee normally chooses to make public the written evidence it receives by publishing it on the internet (where it will be searchable).
- If there is any information you believe to be sensitive you should highlight it and explain what harm you believe would result from its disclosure. The Committee will take this into account in deciding whether to publish or further disclose the evidence.
- You should be aware that there may be circumstances in which the House of Commons will be required to communicate information to third parties on request, in order to comply with its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Background

Committee membership is as follows:

Margaret Beckett MP (<i>Labour, Derby South</i>) (Chair)	Lord Boateng (<i>Labour</i>)
Mr Adrian Bailey MP (<i>Labour/Co-op, West Bromwich West</i>)	Lord Clark of Windermere (<i>Labour</i>)
Sir Alan Beith MP (<i>Liberal Democrats, Berwick-upon-Tweed</i>)	Baroness Falkner of Margravine (<i>Liberal Democrat</i>)
Sir Malcolm Bruce MP (<i>Liberal Democrats, Gordon</i>)	Lord Forsyth of Drumlean (<i>Conservative</i>)
Mr Fabian Hamilton MP (<i>Labour, Leeds North East</i>)	Lord Levene of Portsoken (<i>Crossbench</i>)
Paul Murphy MP (<i>Labour, Torfaen</i>)	Lord MacGregor of Pulham Market (<i>Conservative</i>)
Sir Richard Ottaway MP (<i>Conservative, Croydon South</i>)	Lord Mitchell (<i>Labour</i>)
Mark Pritchard MP (<i>Conservative, The Wrekin</i>)	Baroness Neville-Jones (<i>Conservative</i>)
Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP (<i>Conservative, Kensington and Chelsea</i>)	Lord Ramsbotham (<i>Crossbench</i>)
Rory Stewart MP (<i>Conservative, Penrith and The Border</i>)	Lord West of Spithead (<i>Labour</i>)
Keith Vaz MP (<i>Labour, Leicester East</i>)	
Mr Tim Yeo MP (<i>Conservative, South Suffolk</i>)	

The Joint Committee was first established in the last Parliament, and was reappointed in December 2010. It brings together members of both Houses (including the chairs of the relevant Commons departmental select committees) to consider the National Security Strategy.

The Government published a new National Security Strategy (A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy (CM 7953)) in October 2010, alongside the Strategic Defence and Security Review (CM 7948) (SDSR). See <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/national-security>

The Committee also scrutinizes the structures for Government decision-making on National Security, particularly the role of the National Security Council and the National Security Adviser.

The Committee has published four reports, [First review of the National Security Strategy 2010, Planning for the next National Security Strategy: comments on the Government response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2010-12](#), [Work of Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy in 2012](#), and [The work of the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy in 2013-14](#).

Oral and written evidence, and the report, are available on our website. <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/national-security-strategy/publications/>

Specific Committee Information: JCNSS@parliament.uk 020 7219 2712

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Committee Website: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/national-security-strategy/>

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