Fact Sheet 2: National Security Risk Assessment

How the National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA) was carried out

The NSRA was designed to compare, assess and prioritise all major disruptive risks to our national security.

The approach builds on the existing, classified National Risk Assessment, by extending the approach to 20 years and covering <u>all</u> national security risks – including overseas events.

A full range of risks was analysed, giving greatest weight to those which are more <u>likely</u> to occur and which would have greatest <u>impact</u> (see diagram).

The most important risks to UK national security were then placed into three different tiers.



Diagram showing how the NSRA judgements were made: a risk in the top right hand corner is one that is relatively more likely and relatively more impactful

The NSC considered that the following four risks should be <u>Tier 1 risks</u> – they are judged to be the highest priorities for UK national security over the next five years, taking into account both likelihood and impact

Hostile attacks upon UK cyber space by other states and large scale cyber crime.



An **international military crisis between states,** drawing in the UK, its allies as well as other states and non-state actors.



International terrorism affecting the UK or its interests; and a significant increase in terrorism related to Northern Ireland



A major accident or natural hazard which requires a national response, such as severe coastal flooding affecting three or more regions of the UK or an influenza pandemic.



Risks in Tiers 2 and 3 are important and require action, and are the next highest priorities after Tier I

The appearance of the following risks on Tiers 2 and 3 of the National Security Risk Assessment demonstrates that they are important; but they are judged to be either less impactful and/or less likely than those in Tier 1. The SDSR sets out what the UK Government will do across all of these areas to mitigate the risks to UK national security

TIER TWO PRIORITIES:

- An attack on the UK or its Overseas Territories by another state or proxy using chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) weapons.
- Risk of major instability, insurgency or civil war overseas which creates an environment that terrorists can exploit to threaten the UK.
- A significant increase in the level of organised crime affecting the UK.
- Severe disruption to information received, transmitted or collected by satellites, possibly as the result of a deliberate attack by another state.

TIER THREE PRIORITIES

- A large scale conventional military attack on the UK by another state (not involving the use of CBRN weapons) resulting in fatalities and damage to infrastructure within the UK.
- A significant increase in the level of terrorists, organised criminals, illegal immigrants and illicit goods trying to cross the UK border to enter the UK.
- Disruption to oil or gas supplies to the UK, or price instability, as a result of war, accident, major political upheaval or deliberate manipulation of supply by producers.
- A major release of radioactive material from a civil nuclear site within the UK which affects one or more regions.
- A conventional attack by a state on another NATO or EU member to which the UK would have to respond.
- An attack on a UK overseas territory as the result of a sovereignty dispute or a wider regional conflict.
- Short to medium term disruption to international supplies of resources (e.g. food, minerals) essential to the UK.

The NSRA has been used to inform the decision-making process of the Strategic Defence and Security Review

The NSRA allowed the National Security Council to make judgements about the relative importance of different types of risks, and the capabilities required to mitigate them.

Higher priority does not automatically mean greater resources, because some capabilities are inherently more costly than others. Some are already well resourced, and others less so. But overall, the risks in the top priority band drive a prioritisation of capabilities.