

Fact Sheet 20: Foreign Policy and Engagement Overseas

Putting Foreign Policy at the heart of national security....

The National Security Council (NSC) recognises that an active foreign policy is at the heart of our national security. In today's climate international relations are more important than ever. Threats are less predictable than they once were. They come from a wider variety of sources, which increasingly include non-state actors.

Opportunities are also changing. We need to be ready to exploit and respond to changing economic and political centres of gravity while protecting our security and upholding our values.

The SDSR concluded that to meet these threats and exploit these opportunities the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) should lead an active and engaged foreign policy, including engaging early to tackle potential threats before they manifest themselves on our shores.

This will be delivered through a global network serving the whole of the British Government. We are represented in more than 170 countries. Our Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates will pursue a new more focussed mandate. We will:

- safeguard Britain's national security by countering terrorism and weapons proliferation, and working to reduce conflict;
- build Britain's prosperity by increasing exports and investment, opening markets, ensuring access to resources, and promoting sustainable global growth;
- support British citizens around the world through modern and efficient consular services.

....in an effective and efficient way....

The review commits to a fully integrated foreign policy, using all the tools of government together to achieve our goals. Aligning diplomatic, development, economic, defence and intelligence engagement in a given country, and supporting that alignment with co-location in a single Mission, maximises our chances of achieving our objectives and makes good economic sense. Examples of where this is already happening include Afghanistan, where representatives of the FCO and a number of other government departments are co-located and work to common goals set by the NSC.

....adaptable and flexible....

The review also commits to more adaptability and flexibility, including through a commitment to work more closely with international partners to achieve our foreign policy and security objectives. The overseas network will not be static. As threats and economic opportunities change, so the network will subtly shift emphasis. Work has already begun to create a more flexible network, with a shift in resources from Europe to Africa, Asia and the Middle East. We will place more emphasis on relations with emerging powers/ high growth markets (e.g. Brazil, India, China, Turkey and Indonesia), as well as strategically vital partners in the Gulf and North Africa.

The FCO and UKTI have already launched a Commercial Diplomacy Taskforce with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and have begun a Gulf Initiative to deepen our relations with regional countries vital to the UK's security and economic interests.

New, flexible forms of diplomacy will include regional coverage from central hubs, deploying mobile consuls to follow tourism patterns, rapid deployment teams for reaching crises quickly, and extending the use of digital media to reach and influence more audiences.



...working with others...

As well as increasing internal coordination, the UK aims to increase coordination with international partners. It makes sense for the same reasons: integrating efforts reduces duplication, increases effectiveness, and costs less than attempting to do things alone.

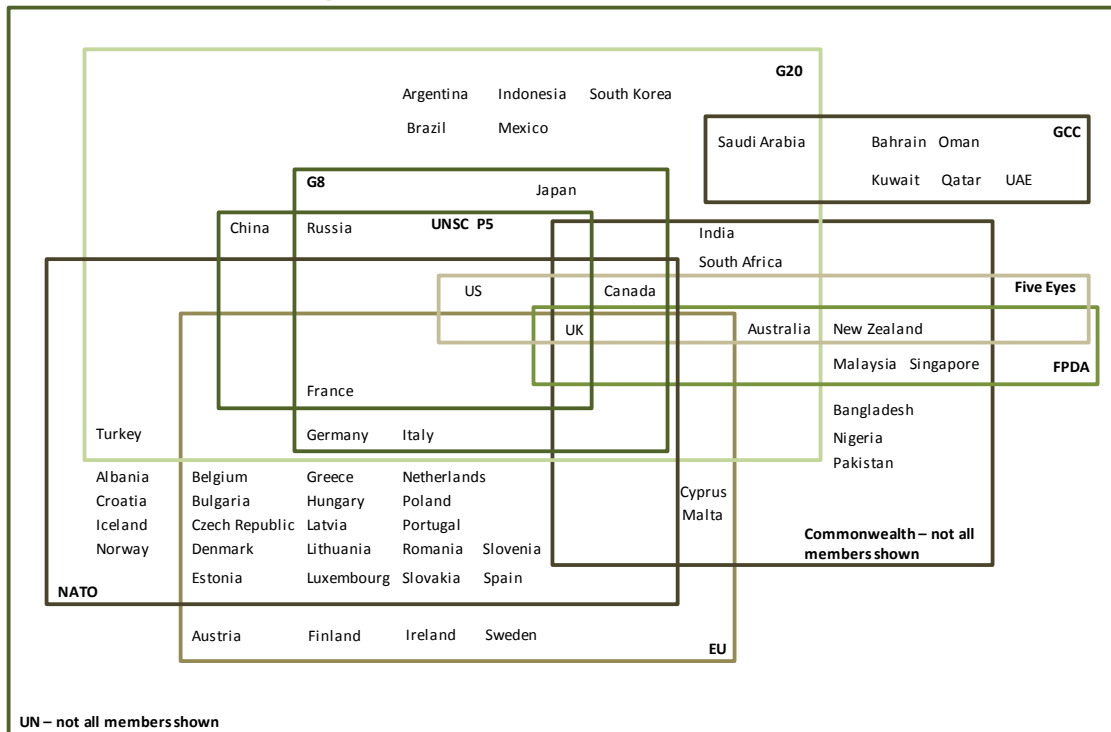
The UK will build bilateral defence and security relationships with a range of key partners and on a range of security issues. These will include countries who are: close allies; emerging economic powers; key regional states with whom we might wish to act to address common security interests; countries who supply us with energy and other natural resources; and states at risk of failure whose capacity we can help to build.



We'll work with them to manage risks, adapt to new challenges, and exploit opportunities. This might include influencing others, supporting development and jointly funding projects and programmes. Where the right conditions exist, it can also mean building joint defence capabilities. Where we can, and where it makes sense, we'll share overseas premises with international partners.

The UK is an influential member of key international institutions and we will continue to use our position to support and strengthen multilateral institutions such as the UN, the IFIs, the EU, NATO, G8, G20, the Commonwealth, the OSCE and organisations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Alliances and Partnerships



We will commit to collective security via a rules-based international system, a sustainable, open global economy that drives wealth creation across the globe and effective and reformed international institutions. And we will continue to support the development of regional organisations such as the African Union and the Association of South East Asian Nations.

...to safeguard security, prosperity and our citizens around the world.

Our strategy reflects the country that we want to be: a prosperous, secure, modern and outward-looking nation, confident in its values and ideas. We must be a nation that is able to bring together all the instruments of its national power to build a secure and resilient UK, help shape a stable world and meet our international obligations. Our outlook will be characterised by flexibility and resilience and underpinned by a firm commitment to human rights, justice and the rule of law.