



HM Government

National Security Strategy 2025

Security for the British people in a
dangerous world

CP 1338

June 2025



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Security for the British people
in a dangerous world

Presented to Parliament by The Prime Minister
by Command of His Majesty

June 2025



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Contents

PM Foreword	4
Introduction	8
The Strategic Context: Navigating an era of radical uncertainty	14
Confrontation	16
Competition	17
Cooperation	18
Strategic Framework	20
Pillar (i) – Security at Home	21
Section (1) – Defend our territory	22
Section (2) – Make the UK a harder target	25
Section (3) – Build resilience to future threats	27
Pillar (ii) – Strength Abroad	29
Section (1) – Bolster collective security	30
Section (2) – Renew and deepen our alliances	33
Section (3) – Develop new relationships in new domains	35
Pillar (iii) – Increase Sovereign and Asymmetric Capabilities	41
Section (1) – Rebuild our defence industrial base	42
Section (2) – Identify, nurture and protect other sovereign capabilities	44
Section (3) – Pursue asymmetric advantage	46
Conclusion	51

PM Foreword



National Security is the first responsibility of any government, that never changes. But as the world changes, the way we discharge that responsibility must change with it. And the world *has* changed. Russian aggression menaces our continent. Strategic competition is intensifying. Extremist ideologies are on the rise. Technology is transforming the nature of both war and domestic security. Hostile state activity takes place on British soil. It is an era of radical uncertainty, and we must navigate it with agility, speed and a clear-eyed sense of the national interest. That is what keeping the British people safe demands. This document sets out our strategy.

We are guided by our values and our history. The United Kingdom is a founding member of NATO and I am immensely proud that it was a Labour government that played a role in its creation. We are a champion of collective security on our continent and beyond. Together with our allies, we have shown that strength remains the only effective response towards tyrants like Putin. And we stand unashamedly for freedom, democracy and internationalism.

In a world where these values come under attack, our resolve is even more important. Co-operation is in the national interest; our alliances must be deepened. This is why I have been so determined to repair the United Kingdom's international standing. Our reputation as a stable partner was damaged by the previous government's chaos. We have restored it because it is essential for our national security.

Yet from that great post-war period, we should also now recall three lessons that are fundamental to our national security today.

First, that foreign policy should answer directly to the concerns of working people. After all, the challenges we face already impact their lives. Wars drive up their bills. Cyber-attacks undermine their public services. Criminals smuggle illegal migrants across our borders. The lesson is clear: delivering my Plan for Change requires us to bring foreign and domestic policy together.

Second, that collective security, led by NATO, remains the cornerstone of our strategy. Our alliances remain robust, but for both their ongoing health and our own national interest we must now increase the sovereign strengths that underpin our national security.

Third, that nations are strongest when they are bound together by a shared purpose. One look at the world today shows the security challenges we face demand nothing less than national unity. Therefore, it is no longer enough merely to manage risks or react to new circumstances. We must also now mobilise every element of society towards a collective national effort.

That is the animating idea of this entire strategy – a hardening and sharpening of our approach. It means viewing higher living standards as an essential national security goal. It means restoring security to our borders as a crucial test of fairness and social cohesion. It means marshalling our comparative advantage in science and technology to create new opportunities for working people, as well as putting ourselves at the cutting edge of cyber defence. And it means we must strengthen our approach to domestic security, where threats continue to grow in their scale and complexity. Not just in terms of terrorism as traditionally understood, though that threat endures. Also, by strengthening our approach to the growing challenge of violence-fixated individuals and self-initiated terrorists.

However, perhaps the biggest implications of this strategic shift are for our national defence. Since coming to office, this government has responded to the generationally high threats to our security with the biggest sustained investment in our defence since the Cold War. Yet it is also clear that to keep up with our adversaries and strengthen the NATO alliance, we must go further still. That is why, as part of this strategy, we make a historic commitment to spend 5% of our GDP on national security by 2035.

We should view this as an opportunity. I have long argued that issues like energy security are vital for our national security. Meanwhile investment in our wider economic resilience is clearly a crucial component of our defence, as well as our mission to deliver growth that improves the living standards of the British people. That is an argument made in our manifesto, in the recent Strategic Defence Review and which increasingly shapes the thinking of our NATO allies. So the United Kingdom, as it always has, will step up to meet its obligations to NATO. But just as important, we will use this pledge to renew our social contract.

I am convinced this can be done. We can unleash a 'defence dividend' that will renew industrial communities the length and breadth of our country. We can generate the jobs, growth and wages we need to bring the country together, guided by my Plan for Change. And we can unite society behind a simple argument that economic security is national security.

Strength on the international stage has always been vital for our national security. Now, we can use national security to strengthen our country.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keir Starmer', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer MP
Prime Minister



Crowds waving flags line the Mall during the VE Day 80 procession and flypast in London.

Introduction

1. National security is the first responsibility of government and the foundation for our prosperity and way of life, along with secure borders and a stable economy. It means protecting the British people, promoting British interests and making the country stronger, more sovereign and more competitive in the long-term.
2. Protecting the UK and promoting British interests is becoming increasingly hard, however. Threats are proliferating. We are entering a period in which we are likely to face **indirect and potentially direct confrontation with adversaries**, the **intensification of strategic competition** – including the increasing salience of nuclear weapons in the policies, doctrines and approaches of our adversaries – and a **radical renegotiation of the terms on which we cooperate** with allies and other partners, with major implications for how and where we invest our resources.
3. The UK must therefore adapt its approach to national security in response to dramatic changes in the world around us, and to growing threats at home and in cyberspace. Decisions taken in the next few years – on illegal migration, the future of Ukraine, Euro-Atlantic security, the Middle East, the Indo-Pacific and in the fields of science and technology – have the potential to reverberate through the rest of this decade and beyond. Our ability to ensure public safety, on our streets and online, defend our democracy and generate economic growth will be tested. So it is vital that we approach the coming years with a hard-headed understanding of the strategic context and clarity about what we are *trying* to achieve, and what we *can* achieve.
4. The purpose of *National Security Strategy 2025: Security for the British People in a Dangerous World* (NSS 2025) is: to identify the main challenges we face as a nation in an era of radical uncertainty; and to set out a **new Strategic Framework** in response, covering all aspects of national security and international policy. This includes three mutually reinforcing components: (i) security at home; (ii) strength abroad; and (iii) increased sovereign and asymmetric capabilities.
5. NSS 2025 brings together the various strands of work relating to national security that have been underway since the 2024 general election. This includes the Strategic Defence Review (SDR), Strategic Security Review, AUKUS Review, Resilience Strategy, China Audit, the Industrial and Trade Strategies and work on supply chains, intelligence assessment, development assistance, soft power, artificial intelligence (AI) and technological advantage. While recognising the uncertainty of the present moment and the need for continued adaptation, NSS 2025 is designed to last the duration of this Parliament.

6. This work takes on new significance because of our 2025 NATO Summit pledge - a historic commitment to spend 5% of GDP on national security. This is a generational increase in defence and security spending, underlining the UK's commitment to national security and honouring our commitment to be a leader in NATO. As the second largest economy in Europe and the third largest in NATO, this will have a considerable impact on the strength of our alliance. The UK has long argued that NATO needs to focus more on national resilience as well as conventional military threats. We have set the foundations for a new era for defence in the SDR. But unless we do more to increase our competitiveness and sovereign strengths – in crucial areas like science and frontier technology – we will lose our ability to generate wealth and risk falling behind our adversaries. National security today means so much more than it used to – from the health of our economy, to food prices, to supply chains, from safety on the streets to the online world. And as we move to 5%, we need a plan for how we will maximise this opportunity to make our nation stronger. That is the purpose of NSS 2025.
7. Taken as a whole, NSS 2025 represents **a hardening and a sharpening of our approach to national security** across all areas of policy, already seen in a shift towards more investment in hard power and an emphasis on increasing the lethality of our armed forces. This needs to be accompanied by **realism and frankness about the world in which we operate**. The months and years ahead will see difficult compromises and trade-offs on resource allocation and prioritisation, short-term and long-term goals and, potentially, values and interests. We have already taken the difficult decision to cut spending on overseas development to allow us to increase investment in our armed forces. More tough choices can be expected as we head towards higher spending on defence and national security.
8. Against this backdrop, NSS 2025 therefore signals the need for a **major cultural shift in government to help us navigate the new era in which we find ourselves**. We will need to be **more unapologetic and systematic in pursuit of our national interests**. These interests will be defined as *the long-term security and social and economic wellbeing of the British people*.
9. It remains the case – as it has been for many decades – that British interests are best served by the preservation of international security and effective multilateral cooperation on issues from economic stability to energy policy. However, we must equally recognise that many people in the UK feel exposed to the negative effects of globalisation – such as de-industrialisation and mass migration – and see the rules being ignored, undermined or flouted by others, to their disadvantage. Answering such concerns will be at the forefront of our agenda. Meanwhile, we are entering a period in which we may have to act outside our comfort zone and take extraordinary steps if we are to strengthen our borders, deter and defend ourselves against threats, and achieve both technological advantage and our higher objectives of growth and renewal. In other words, multilateralism and institution building will not be enough. Our statecraft needs to adapt to a world in which there will be fiercer competition and a more transactional approach on migration, defence, trade, energy, technology and raw materials.

10. It follows that the starting point of the government's approach to national security is to **identify, anticipate, address and tackle risks to the British people and homeland** (including the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies). This threat-focused paradigm places particular importance on the role of our armed forces, intelligence, security and law enforcement agencies. The SDR has identified the most acute threat as that posed by Russia and prescribed a NATO-first but not NATO-only plan for the modernisation of our military – with a more integrated digitally-enabled and lethal force. The Strategic Security Review has identified the need to address a wide range of threats to domestic security – from terrorism, serious organised crime, and extremism to state threats – to which our responses are outlined in this document.
11. However, NSS 2025 is also clear that taking a defensive crouch – in which the primary activity is to manage risk – will not be sufficient to deliver on the government's agenda, including the Plan for Change. Instead, as NSS 2025 lays out, we will **adopt a campaigning approach to: minimise the ability of others to coerce us or undermine the foundations of our national strength; and maximise opportunities to enhance our security and prosperity, sometimes acting alone but mostly acting in concert with others**. This will require ingenuity, creativity and calculated risk, as well as consistency, perseverance and effective implementation. It will be built around a **long-term goal to build the necessary sovereign capabilities and competitive edge** that ensures we take control of our own future in an uncertain world. As such, when we come out of this period of turbulence, the net assessment of our position should be that we are in a stronger position – economically, militarily, diplomatically and in terms of overall resilience and national well-being – with respect to adversaries and competitors than we were before.
12. There are **important areas of continuity in NSS 2025** to stress at the outset. We will build on strong foundations in our armed forces, diplomatic service and intelligence, security and law enforcement agencies. Despite the persistent threat from terrorists and extremism, we have one of the best-regarded domestic security and counter-terrorism systems in the world, disrupting 43 late-stage terrorist attack plots between 2017 and 2024. We have a lattice-work of international partnerships and a seat at the table of global decision making, such as at the IMF and World Bank and our permanent membership of the UN Security Council. Our highly skilled and admired diplomatic presence across the globe, with deep expertise in multilateralism, development and conflict resolution helps us tackle challenges such as emerging security crises or mass migration. We remain committed to addressing the threats from the climate and nature crisis to our national security and economic prosperity. Alongside our international partners, we are taking action to deliver secure energy, financial security and green growth at home, restoring the UK's position as a climate leader on the world stage. Our relationships with the US and Europe will be our priority focus, as they have been historically. We will continue to abide by the important principle – shared by NATO and its key partners – that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions are inextricably linked. We will maintain our major capability programmes such as AUKUS and Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP) and our partnerships in economically vibrant and geopolitically important regions like the Gulf and Asia. We will cultivate existing national strengths across the Union, such as our soft power and cultural reach and our financial, services, science and technology, energy and higher education sectors.

13. However, there are a number of **distinguishing characteristics to NSS 2025** that show how we are hardening and sharpening our methods, while breaking new ground from previous national security reviews. A shift to 5% of GDP on national security requires us to align our national security objectives and plans for economic growth in a way not seen since 1945. Therefore, the essence of our approach will be: to **harness the nation’s productive, industrial, technological and scientific strengths more closely to our national security objectives to an extent not seen since wartime**; and to do more to **answer the concerns of everyday British working people through a more systematic approach to pursuing national interests**. That will start at home with new measures to **make the UK a harder target** for adversaries and criminals, accepting that we cannot stop every hostile actor. From that basis, our **foremost mission beyond our shores will be to revise and reforge our collective security arrangements** – starting with the Euro-Atlantic, strengthening NATO with new burden-sharing arrangements and fortifying Ukraine – to **achieve long-term deterrence against adversaries**. As part of this, and to spur more economic growth, we will: pursue **greater strategic depth in our key alliances**, from security to trade to deepening technological and nuclear cooperation; **build resilience into our defence industrial base**; and introduce a **new emphasis on developing sovereign capabilities and asymmetric advantage** as a nation, from innovation in frontier technologies to nuclear-powered submarines.
14. In support of this new approach, we will:
- **Expand our legal and law enforcement toolkit**, to ensure the UK becomes a harder target for hostile state and non-state actors including criminal gangs engaged in illegal migration.
 - **Roll out a series of new measures to strengthen our borders, defend our territory and enhance the resilience of our critical national infrastructure**, ranging from enhanced defence of our island territory to stronger upstream measures and cyber capabilities.
 - **Deliver the largest sustained investment in our armed forces since the Cold War**, with an emphasis on greater lethality, warfighting readiness, deeper stockpiles of munitions and innovation in, and adoption of, new technologies.
 - **Introduce an explicit prioritisation of NATO in our defence planning** as part of our efforts to bolster collective security, alongside the delivery of major capabilities like AUKUS and GCAP that complement but are not tied to NATO alone.
 - **Place a new premium on the “defence dividend” for the UK** – translating increased investment into more British jobs, skills and a stronger and more resilient defence industrial base, supported by major procurement reforms.
 - **Pursue both a deeper trade, technology and security deal with the United States and a closer economic and strategic partnership with the European Union**, going further than the agreements we have already struck and supporting our objective of achieving greater strategic depth with key allies.
 - **Sharpen our diplomatic focus on countries that are geographically dispersed but economically vibrant and technologically advanced** – particularly those (from Canada through the Gulf States, to India, Indonesia, Singapore, Japan, South Korea,

Australia and New Zealand) who are interested in cooperation on trade and security, sit outside large regulatory blocs and share a similar interest in shaping international norms to mitigate and manage the effects of great power competition.

- **Identify, nurture and protect sovereign areas of strength in the UK's industrial, scientific and technological base** with the explicit goals of improving our knowledge and research base, enhancing economic security, achieving breakthroughs or leads in key sectors, boosting our economy and enhancing our leverage within a broader international ecosystem.
 - **Build the UK national security agenda for AI and other frontier technologies** around three pillars: creating more national capacity (including data, research, investment, talent and regulation); accelerating adoption in key sectors; and advancing understanding of the national security risks.
15. Bringing this together, we will seek to partner with all parts of society, business, academia and devolved and local governments in a **new national resilience effort** on the journey to 5%. This process starts with building greater public awareness of the threats we face, outlined in the Strategic Context that follows, and builds towards a new social contract between government and the British people, spanning across every corner of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.



A Seaman Specialist on the bridge of the HMS Prince of Wales, transiting the Red Sea en route to the western Pacific, 30 May 2025

The Strategic Context: Navigating an era of radical uncertainty

- 1. We are entering a new era that will be characterised by radical uncertainty.** The international order is being reshaped by an intensification of great power competition, authoritarian aggression and extremist ideologies. It is unclear when a more stable equilibrium will emerge and on what terms it will be governed. There is the very real prospect of even greater geopolitical volatility and exposure to economic shocks, exacerbated by technological changes and other persistent transnational threats.
- 2. In the years ahead, countries will become more assertive in pursuing their own goals and more willing to generate and exercise state power in pursuit of their vital interests.** This will manifest itself in fiercer competition for resources, military modernisation, technological competition, economic coercion, increased hybrid threats and the more frequent testing of international norms and boundaries by major powers – as we have seen in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and the Pacific region in recent years.
- 3. Many of the rules which have governed the international system in the past are eroding.** Global commons are being contested by major powers like China and Russia, seeking to establish control and secure resources in outer space, cyberspace, the deep sea, and at the Arctic and Antarctic poles. There will be less scope for agreement on mechanisms which protect fair trade, set controls on science and technological developments and mitigate the effects of climate change, as multilateral institutions decline in influence.
- 4. The foundations of strategic stability are being challenged.** The threat to the UK and our allies from nuclear weapons is once again growing. Tackling this challenge is likely to be more complex than it was even in the Cold War, with more states with more nuclear weapons, the further proliferation of nuclear and disruptive technology, and the failure of international arms control arrangements to keep pace.
- 5. The UK's national security and growth objectives will be profoundly affected by tensions between the major powers and regulatory blocs on trade, technology and defence.** The way we have traded in the past will have to be adapted as open economies outside these major blocs will face increasing protectionism, restrictions on free trade and limitations on access to resources. Economic coercion will become more common as other states weaponise trade or use export controls and supply chain dependencies to gain advantage.
- 6. Large global companies and small start-ups will play a significant role in this competition, particularly in the development of the scientific and technological capabilities that underpin states' military and economic strength.** For this reason

the most successful of these companies are likely to exert increasing economic, political and societal influence. The relationship between the private sector and the state will become more important. Innovation will be fuelled by flows of venture capital, private equity and institutional investments (over which democratic states have less control than authoritarian regimes).

7. **Transnational challenges may become more acute and are likely to exacerbate other national security challenges.** We will have to contend with the effects of climate change and potential ecosystem collapse, biological threats, demographic shifts, continued urbanisation, threats to human health, slow economic growth, inequality, and competition for basic resources, including food and water. Increased migration and population displacement will continue to place pressure on borders, infrastructure and public services, and potentially increase distrust and disinformation.
8. **Science and technology are becoming ever more important domains of strategic competition.** Technological advancements, particularly in quantum computing, engineering biology and AI, will accelerate innovation and bring benefits to our prosperity, health, education and security. But it will also mean greater competition for sources of energy and critical minerals. The frontrunners in this competition could achieve technological predominance, especially if they can secure a first-adopter advantage in the most promising fields (such as transformative AI). The speed of innovation will mean international regulations, safety standards and law enforcement responses will struggle to keep pace. Countries will use many different levers to encourage the emergence of national champions at the frontier of AI and other critical technologies, building public-private partnerships with global players to ensure they can secure access to the best capabilities and seeking to gain advantage by influencing the development of digital technical standards.
9. **Technology will also create new vulnerabilities and change the character of conflict.** New chemical and biological weapons may be developed and proliferate. Hypersonic missiles and AI-enhanced systems will be supplemented by mass-produced, low sophistication capabilities like drones. Some of these technologies will be available to a wider range of threat actors, posing new challenges to traditional concepts of deterrence and escalation.
10. **Threats to the homeland from state actors are increasing.** The UK is directly threatened by hostile activities including assassination, intimidation, espionage, sabotage, cyber attacks and other forms of democratic interference. These have targeted our citizens, institutions, journalists, universities and businesses. Adversaries threaten societal cohesion and seek to erode public trust through the spread of disinformation, malign use of social media and stoking tensions between generations, genders and ethnic groups. Meanwhile, critical national infrastructure – including undersea cables, energy pipelines, transportation and logistics hubs – will continue to be a target. It may become more difficult to identify hostile state activity as they make use of terrorist and criminal groups as their proxies. Our reliance on data centres and other forms of digital infrastructure will also increase vulnerabilities to cyber attack.

11. **The combined threat from terrorists, criminals and lone actors will evolve as instability overseas feeds radicalisation and extremism in the UK.** Ungoverned spaces in the Middle East and North Africa will accentuate these challenges, along with illegal migration. Terrorism – from Islamist and Extreme Right Wing ideologies – will remain a persistent, and diversifying threat. Hybrid and tech-enabled methods are increasingly being used as part of the terrorist toolkit. The number of vulnerable young people who are desensitised, exploited and radicalised online is likely to increase, alongside more individuals who are fixated by extreme violence. This will be compounded by the proliferation of illegal activity and harmful content online and the use of end-to-end encryption which frustrates law enforcement efforts. Alongside this, organised crime will remain the most corrosive, day-to-day threat to most UK citizens, with new technologies lowering the barrier for entry and exacerbating illicit finance, cyber attacks and online fraud, cross-border drugs, child sexual abuse and human trafficking.
12. These trends in the national security context are likely to force difficult choices and dilemmas upon us within a very short time frame. They are also likely to manifest themselves as strategic challenges which are more pressing and severe than at any time in decades. These include: **confrontation with adversaries** (indirect and potentially direct); **competition with other states** (which will be both systematic and strategic in nature); and **cooperation** (which will become harder but arguably even more important than ever before).

Confrontation

13. **We are in an era in which we face confrontation with those who are threatening our security.** The most obvious and pressing example of this is Russia in its illegal war against a European neighbour. Ukrainians are paying the ultimate price as they find themselves at the frontline of this confrontation. This war has been accompanied with a campaign of indirect and sub-threshold activity – including cyber attacks and sabotage – by Russia against the UK and other NATO allies and the use of increased nuclear rhetoric in an attempt to constrain our decision making. Iranian hostile activity on British soil is also increasing, as part of the Iranian regime's efforts to silence its critics abroad as well as directly threatening the UK. Meanwhile, some adversaries are laying the foundations for future conflict, positioning themselves to move quickly to cause major disruption to our energy and or supply chains, to deter us from standing up to their aggression. For the first time in many years, we have to actively prepare for the possibility of the UK homeland coming under direct threat, potentially in a wartime scenario.
14. **The likelihood of contingencies in which we may be asked, or choose, to confront threats by the use of military force is growing.** We have seen groups like the Houthis threaten the essential principle of freedom of navigation with attacks on civilian shipping in the Red Sea, as well as on the allied navies there to protect them (leading to UK military action). Elements of the UK's armed forces have been shifted into a state of heightened readiness on a number of occasions in different theatres. Therefore, greater vigilance in all domains will be essential to continue to deter those who seek to

undermine our territorial security, such as in monitoring and countering the activities of Russian surveillance vessels in British waters.

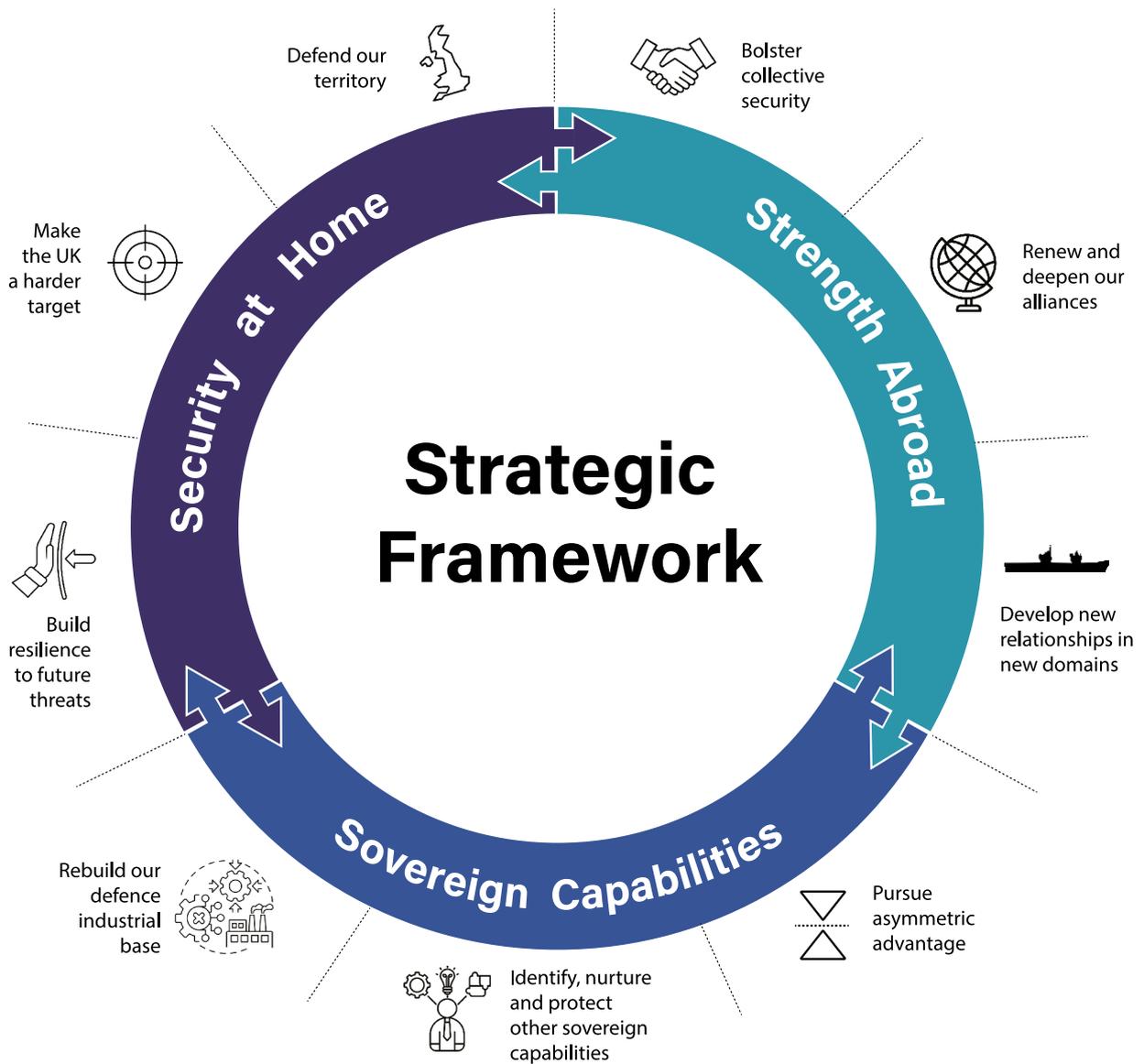
15. **Warfare between major powers, an international security crisis, or a situation with multiple-contingencies across different regions, is an active possibility.** Tensions between India and Pakistan have reached their highest levels for decades. The possibility of major confrontation in the Indo-Pacific continues to grow, with dangerous and destabilising Chinese activity threatening international security. We have seen direct military conflict between Israel and Iran. This follows years of aggressive and destabilising activity by the Iranian regime which has included activity specifically targeted against UK interests at home and overseas. Significant escalation in any of these theatres would have a profoundly negative impact on our energy security, the cost of living and our ability to grow our economy.

Competition

16. **Alongside this period of confrontation, we and our allies are engaged in medium- to long-term systemic and strategic competition with those who do not share our values, have divergent interests, or have the capability to undermine our security and prosperity.** This applies to every aspect of our domestic and foreign policy and not just traditional defence and security concerns. Just like in the era of the First and Second World Wars, in the next decade those nations that are able to harness productive power – and mobilise all their assets towards strategic objectives – will end up in a position of comparative advantage.
17. **Authoritarian states are putting in place multi-year plans to out-compete liberal democracies in every domain, from military modernisation to science and technology development, from their economic models to the information space.** Since 2022, for example, Russia has massively increased defence spending, not just to prosecute war against Ukraine but also to replenish its defence industrial base and threaten others in its neighbourhood. As the second largest economy in the world, with strong central government control, the challenge of competition from China – which ranges from military modernisation to an assertion of state power that encompasses economic, industrial, science and technology policy – has potentially huge consequences for the lives of British citizens.
18. **A major feature of this competition is the willingness of adversaries and competitors to work more closely together.** This is both strategic and opportunistic. North Korea not only threatens its neighbours in Asia through ballistic missile testing; it has sent thousands of troops to support Russia's illegal war in Ukraine, directly confronting those seeking to preserve European security. Iran has delivered missiles and drones to Russia while China has helped Putin maintain his defence industrial base. As our adversaries and competitors engage in further military modernisation, issues like technology transfer and sanctions enforcement are going to become increasingly important.

Cooperation

19. **In this period of rapid change and uncertainty, it will be more important than ever before that the UK has strong alliances.** This remains a major source of our competitive strategic advantage. Traditionally our adversaries have been less effective at working within a coalition, with the trust and stability ensured by the types of decades-long alliances and partnerships we have built in groups like NATO, the G7, or Five Eyes.
20. **Yet the assumptions underlying our alliances are undergoing a fundamental change – perhaps the most significant in 70 years.** Alongside this, there is major re-balancing underway in the international system. The United States, in particular, has consistently made clear to European allies that they need to spend more on defence. Related to this, allies will need to further improve interoperability and the compatibility of their collective defence industrial base.
21. **Transactionalism will increase in the years ahead, with states relying more on pragmatic bilateral deals and minilateral groupings to achieve their objectives.** But working towards internationally-agreed regulation and norms, stewarded by institutions – will also remain vital. There will be opportunities to deepen strategic ties with traditional allies. At the same time, it may become more common to work more closely with those with different values where mutual interests are identified. Agility and flexibility will be crucial.



Strategic Framework

This Framework sets out the overarching principles that will guide the UK's response to the context set out in the previous section. The three pillars are mutually reinforcing. Security at home provides the essential foundation from which to project strength abroad and to nurture our unique national strengths. Working with others overseas is essential to our ability to protect people and grow our economy. Developing sovereign capabilities keeps us safe at home, boosts our economic productivity and increases our international influence.

(i) SECURITY AT HOME

- Defend our territory
- Make the UK a harder target
- Build resilience to future threats

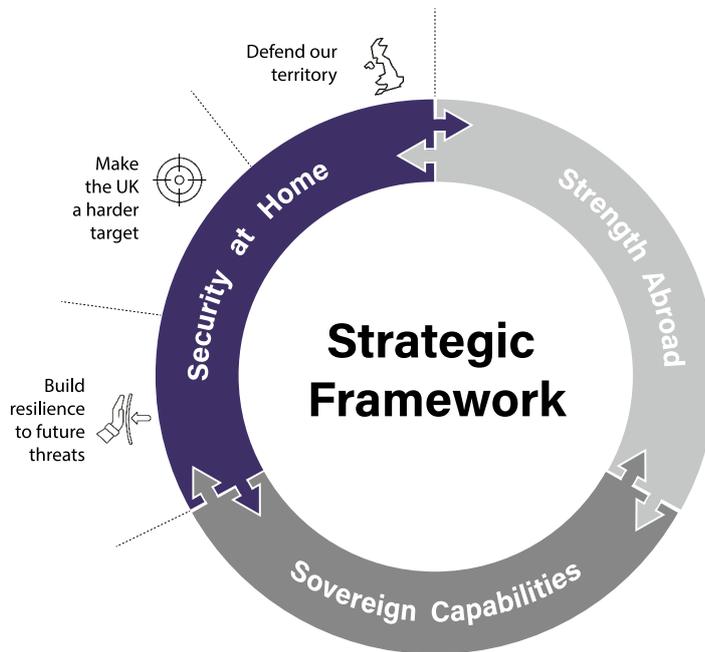
(ii) STRENGTH ABROAD

- Bolster collective security
- Renew and refresh key alliances
- Develop new partnerships in new domains

(ii) INCREASE SOVEREIGN AND ASYMMETRIC CAPABILITIES

- Rebuild our defence industrial base
- Identify, nurture and protect other sovereign capabilities
- Pursue asymmetric advantage

Pillar (i) – Security at Home



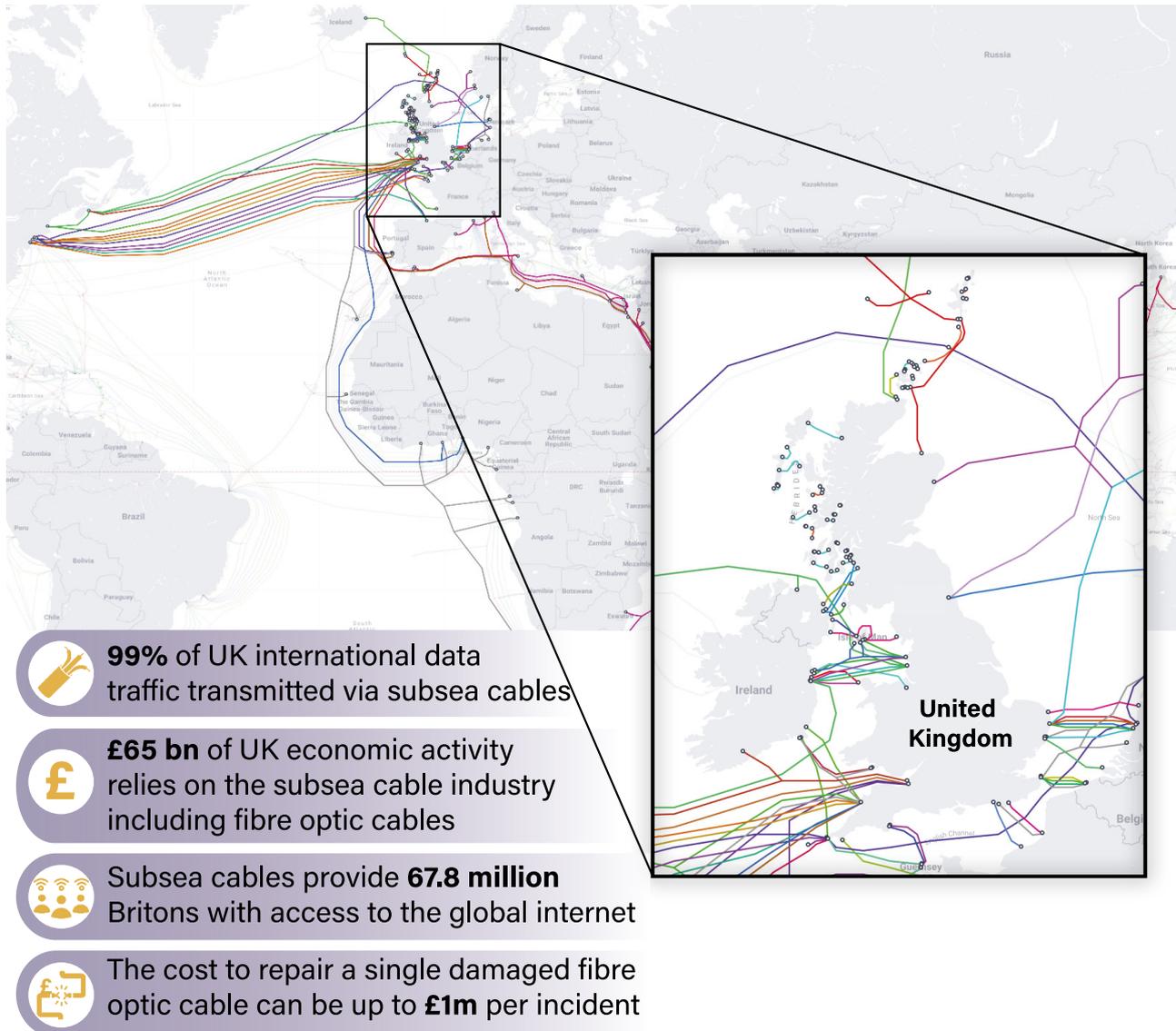
1. The first pillar of our Strategic Framework is to protect our people, bolster the security of our homeland and strengthen our borders against all types of threats, both in the physical and online space. Without security and resilience at home, we cannot deliver economic growth or any of the other government missions to improve the lives of the British people.
2. The vital work of the police and the security and intelligence agencies – often in the shadows, often in secret, and often at great personal danger – is indispensable in keeping our communities safe. But today’s hybrid, technology-enabled threat is testing their ability to operate safely, securely and covertly more than ever before. Hostile activity on British soil from countries like Russia and Iran is increasing, threatening our people, critical national infrastructure and prosperity. Illegal migration, enabled by criminal gangs, continues to cause strains on our public services and social fabric, including people’s perception of justice and fairness. Global terrorist groups pose a persistent and enduring threat – directing, projecting and enabling plots in the UK – while we also see increasing numbers of individuals with no fixed ideology who are violence-fixated, driven and enabled by the online environment. The combined and overlapping threats from state actors, terrorists and extremists, and organised criminals – magnified by technology – pose new and evolving risks to our economy, our democracy and our way of life.
3. These multiple and interconnected threats require us to make ourselves a harder target to our adversaries. As a first step, the defence of our borders and territorial waters must be strengthened. This will begin with an upstream approach, working with our international partners as part of a collective response to challenges like illegal migration. Second, we are taking new measures to frustrate and deny hostile actors who seek to take advantage of our openness as a democracy. As part of this, we must increase the

cyber and economic security defences which are vital to our ability to achieve innovation and growth. Finally, we need to increase our preparations for potential threats on the horizon, from future pandemics to energy and supply chain disruption and climate change induced threats to our food security.

Section (1) – Defend our territory

4. An island nation needs to be able to control its borders and maritime environment. Security at home requires monitoring and managing who and what enters our waters and airspace. The UK depends on subsea fibre optic cables for 99% of its digital communications and approximately three quarters of the UK's total gas supply comes from subsea pipelines. Our territorial security therefore begins at sea – from our ability to stop criminal gangs and deter hostile states to the import of food and energy supplies.
5. The Royal Navy will take a leading and coordinating role in securing undersea infrastructure and maritime traffic carrying the information, energy and goods upon which we depend. Under Operation Atlantic Bastion, we will counter the persistent and growing underwater threats from Russian submarines and the shadow fleet. Changes to our Rules of Engagement means our warships can now do more to track vessels we suspect of spying or conducting sabotage. Under UK leadership, the ten-nation Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) is increasing efforts to track potential threats to subsea infrastructure and the Russian shadow fleet at its operational headquarters in Northwood. Our NATO allies are also helping us defend our waters through the UK-hosted NATO Maritime Command, as well as Operation Baltic Sentry, which ensures Russian ships cannot operate in secrecy near UK or NATO territory.

Fibre-optic subsea cables carry 99% of UK digital data



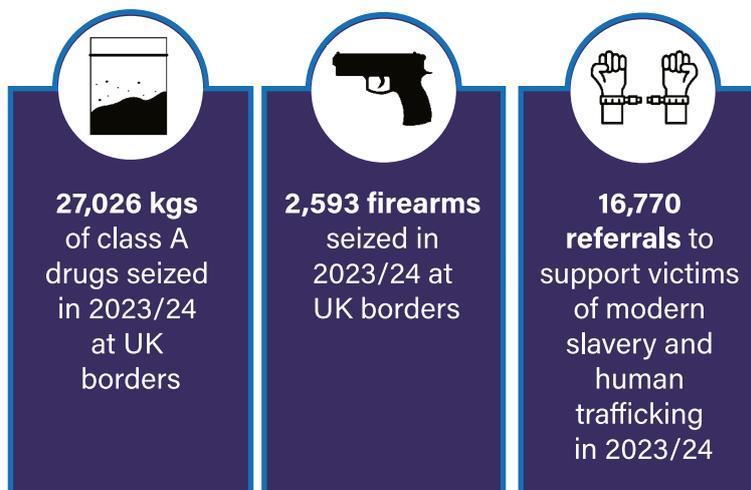
Source: Map Telegeography; Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy (JCNSS); Huddersfield University: An Economic and Social Evaluation of the UK Subsea Cables Industry 2016; Data Reportal Digital 2025: The United Kingdom; International Cable Protection Committee: Damage to Submarine Cables from Damaged Anchors 2025

6. Sovereignty over the Overseas Territories must be protected against all challenges so that, for those who live in the Territories as British nationals, their right of self-determination is upheld. The Overseas Territories provide the UK and our allies with strategically-located bases which support a wide range of security capabilities. We will maintain our military presence in Gibraltar, the Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri & Dhekelia, Ascension Island, the Falkland Islands and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands to deliver UK defence objectives, and support the UK's scientific presence in the British Antarctic Territory, whilst upholding the Antarctic Treaty system. The joint UK/US base on Diego Garcia will continue to play a key role in countering a wide range of threats from terrorism, piracy and hostile state activity. The government's deal with Mauritius, supported by the US, will maintain full UK control over this vital base

with robust security provisions, ensuring it can continue to operate as it has done, with legal certainty, well into the next century.

7. The UK border is a vital pillar of our security as a nation – protecting us from international threats, helping us uphold and enforce our domestic laws and allowing our citizens to go about their lives freely and confidently. Through the new Border Security Command, we have already invested over £150 million over two years into technology and specialist officers, including applying lessons from counter-terrorism and making full use of law enforcement and intelligence agency capabilities.
8. We are also investing in new technology to enable front line personnel to carry out more targeted interventions, and increase detections and seizures at the border. The introduction of Electronic Travel Authorisations allows us to prevent the travel of people known to pose a risk to the UK. We will leverage the UK visa system to drive cooperation with other countries on returns. This includes using powers to suspend the granting of visas to countries that are not cooperating on the return of their citizens. We will also make it easier to refuse entry or asylum to those who break our laws, by simplifying the rules and processes for deporting foreign national offenders.
9. Tackling organised immigration crime and cracking down on people smuggling requires partnerships with both source and transit countries, which is why we convened more than 50 countries and international organisations for the first major international summit to tackle organised immigration crime. Through the 2025 Calais Group Priority Plan – agreed with Germany, France, Belgium and the Netherlands – we have committed to enhancing law enforcement cooperation through Europol to tackle irregular migration and increase our border security. We have expanded our Joint Migration Taskforce with Albania and Kosovo to include North Macedonia, with plans to extend to Montenegro, and agreed a Joint Action plan to tackle human trafficking with Vietnam and a Border Security Pact with Iraq to target smuggling gangs.

Stopping criminal activity at UK borders



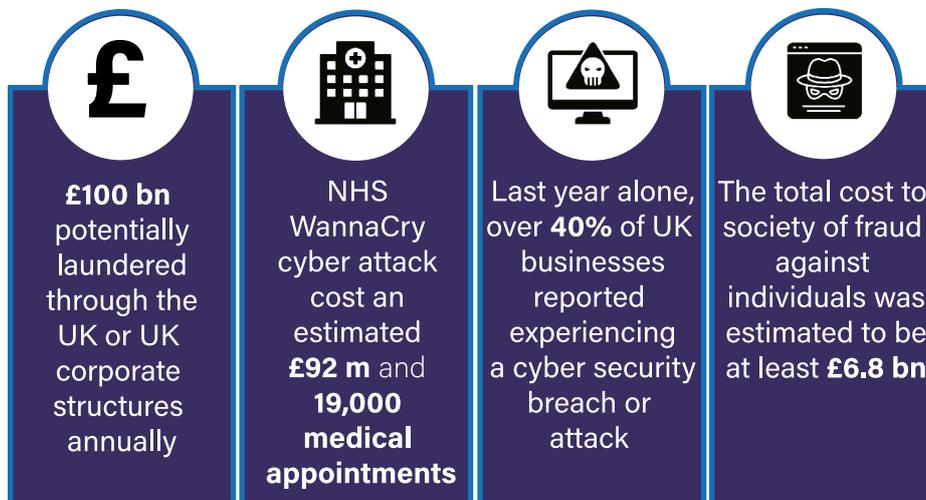
Source: Border Force: Transparency Data Q1 2025; Home Office Modern Slavery: NRM and DtN Statistics, end of year summary 2024

Section (2) – Make the UK a harder target

10. The openness of our democracy and economy are national strengths. Therefore, it is vital to keep ahead of those who seek to exploit them with robust defences. While we will not be able to stop all threats to the UK, we are taking steps to make our country a harder operating environment for hostile actors.
11. The Foreign Influence Registration Scheme, introduced under the National Security Act 2023, is a critical tool. This will strengthen the resilience of the UK political system against covert foreign influence and provide greater assurance around the activities of designated foreign powers or entities where there is a national security risk. We have already placed both Russia and Iran on the enhanced tier of the scheme, meaning anyone working for those states in the UK – including criminal proxies – will need to declare their activities or risk prosecution and imprisonment. We have also used sanctions to dismantle the criminal networks and enablers that Iran uses to carry out its work.
12. We are committed to taking forward the recommendations of the Independent Reviewer of State Threat Legislation, and will draw up new powers – modelled on counter-terrorism – to tackle state threats. Counter Terrorism Policing will continue to investigate terrorist and state threat offences. We have also renewed the mandate of the Defending Democracy Taskforce, which will strengthen safeguards against individuals and companies acting as proxies for foreign donations.
13. It is vital that we keep adapting our national security systems in keeping with the persistent but changing threat from terrorism. The Counter Terrorism Operations Centre will continue to provide a single locus for the police, MI5, probation services, other operational partners and Five Eyes allies to coordinate efforts to disrupt terrorist groups and prevent attacks. The new Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, also commonly referred to as Martyn’s Law, will improve public safety and ensure we embed the lessons from the terrible Manchester Arena attack.
14. The awful attack in Southport exemplifies the growing threat from individuals who are fixated by extreme violence, seemingly for its own sake. Our response requires closer working across law enforcement, education, health and justice. We will review our legislative framework to consider a new offence for “acts preparatory” to “extreme violence”, or individuals who are identified as violence fixated.
15. Tackling tech-enabled harms in the online space is also central to managing threats including from terrorists and extremist violence. Through the Online Safety Act 2023 (OSA), providers of internet services are now required to take proportionate steps to make their services safe and protect users from illegal content. While the OSA provides us with tools to make services safer, particularly around terrorist content, there are significant challenges around tackling other violent and extremist content online. Government, law enforcement and service providers must find ways to tackle this kind of content, including working with and supporting Ofcom to maximise the levers within the OSA.

16. Coming into the UK – and taking part in our society – means living by the same rules as everyone else. We will not accept a situation in which conflicts or divisions that have their origins overseas are brought into our streets. The state will remove the platforms and privileges granted to anyone who abuses this fundamental principle. We will deny visas to those who seek to travel to the UK to spread discord in our communities, and harden our response to those abusing charitable status to peddle extremist viewpoints.
17. Cyber and economic security are becoming increasingly important to our ability to grow our businesses and go about our everyday life. But the essential services, infrastructure and digital services on which we rely are exposed to increasingly intense, frequent and sophisticated hostile cyber activity, such as ransomware. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) will continue to help empower businesses, the public sector and the public to protect themselves from cyber attacks, and to support response and recovery when incidents do occur.
18. More broadly, we are constantly adapting our methods to ensure we are a harder target to adversaries in the digital realm. This includes publishing a refreshed National Cyber Strategy and introducing a Cyber Security and Resilience Bill, setting out new legal powers and protections. The NCSC is working to support the public and private sector in the transition to post-quantum cryptography by 2035 and in responding to the challenge of quantum-enabled cyber threats.
19. The National Security and Investment Act 2021 and Investment Security Unit remain central to our approach to economic security. This brings together expertise from across government to review acquisitions and put in place mitigations to prevent investments harming our national security. We will also use the measures set out in the Telecommunications (Security) Act 2021 to protect public telecoms networks and services, and to mitigate the security threat posed by high-risk vendors.
20. All elements of our security are supported by our ability to tackle illicit finance – the flows of funds from criminal activity that underpin threats to the UK including terrorist networks, serious and organised crime groups, and hostile state actors. Our new Anti-Corruption Strategy will include measures to counter illicit finance, kleptocracy and corruption, domestically and internationally.

The cost of serious organised crime



Source: National Economic Crime Centre: Annual Report 2023-2024; Department for Health and Social Care Securing cyber resilience in health and care 2018; UK Cyber Crime Statistics 2025; Home Office Fraud Strategy: stopping scams and protecting the public 2023

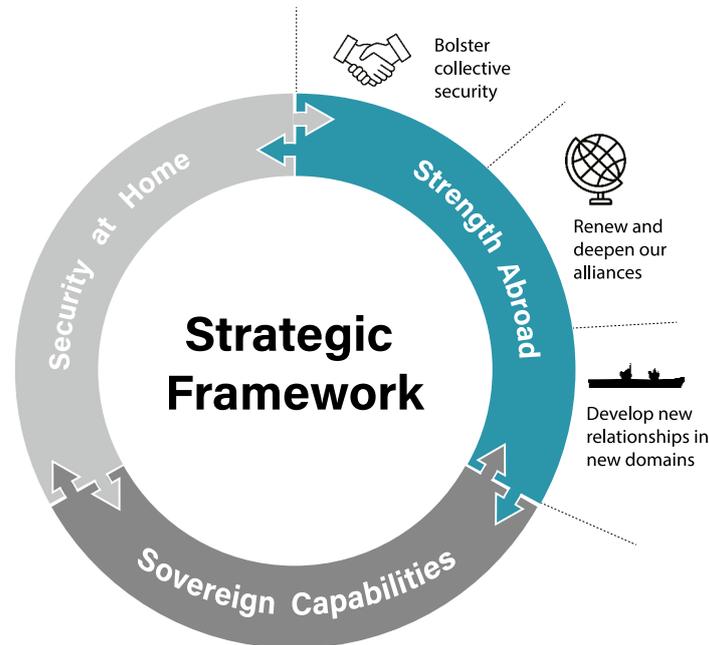
Section (3) – Build resilience to future threats

21. NSS 2025 recognises the vital importance of long-term actions to build national resilience against external shocks or threats that could cause massive disruption to our way of life, including from the natural world. This requires us to reduce reliance on others – ensuring our supply chains, energy security and access to critical goods can be maintained even in times of crisis. It also means we must develop new measures to anticipate and prepare for risks that emerge from scientific or technological developments, such as in the fields of AI or biology, and which could interact with other threats to the UK.
22. The new Resilience Strategy will deepen our understanding of the UK's current resilience levels, supporting civil society and the public sector to better address risks and vulnerabilities. This follows our commitment at the NATO Vilnius Summit to develop National Resilience Goals, NATO's seven Baseline Requirements for resilience and Alliance-wide Resilience Objectives. The strategy will also launch public communications to inform citizens about preparedness for risks. This will be supported by the UK Resilience Academy's training offer to all those across our society who play a vital role in our national resilience. As part of this, our plans for Home Defence will focus on the protection of critical national infrastructure and countering sabotage during a crisis (potentially modelled on the Reserves). We will also run annual National Exercises in order to test our whole-of-society preparedness.
23. We are establishing a new network of National Biosecurity Centres with investment of over £1 billion to bolster the UK's defences against biological incidents, accidents and attacks. The forthcoming report on the Biological Security Strategy will set out the progress made in creating a new Biothreats Radar, a UK-wide Microbial Forensics Consortium and a National Action Plan on confronting Antimicrobial Resistance. We

are also investing up to £520m in UK-based Diagnostic, Therapeutic and Vaccine manufacturing facilities, along with funding for High Containment Laboratory facilities.

24. The new Industrial, Trade and Critical Minerals Strategies will strengthen international collaboration to drive investment, increase access to finance, and improve government support and guidance for businesses to help them understand and mitigate risks. Our new Supply Chain Centre will review inputs, consider the impact of future trends on demand, and determine what action may be required – such as domestic capability building, diversification or strategic international partnerships to build resilience. Our Trade Strategy will set out further action to support businesses to strengthen their economic security.
25. Our energy security is vital to our national security, economic stability, the delivery of essential services and our ability to fuel new technological developments in fields such as AI. We are moving away from imported fossil fuels and towards electricity produced at home and by our allies. We have banned the import of oil or gas from Russia and are building a global uranium nuclear supply chain that is entirely free from Russian influence. We have also lifted the ban on onshore wind, consented to record amounts of solar power projects and continue to innovate and invest in other sources of renewable energy. Reducing energy prices remains a vital part of ensuring our nation's ability to innovate and grow our economy. Alongside action to shore up our domestic energy security, we will work internationally to address the climate and nature crisis and the risks it poses to our national security, financial stability and green growth at home. Our Global Clean Power Alliance will maintain international momentum behind the transition to clean power, drive investment in emerging markets and developing economies, and enhance the resilience of clean energy supply chains, including for the UK. With partners, we are working to reform the global financial system so that it delivers the finance needed to tackle such global challenges.

Pillar (ii) – Strength Abroad



1. The second pillar of NSS 2025 is to achieve strength abroad by using (and combining) all the levers of state and national power including defence, diplomacy, trade, intelligence, law enforcement, science, technology, education and our cultural reach.
2. Our ability to achieve influence abroad will be more challenging in the next few years, with adversaries taking aggressive and concerted action against our interests. Our approach also needs to reflect the fact that some of our traditional allies are making changes to their international priorities in ways that will have major implications for us. Effective cooperation is going to increase in importance for our ability to deliver our objectives but will simultaneously be more challenging than it has been in the past. Our diplomacy and statecraft therefore needs to adapt to a more fluid and transactional world, in which economic and military measures will be more commonly used as means of leverage and bargaining.
3. In response, we will reinforce those parts of our approach to national security which have traditionally served us well, such as NATO, the G7 and Five Eyes. First, building on our historic approach, collective security will remain the foundation stone of our strategy to deter and defend against aggression. But this will require a major effort to restore stability and security to the Euro-Atlantic area as an overriding priority, beginning with our support of Ukraine. Second, we will seek to renew and then achieve greater strategic depth in our key alliances, starting with the US and EU, not only to bolster our security but also our prosperity and long-term competitiveness. Third, we will bring new creativity to our international partnerships, particularly in new domains of policy like technology. This involves a sharp focus and prioritisation of effort on those relationships that best allow us to deliver for our national interests at home. Finally, we will establish greater robustness and consistency in how we approach major strategic challenges such as the impact of China as a global actor.

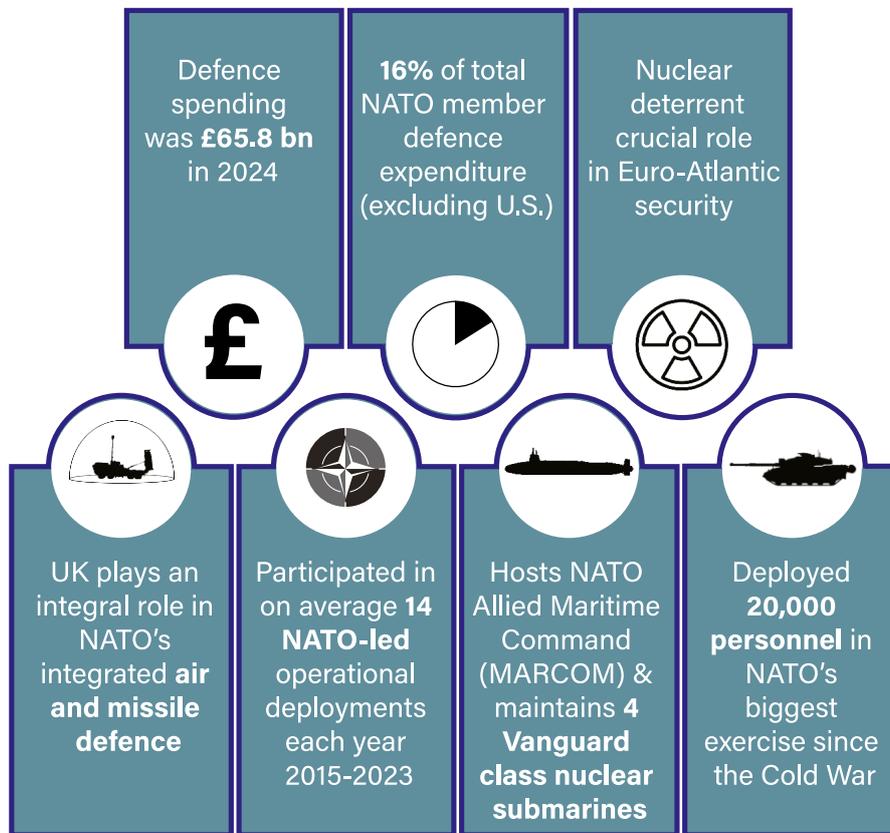
Section (1) – Bolster collective security



"Meanwhile, we must face the facts as they are. Our task is not to make spectacular declarations, nor to use threats or intimidation, but to proceed swiftly and resolutely with the steps we consider necessary to meet the situation which now confronts the world" Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary (1945 - 1951)

4. Collective security, underpinned by formal alliances and partnerships, is the bedrock of our whole approach to national security and a force multiplier for the UK's deterrence and defence. At the forefront of this is the NATO alliance, which has played an essential part in preserving peace for 75 years. Nearly a billion people in the Euro-Atlantic are protected by the mutual defence clause (Article V), and the self-help and mutual aid clause (Article III) of the North Atlantic Treaty.
5. As a founding member of NATO, the UK has always placed immense importance on the alliance. We have been and remain the only European country to offer our nuclear deterrent to the defence of our NATO allies, and contribute to every aspect of its planning. But equally NATO's success has always depended on its ability to adapt and the willingness of allies to meet their pledges and share the burden of security. Following the conclusion of the SDR, therefore, we will pursue a "NATO First" approach to how we organise UK defence. Specifically, this means that NATO will be foremost in how the armed forces plan, invest, train and equip themselves.

The UK has a strategic role in NATO



Source: NATO Annual Report 2024; House of Commons Library: UK armed forces operational commitments 2025

6. There are other means by which we can enhance our collective security across the Euro-Atlantic. Through our leadership role in the Joint Expeditionary Force we will deliver renewed deterrence in the increasingly contested High North and Northern Europe, track potential threats to undersea infrastructure and monitor Russia's shadow fleets. Likewise, we will seek to enhance the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force with France through the 2025 France/UK Summit.
7. The future of Ukraine is a vital part of collective security in the Euro-Atlantic area. Russia continues to inflict devastating attacks on the Ukrainian people and make unacceptable demands for a veto over Ukraine's self-defence. That is why the UK continues to stand with Ukraine in its self-defence – now and in the future. In supporting Ukraine, our essential goal is to prevent further Russian aggression.

8. A durable settlement in Ukraine is one that defends Ukraine’s sovereignty and security and lets the people of Ukraine decide their own future, without the threat of violence or coercion. Just as we have championed Ukraine during the war, so we will provide the same commitment as it seeks to make peace. Through the UK-Ukraine 100-year partnership we are building the framework for a better future for the Ukrainian people. As part of our renewed efforts, we were the first European country to convene the Ukraine Defence Contact Group. Working closely with France, we have also established the 31-country Coalition of the Willing to step up European support for Ukraine.

The UK is playing a leading role in supporting Ukraine to defend itself against Russia’s invasion and grow its economy, whilst increasing pressure on Russia and helping Ukraine achieve justice



This support includes but is not limited to:

<p>Military assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £3 bn per year, plus £2.26 bn funded by profits from immobilised Russian assets Over 54,000 Ukrainian personnel trained Military equipment including 30,000 new attack and surveillance drones, with further investment to take this to 100,000 	<p>Non-military support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £400 m for energy security and resilience £477 m urgent humanitarian support £4.1 bn fiscal support through World Bank guarantees
<p>UK sanctions on Russia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 2,500 Russian targets sanctioned UK oil sanctions in Q1 2025 cost Russian tankers \$1.6 bn Over 250 shadow fleet vessels sanctioned 	<p>Achieving justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £2.3 m to the International Criminal Court Founding member of International Register of Damage £11.3 m to investigate war crimes

Source: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Ministry of Defence, Home Office, Department for Business and Trade: Support to Ukraine May 2025

9. One of the vital lessons from the war in Ukraine is the importance of measures like sanctions and export controls. Effective deterrence in the future will require more incorporation of economic measures into our defence and security toolkit. Our sanctions against Russia are designed to deny them the means to continue its war, limiting access to key revenue sources and to critical goods and technology.
10. Sanctions and other measures are most effective when implemented in coordination with our international partners, particularly with G7 and Five Eyes members. As part of our Economic Deterrence Initiative, we are working to strengthen our sanctions implementation and enforcement, including through the establishment of the Office for Trade Sanctions Implementation which has powers to issue civil monetary penalties for breaches of trade sanctions.

Section (2) – Renew and deepen our alliances



Allied and NATO flags lining the Mall to Buckingham Palace to mark the Alliance's 75th anniversary in April 2024.

11. Our alliances and partnerships are even more critical to our safety in the context of growing risk and uncertainty. By deepening alliances and initiating new partnerships, we can combine our strength, pool financial and technological resources, increase resilience and economic benefits for our people, and mitigate risks. As we renew our relationship with the EU and re-invigorate our relationship with the United States, we will set ourselves the goal of making sure these alliances are defined by greater strategic depth, alongside reciprocity and mutual benefit.
12. The US remains the UK's most important defence and security ally. There are deep structural foundations to this relationship such as our commitment to NATO, intelligence and nuclear sharing and the interoperability of our armed forces. There are also considerable new opportunities opening up for deeper cooperation on matters like

AUKUS and defence technology. The UK was the first country to agree a new economic deal with the US administration. But there is much more we can do to strengthen our alliance in a way that reflects the changing nature of power in the world. That is why we seek an ambitious new science and technology partnership with the US, to cement this closest of partnerships.

13. The UK is also building a new strategic partnership with the EU based on closer cooperation in order to grow the economy, boost living standards, protect our borders and keep the UK safe. The new UK-EU Security and Defence Partnership will support this, enabling closer cooperation across a wide range of areas, from maritime security, space security, tackling hybrid threats, and enhancing the resilience of our critical infrastructure, to irregular migration, global health and illicit finance. New six-monthly foreign and security policy dialogues will enable strategic consultation in themes and geographic areas of joint interest such as Russia/Ukraine, Western Balkans, Indo-Pacific and hybrid threats. The partnership will also mean we can explore closer co-operation and joint investment in our defence industrial base, in a way that can support economic growth and jobs on both sides and help to prevent fragmentation. In doing so, we will work towards the most effective cooperation between NATO and the EU, recognising the primacy of NATO in the defence of Europe but also the growing importance of the EU as a geopolitical actor. Our science collaboration adds another level to the strategic depth of our relationship. The UK's association to the Horizon Europe and Copernicus programmes means the UK's scientific community has access to the world's largest research collaboration programme and this now includes joint research on quantum and space technologies.
14. Bilateral relationships with European neighbours also remain crucial to our national security. Our security and defence relationship with France is unparalleled in Europe. As Europe's only nuclear weapon states, the UK and France have long recognised that a threat to the vital interests of one would constitute a threat to the vital interests of the other. Work is ongoing to deepen and broaden our cooperation, building on the Lancaster House Treaties and ahead of the 2025 UK-France Summit. We are also enhancing our relationship with Germany, building on the Trinity House Agreement with a new bilateral treaty, and working together on developing a precision long-range strike capability. As the E3, we are working more closely with France and Germany on Ukraine and other issues.
15. We will continue to seek new opportunities to cooperate across the Euro-Atlantic. We are deepening our defence and security partnership with Canada and enhancing collaboration in areas from AI to biomanufacturing and nuclear fusion. Our new agreement with Poland will bolster NATO's eastern flank, tackling hybrid threats and collaborating on air and missile defence, with significant economic benefits for both countries. On NATO's northern flank, our strategic defence partnership with Norway is delivering on our shared security priorities in the North Atlantic and High North. Italy is a vital partner on NATO's southern flank – we are working together on the Global Combat Air Programme and strengthening the interoperability of our carrier strike groups. At the crossroads between the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Middle East and Africa, Turkey is imperative to UK security interests across Europe and on NATO's flanks and remains a

key NATO and bilateral partner for the UK, with strong military integration and defence industrial collaboration.

Section (3) – Develop new relationships in new domains



The UK Carrier Strike Group on a multinational deployment to the Indo-Pacific.

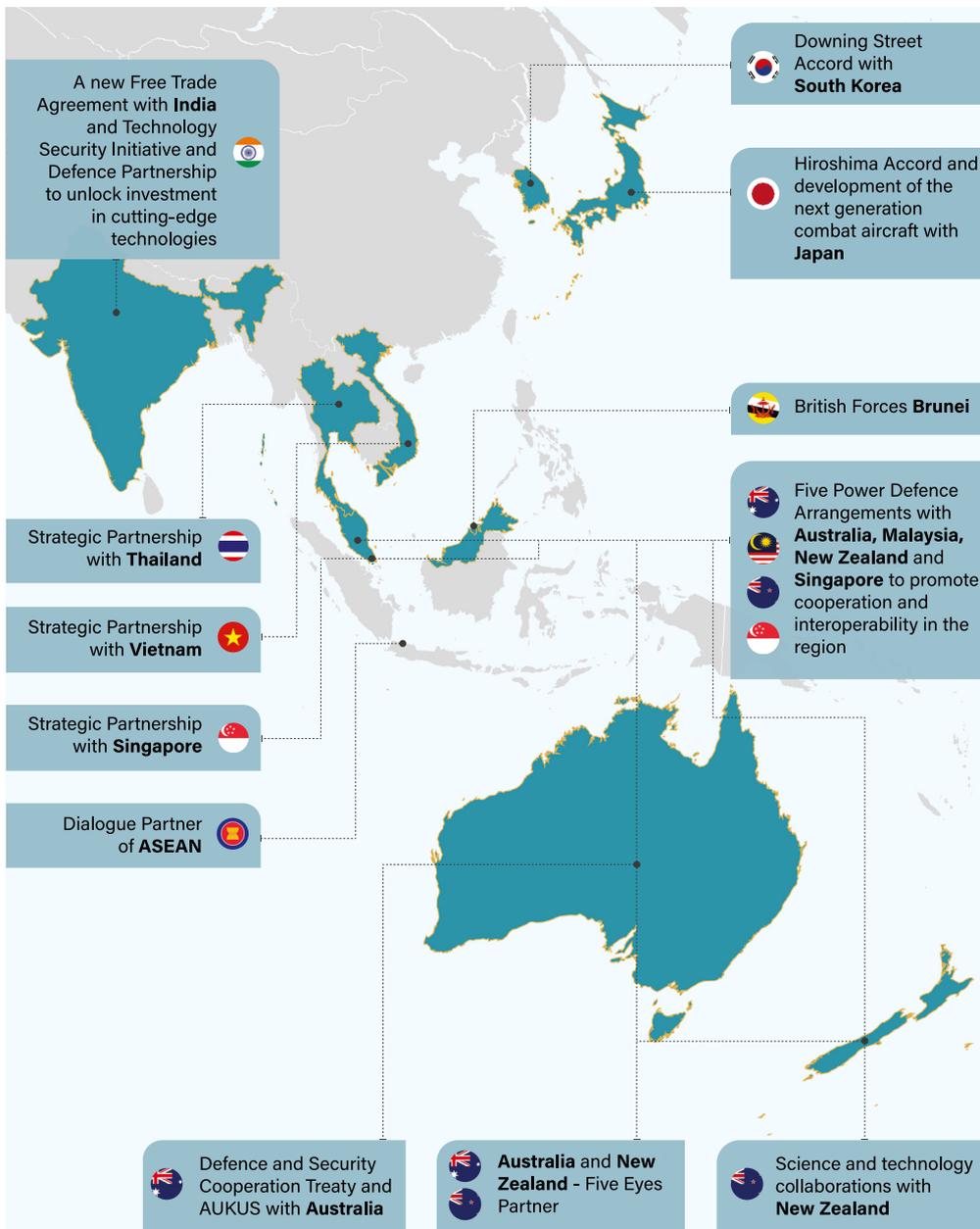
16. The hard realities of our geography, security and trade necessitate a prioritisation of the Euro-Atlantic area as part of our “NATO first” approach. But evidence of countries like Russia, China, Iran and North Korea cooperating across theatres – sometimes opportunistically and sometimes by deepening strategic ties – demonstrates the interconnectedness of the Euro-Atlantic with different theatres like the Middle East and Indo-Pacific, where we already have strong partnerships. As the SDR notes, after the Euro-Atlantic, these are the two additional priority regions for UK defence.
17. Furthermore, the dispersed and diffuse nature of international power in today’s world means that it is a matter of hard national interest that we look beyond our immediate neighbourhood. That is why we seek to create modern partnerships with vibrant and innovative economies in other parts of the world. In particular, there is a geographically dispersed group of countries, many of which are Commonwealth countries, with which we share a strong community of interest. They stretch from Canada in the North Atlantic to New Zealand in Oceania and include the Gulf States, India, Singapore, South Korea, Indonesia, Japan and Australia. These fast growing and advanced economies depend on the free trade of goods and resources, with financial market confidence built on political stability, maritime security and the predictable application of international

maritime law. We have a common interest in working with them against economic coercion and the potential fragmentation of the international economic order into spheres of influence for great powers.

18. Beyond our immediate region, we are committed to contributing to the security and stability in the Middle East, through our diplomatic, humanitarian, military and prosperity footprint, including total trade of £60 billion. As the region is so important to a wide range of UK priorities - including trade, investment, energy and humanitarian - as well as home to hundreds of thousands of British nationals, threats to international security in the Middle East and North Africa have a direct impact on UK interests. The UK contribution to the region spans support to the Global Coalition to defeat Daesh, the Combined Maritime Forces and efforts to secure freedom of navigation in the Red Sea. We have deep and enduring bilateral ties with the Gulf, including wide-ranging strategic partnerships across the region and we are working to secure a free trade agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council. We are committed to a safe and secure Israel and advancing Palestinian statehood as part of a two-state solution. Both Israelis and Palestinians deserve to live in peace, prosperity and security. We are working to contain Iran's destabilising influence and to prevent it developing nuclear weapons.
19. India is a country with which we seek a genuine strategic partnership, reflecting its growing importance in the international system. Our new free trade agreement is a landmark deal with one of the fastest growing economies in the world, increasing interaction between our markets and reducing trade barriers. Through our Technology Security Initiative, we are unlocking investment across a range of cutting-edge technologies and through our Defence Partnership we are collaborating on capability developments.
20. The UK's bilateral relationships and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific are designed to enhance the international security on which our shared prosperity depends. Among others, these include our Global Strategic Partnership with the Republic of Korea, Defence and Security Cooperation Treaty and AUKUS agreement with the US and Australia, our Global Strategic Partnership and joint development of the next generation combat aircraft with Japan alongside Italy, and science and technology collaborations with New Zealand. We will underscore our investment in the stability of the region with the sailing of the UK Carrier Strike Group to Australia, reaffirming the UK's commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. We will also continue to invest in the Five Power Defence Arrangements with Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Singapore to promote cooperation and interoperability in the region, demonstrated by the UK's participation in BERSAMA LIMA 24 last year.
21. The centrality of the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait to global trade and supply chains underscores the importance to the UK of regional stability. There is a particular risk of escalation around Taiwan. It is the UK's position that the Taiwan issue should be resolved peacefully by the people on both sides of the Strait through constructive dialogue, without the threat or use of force or coercion. We do not support any unilateral attempts to change the status quo. As part of our strong unofficial relationship with Taiwan we will continue to strengthen and grow ties in a wide range of areas, underpinned by shared democratic values.

22. The AUKUS programme remains a priority project for UK defence and collective security, as part of a “NATO first”, but not NATO-only, approach. The US, Australia and the UK will co-develop an advanced fleet of interoperable nuclear-powered attack submarines, which will be operated by both the Royal Navy and Royal Australian Navy, and other advanced capabilities that will strengthen deterrence. The joint nature of this venture will create a more resilient industrial base in all three countries, vastly increase interoperability between AUKUS partners and allow us to develop a critical edge in the maritime domain to maintain peace and stability.
23. Our membership of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) exemplifies the benefits of wider ties and partnership. It has strengthened trading ties with a number of the fastest growing and emerging economies in the region. We will advocate for a deeper CPTPP, with wider membership and increased links to other major blocs such as the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the EU.

The UK's relationships in the Indo-Pacific support regional security



24. Creativity and agility will be particularly important where there is the opportunity to move beyond traditional partnerships. Our foreign policy will do more to adapt to the importance of rising powers such as Nigeria and Brazil which are growing in international importance and for which there are new opportunities to deepen investment ties and work together on areas like climate change, science and technology.
25. We will also need to forge closer partnerships with countries in Africa given its rapidly growing and young population, and opportunities for growth and trade. In particular, we will need to help mitigate threats from instability on NATO's southern flank in what is an increasingly geopolitically competitive continent. Our Strategic Security and Defence Partnerships with Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana, for example, help to deliver on UK interests at home while building African capability – allowing for cooperation across a broad

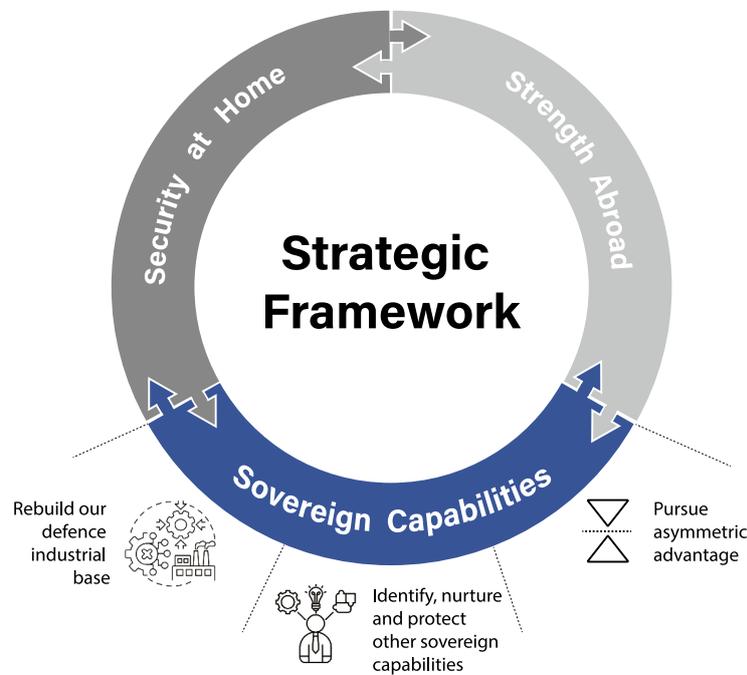
spectrum of threats, including terrorism, serious and organised crime, hybrid threats and maritime issues.

26. Consistency is essential in approaching the geostrategic challenge posed by China in a way that is aligned with partners across the G7 and beyond. China is a global power undergoing rapid economic, military and technological modernisation on a scale that is unprecedented in world history. The actions taken by China, on issues from international security to the global economy or climate change, have the potential to have a significant effect on the lives of British people. Each pillar of the Strategic Framework contains measures that are designed to bolster our overall security with respect to China and other state actors that have the ability to undermine our security.
27. We recognise the vital importance of diplomacy in approaching this challenge. The process of auditing our interests with respect to China, in line with the government's manifesto commitment, is now complete. This work underscores the need for direct and high-level engagement and pragmatic cooperation where it is in our national interest – similar to all other members of the G7. In a more volatile world, we need to reduce the risks of misunderstanding and poor communication that have characterised the relationship in recent years. China's global role makes it increasingly consequential in tackling the biggest global challenges, from climate change to global health to financial stability. We will seek a trade and investment relationship that supports secure and resilient growth and boosts the UK economy. Yet there are several major areas, such as human rights and cyber security, where there are stark differences and where continued tension is likely. Instances of China's espionage, interference in our democracy and the undermining of our economic security have increased in recent years. Our national security response will therefore continue to be threat-driven, bolstering our defences and responding with strong counter-measures. We will continue to protect the Hong Kong community in the UK and others from transnational repression.
28. The China Audit therefore recommends an increase in China capabilities across the national security system to strengthen ability to engage, as well as our resilience and readiness on the basis of deeper knowledge and training. That includes creating the basis for a reciprocal and balanced economic relationship, by providing guidance to those in the private or higher education sectors for which China is an important partner. To ensure that the public, businesses, academia and partners understand our approach, and have the right guidance to help them make safe decisions, we will bring together existing guidance on China in a new gov.uk hub and continue to develop comprehensive guidance relevant to engagement with China.
29. Diplomacy is an essential part of our ability to achieve strength abroad and requires a variety of methods. The UK is clear that multilateral institutions and intergovernmental organisations like the UN, World Health Organisation and the Commonwealth, remain critical to making progress on global issues from climate change and biosecurity to the sustainable development goals and conflict prevention. Equally, the UK has a strong economic interest in maintaining a functioning and effective International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation. In many cases, these institutions need reform, investment and modernisation. Using our strong expertise across these areas, therefore, we will make it a strategic goal to reshape the international development and humanitarian

systems, support the UN80 reform initiative and strengthen international financial institutions.

30. While prioritising poverty reduction and sustainable development, our development spending also needs to support our security, and focus on impact and a narrower set of countries and issues. It must address threats upstream and aligned to what will achieve comparative advantage for the UK. We remain committed to returning to spending 0.7% of GNI on development when fiscal circumstances allow, but we will also explore innovative options for providing new sources of financing, including the use of guarantees, and options that mobilise greater volumes of private finance.

Pillar (iii) – Increase Sovereign and Asymmetric Capabilities



1. The third pillar of NSS 2025 is to build more sovereign and asymmetric capabilities in critical areas for our future national security and international competitiveness. In doing so, we will ensure that our national security agenda aligns with our mission to grow the economy and increase opportunities for the British people. This means reducing our dependence on others, including the ability of adversaries to coerce or manipulate us. But it also allows us to increase our value to allies and to strengthen our hand when we transact business with those who have sovereign assets that we seek access to.
2. In doing so, we will need to take a broader view of the national security capabilities we require to maintain national agency and decide our own future. This ranges from traditional industries, like our shipbuilding and nuclear enterprise, to new and emerging technologies. In some cases, this will require a more activist state willing to intervene more deeply into our economy, such as we have done to secure UK steelmaking for the future. In other areas, government will seek to reduce regulation and red tape to create the best possible environment for innovation.
3. As a first step, we will rebuild our core defence industrial base, with a focus on achieving greater resilience in our stockpiles and in support of warfighting readiness. Second, we will identify, protect and cultivate other sovereign capabilities that are foundational to our industrial base and our long-term competitiveness as a nation. Third, we will channel our particular national strengths into asymmetric strategies. This means utilising unique or cutting-edge capabilities to bolster our alliances and give us an advantage over adversaries and competitors.

Section (1) – Rebuild our defence industrial base

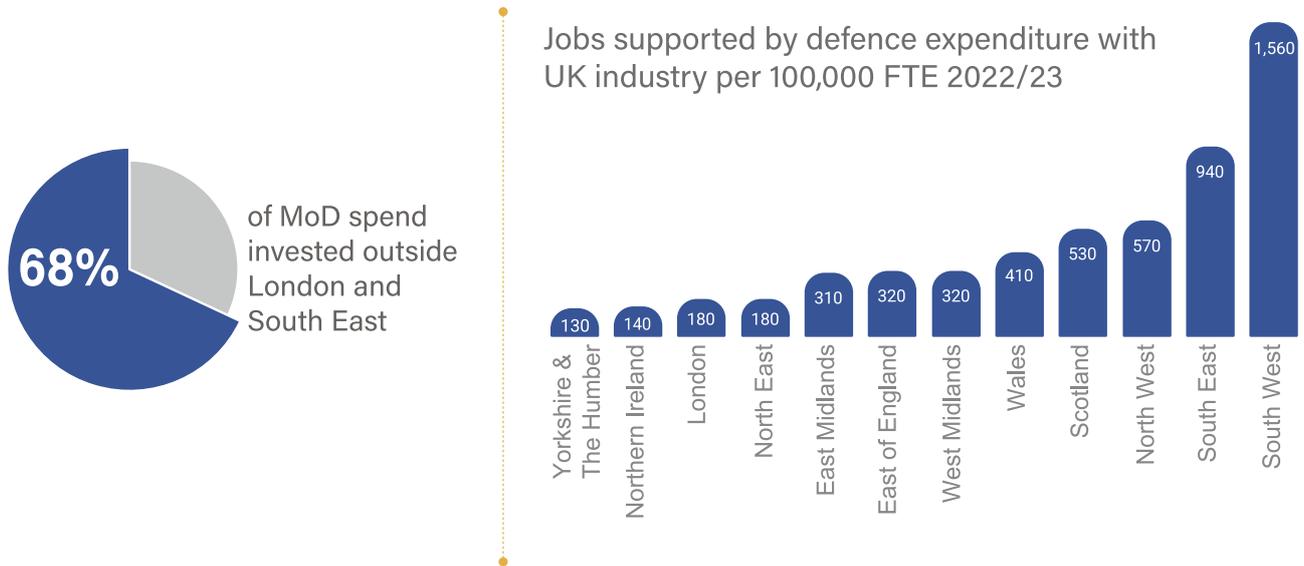


HMS Venturer, the first Type 31 Inspiration Class Frigate, is unveiled at Rosyth Dockyard

4. As the threat environment worsens, a more sovereign and dynamic defence and innovation-focused industrial base will be more important than ever. And we must ensure that a defence dividend is translated into British jobs, skills and long-term industrial capacity. This is vital to our future prosperity, the strength and cohesion of our Union, our ability to deliver on our international commitments, and our capacity to defend and deter against threats at home and overseas.
5. Our most important national capability is the UK's independent nuclear deterrent, which protects us against coercion and deters aggressors. We will maintain our "triple lock" commitment, ensuring a continuous at-sea presence, building new submarines and upgrading the fleet. This will be supported by a £15 billion investment into the sovereign warhead programme in this parliament and a £31 billion investment (with a £10 billion contingency) in the Dreadnought programme to build a new class of submarine which will enter service in the 2030s. We are expanding the industrial capability at Barrow and Raynesway which will enable us to build a new submarine every 18 months.
6. The forthcoming Defence Industrial Strategy sets out plans to build one of the most dynamic defence industrial ecosystems in the world, through targeted investment, procurement reform and creating a wider export market. We are supporting priority sectors through a new National Wealth Fund investment for defence companies. The UK defence industrial base will be redefined to include academia, dual-use civilian-military companies, financial services, technologists and trade unions. To support this, we are scaling up the National Security Strategic Investment Fund, investing more in companies which address our national security and defence capability requirements and growing the UK's early-stage dual-use technology ecosystem.

7. To increase our sovereign capability, we will ensure that defence investment better supports UK-based businesses. We will build at least six new munitions and energetics factories and procure up to 7,000 UK-built long-range weapons – delivering an “always-on” approach for priority munitions. We will establish UK Defence Innovation, a new organisation to find and buy innovative commercial products and services, improve access to funding and advice for industry. Pace will be critical to our efforts to modernise the armed forces. Through the Procurement Act 2023, we will reduce procurement timelines, using additional specific flexibilities for direct award and contract modifications. As the SDR says, we also need a concerted effort to unlock private capital and expertise, removing barriers to investment where they exist.
8. Long-term strategic competition requires us to develop next-generation capabilities for the UK Armed Forces in close collaboration with close allies. Under AUKUS, Australia, the UK and the US will bring together the best of our research and development communities to co-develop an advanced fleet of interoperable nuclear-powered attack submarines and to drive the co-development and production of AI, autonomous systems, underwater warfare, quantum and cyber capabilities. The initiative supports our growth agenda, with the submarine programme set to build up to 12 new attack submarines and generate 30,000 additional British jobs. Under the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP), Italy, Japan and the UK will develop a sixth-generation aircraft, comprising crewed aircraft, uncrewed platforms, next-generation weapons, networks and data-sharing. This, in turn, will support tens of thousands of aerospace jobs across different parts of the country. We will back British businesses by positioning them for further international collaborations, and enhance the government’s support for defence exports.
9. Innovation and learning will be at the heart of this agenda. From the next financial year, the Ministry of Defence will spend at least 10% of its equipment procurement budget on novel technologies. It will also develop a new Digital Targeting Web to better connect armed forces weapons systems and allow battlefield decisions for targeting enemy threats using new AI and software.
10. We are incorporating lessons from Ukraine’s extraordinary experience in land warfare, drone and hybrid conflict in developing its own modern approach to warfighting. The rapid adaptation and fusion of capabilities – including AI, commercial drones, disruption to Positioning, Navigation and Timing services, and secure satellite communications – has revealed how challenging it will be to maintain an enduring advantage. We cannot assume that any technological edge will last without constant innovation. We must be able to deliver this at wartime pace, including through an investment of £4 billion for autonomous systems, such as drones.

Defence grows the economy



Source: Ministry of Defence: regional expenditure with industry 2023/24; Ministry of Defence: supported employment estimates 2022/23 [revised May 2025]

Section (2) – Identify, nurture and protect other sovereign capabilities

11. Our sovereign capabilities have always been essential to the UK's defence and security, as well as to our offer to allies. However, in a world of increasing technological disruption, protectionism, competition for resources and supply chain shocks, we will need to take a wider lens when considering the capabilities we need to prevent the UK's national interests from being buffeted by external forces, and to ensure our long-term competitiveness.
12. The government's Industrial Strategy identifies eight growth-driving sectors and the foundational industries which underpin them. The strategy sets out the government's plan to support these sectors and industries, in recognition of strong headwinds in the global economy, including tariffs and protectionism. Our Sector Plans prioritise frontier industries that are crucial for developing technologies with both civil and military applications. In particular, we will nurture the UK's high-risk, high-reward digital and technologies sectors, ensuring that we are building sovereign capability in the most strategically important areas.
13. Developing our own defensive and offensive tools of economic statecraft will become more important if we are to deliver this agenda. The government's Trade Strategy will set out plans for more robust trade defence tools to tackle unfair trading practices and ensure that businesses are better supported in a more challenging and geopolitical global trading environment. The Steel Industry (Special Measures) Act 2025, which prevented the pre-emptive closure of the last remaining domestic steel blast furnace in the UK, is an example of the more activist approach to safeguarding sovereign capability that we are prepared to take when necessary.

14. Partnerships with the UK's telecommunications sector and other leading domestic and international tech companies are critical to maintaining our sovereign military and national security capabilities. We will continue to place deep importance on these relationships, as well as critical advanced connectivity research, to preserve the UK's strategic advantage and ensure that new technologies do not jeopardise the UK's safety and security.
15. The sovereign capabilities of our security and intelligence agencies, underpinned by appropriate safeguards and oversight, enable us to keep ahead of our adversaries and provide the lynchpin for our collaboration with our Five Eyes partners. Recognising what these agencies do to boost our security and defence, the government is providing additional funding, so that, taken together with the increase in defence spending, we will be spending 2.6% on our defence from 2027. We will seek to maintain and evolve their unique powers, data sources and capabilities to keep pace with rapid technological change.
16. Our diplomatic service is a unique asset in a world of competition and transactionalism. This provides an extensive global network of over 270 posts in 180 countries and territories. It has deep expertise and knowledge, enabling the UK to project influence, protect its interests, and support British citizens. This network supports upstream interventions to counter threats before they reach our shores, defending the UK's security against hybrid threats, and underpinning the UK's ability to act as a credible global partner. We will reinforce this vital capability through a £290 million investment in world class capabilities, reforming the workforce and delivering new technology. This will include: a smaller, more agile, workforce with a higher proportion of staff overseas, the biggest ever digital investment in our foreign service and a new College of British Diplomacy.
17. The UK's arts, culture, education and science and technology sectors provide a significant source of soft power. These assets help us foster a positive reputation internationally, build trust, and create partnerships which support international stability. As other countries develop their soft power activity, we cannot be complacent about our traditional strengths. Our new Soft Power Council will advise government on how to focus our soft power assets more strategically and in support of our security and foreign policy objectives
18. The National Cyber Force (NCF) is responsible for operating in and through cyberspace to counter and contest those who would harm the UK or its allies, to keep the country safe, and protect and promote the UK's interests at home and abroad. The NCF uses cyber effects to exploit our adversaries' own dependence on digital technology and seize the advantage for the nation. This capability is critical. The NCF will continue to carry out responsible cyber operations, alongside partners and allies. It will seek to protect against both state and non-state threats, further our foreign and national security policy, and support military operations and the prevention and detection of serious crime.

Section (3) – Pursue asymmetric advantage

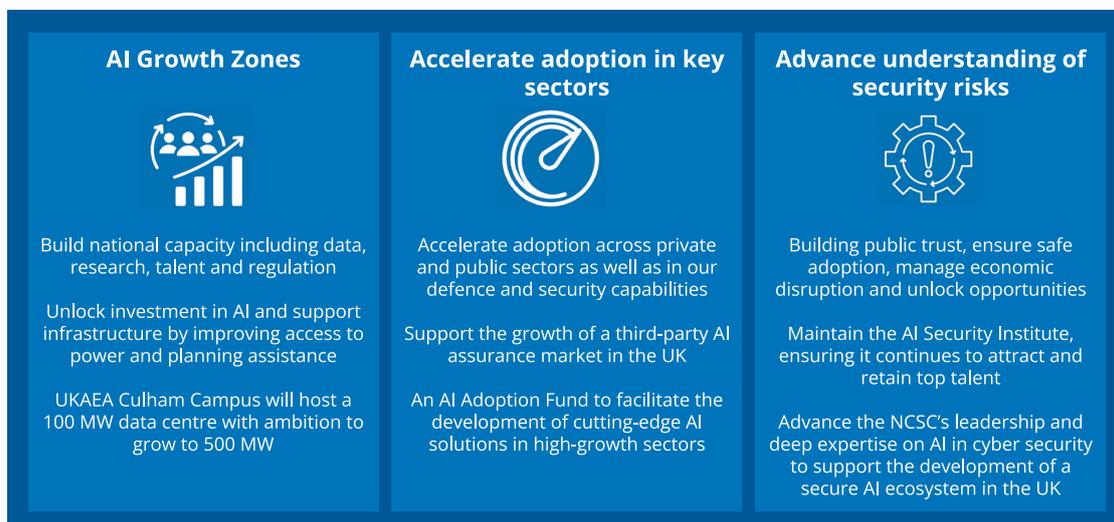


A F-35B reflected on the flight deck of HMS Prince of Wales

19. Given our competitors' ability to deploy scale to achieve advantage, we will complement our sovereign capabilities by deploying asymmetric strategies to cultivate a specialised edge in a wider global ecosystem. As part of this, we will also sharpen our focus on the arenas of current and future competition, from the Arctic and space to AI, in concert with our allies.
20. Through a research and development commitment of £86 billion, we will drive innovation in our frontier industries and invest in technologies that will underpin our future economic and military competitiveness. There is a pressing need to fundamentally rethink the government's relationship to private capital in these areas – to see it as a vital strategic pillar of national security. Through establishing partnerships with investors as well as industry, we will seek to channel and align private capital to help fund the delivery of strategic priorities. New funding models should be explored to make defence innovators a more attractive proposition for private capital, reduce the cost of finance for defence companies and increase the ability to pool capital with allies.
21. Achieving complete sovereign independence will not always be possible when it comes to frontier technologies like AI and quantum computing. Our approach will be to develop a baseline level of sovereign capability and, beyond that, to strengthen the UK's asymmetric position within a broader international ecosystem. AI is an example of this: we have established the Sovereign AI Unit and are expanding our sovereign compute capacity by at least 20 times by 2030. Sovereign compute will almost certainly be the

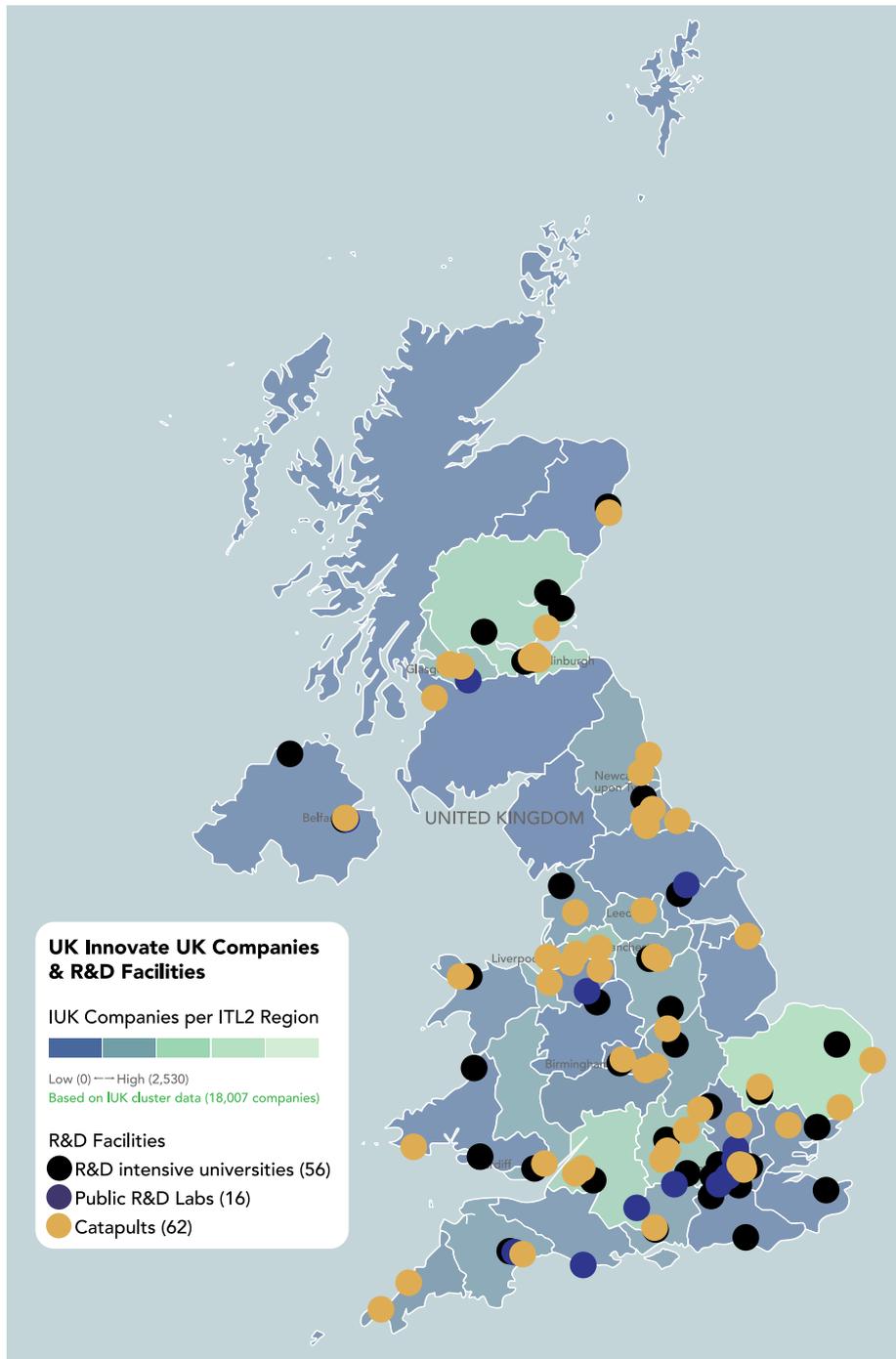
smallest component of the UK's overall compute portfolio but it will enable us to quickly and independently allocate compute to national priorities. Complementary to this, we will maintain and develop areas in which we have genuine world leading credentials to ensure we are serious players in multiple layers of the critical technologies utilised in frontier applications of AI.

22. In a period of transactionalism, in which our goal is to achieve strategic depth in our alliances, it will be essential to elevate technology to the top of our international agenda. Some technologies will need to be accessed via reciprocal agreements and partnerships with like-minded partners – particularly the US. That, in turn, means that the UK must grow complementary capabilities and facilitate joint AI research in areas of shared interest. Outside the US and China, the UK has one of the strongest research and private sectors for technology in the world.
23. To maximise our value to allies, we will also develop a national security agenda based around growth, sharing best practice, adoption and preparedness and resilience against risk. We will create AI Growth Zones, areas which have enhanced access to power and support for planning approvals, to accelerate the build out of AI infrastructure on UK soil. The AI Security Institute (AISI) will remain a central plank as the world's largest government team dedicated to AI security, working alongside centres of expertise across government, including the National Cyber Security Centre, the UK's technical authority for cyber security. With talent drawn from outside the public sector, AISI is a prime example of our shift to an approach based on asymmetric advantage. Our national security agenda for AI will consist of three mutually reinforcing pillars:



24. In addition to building an asymmetric advantage in AI, we will play a leading role in developing technologies for the next generation of telecoms, explore novel applications for advanced materials, including graphene, and employ biomanufacturing techniques to improve our resilience to geopolitical shocks. At the same time, the government will roll out the next phase of the National Quantum Technologies Programme, building on the £121m investment committed for 2025-26. This will include working through the National Quantum Computing Centre to accelerate the development of quantum computers and through the quantum research hubs to develop applications in areas

like medical diagnostics and next-generation navigation. We will develop our position in the global semiconductor sector, strengthening research and our niche capabilities in areas such as chip design, power electronics, photonics, radio frequency, and advanced packaging. Through the investment of £2.5 billion in next generation nuclear technologies, we will also support the UK to take advantage of the potential of Small Modular Nuclear Reactors. And we will build on decades of experience, unique institutional strengths, skills and capabilities to position the UK to exploit fusion energy and offshoot technologies with broader applications.



Source: Government Office for Science Analysis of Department of Science Innovation and Technology and UKRI Innovation Clusters' Data. Note: There are multiple cases in this map where catapults and other research institutions share the same location

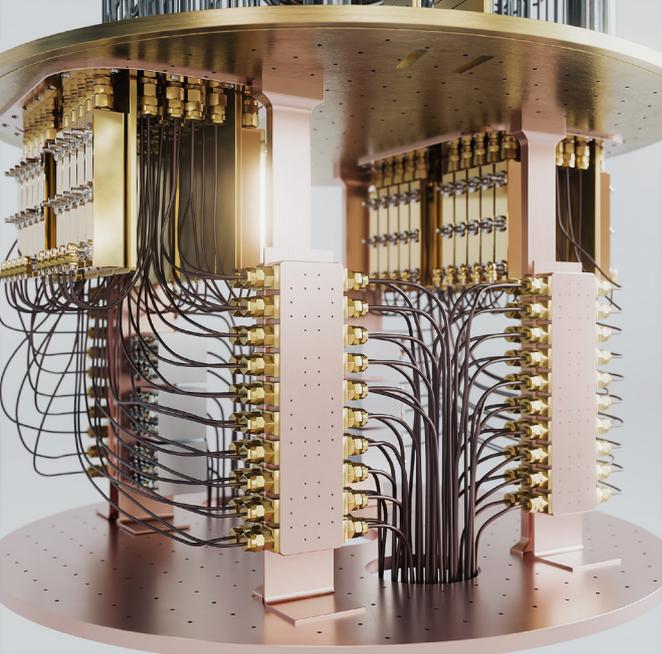
25. We recognise the importance of staying alert and responsive to developments in new and emerging areas of strategic competition, such as the Arctic and Antarctica. In the Arctic, the Advanced Research and Invention Agency's new £81m research programme will develop an early warning system for tipping points, providing climate data of local and global importance around Greenland. The RRS *Sir David Attenborough* will continue to maintain a scientific presence in Antarctica, as well as helping us understand environmental changes in the Arctic Ocean.
26. In recent decades a growing number of economies and militaries have become more reliant on space, meaning it has become a more contested arena among states. More broadly, private sector actors around the world have become more active in this arena, leading to a huge increase in the number of satellites and supporting infrastructure. It is therefore vital that the UK has a clear vision for both public and private investment. This should build resilience and operational advantage into our military space capabilities, and maximise the opportunities for the vibrant UK commercial sector. Our uniquely close relationship with the US will underpin our approach, but we will also play a leadership role in the development of NATO's space capabilities and policies, as well as partnerships with the EU, the European Space Agency and a range of other partners. The National Space Operations Centre's new £65 million Borealis system will boost the UK's space capabilities, enhancing our ability to monitor and protect crucial space assets, enabling us to navigate the oceans, monitor the climate and forecast the weather more effectively.
27. The ability to foster talent at home and attract it from around the world is fundamental to our comparative advantage. The Industrial Strategy sets out how we will reform our skills and employment support system to create a strong pipeline into priority sectors, including increased technology training and a boost for engineering, digital and defence skills. At the same time we will strengthen how we compete for the world's innovators, experts and entrepreneurs through a new Global Talent Taskforce, providing a concierge service for top talent and by visa simplifications. The new £54 million Global Talent Fund signals the UK's ambition to increase our attractiveness to world-leading talent, and new Turing AI Global Fellowships provide £25 million of multi-year funding for overseas researchers to build a team and conduct groundbreaking AI research at a UK institution.
28. To maintain our competitive edge we must protect our ideas and cutting-edge technology from our competitors. Through joint campaigns by the National Protective Security Authority and National Cyber Security Centre we are working with universities and industry to reduce vulnerabilities. We are also providing expert advice to the academic community through the Research Collaboration Advice Team (RCAT). Since 2022 this team has delivered 3500 pieces of advice to over 150 research institutions, and managed over 400 complex cases, working to support institutions with their risk mitigation strategies. Further development of the RCAT will be underpinned by the publication of the UK's first Research Security Strategy, which will set out the government's domestic and international policy on research security. We will also be expanding our international capacity building programme on research security, utilising the UK's experience and expertise to support our allies across the globe to develop secure and resilient domestic R&D systems.



Conclusion

1. NSS 2025 stresses the radical uncertainty of the international context and the proliferation of threats. At the same time, it notes that there will be considerable opportunities emerging in the years ahead to enhance our security and prosperity as a nation and embrace the benefits of technological change. The tests for success will be whether we deliver on our core goals: to protect the British people and our interests, at home and overseas; to seek opportunities for the British people by pursuing our national interest; and to enhance the strength and competitiveness of the UK over the long-term.
2. NSS 2025 demonstrates our commitment to improving the lives of British people in tangible ways. This means delivering stronger borders and upstream intervention to tackle the scourge of illegal migration. It means using British diplomacy to save British jobs from the impact of tariffs and keeping factories and manufacturing plants open. It means improving the lives of thousands of British military personnel and their families through more than £1.5 billion of additional funding to repair and renew armed forces housing. It means spreading defence investment across the country so it becomes a vital part of economic growth and opportunity across every corner of the UK. It means securing UK steelmaking for the future, or stripping out red tape to allow our private sector to thrive. It means providing the economic and cyber security that give businesses and families the certainty they need to invest for the future.
3. NSS 2025 is also a call to action for an all-of-society effort to make our country stronger and more secure. It outlines a number of ways in which we will have to pull together, from national resilience exercises to greater vigilance from the public. The ambition set out in NSS 2025 means asking investors, academia and industry to align private capital and intellectual capacity to ensure our competitive edge and sovereign capability. It requires the public, business and academia to adopt cybersecurity practices and effective research security practices. It means asking the private sector to engage with law enforcement to protect people from harmful and illegal content online, and ensuring that human security remains at the forefront of AI. This is the task ahead of us: to mobilise the nation in the common cause of our national security.
4. The years ahead will test the United Kingdom. As this National Security Strategy sets out time and again, our world is characterised by radical uncertainty. The direction it takes – and the decisions we take – will reverberate through the decades. We will need agility and courage to succeed, but we should be optimistic. We remain a resolute country, rich in history, values and in our capabilities. But most of all, there is the determination of the British people themselves. After all, we do not need to look too far into our history for an example of a whole-of-society effort, motivated by a collective will to keep each other safe. We can mobilise that spirit again and use it both for our national security and the rebuilding of our country. And, as we do so, this national security strategy can act as our guide. A strategy that will ensure we can protect our country, secure the national interest and deliver change for the British people.

Citations for collage photos on the back cover, from top left, clockwise: 1) RAF Cyberspace Engineering Technician testing equipment in support of Operation (Op) SHADER. 2) A City of London Police Constable 3) 3rd Operation (Op) INTERSTORM graduation, where Ukrainian pilots have been trained by instructors of No 6 Flying Training School based at RAF Cranwell. The successful graduates will progress to their 2nd phase of flying training in readiness for front line operations. 4) Belfast Harbour © Harland & Wolff 5) The OQC Toshiko Gen 1 is the world's first enterprise-ready quantum platform via Tokyo and London. © OQC



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