Executive Summary

This paper develops Liberal Democrat policies on domestic and international security. Labour and Conservative approaches both rely on a narrative of fear, arguing that liberty must be sacrificed on the altar of security. Liberal Democrats believe that liberty, justice and the separation of powers are prerequisites for security and that sacrificing liberties in the face of unconventional threats from criminals and terrorists will only serve to make Britain a weaker and less secure society.

Britain and its population face growing and diverse threats. Climate change, resource depletion, water shortages and energy security all threaten global stability yet receive relatively little political attention. A new breed of suicide terrorist, increasing cross-border crime, the precarious nature of fragile states and a resurgence of nuclear proliferation all get attention from the Government, but the response is all too often a knee-jerk and misguided attempt to pacify citizens rather then to tackle the underlying security challenges Britain faces.

Liberal Democrats believe that in order to secure the future it is essential to focus on long term preventative measures and have a more proactive approach to dealing with all our security challenges.

Cooperating Across Borders

Liberal Democrats believe that multilateral co-operation is a key element in ensuring Britain's security. We therefore propose:

- Working more effectively with our allies in the EU, NATO, the UN, the Commonwealth and other international bodies to tackle security challenges both at home and abroad. Closer co-operation of all aspects of government and society with their foreign counterparts is crucial to the security of Britain.

- Keeping the channels of communication open. Our response to radical ideologies should be a mix of firm defence of our values combined with a willingness to talk.

Security with liberty

Whatever the threats to security, respect for human rights, the liberty of the individual and the rule of law must not undermined. They have to be adapted to deal with emergencies and with new circumstances, but no British government should compromise the underlying principles fundamental to our society. We therefore propose:

- Emergency measures when needed, and tough penalties when justified. We insist that the rule of law and the protection of individual liberty and privacy are core British values which it is the role of government to defend.

- Increasing the likelihood of successful prosecution in both terrorism and organised crime cases by supporting the admissibility of intercept evidence in these cases. This would avoid having to resort to such desperate measures as control orders or a further extension of pre-charge detention.

Building Communities:

Strengthening local communities and building mutual trust provide an effective defence against both the fear and the reality of crime, terror, and natural disaster. A coherent national community partly depends upon shared confidence in political institutions; growing distrust

of government has thus become part of the problem of domestic security, contributing to alienation. We therefore propose:

- Rebuilding cohesive communities by reviving local democracy and reversing the centralisation to Westminster and Whitehall.

- A cross-party study of training for active citizenship and the creation of a force of civilian reservists to rebuild the local capabilities to cope with emergencies.

Making Britain's Neighbourhood Secure

Britain's security is inextricably bound up with our continental neighbours. British citizens who live abroad and the citizens of other EU member states who live in Britain or are regular visitors are entitled to expect close co-operation between the law enforcement agencies of the countries in which they live and work.

We recognise that security must be seen as a continuum including local, national, European and international aspects. We therefore propose:

- Supporting the development of European capabilities for conflict prevention, conflict management, and post-conflict reconstruction, both civilian and military, in line with the wider requirements of the responsibility to protect.

- Moving to a more equitable system for financing EU and NATO operations where all members share the costs of operations.

- Supporting further integration of logistical support and defence procurement as the practical way to maintain effective capabilities without raising defence spending.

Managing Global Threats

Democratic governments, using all the available instruments of foreign policy, should promote the rule of law, limited government, economic development with widely-dispersed ownership, education and civil society, to provide the long-term framework within which democracy can grow and flourish across the world. We therefore propose:

- Supporting the principle of Responsibility to Protect. Prevention is better than cure; intervention should be for humanitarian reasons, and must involve wide international participation under UN authority and have reasonable and achievable aims and a clear and realistic exit strategy.

- That the UK works with partners and allies to ensure fragile states do not become failed states.

- Supporting Britain's continued commitment to Afghanistan. The priority must be as far as possible to reconstruct viable institutions and the local and national economy.

Making Nuclear Weapons History:

Nuclear proliferation presents a profound threat to security. We therefore propose:

- That the UK should play a leading role in the 2010 non-proliferation treaty review; we support further steps to demonstrate our commitment to that process by placing Britain's minimal nuclear deterrent under international inspection.

Meeting Our Commitments

It is essential that our commitments are met by both effective decision-making structures and adequate funding. We therefore propose:

- That inter-departmental relations be enhanced to ensure that all ministries involved in tackling security issues – the FCO, MOD, DfID, DEFRA and the Home Office – work together more effectively, and create a clear diplomatic and political strategy by which development assistance is managed.

- That a Strategic Security and Defence Review (SSDR) be initiated as soon as possible to examine foreign and domestic security policy, including the long-term security impacts of environmental and economic factors including that of climate change. It should take at least a 20-year perspective with an update at the beginning of each parliamentary term. It should include close consultation with the US and our European partners. The new SSDR must be accompanied by an opening up of the MoD budget to closer scrutiny.

- Elements of the MoD budget related to forces' welfare, particularly to the modernisation and maintenance of accommodation should be ring-fenced. A thorough review of personnel policy should be integral to the investigations and conclusions of a new SSDR.

Contents

1. Introduction

1.0.1   The security challenges of the 21st century are markedly different from those traditionally faced by nation states. The UK faces no direct threats that are not shared to a greater or lesser extent by its neighbours and allies in the EU and NATO. Nor do contemporary threats to the UK or to international peace and security emanate solely or even mainly from other states. After more than half a century of European integration, Europe is essentially a peaceful region and the military threats to Western Europe of the Cold War era have retreated. Only a more diffuse nuclear threat remains, in the form of nuclear proliferation to states outside Europe – a challenge to Britain as to the whole international community.

1.0.2   By contrast, non-state actors pose a significant threat and failing states can threaten regional security as well as harbouring criminal networks or terrorists. Globalisation – instant communication, cheap and rapid international travel, globally integrated financial markets, and a highly interdependent world economy – and the evident threat of climate change have profound ramifications across the world which affect the security of the UK, its neighbours and allies.

1.0.3   The new sources of insecurity for the 21st Century are made worse by global changes that make resource conflicts more likely. The effects of climate change will impact on the security of the UK, its neighbours and allies, either directly or indirectly. Conflicts over water and food resources are likely to grow, with increased migration pressures ensuring that they continue to be felt globally.

1.0.4   The UK cannot protect itself against these new threats by shutting off its borders. Millions of British citizens live across our national boundaries, travelling abroad to work, to study, to enjoy holidays or to retire. More and more people from other countries come to Britain, to visit or to stay. The UK cannot therefore protect the security of its citizens solely at its own ports; it must cooperate with others as closely as possible. It faces a wide range of risks, in a world that may well become increasingly insecure, unless it can successfully work more closely with partners and allies in Europe and beyond.

1.0.5   It is the role of the state to protect individuals and their liberties; ultimately, reductions in liberty also reduce security as the risks of oppression grow. Our aim as Liberals and as Democrats is to defend and promote the values of an open and liberal society. These values are threatened not only by external and domestic threats, but also by those who would claim to be enhancing our security. The politics of fear both breed and can be manipulated by illiberal government. The challenge for those who believe in limited government and the rule of law is to contain the risks which British citizens face, at home and abroad, without giving way to authoritarian responses or to warlike psychology. Open societies flourish best in a peaceful world. It is therefore in Britain's self-interest to work with like-minded states, through regional and global institutions, to counter shared threats and to strengthen a stable and equitable international order, firmly based on respect for human rights and the rule of law.

1.0.6   The first part of this paper attempts to outline these threats to the UK's security. What emerges most strongly is the increasing overlap between domestic and international security. The UK Government and others beyond have begun to grapple with the complexities of 21st century security challenges. Liberal Democrats have yet to be

convinced that the response has been radical enough, either in the UK or the wider international community.

1.0.7   So, in the second half of this paper, we set out the Liberal Democrat response. Four key themes guide our approach. First, we focus throughout on the importance of recognising that liberty and security are not opposites, and that the free and open society we want cannot and need not be sacrificed by an authoritarian approach to security. Secondly, as internationalists, we focus on the centrality of greater co-operation with other countries in various international frameworks. Thirdly, there is the emphasis on preventive policies, to ensure far more is done to reduce and eliminate the causes of insecurity and conflict. Lastly, we place a heavy emphasis on the urgent need to work actively for global disarmament – both in terms of nuclear weapons ahead of the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference and in terms of the wider arms trade.

Part One:
Threats to Security in the 21st Century

An effective set of security policies must be able to deal with short-, medium- and long-term threats, while at the same time ensuring that individual rights and liberties are preserved.[1] In order to address these threats is it important to identify them and their causes. The UK faces a future with innumerable challenges, some of which are more or less predictable and long-term, while others will unavoidably be sudden, unexpected and potentially devastating.

Moreover, the distinction between internal and external security threats has become blurred in an increasingly globalised world. Terrorist acts by British citizens may be driven by developments in distant states; groups within Britain provide financial and political support for organisations involved in conflicts overseas. The impacts of climate change may affect the security of British citizens both directly, for example via flooding, and indirectly, for example as a result of mass migration and conflicts over scarce resources elsewhere. Part One highlights some of the most urgent security threats facing the UK and its allies.

---

[1] For a fuller discussion of Liberal Democrat policy on civil liberties, please see policy paper 83 *For the People, By the People: polices for better governance in the UK*, 2007.

2   Threats to Global Security

2.0.1   For too long the UK and its allies have paid scant regard to the global threats to their security. These threats tend not to be as immediate as a surge in terrorist activity or cross-border crime, yet the consequences of ignoring them are equally dangerous and require serious analysis and responses.

2.1   Climate Change and Resource Depletion

2.1.1   The British Government's Chief Scientific Adviser has declared that climate change, significantly shaped by human activities, is the greatest threat to long-term security. While it is not the job of this paper to assess the overall debate on climate change, its impact on global security is of vital concern to the UK and needs to be addressed urgently. Flooding and drought are now occurring with increasing frequency on a massive scale, placing additional pressures on already poor regions, and on already fragile states, as people are forced to seek alternative locations in pursuit of water and other resources. Land use, including desertification of fertile land, and food supply are also increasingly affected, creating mass migratory pressures as people become homeless and/or lose their livelihoods. Climate change and the resource depletion it engenders are leading to resource wars, as states face shortages. Water is already a scarce commodity in many parts of the world; procuring a secure supply of water threatens to become a source of national and international conflict.

2.1.2   The depletion of natural resources may also present challenges in the near future. Many national economies, particularly in Africa and the Middle East, are heavily dependent on the exploitation of rapidly diminishing natural resources; conflicts over control of diamonds, scarce metal ores, and oil revenues have fuelled domestic and cross-border conflicts. The UK, as a major consumer of such resources, is affected by the shortages and the criminal trade which these conflicts create. Refugees from such conflicts spill over to the UK and its European neighbours, as desperate people struggle, whether by legal or illegal means, to reach more secure and prosperous countries. Climate change raises the spectre of energy security skirmishes: as the ice-cap melts, for example, Russia has staked a claim to the Arctic seabed.

2.1.3   Liberal Democrats believe that these threats and their humanitarian consequences are on such a scale as to seriously endanger international peace and stability. Yet they command little political attention because they are beyond the time horizon of the next election or two. The British Government should take the lead in the EU and more widely in starting to address these longer-term issues and how to manage them.

2.1.4   Climate change and environmental crises will also affect the UK domestically. Flooding in summer 2007 highlighted explicitly the infrastructure problems that the UK faces: areas that were protected against coastal and river flooding were not protected against flash floods, for example, as urban drainage systems struggled to cope. The subsequent difficulties many people now face in insuring their properties contributes to considerable personal insecurity, quite apart from the huge costs such problems pose to UK public services, which need to be dealt with within a framework of civil contingencies.

2.2   Food Security

2.2.1   One of the effects of climate change is the heightened danger of crop failure, increasing the risk of famine in various parts of the globe, most notably in Africa. This problem has been compounded by global population growth, greater wealth in India and China

leading to increased meat consumption, and the all too successful subsidies from some governments to farmers to grow crops for biofuels (ironically itself a response to the issue of climate change) rather than food.

2.2.2   Food insecurity is now a real and growing problem, which will affect the UK both directly in the form of rapidly rising prices and indirectly as food scarcity leads to conflict and humanitarian crises elsewhere – whether in the form of tortilla riots in Mexico, rice crises in Asia or total destitution in Africa.

2.3   Energy Security

2.3.1   As North Sea oil runs dry the UK, like the vast majority of its European neighbours, is becoming increasingly dependent on third countries for its oil and gas supplies. Norway currently offers secure and stable supplies but other suppliers, notably Russia and the Middle Eastern OPEC states, are far less secure. In recent years, Russia has cut off gas supplies to its neighbours, Ukraine and Belarus, leading to fears that those EU states dependent on Russian gas could also be open to Russian pressure.[2] Russian production, moreover, is peaking. Investment in new fields is inadequate, domestic demand is rising, so that Russia may well not be able to meet both its domestic and foreign demand for its gas in the not too distant future.

2.3.2   Meanwhile, instability in the Middle East means that oil supplies are vulnerable to regional conflicts or domestic changes of regime. In addition, emerging economies, notably India and China, require increasing amounts of energy resources, putting additional pressure on scarce resources and driving up world prices, especially of oil.

2.4   Fragile States

2.4.1   Fragile states increasingly have a significant impact on global security and the stability of their region, not least as safe havens for criminal gangs and for terrorist-minded groups like, or inspired by, Al Qaeda. Such states are typically found in areas that are vulnerable to other factors of insecurity: exposure to natural disasters like floods or drought, increasing now from climate change; long-term water shortages; population pressures; or HIV/AIDS. Internal conflict and economic collapse arising from such causes are massively destabilising for the affected region and may cause huge problems for their neighbours and ultimately for European states, especially as the populations flee, and for the UN under its humanitarian responsibilities and the Responsibility to Protect. While European states have struggled to control the numbers of would-be refugees arriving at their borders, it is important to recognise that the vast majority of refugees remain in the developing world, frequently putting great pressure on already poor neighbouring states.[3]

2.4.2   In the main, the international community has tended to respond to such crises in an ad-hoc, ex-post fashion. Occasionally military interventions have been tried, as, for example, with the US deployment in Somalia. Sometimes, however, the UK, the EU and the wider

---

[2] "By 2020 around 80% of UK fuels are likely to come from overseas" DTI Energy Review p33. The EU relies on imports for 50% of its energy (Source: speech by Andris Piebalgs, European Energy Commissioner, 21 September 2007). However, the UK itself imports very little gas from Russia.

[3] Jordan has between 700,000 and a million Iraqi refugees as a consequence of the war in Iraq (Source: Baroness Williams of Crosby, Hansard, Col. 1103, 24 January 2007) and Syria similarly has huge numbers of refugees, as do Pakistan and Iran following the war in Afghanistan. Elsewhere, genocide in Africa has placed huge migratory pressures on fragile neighbouring states.

international community have attempted to try to develop preventive strategies to avoid states from failing, whether through better use of development aid, more support for better governance and/or institution-building and encouraging regional actors to play a more constructive role.

2.5   Nuclear Proliferation

2.5.1   Since the end of the Cold War, increasing numbers of states have sought nuclear capabilities, sometimes in breach of commitments undertaken under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). This treaty precludes non-nuclear signatories from developing military nuclear capabilities, while committing the five declared nuclear powers in return to reduce their nuclear arsenals and ultimately to disarm completely. Nonetheless, Israel, India and Pakistan, none signatories of the NPT, now have military nuclear capabilities. Iran and perhaps Syria (both signatories) seem intent on acquiring nuclear weapons and North Korea (a non-signatory) may already have acquired them. Such nuclear proliferation is a major threat, with associated dangers for regional and global security.

2.5.2   Nuclear proliferation presents new dangers in a world of suicide terrorists. While it is highly unlikely that a terrorist group would be able to explode a nuclear device, it remains a possibility they could obtain one, especially if a fragile nuclear state breaks down. Moreover, "dirty" radioactive bombs are relatively easy to make, though their destructive capability is more limited.

2.5.3   Elsewhere, the United States' determination in recent years to press ahead with a unilateralist approach has devalued multilateral treaties and regimes. It withdrew unilaterally from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002 and declared its intention not to renew the START treaty when it runs its course in 2009. President Bush's determination to press ahead with a Ballistic Missile Defence Shield – "son of star wars" – in the face of Russian opposition, has already underdone the old nuclear stability. Nor have other declared nuclear powers taken any lead on their NPT commitments to disarmament. Thus, there has been little progress in reducing nuclear proliferation at a time when the world should be preparing for the 2010 Disarmament talks.

2.6   Shifting Power in a Multi-Polar World

2.6.1   Our global political and economic order, and the international institutions which support it, owe a great deal to enlightened American leadership over the past 60 years. The legitimacy of American leadership has, sadly, been damaged in recent years, while American military power has been overstretched and its economy weakened. New economic and financial centres have risen across Asia and around the Arabian Gulf. China and India have massive populations, rapidly growing economies, and substantial armed forces. Russia is attempting to re-establish itself as a global power without which important decisions cannot be taken. Britain and its European neighbours now face a multi-polar world, in which they and their American allies on whom they have relied for decades for their security and for leadership in world affairs must increasingly persuade others to share responsibility for managing common threats.

2.6.2   Although the UK has not faced any direct military threat since the end of the Cold War, its forces have continued to engage in conflict, and in the prevention and management of conflict, in south-eastern Europe, Africa, Iraq and Afghanistan. These deployments have been matters of choice rather than obligation. In almost all cases these have been joint operations with forces from other states to meet perceived common threats to

international security. Over the past ten years Britain has been readier than most other NATO and EU member states to use force and to deploy forces to meet distant threats.

2.6.3   There are many current and potential threats to global and regional security around Europe's periphery, across Africa and in the Middle East. Many developing states are experiencing rapid population growth, leading to an explosion of their urban populations, high youth unemployment and emigration. Authoritarian regimes face radical opposition groups; radical groups in power could well be hostile to the West; traditional societies are challenged by globalisation and technological change; non-oil economies are struggling to adjust to global competition. State collapse or civil conflicts spill over borders, to disrupt the stability of their neighbours, with knock-on effects for countries like Britain in surges of refugees and illegal immigrants, and in interruptions of trade flows, food and raw material supplies. The challenge for Britain is to decide how best to contribute to the prevention and containment of conflict and to post-conflict reconstruction – to choose where and how to deploy its limited resources, within what multilateral frameworks, and with which partners.

3 External Threats to UK Security

3.0.1 Of all the threats facing the UK and its citizens, terrorism and cross border crimes including people trafficking, drug trafficking and organised immigration crime are arguably the most talked about and the most feared. The indiscriminate nature of these threats has fostered a political climate of knee jerk responses and erosion of civil liberties.

3.1 Terrorism

3.1.1 Since 9/11, the most frequently discussed threat to international and UK security arises from terrorism and especially Al Qaeda-inspired terrorists. The threat they represent is their violent hostility to the values central to our society. Their danger to us is increased by their ability to take full advantage of the phenomenon of globalisation, such as the easy movement of capital, the ease of global communications and the strength of trans-national allegiances.

3.1.2 While the UK has faced terrorist threats for decades, most importantly from the IRA, the threat from violent fundamentalist Islamist groups is of a different nature. Not only do they seek to take life on a large scale, but, unlike "traditional" terrorist movements, they are fully prepared to die themselves in the process. As the events of July 2005 and June 2007 demonstrated, even some people born and brought up within the UK are willing to give their own lives in perpetrating terrorist attacks on British soil. Domestic terrorist groups are supported through trans-national links, such as training camps in other states, ties to radical groups in other countries and financial flows from foreign supporters, which in turn may be linked to drugs-trafficking and other forms of cross-border crime which help to finance terrorism.

3.1.3 Such challenges from non-state actors cannot be tackled by conventional military means alone. Moreover, there is a risk that by focusing national security on international terrorist threats – worst of all, in labelling it a "war on terror" – states both fail to pay sufficient attention to other pressing threats and seek to curtail the freedom of all in the hope of greater security. Britain, together with its neighbours and allies, faces a long struggle to counter threats from radical terrorist groups; these threats cannot be countered by force alone. The current government, and Britain's public services, have already responded to this urgent new threat; Liberal Democrats especially applaud the vigilance and work of the police and the security services. Yet mixed in with many sensible measures, the Labour Government's response to terrorism, backed at almost every stage by the Conservatives, has also included a range of unnecessarily authoritarian measures.

3.1.4 Labour's curbing of civil liberties, by increasing the length of time people can be detained without trial and introducing ID cards and innumerable surveillance mechanisms, is not the way forward. Liberal Democrats accept that some constraints might be in the public interest but recognise that excessive amounts of surveillance and controls, by increasing the arbitrary powers of the state, end up making people *less* rather than *more* secure. We believe a more practical approach can see new laws and policies that are more effective in stopping terrorists, while protecting civil liberties better. On a number of occasions already, Liberal Democrat-inspired ideas have done just that - including our ideas for an offence of acts preparatory to an act of terrorism, our support for making telephone intercept information admissible in court and our support for post-charge questioning in certain cases.

3.1.5   Indeed, as we show in the second part of this paper, the Liberal Democrat response to the terrorist threat would focus much more on long term preventive measures, both at home and abroad, combining this with a far more proactive approach to minimise the destructive potential of the terrorists, through our approach on non-proliferation and disarmament. Security counter-measures must be limited and proportionate, faithful to our own values. Policy-making and implementation must be accountable, to retain public confidence and trust.

3.2   Cross-Border Crime

3.2.1   Britain's borders no longer separate domestic order from disorder and insecurity elsewhere. More and more British citizens travel abroad, and more and more people from other countries travel to Britain. Several million British citizens now live overseas for all or part of the year. Several million citizens from other countries live and work in Britain. Tourists and students travel inwards and outwards in rising numbers.

3.2.2   Tackling crime at the UK's borders remains an essential element in our security armoury – not just against terrorists but also against drug smugglers, human traffickers, illegal arms shipments and organised immigration crime. Yet the Government's new unified border force integrates only immigration and customs, and omits the police, undermining its efficacy. It is merely a re-branding of existing functions and will not improve security. Liberal Democrats propose a more co-ordinated UK Border Force, which includes the police and works better with their equivalents worldwide. This will be crucial in avoiding unacceptable delays at the UK's 35 air, sea and rail points of entry.

3.2.3   While there is a cross-party consensus that effective border policing will increasingly require better identity documentation, this breaks down over the details. The Government is proposing biometric passports, containing both a facial scan and fingerprints, which would meet the highest requirements proposed for Schengen, even though the UK is not a member and has no plans to join. Liberal Democrat MEPs voted against the European Commission's proposals for similar biometrics in European passports. The Government's over-engineered biometric passports are intrinsically linked to its illiberal and unnecessary ID card scheme. Such systems are not only extremely expensive; they also have the potential to be *less* secure. The billions being lavished by the Government on these schemes would be far better spent on some of the more effective security measures outlined in this paper and elsewhere in Liberal Democrat policy. Liberal Democrats would instead adhere to ICAO standards, which only require passports to be machine readable and contain a facial image.

3.2.4   Close co-operation with other governments is essential to maintaining domestic order as cross-border crime including drugs and people-trafficking, and the money laundering associated with these crimes. As with illegal immigration, solutions can often only be found at the European level. However, both Labour and Conservative parties are reluctant to give the EU the powers it needs to tackle such questions effectively and to explain to British citizens those measures that they have already adopted. There are also serious questions as to how we can best cooperate internationally and through international institutions to tackle crime originating outside of our borders, such as cybercrime and e-terrorism.

3.2.5   The growth in use and sophistication of information and communications technology (ICT) has had significant positive impacts on British society. The growth of the internet has also provided citizens with a platform for the exchange of ideas, goods and services that has international reach. However, just as this technology has been used as a force for

good, it has also created opportunities for criminality, for fraud and deception, for fostering hate, extremism and alienation, for child pornography and for terrorism. Society has also learned to rely on the advances in technology to the extent that some critical infrastructures are reliant upon the continued safe functioning of specialist ICT. So called 'Cybercrime' and the capacity for sophisticated cyber attacks against the technological infrastructure of society need to be tackled and security provided.

3.2.6   The National Hi Tech Crime Unit, which became part of the Serious and Organised Crime Agency, and the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure both operate to tackle criminality and guard against external threats. Significant work is required by these agencies co-operating together to map comprehensively the interdependencies between the critical physical infrastructures and critical ICT infrastructure upon which society relies, such as transport systems, energy and power systems, and financial and banking systems. Civil emergency plans should be made against eventualities and include local authorities where required.

3.2.7   Liberal Democrats believe that tackling cybercrime and associated threats to security have significant implications for the privacy of the individual and protection of civil liberties. Liberal Democrat responses to these issues are set out elsewhere in this paper and in policy paper 83 *For the People, By the People* (2007).

4   Internal Threats to the UK's Security

4.0.1   Years of undermining the powers of local authorities and the value of strong local communities by both Conservative and Labour governments has left the UK with weak and disparate communities, citizens who feel that they do not belong and towns and cities where indiscriminate violent crime is fast becoming the norm.

4.1   Weaker Communities, Radicalisation and the Search for Identity

4.1.1   One of the costs of greater personal and social mobility, and of the increased diversity of our society, has been to weaken the bonds that held local communities together. Urban re-housing schemes, from the 1950s onwards, broke up extended family structures, creating estates where mutual trust has broken down and the long-term unemployed feel excluded.   Cities, with their rapid social turnover, leave some – whether white, working-class young men or the children of immigrants - confused and alienated, because of socio-economic exclusion and/or real or perceived victimisation.

4.1.2   Radical movements, whether using legal or illegal means, grow out of alienation and confusion, when people feel uncertain of where they belong, seeking a cause and a social identity. The phenomenon of home-grown suicidal terrorism highlights tensions within the UK that must be addressed urgently in order to try to prevent the alienation that lead some to more extreme and violent responses. British governments must therefore necessarily be concerned to strengthen social cohesion, both local and national. Calls to revive "Britishness" address only part of the problem. A strong national community depends on a shared sense of equity and opportunity for all, providing vital underpinning to appeals to common values.

4.1.3   Liberal Democrats believe that liberal values such as openness, tolerance and respect for secular law constitute, and should continue to constitute, the foundations of our society. There are important core elements to our national identity, such as proficiency in the English language, which should be actively promoted at national and local levels. While we support efforts to integrate newcomers on certain core issues, we also understand that many people hold multiple identities that need not necessarily conflict with an overarching British one. So we also support efforts to promote inter-cultural understanding and tackle xenophobia.

4.1.4   Britain, like other states with minority groups, must address justified grievances, clarify the misunderstandings that fuel unjustified grievances, contain the irreconcilable few who turn towards violence, and work with groups from all faiths and none to promote the principles of an open and tolerant society, firmly based on respect for secular law.

4.1.5   Conflicts in other regions may also become issues within Britain. The rights of Kurds in Turkey, Iran and Iraq, the grievances and suffering of both sides in the Israel/Palestine conflict, the unresolved Indian/Pakistani conflict in Kashmir, the civil war in Sri Lanka, all echo within established communities in Britain. British foreign policy has therefore become closely intertwined with British domestic politics; security at home may be adversely affected by action, or inaction, abroad.

4.2   Critical Infrastructure

4.2.1   The UK's administrative system is far too centralised, with decisions about local schools, hospitals, policing and emergency provision for England increasingly concentrated in London. Britain's electricity network and gas supplies are also highly centralised and

integrated. All of these issues render the UK's infrastructure highly vulnerable to natural or man-made disruption, with limited resilience under crisis conditions (c.f. the lone terrorist who poisons a reservoir). As currently constituted, local authorities and locally-based emergency services are inadequate to cope with such emergencies, and local voluntary services are too weak, leaving communities vulnerable to both manmade and natural disasters.

Part Two

Meeting the Security Threats

With so many threats so different in nature to the UK's security, a comprehensive response will involve many parts of Government and society, and require many types of response.

Britain has to be clear on its role in the face of the global threats. The need for engaged and committed co-operation internationally is paramount. This of course must be done at the UN, NATO, EU and elsewhere. In maximising the ability of countries to co-operate, the UK needs to be especially candid with its closest allies. In Europe, that may mean being frank within the EU about past reluctance to shoulder responsibilities. With the US, it should mean encouraging recent early moves to a more multilateral approach.

Preventing conflicts and crises before they flare up must go hand in hand with that greater international engagement. Refocusing Britain and its partners towards a more pro-active, early intervention approach will require action on many fronts, involving everything from better use of aid budgets to developing international law, and from building up regional capabilities to deal with their own local threats, to improved and different approaches to intelligence-gathering and analysis.

Preparing for conflicts we hope not to fight will however remain essential. With many pressures on the UK's defence and security budgets, an early strategic review of security and defence needs is essential, and should include a renewed effort to tackle procurement costs working with our partners. This must go hand in hand with a major new initiative on disarmament, both in terms of weapons of mass destruction and other armaments, down to small arms. Disarmament has the potential of reducing international tensions as well as the ability of terrorists, warlords and uncontrolled militia to turn fragile states into failed ones.

When considering the internal and direct threats to the UK's security, Liberal Democrats support both the need for investment in the security forces and an approach involving local communities across the UK. Yet we profoundly believe that the UK's responses to security questions must be underpinned by a commitment to the freedom of the individual. This approach is distinct from that of Labour and the Conservatives, both of whom appear to assume that constraints on liberty in some way enhance security.

5   Co-operating Towards a Safer World

5.1   Multilateralism

5.1.1   Liberal Democrats believe that multilateral co-operation is a key element in ensuring Britain's security.   First, at the global level, the United Nations, imperfect as it is, provides, with other global institutions, the only rules-based framework for international co-operation. It is a Liberal Democrat objective to see it strengthened and reformed.[4] Second, at the regional level, the UK must work within the European Union, seeking both regional responses to shared problems and ways to increase European influence in world affairs. Third, the North Atlantic Alliance has been the guarantor of British security for six decades and continues to provide an indispensable means of working with the US and other NATO partners in international security crises. Last but not least is the Commonwealth, a valuable world-wide association of countries with ties of history and language, which permits the UK and other member states to exert influence on fellow member states to support democracy and the rule of law.

5.1.2   Co-operation with European Union partners in the field of security has huge untapped potential. Successive British governments have been reluctant to commit to bilateral and multi-lateral relationships with our partners within the European Union, partly as they have overcommitted to the bilateral relationship with the US. Even when the UK has worked with EU partners, as with the 1998 Franco-British St Malo initiative which launched European Security and Defence Policy, the Labour Government, like its Conservative predecessor, shied away from explicit leadership once the sceptical media launched an attack.

5.1.3   Britain also needs to rebalance its relationship with the US. While the US remains the world's pre-eminent superpower and shares many of our values, it has to be central to our approach to both global and UK security. However, it does not help global security when Britain adopts the role of uncritical cheerleader, most vividly seen during the Iraq disaster. With President Bush's successors seemingly ready to embrace both a more multilateral approach to foreign policy in general and a more positive view of developments like the European Security and Defence Policy, this may be an historic opportunity to influence American approaches to global threats. Liberal Democrats recognise that Britain is better placed to exert influence in Washington in combination with other European governments rather than acting alone, and that British interests can be better served by working to develop common positions with our European partners, rather than pretending that Britain can form a transatlantic 'bridge' between the US and Europe.

5.2   Cooperating Across Borders

5.2.1   One of the side effects of globalisation is that the distinction between domestic and international security is now breaking down. The growth of multi-national companies and widespread movement within the EU mean that that there are limits to the measures we can take to keep people outside our borders or to prevent crimes that affect our citizens. British law enforcement agencies must therefore co-operate increasingly closely

---

[4] For existing Liberal Democrat policy on the UN, please see policy paper 74 *Britain's Global Responsibilities: the international rule of law* (2006)

with their counterparts in other countries, to identify criminals, hostile agents and potential terrorists, and to close down human trafficking routes and trans-national criminal networks.

5.2.2 Liberal Democrats recognise the severity of the threats that radical movements and revolutionary regimes pose to an open society and to the established international order. A large part of Islamic radicalism is directed against domestic regimes in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, not just the West. Britain and its partners must maintain the intelligence co-operation, law enforcement and military capabilities needed to contain and overcome the challenges they present.

5.2.3 The defence of British interests and objectives may require dialogue with hostile or unpleasant regimes or movements, as in the past with Colonel Gaddafi's Libya or the IRA Army Council and more recently Kim Jong Il's North Korea. Former US diplomat George Kennan wisely argued in 1947 for containment rather than outright confrontation in tackling what then appeared to be the existential threat of Soviet Communism. The response of liberal democracies to radical ideologies today should offer a similar mix of firm defence of our values and ordered societies, combined with a willingness to talk, to keep open channels even to radical states and movements, through which they may in time discover the advantages of seeking compromise and common ground.

5.3 Making Britain's Neighbourhood More Secure

5.3.1 Britain's security is inextricably bound up with its continental neighbours. British citizens who live abroad and the citizens of other EU member states who live in Britain or are regular visitors are entitled to expect close co-operation between the law enforcement agencies of the countries in which they live and work. Liberal Democrats recognise that security must be seen as a continuum including local, national, European and international aspects. Thus, we have supported efforts from British police and prosecution authorities to build effective frameworks for cross-border co-operation, and support the further development of such co-operation. We deplore the Government's dishonest way of presenting this necessary process to parliament and public, negotiating new initiatives in the EU and then presenting them in London as imposed by "Brussels". Liberal Democrats wish to strengthen the European framework so as to strengthen the safeguards for judicial review of cross-border co-operation, and also to strengthen the regulation of the cross-border data exchanges and networks which form part of this European framework.

5.3.2 Britain should now be leading a Europe-wide debate on the nature and diversity of the threats we face, not standing on the sidelines. Britain, like all European states, faces intense pressures for immigration from poor, badly-governed and conflict-ridden states in Africa and the Middle East; stepping up its engagement in FRONTEX is therefore vital to providing for more effective control of the EU's outer boundaries, especially in the Mediterranean. Like all European states, Britain feels the impact from conflicts around the wider neighbourhood, as refugees struggle to reach British cities and as criminal networks exploit disorder. These challenges justify Liberal Democrat support for the development of European capabilities for conflict prevention, conflict management, and post-conflict reconstruction, both civilian and military in line with the wider requirements of the duty to protect (see section 7.1 below).

5.3.3   Tony Blair launched the initiative for European co-operation in security and defence (ESDP) with President Chirac at St. Malo in 1998.[5] In spite of ESDP successes in South-East Europe, central Africa and Western Indonesia, the development of ESDP has been held back by the reluctance of several EU governments to invest in the equipment and training required to give their forces effective expeditionary capabilities, and by the strict 'caveats' some governments have imposed over force deployments. Liberal Democrats look forward with interest to President Sarkozy's proposals to strengthen ESDP, expected in the latter half of 2008, in a package which would bring France back into NATO's integrated military command structure for the first time since 1966.

5.3.4   Liberal Democrats believe it would be fairer, provide for more effective operations and be to Britain's advantage, as a major European contributor to conflict management in south-east Europe, Africa, and Asia, if the EU and NATO were both to move away from the present "costs-lie-where-they-fall" philosophy for financing EU and NATO operations. Member states not contributing forces, which currently contribute nothing at all to operations and have little incentive to do so, would be obliged to contribute more fairly. The Conservatives under David Cameron have come out in support of common funding within NATO for operations outside the NATO area, under US leadership, but they remain opposed to any similar proposals to reimburse costs for EU operations.

5.3.5   Several other European NATO members jointly invested in the American Boeing-based AWACs, the NATO Airborne Early Warning system, several years ago; Britain insisted, at very significant extra cost, on maintaining its independent Comet-based Nimrod system. There is room for further integration of logistical support and defence procurement, from long-range airlift to helicopters, without affecting national autonomy in the commitment of troops to operations; Liberal Democrats see such integration as the only practicable way to maintain effective capabilities without raising defence spending.

5.3.6   Despite traditional American objections to what they see as "caucusing" in NATO, Liberal Democrats believe that EU members of NATO should coordinate policy together within alliance rather more effectively than in the past in order to provide a better balance between American leadership and European responses, better to reflect the role of NATO and respective roles of its members. This is a logical concomitant of the EU having a common security and defence policy.

5.3.7   Twenty years after the disappearance of the Soviet threat that led to its creation, NATO now has three roles. The first is to extend a security framework across the European region, bringing national military forces into an integrated international structure and reinforcing the principles of civilian control and democratic accountability. The second is to protect its member states against the potential re-emergence of military threats to Europe. The third is to provide an expeditionary capability outside the European region, in response to attacks on Europe and North America from outside the region or to requests from the UN to assist in containing regional conflicts or state collapse. Liberal Democrats strongly support all three roles, provided that NATO's role outside the European region is conducted in accordance with the UN Charter and in co-operation with appropriate regional security organisations, such as the African Union.

---

[5] For the further insights into Lib Dem policy on European foreign, security and defence policy, please see policy paper 87, *2008*

6   Security with Liberty – Tackling Internal Security Issues

6.0.1   Britain has long and bitter experience of radical movements prepared to use violence. The IRA campaign left 3,000 people in the UK dead over thirty years; it included two attacks on British prime ministers. A new generation of people prepared to use suicidal terrorism with a different ideology and stronger links to terrorist networks overseas has taken the IRA's place. Tony Blair's declaration, in the wake of the July 7th bomb attacks in 2005, that 'the rules of the game have changed', was however misplaced. Terrorists' methods might be different, with a greater willingness to attack without warning and engage in suicide bombing missions; respect for human rights, the liberty of the individual and the rule of law must not change. They have to be adapted to deal with emergencies and with new circumstances, but no British government should compromise the underlying principles fundamental to British society.

6.0.2   Liberal Democrats support emergency measures when needed, and tough penalties when justified. But we insist that the rule of law and the protection of individual liberty – and privacy – are core British values which it is the role of government to defend. The rule of law itself provides underlying security for every British citizen against an over-mighty or arbitrary state. Emergency measures must therefore be clearly justified and of limited application and duration. Trials should be conducted before juries.

6.0.3   Privacy is also a right; protection from the *state*'s surveillance, whether by national or local government, distinguishes limited, democratic government from authoritarian, police states.   Computerisation of records makes centralised data collection more easily attainable, but also more open to loss, theft and fraud. Liberal Democrats recognise that a highly mobile mass society needs government to check the identities of those crossing borders, paying tax, and attending hospital; we are not persuaded of the case for bringing government records further together, nor of the case for a compulsory national identity card scheme. Identity fraud is already a growing problem; we do not trust government agencies to protect centralised records from fraudulent use or other abuse.

6.0.4   The UK is the only western country, except Ireland, that does not allow phone tap evidence in court. The Liberal Democrats support the admissibility of intercept evidence in cases involving not only terrorism but also organised crime, as other common law legal systems close to Britain's, such as Australia and the United States, now do. The genuine concerns of the security services about the protection of their methods and sources cannot be ignored. However, allowing phone tap evidence and the clarification of a framework for the use of other sensitive evidence in court is possible without compromising the work of the security services. This would allow the maximum amount of evidence to be presented in open court and minimise the risk of trials collapsing due to defence requests for disclosure. The result would be the increased likelihood of successful prosecution in both terrorism and organised crime cases, without having to resort to such desperate measures as control orders or a further extension of pre-charge detention. More criminals could also be brought to justice by extending the grounds for post-charge questioning.

6.0.5   Close co-operation with other governments is now an essential element in maintaining domestic security. British criminals have bolt holes overseas; criminal networks smuggle drugs, or people, into Britain from other continents. Successive governments have kept from Parliament and public the extent of international co-operation which already exists,

for fear of arousing the Eurosceptic press. Britain has formally opted out of significant areas of European police and judicial collaboration, but informally opted back in without any public discussion. British law enforcement agencies value collaboration within Europol and Eurojust; the European Arrest Warrant has enabled British authorities to return criminal and terrorist suspects to British jurisdiction far faster than through traditional extradition procedures. Liberal Democrats support further European co-operation, and wider international co-operation where possible, subject to clearer accountability to Parliament and to the safeguards of European and international law.

6.0.6   In the economic sphere, a number of the world's most successful offshore financial centres are under UK sovereignty. Britain accordingly bears a particular responsibility in combating international corruption through financial fraud, and in countering money-laundering by international criminal networks. Liberal Democrats will press the Government to tighten regulation of these centres, and to reduce the secrecy of the transactions they manage with onshore customers.

6.0.7   The protection of British citizens abroad is necessarily a rising preoccupation for the Government. British holiday-makers were killed in the bombings in Bali and Egypt and many were caught up in the Asian tsunami in 2004. This increase in workload means that consular co-operation with our European partners in other states is clearly in Britain's interest and we should consider pooling resources within the EU to deal with the natural or man-made disasters which our citizens may suffer.

6.1   Building Communities

6.1.1   In many ways, we have never been safer or healthier, yet the modern world has left many people feeling insecure about the threats from crime, terrorism and natural disaster. Both Labour and the Conservatives have attempted to exploit this politics of fear. Liberalism's belief in people's capacity to act for themselves and their communities offers a compelling alternative to the politics of fear. Liberal Democrats believe that strengthening local communities and building mutual trust provides the most effective defence against both the fear and the reality of these security threats. By empowering people and local communities and by giving them the strength to act for themselves, they can be freed from relying passively on the authority of the state.

6.1.2   This authority has been seriously undermined by a growing distrust of government, both local and central. This shattered confidence in political institutions has become part of the problem of domestic security. The invasion of Iraq, justified through the manipulation of intelligence information, is perhaps the most important factor that has damaged public trust in government over recent years.

6.1.3   It is shameful that the Labour Government should discuss how to strengthen the concept of British citizenship without at the same time addressing political reform; active citizenship is learned through involvement in public life, from parish councils and local elections to jury service, school meetings to trade unions and voluntary work. Active citizenship depends on citizens feeling they have a stake in their community. Liberal Democrats therefore see the revival of local democracy, and the reversal of centralisation to Westminster and Whitehall, as worthwhile aims in themselves, but also as contributing to rebuilding a more cohesive national community.

6.1.4   Decentralisation and local participation are also vital for enhancing local resilience when disaster strikes. Voluntary service, through part-time local policing, fire brigade volunteers, and other public activities, build reserves of organised capability for

emergencies, and at the same time build stronger communities and active citizenship. Britain has witnessed a serious decline in its voluntary services over the past twenty years not least because of significant cuts in funding at national and local level; Liberal Democrats support their revival and call for an enquiry into reinvigorating the voluntary sector.[6]

6.1.5   The ability of the Territorial Army to assist in civilian emergencies has been hampered by its progressive reduction in size and the professional army's increasing dependence on territorial reserves for active service. This has left Britain still more vulnerable. Liberal Democrats support the Government's encouragement of state schools to initiate army cadet forces but recognise that this type of activity does not appeal to all young people, particularly those who are marginalised and disaffected. Liberal Democrats therefore also advocate the expansion of other youth programmes, particularly those that work to bring young people from different communities together and involve young people themselves in their development.

6.1.6   Liberal Democrats propose the establishment of a Civilian Voluntary Service, to rebuild the local capabilities to cope with emergencies which have sadly been lost. This is not something that can be imposed from above – it must be community-based, community-led and engage local people. Liberal Democrats propose a cross-party examination of how to structure a Civilian Voluntary Service. For too long, communities have been treated as the victims of disaster and not consulted over, or involved in, the organised response. It is time to tap into that resource – to explore how people can learn skills to serve their community and to share them. Then, when emergencies occur, from flooding to terrorism, local people can stand alongside the professionals in defending their communities. This is a big challenge for communities, but when empowering them, responsibility comes built in.

6.1.7   Building and maintaining a strong national community requires a shared sense of equity: a degree of support for the poorest in society, and an acceptable balance between the richest and the poorest citizens. An open, liberal society cannot flourish when the gap between the poorest and the richest widens too far. Hence Liberal Democrats advocate a fairer tax system, including local income tax, which seeks to help the poorest in society, thereby reducing one major source of dissatisfaction that could otherwise contribute to alienation and extremism within certain sections of society.

6.2   Preventing Violent Extremism – Promoting Cohesive Communities

6.2.1   The 7/7 bombings in London were a wakeup call. Following on from 2001 disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham they showed that politically motivated terrorism by people purporting to be Muslims was not just an international phenomenon but could be found in communities in the UK. In an age of globalised ideologies, globalised communications and porous borders there is no real distinction between domestic and foreign threats.

6.2.2   Security Policy must therefore address hearts and minds and prevent individuals becoming attracted to extremism as well preventing attacks by extremist groups. Allied to the security response is one from departments like Communities and Local Government (CLG) which work with community groups to isolate extremism and extremists. The work also redresses some of the social concerns that may lead to people

---

[6] For existing Liberal Democrat policy on increasing volunteering, see policy development paper on volunteering March 2003.

taking such a route. There is therefore a hard military and security response and a softer (hearts and minds) approach employed by departments like CLG.

6.2.3 In response to 7/7 the Government transferred responsibility for community cohesion to the Department for Communities and Local Government. It set up the Commission on Integration & Cohesion which produced its report with 57 recommendations in June 2007. As Liberal Democrats we share its conclusion that integration and cohesion are crucial at local level. Central government can set a framework but there is no quick fix or one size fits all solution. We agree however that there is now a pressing need for a written constitution that sets out a new model of rights and responsibilities with a clear sense of citizenship at national and local level together with the responsibilities that go along with membership of communities.

6.2.4 Local authorities, community organisations and political parties have a vital role in confronting extremism and promoting community cohesion. In recent years extremists who regard themselves as Muslims have used lack of educational, economic and social opportunities in some of our deprived areas to radicalise young people. As Liberal Democrats we must tackle this extremism by:

- Acting against discrimination in all areas ensuring that opportunity is available to all. It is clear that in parts of urban Britain housing, education and employment opportunities are not equal. We want to empower local communities giving them the tools and resources rather than the current top down, centrally driven approach.

- Aiming at an effective citizenship of inclusiveness and participation, promoting the political and civic participation of all citizens regardless of ethnicity and religious background. For too long political parties and politicians have not been representative of the communities they serve. That must change and we support moves to ensure that more women and representatives of different ethnic communities are selected for election at local and national level. In addition we will promote the role of active citizens empowered to work in their community.

- Promoting active policies of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue involving young people through education, youth services and the media. Many young people feel alienated from the culture and customs of their parents and do not see how some cultural elements fit in as part of a British society. Instead they turn to simplistic ideas and misinterpretations of Islam available on the internet produced by extremist organisations. Websites and satellite television channels supply visual images and incendiary rhetoric as well as details of how to produce bombs and explosives. These young terrorists have become self selecting and self radicalised and are a headache for security services. We must promote positive images and examples of Islam in the UK together with a strong emphasis on intercultural and inter-religious dialogue at a local level in our schools, colleges and universities and through our youth services and the media. Particular support from Muslim communities themselves must also be provided to converts to Islam who no doubt need advice, guidance and mentoring so that they can play productive and positive roles through their newly found faith.

- Supporting the establishment of courses including university level to train Imams locally so that they share a common UK cultural heritage. There are approximately 1.6million Muslims in the UK making up approximately 3% of the population. About 60% of these are of South Asian origin and they are concentrated in urban deprived areas. Most of the Imams serving in local Mosques come from the Asian subcontinent. They are ill-equipped to deal with second or third generation Muslims grappling with

a conflict of cultures – that espoused by their parents and what they often view as a contradictory western culture. Imams trained in the UK and having a common cultural heritage are much more likely to be sensitive and aware of these conflicts and able to deal with the issues as they arise. We therefore support the MINAB (Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board) programme that was recently launched and believe that such good practice programmes should be supported, capacity built and implemented.

7 Conflict Prevention

7.0.1 Conflict prevention must be central to security policy. Without investment in this area the UK and its allies will be condemned for generations to come to watch on the sidelines as crises escalate only to intervene once conflict is entrenched and human rights have been disregarded.

7.1 Responsibility to Protect and the Role of International Institutions

7.1.1 Democratic governments, using all the available instruments of foreign policy, should promote the rule of law, limited government, economic development with widely-dispersed ownership, education and civil society, to provide the long-term framework within which democracy can grow and flourish across the world. But we resist the idea that democracy can be imposed through regime change or sanctions; stable democracy depends upon the establishment of the rule of law, and the existence of autonomous civil society.

7.1.2 Liberal Democrats strongly support the principle of the 'Responsibility to Protect', initially proposed by the Liberal government in Canada and now adopted by the UN. This principle takes the individual as sovereign and focuses on the security of individuals rather than states. It requires states to endeavour to prevent crises from occurring in the first place, but if this is not possible any action must focus on protecting the population, **not** on punishing an unpleasant regime, and in cases of intervention, there is a duty to rebuild. Put simply: prevention is better than cure; intervention should be for humanitarian reasons, and must involve wide international participation under UN authority, must have reasonable and achievable aims and a clear and realistic exit strategy.

7.1.3 Failing states — countries where there is no effective government — threaten both regional and global security and it is in precisely such cases that it is desirable to avert crises before they turn into conflicts. Afghanistan, sometimes referred to not as a failed state but as a 'destroyed state' after the Soviet invasion and the following civil war, is perhaps the best of example of a state where failure to act sufficiently early made it possible for a particularly nasty regime to gain power by force and give protection to Osama bin Laden and his terrorist training camps. Liberal Democrats support Britain's continued commitment to Afghanistan, while emphasising that the priority must be as far as possible to reconstruct viable institutions and the local and national economy. Elsewhere the UK should seek to work with partners and allies within the international institutions to ensure that fragile states do not become failed states.

7.1.4 There are many reasons why fragile states become failed states, and the factors determining whether and when the UK and other states should intervene are complex. We are poor at identifying potential crises, whether deriving from climate change, resource depletion or lack of clean water or from more traditional sources of conflict. Liberal Democrats believe that the British approach to assessing the situation on the ground and responding to it should be reviewed in order that the UK and its allies can focus on prevention in line with the responsibility to protect. It is imperative to find a way to coordinate the responses of all relevant ministries - the FCO, DfID, the MOD and DEFRA - more effectively, so that the UK's response can be effective, for example, military

support may be required to protect DfID and NGO workers in the tasks of providing enhanced infrastructure for clean work or rebuilding hospitals.

7.1.5   In cases where conflicts cannot be averted and humanitarian intervention becomes inevitable, it will not normally be feasible or desirable for the UK to intervene alone. Liberal Democrats therefore wish to see further moves to develop European civilian and military crisis management capabilities. The EU already puts a lot of work into conflict prevention but such work needs to be higher profile and there needs to be adequate coordination among EU members and within the various ministries within the member states, to ensure effective action.

7.1.6   Liberal Democrats believe very strongly that military intervention must be proportionate and based on international law. Apart from threats to the security of the UK and its allies, such intervention should only be for humanitarian reasons and there must be a commitment both post-conflict reconstruction and a clear exit strategy. We recognise that, while state construction is not normally a military task, the armed forces may be required to support other services in that work and the need to ensure the requisite manpower is available.

7.2   International Co-operation

7.2.1   We can build a more secure world only through respect for international law, and greater co-operation through international institutions. Liberal Democrats recognise the difficulties of reforming and strengthening the UN; but we recognise also the progress that has been made through international co-operation in recent years, for example in Afghanistan. We insist that there is no alternative to increasing international co-operation in combating the world's problems, e.g. controlling epidemic diseases – recognising the limitations on national sovereignty that binding international commitments entail. We discuss this in more detail in policy paper 74 *Britain's Global Responsibilities: the International Rule of Law* (2006).

7.3   Tackling Climate Change

7.3.1   While the impact of climate change will affect the UK directly and indirectly, there is little the UK acting alone can do to manage the challenge. One of our most urgent priorities is to make the transition to a low carbon global economy. Liberal Democrats would ensure that the UK takes a leading role in multilateral efforts to tackle climate change, working alongside our European neighbours. This includes helping to set binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.   We would work for an international framework that will enable each country to manage the transition to a low-carbon economy. We would aim to reach agreement on a much more ambitious set of targets in the negotiations for the second commitment of the Kyoto Protocol and beyond.   We would work to: develop the global carbon market; make the EU's climate change policies more effective; and enhance the ability of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to address climate issues. Liberal Democrats would seek to build capacity in developing countries to mitigate and adapt to climate change. We would work for the establishment of an International Leapfrog Fund, to facilitate the development of low-carbon technologies, energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies in developing countries.

7.4   Building Energy Security

7.4.1   Energy security is now a major concern for the UK. The world is now moving towards peak production of fossil fuels, amid rising competition among consuming states, especially as the emerging economic powerhouses, India and China, seek more energy.

We need to ensure secure and reliable energy supplies and to reduce the UK's vulnerability to security shocks elsewhere, whilst at the same time tackling climate change. Liberal Democrats support the development of a common EU energy policy, including the completion of an open competitive European energy market, with a requirement for the supply and distribution of energy to be separated. We also support efforts by the EU and other global institutions to promote a competitive global gas market. A comprehensive security policy for the UK must include efforts to diversify the sources of primary fuels and develop a low-carbon economy, both here and around the world. Liberal Democrats would increase supplies from renewable sources of energy and heat, improve energy efficiency and promote credible and predictable mechanisms for pricing carbon. Our proposals to promote a shift to a low carbon economy are set out in more detail in policy paper 82 *Zero Carbon Britain* (2007).

7.4.2   Energy dependence, for Britain and other industrial democracies, also means dependence on the authoritarian regimes of the Arabian Gulf; high fossil fuel prices transfer financial resources from consuming countries to the producing states clustered around the Gulf, as well as to Russia and to a number of unstable states in Africa and Latin America. The United States has been the dominant power in the Middle East for the past half-century, in alliance with Saudi Arabia, Israel, and – until the revolution of 1979 – Iran. Britain has largely supported US policies towards the region, including the close relationship with Saudi Arabia and the acceptance that the informal alliance between the USA and Israel controls international efforts to resolve the Israel-Palestine conflict.

7.4.3   Liberal Democrats regret that Britain's Labour government has fallen below acceptable international standards in blocking the due process of law on allegations of international corruption in contracts between BAe and Saudi Arabia. Arms sales to Saudi Arabia have supported jobs in Britain, but at an unacceptable moral cost. There have also been additional financial costs in terms of more expensive procurement for the UK's armed forces, forced to buy British as the basis for arms sales to Middle East states; the opaque terms under which successive contracts have been negotiated have laid Britain open to charges of corruption.

7.5   Inter-Departmental Relations

7.5.1   Liberal Democrats recognise the diplomatic strengths of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the vital role played by its embassies and consulates around the world, along with the 'soft diplomacy' work undertaken by the British Council. Both are excellent value for UK taxpayers' money.

7.5.2   The declining weight of the FCO within Whitehall over the past ten years has weakened its ability to co-ordinate relations with other countries. This is seen not least in the changing balance of Britain's overseas budget over the past ten years, with a welcome increase in the development budget, a less welcome squeeze on Foreign and Commonwealth expenditure, and a small rise in MoD spending which signally failed to match the increasing cost of new weapons systems or the cost of Armed Forces operations. The latest spending review sees DfID's settlement planned funding climb to above the FCO to c. £7.9bn pa by 2010/11. In order to have more effective policy on the ground, the work of the FCO, DFID, the MOD and parts of DEFRA need to be far more closely integrated, within a coherent framework for British foreign policy.

7.5.3   Liberal Democrats welcome the emergence of common spending 'pools' across these three departments. The Government has made serious attempts to provide a more joined-up approach to both the prevention of conflict and management of its aftermath.

Liberal Democrats support the aims of the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit, but we have seen how easily cross-departmental units can falter without strong political backing. Likewise, the Global Conflict Prevention Pool is an attempt to provide more joined-up government, but the funding is comparatively low and often raided by departments for post-conflict rather than preventative purposes. We believe that there is a case to be made for far stronger unity of command and purpose in these fields.

7.5.4 We also advocate a need for a School of Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Reconstruction within government, with the Foreign Secretary acting as patron, to build up expertise in government departments and train a cadre of staff with a cross-department approach.

7.5.5 Liberal Democrats also deplore the lack of adequate accountability in policy-making. So we believe security policy needs more transparency and democratic debate than ever before – thus our recommendation for a bi-annual Parliamentary investigation and report on the UK's security policy.

8 Security, Defence and Disarmament

8.1 A Strategic Approach to Security

8.1.1 Since the end of the Cold War, Britain has attempted to restructure its Armed Forces to meet a new and complex security landscape. Like many other states, Britain initially sought to reap the financial "peace dividend" by reducing defence spending from its Cold War highs. However, the 1998 Strategic Defence Review (SDR) aimed to formulate a foreign-policy led strategy to better match spending with international commitments and post Cold-War security challenges.

8.1.2 The SDR set out clear Defence Planning Assumptions, which acknowledged the limitations on Britain's ability to project force and that large (and most medium-scale) operations would be undertaken within coalitions. Since 1998, however, the Labour Government has failed to provide the necessary resources to meet the requirements of the SDR. Britain's expeditionary capability has been stretched to breaking point through deployments in Iraq, Afghanistan and other commitments such as the Western Balkans. There is a dangerous and growing disconnection between the rhetoric and the reality of delivering the SDR. The SDR recognised that Britain should not attempt to punch above its weight if that led to dangerous levels of overstretch. Yet a strategy that was once considered modest and achievable is now at risk.

8.1.3 The Defence Planning Assumptions have been breached in successive years and now look wholly unrealistic. The Armed Forces are suffering from the effects of overstretch, with equipment, recruitment and retention all showing the adverse effects of being pushed too hard. Serious concerns have been raised over the welfare of service personnel involved in long and intensive operations. Labour promised in 1998 that the treatment of our troops and services would be core to the future of the Armed Forces, yet compensation pay-outs remain low, regular army salaries remain poor by contrast with comparable public service professions and much of their accommodation is in a dire state.

8.1.4 Whilst the Iraq and Afghanistan operations have largely been funded from the Treasury Reserve (to the tune of almost £10bn), there is a crisis in the MoD budget that threatens to undermine the long-term viability of the Government's commitments and indeed of the effectiveness of Britain's Armed Forces in the world. The long-term equipment programme is under-funded by up to £15bn. Any delays or spending cuts will further undermine the Defence Industrial Strategy, and throw the future of Britain's defence industry into doubt. Yet even as the MoD prepares to spend billions of pounds on delivery of the final batch of Typhoon fighter-jets, this expensive Cold-War era capability is at odds with the dire shortage of helicopters and infantry soldiers badly needed on the front-line in Afghanistan.

8.1.5 The defence budget crunch, combined with doubts over when and how Britain should play a role in expeditionary deployments, is ample evidence of the need for a new foreign-policy led Strategic Security & Defence Review. Britain must take a long hard look at whether we can continue to afford to design our armed forces as an almost miniature version of the American military with a wide variety of military platforms.

8.1.6 Liberal Democrats gave a cautious welcome to the Government's National Security Strategy as a first attempt to pull together the diverse security threats Britain faces today and adopt a more coherent approach to deal with them. However, Liberal Democrats

believe that a more fundamental and wide-ranging cross-departmental review is now necessary. Building on the clear need for a new defence review, but extending its approach to consider all major threats to Britain's security, Liberal Democrats propose a Strategic Security & Defence Review (SSDR) that would examine foreign and domestic security policy, including the long-term security impacts of environmental and economic changes, including in particular that of climate change. The review would seek to derive the most appropriate balance of security-related spending as between civil and military priorities for the nation's security.

8.1.7   We believe that such a review should be initiated as soon as possible. Due to the long-term nature of defence procurement contracts, it is essential that a new SSDR look as far into the future as possible. A short-term fix of cuts and delays will not be in the national interest and will struggle to properly match strategic requirements with resources. A new SSDR should therefore take at least a twenty-year perspective with an update at the beginning of each parliamentary term. It should include close consultation with the US and our European partners and address domestic, foreign and environmental security threats.

8.1.8   A twenty-year focus to the SSDR would allow consideration of areas where Britain and other European or NATO states can make the greatest contribution. It would allow greater consideration of the scope for joint defence procurement with our European and NATO allies. Liberal Democrats welcome the Joint UK-France Summit Declaration on Defence and Security of March 2008. But the valuable boost that President Sarkozy has given UK-French defence co-operation must get the necessary high-level political support to drive policy down into both the French and British ministries of defence. Liberal Democrats therefore propose an Anglo-French standing committee with cabinet-level representation to push through the co-operation measures agreed and continue the search for viable co-operation in other areas.

8.1.9   The SSDR must include a hard-headed assessment of the current Defence Planning Assumptions, which now seem beyond the reach of our forces. This must be part of a dialogue with the public as to what we expect of our Armed Forces and how much the taxpayer is prepared to resource the MoD to do the job. Liberal Democrats believe it is essential to ensure that Britain's Armed Forces are adequately equipped for the duties we require of them but it would be for the SSDR to consider what the scale and purpose of the UK's capability and commitments should be.

8.1.10   The SSDR must be accompanied by an opening up of all security-related spending, particularly that of the MoD, to more effective public scrutiny. Parliament must have far more information over how the nation's finances are spent. As the situation stands, it is impossible for parliament to effectively hold the Government to account over its defence and security spending plans. Both taxpayer and the national interest are ill-served by the current situation.

8.1.11   The SSDR must also seek more joined-up strategy between all those government departments with security-related activities, primarily the MoD, but also the FCO, DfID, Home Office and DEFRA as regards the security impacts of climate change. All departments must be engaged from the outset and concrete recommendations for closer co-operation included in the review.

8.1.12   Liberal Democrats are proud of the bravery, professionalism and commitment of our Armed Forces. Our servicemen and women continue to serve under difficult conditions in deployments around the world. But the Government has failed to fulfil its side of the

bargain. The Military Covenant, the unwritten contract between the nation and those willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for their country is at risk. Liberal Democrats believe that elements of the MoD budget related to forces' welfare, particularly to modernisation and maintenance of accommodation should be ring-fenced. A thorough review of personnel policy should be integral to the investigations and conclusions of the SSDR.

8.1.13   In summary, Britain needs a fundamental review of its international responsibilities, of the security priorities of the nation and of the capabilities and resources needed to fulfil them. This paper outlines Liberal Democrat views on what those roles and responsibilities should be. A Liberal Democrat government would immediately initiate a new SSDR to enable us to achieve these aims.

8.2   Global Disarmament

8.2.1   Liberal Democrats have long been committed to arms control regimes and nuclear non-proliferation and have long campaigned to reduce indiscriminate and inhumane weapons. From calling for a new round of multilateral arms reduction talks to supporting the establishment of a cross-party Parliamentary Arms Export Committee to monitor arms exports and scrutinise individual licence applications, Liberal Democrats have been, and will continue to be, at the forefront of this debate.

8.3   Cluster Munitions

8.3.1   Cluster munitions are bomb systems that deliver a large number of sub-munitions or "bomblets" against enemy forces and have been in use since the Second World War. They have been used to attack targets on the ground like vehicles and runways and as an anti-personnel weapon in many conflicts around the world. UK Armed Forces have used cluster munitions in Kosovo, Serbia and Iraq. The unexploded sub-munitions can cause civilian injuries during and after conflict and leave a dangerous legacy for many years after initial deployment. Liberal Democrats believe that such weapons cause wholly unacceptable harm to civilians, as well as being unsuited to the kinds of conflict in which Britain is, or is likely to be, engaged in today, where winning the backing of a civilian population is so important.

8.3.2   Liberal Democrats therefore welcome the progress made at the Dublin Conference on cluster Munitions in May 2008. Liberal Democrats believe that the Dublin Treaty will now lead to a stigmatisation of the use of these weapons and we welcome the Government's decision to sign up to a full ban on the use of cluster munitions. It is regrettable however that several key military powers including the United States, Russia and China refused to attend the conference. We therefore believe that the British Government should advocate full international support for the treaty. We also call on the Government to end the practice whereby the United States is permitted to store stockpiles of cluster munitions on British soil. Liberal Democrats condemn the Government for its inability to produce an estimate of the precise whereabouts and quantity of unexploded bomblets deployed by British forces. We support continued efforts to seek out and make safe those remaining unexploded cluster munitions.

8.4   Landmines

8.4.1   Although much progress has been made on the eradication of landmines, they continue to present a significant threat to development and post-conflict reconstruction and security. Around 75 countries are still affected to some extent by landmines, with some of the worst affected including countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Nepal. Liberal Democrats believe that still more needs to be done

to fulfil the ambitions of the Ottawa Convention of 1997. 155 states had signed the International Mine Ban Treaty by August 2007. We want to see those who remain outside of the Treaty encouraged to sign up to the agreement and its key principles.

8.5   Arms Trade

8.5.1   Liberal Democrats oppose the use of public money to promote the export of arms. We will end export credit guarantees for arms exports. We believe that Britain's arms export regimes should conform to the strictest ethical guidelines. We will establish a cross-parliamentary Arms Export Control committee to monitor arms exports and scrutinise individual licence applications. Working with the EU we will develop systems to tackle the activities of arms brokers operating independently of national regulatory guidelines. We will support the establishment of an International Arms Trade Treaty. Liberal Democrats believe that the Government can do far more to both promote and enforce tough end-use monitoring regimes for arms exports. There are still too many British-made or British-sold arms ending up in the wrong hands.

8.5.2   Liberal Democrats believe it is essential that Britain takes far more seriously its commitment to expose and prevent bribery and corruption in international arms sales. Britain should work harder to meet the OECD Anti Bribery Convention by reviewing its anti-bribery legislation. The scandal over allegations of bribery in the sale of arms by BAE to Saudi Arabia undermines Britain's ability to promote greater transparency in international arms sales.

8.6   Making Nuclear Weapons History

8.6.1   Liberal Democrats believe that Britain must be in the vanguard of the struggle to make nuclear weapons history. Although the tension of the Cold War may be over, the legacy of that era in the form of huge stockpiles of weaponry, particularly in Russia and the US, remains a significant threat to international security. The risk of accidental detonation or explosion of a nuclear device or of materials falling into the hands of terrorists or countries of concern is a real threat. The proliferation of nuclear weapons technology presents a profound threat to international security.

8.6.2   The climate for nuclear disarmament has been poor in recent years. The unilateral actions of the Bush administration have been divisive. Its missile defence programme contributed to the set back of arms control agreements with Russia; the decisions to invade Iraq on a pretext of mass destruction while avoiding military confrontation with North Korea have arguably given non-nuclear states a rational excuse to pursue nuclear weapons.

8.6.3   In this context, the 2010 Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference presents a critical opportunity for the international community to set in train a process of further disarmament and arms control agreements to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons. Although a relatively small nuclear power, Britain remains a nation of considerable influence and must play a leading role at the conference. It is essential that the 2010 talks make real progress towards a nuclear-free world.

8.6.4   The fundamental principle on which the NPT is based, that nuclear powers will reduce their arsenals in return for others not developing nuclear weapons is at risk. If today's nuclear powers are to convince other states that it is not in their interests to have such weapons then they must show that they are prepared to take serious measures to reduce and eventually eradicate their own arsenals, and also to back new international control

regimes such as the tighter inspection and monitoring of the uranium enrichment process and a halt to the production of fissile material.

8.6.5 In order to kick-start those talks, Liberal Democrats are committed to Britain taking the lead in working towards global disarmament at the 2010 conference by making a 50% cut in Britain's nuclear arsenal and retaining a multilateral negotiating position on further warhead reductions and any future system replacement for Trident. A final decision on the manufacture of a successor system does not need to be taken until 2014. Britain has a window of opportunity to show courage and conviction at the conference, and take the lead.

8.6.6 Liberal Democrats welcome President Sarkozy's recent proposals to reduce the French nuclear arsenal. As two-fifths of the UN Security Council together, with closely aligned national security interests, Britain and France should work towards a joint negotiating position at the review conference, representing a European perspective on nuclear disarmament.

8.6.7 Respected voices in the US security establishment including George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger and Sam Nunn have recently called for America to re-engage in the nuclear disarmament agenda and to show leadership on the world stage. It is to be hoped that the next President of the United States will heed their call, believing that the US, along with Russia, must set early deadlines for reducing their own nuclear stockpiles. We welcome the recent agreement by President Bush and President Putin to begin talks on an extension of the START nuclear weapons reduction programme. But more can be done to enhance security and reduce the risk of accident. Any remnants of the Cold War posture that contribute to security or risk of accident should be eliminated.

8.6.8 We remain sceptical that the current US missile defence programme, seemingly intended to protect the US against a potential Iranian threat, will enhance regional or global security. The controversy over missile defence in Europe and between Russia and the US has sapped vital political energy from the arms control agenda. Whilst we are encouraged that the programme now has the wider backing of NATO, it is essential that intense effort is made to extend multilateral support for the programme, particularly to Russia and China.

8.6.9 Liberal Democrats believe that despite the US National Intelligence Estimate, which judged "with high confidence" that Iran halted its nuclear weapons programme in 2003, the US, EU and UN Security Council must continue to take a robust approach in dealing with Iran.[7] However, Britain, and its European partners, should grasp the opportunity of the forthcoming change of US Administration to push for constructive dialogue with Iran, including a form of comprehensive security guarantee, to persuade Iran to open its nuclear programme to full international inspection.

8.6.10 The 2010 talks should work towards the establishment of a UN agency managed by the IAEA to oversee the provision of nuclear fuels and pave the way for stricter access to nuclear technology. Liberal Democrats would like to see the "Additional Protocol" to the NPT on greater IAEA verification access brought into force. We welcome any push towards a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty.

---

[7] The UK, working with France and Germany and latterly with the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, has taken a lead on diplomacy with Iran under the auspices of the EU.

Policy Paper 86

Working Group on Security

Note: Membership of the Working Group should not be taken to indicate that every member necessarily agrees with every statement or every proposal in this Paper.

Dr Julie Smith (Chair)

Sir Brian Crowe

Edward Davey MP

Rory Domm

Shirin Homawala

Ruthe Isden

Baroness Ludford MEP

Michael Moore MP

Turin Munthe

Thomas Papworth

Lord Roper

Philippe Sands QC

Lord Wallace of Saltaire

***Staff*:**

Helen Banks

Ben Jones

James McGrory