**Written Submission to**
**Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy**

**Scientists for Global Responsibility (SGR)**

*September 2020*

- SGR welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Integrated Review – even at this late stage in the process. Our response covers the range of issues highlighted in the 'Call for Evidence' – but especially questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7.
- The UK government does not clearly define what it means by 'national security' – which is a fundamental obstacle to outlining an effective strategy. SGR believes that it should be based upon the protection of the wellbeing of people and the global environment. This Review should therefore be concerned with human security within the UK, with the UK's contribution to the shared security of humanity, and with the viability of the natural ecosystems on which humans depend.
- As such, SGR regards the following as the highest priority security threats: [1]
  - The risk of nuclear war through human and/or technical error;
  - The risk of rapid climate change through a failure to quickly transition to a society compatible with keeping global temperature change below 1.5°C;
  - The risk of breaching other 'planetary boundaries' – for example, on biodiversity – through a failure to rapidly reduce the global human impact on the natural environment;
  - The risk of pandemics with high mortality rates through a failure to take internationally co-ordinated preventative action on biosecurity issues;
  - The risk of arms races involving emerging military technologies – especially using artificial intelligence, robotics, information technology, biotechnology and/or space technologies – through a lack of strong international controls on research, development and deployment; [2] [3]
  - The risk of growing inequality and poverty through a failure to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals; and
  - The risk of increasing regional armed conflict through a failure to restrict the international arms trade.
- Following this rationale, we strongly question the UK's current focus on the deployment of large armed forces, while numerous civilian elements which contribute to human security are neglected and underfunded. The folly of such misallocation of resources can be starkly seen in the UK's failings during the Covid-19 health and economic crises.
- SGR is especially concerned about key elements of UK military policies and capabilities including: [4]
  - The continued preferential support for the UK military technology industry and its exports to governments with poor records on human rights, including Saudi Arabia and Israel. The continued export of arms to Saudi Arabia, from where they are used in the war in Yemen, is having a particularly devastating effect on the civilian population. [5] [6]

- o The UK's funding of research and development which may accelerate the eventual deployment of autonomous lethal weapons, also known as 'killer robots'. [7]
  - o The UK's continued deployment of weapons of mass destruction – i.e. the Trident nuclear weapons system – and their modernisation, while openly opposing efforts to pursue multinational nuclear disarmament through, for example, the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. [8]
  - o The UK's explicit policies and capabilities to project conventional military 'strike' power globally, not least through the deployment of aircraft carriers, long-range combat aircraft, and long-range submarines. [9] Indeed, the UK's involvement in recent years in interventionalist wars – and its continued covert use of special forces without parliamentary oversight – has arguably undermined international security. [10]
- SGR is equally concerned that UK efforts to tackle major civilian security threats remain grossly under-resourced, for example: [11]
  - o Climate change is one of the greatest threats to human society, yet UK policies and the funding of measures to tackle the problem continue to be considerably less than required. [12]
  - o Poverty, inequality and instability remain major international problems which need a major increase in targeted resources. The UK should not use the planned merger of the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to undermine efforts in this area.
  - o Outdoor air pollution is estimated to kill 40,000 people in the UK each year, but the policies to tackle it still fall far short of what is necessary. [13]
- SGR therefore calls upon the UK government to: [14]
  - o Use this review to redefine its approach to national security, prioritising the protection of the wellbeing of people and the global environment.
  - o Rapidly decrease funding for militaristic policies and technologies – starting with those technologies with the greatest 'offensive' capability – and use these resources to rapidly increase funding aimed at tackling climate change, poverty, and other major health, social and environmental problems. This should involve a comprehensive 'arms conversion' programme which would provide retraining and redeployment for workers so they can be employed in the expanding 'green' economy.
  - o Take immediate action on key risks related to military technology:
    - End the export of arms and other military technologies to governments with poor human rights records;
    - End funding for research and development which may accelerate the deployment of killer robots;
    - Support international efforts for an international treaty banning killer robots;
    - End deployment of nuclear-armed submarines, and place nuclear warheads in storage;
    - Sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

***About Scientists for Global Responsibility***

Scientists for Global Responsibility (SGR) is a UK organisation whose membership includes about 600 science and technology professionals. Our main objective is to promote science and technology which contribute to peace, social justice and environmental sustainability. Founded in 1992, we have carried out in-depth research and analysis on security issues related to science and technology. For more details, see our website: https://www.sgr.org.uk/

***Notes and references***

1. See, for example, this presentation and the references therein: Webber P (2019). Rethinking Security: A responsible science perspective. Scientists for Global Responsibility. https://www.sgr.org.uk/resources/rethinking-security-responsible-science-perspective
2. See, for example, this report and the references therein: Simms A, Parkinson S (2018). Artificial Intelligence: How little has to go wrong? Scientists for Global Responsibility. https://www.sgr.org.uk/publications/artificial-intelligence-how-little-has-go-wrong
3. See, for example, this presentation and the references therein: Parkinson S (2019). Threats from emerging weapons technologies. Scientists for Global Responsibility. https://www.sgr.org.uk/resources/threats-emerging-weapons-technologies
4. See, for example, this report and the references therein: Parkinson et al (2013). Offensive Insecurity: The role of science and technology in UK security strategies. Scientists for Global Responsibility. https://www.sgr.org.uk/publications/offensive-insecurity
5. Campaign Against Arms Trade (2016). A shameful relationship: UK complicity in Saudi state violence. https://www.caat.org.uk/campaigns/stop-arming-saudi/a-shameful-relationship.pdf
6. Stavrianakis A (2020). Holding the UK to account for its role in the war in Yemen. Responsible Science, no.2. Scientists for Global Responsibility. https://www.sgr.org.uk/resources/holding-uk-account-its-role-war-yemen
7. Drone Wars UK (2018). Off the Leash: How the UK is developing the technology to build armed autonomous drones. https://dronewars.net/2018/11/10/off-the-leash-autonomous-drones/
8. See, for example, this report and the references therein: Webber P, Parkinson S (2015). UK nuclear weapons: a catastrophe in the making? Scientists for Global Responsibility. https://www.sgr.org.uk/publications/uk-nuclear-weapons-catastrophe-making
9. As note 4.
10. See, for example: Jenkins S (2015). Mission Accomplished?: The Crisis of International Intervention. Bloomsbury Publishing.
11. As note 4.
12. Anderson K (2019). Hope from despair: transforming delusion into action on climate change. Presentation at SGR conference. https://www.sgr.org.uk/resources/hope-despair-transforming-delusion-action-climate-change
13. Royal College of Physicians (2016). Every breath we take: the lifelong impact of air pollution. https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/outputs/every-breath-we-take-lifelong-impact-air-pollution
14. As note 4.