



WIG

The Whitehall & Industry Group
connecting the sectors



'Brexit & International' Series

Update on The Integrated Review of foreign policy, defence, security and international development

Expert Insight

We were delighted to be joined by Alex Ellis, Deputy National Security Adviser for The Integrated Review of foreign policy, defence, security and international development, for a webinar update on this landmark government-wide review, to re-examine the UK's international and national security priorities and objectives.



Alex spoke on what The Integrated Review (IR) is and its progress so far, sharing some insights on the issues to be considered.

Some key points included:

- The IR is a combination of vision around UK's place in the world, strategy that sits within that vision, and decisions on spend, systems reform and organisation
- The IR started at the beginning of 2020, was paused due to COVID-19, but has now restarted.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an increase in the rate of change on the world stage and a broadened approach to what could constitute international and national security e.g. health security and the availability of ventilators.
- Other global concerns include challenges to the rules-based international order, climate change, declining biodiversity, and the fight against poverty.
- The IR will consider key areas of national interest, and what role the UK is to play in these areas; from setting standards to building and enhancing our relationships with allies and partners.
- It will also reflect on how the civil service can work cross departmentally to improve capabilities and strengthen links with private sector and academia; bringing diversity of thought and new skills into government.
- Science, data and technology are crucial components in an approach that intends to plan for both current and future problems.

Our members' questions

Over 170 WIG members from across the sectors joined us live. Attendees raised a number of crucial questions for discussion, some key themes they highlighted included:

- Balancing UK priorities such as security and trade with other concerns such as supporting democracy and development commitments.
- Accommodating the different potential contexts of the future UK-EU relationship.
- Increasing investment in defence R&D, and spotting which disruptive or emerging technologies will likely become critical for national security and resilience.
- The timeline for completing the IR and plans around consultation.

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