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New Report: Britain Needs Full International Security Review

Government cannot duck tough questions on defence policy - carriers should be cancelled and Trident reconsidered

London, 21 May: A new report from leading independent think tank, Oxford Research Group (ORG), calls for the cancellation of the aircraft carrier project, the scaling-down of the Trident programme, and the establishment of an independent Defence Procurement Authority. Unless such decisions are taken, the new defence review will be unable to address the real global security challenges facing Britain.

The report, *Reviewing Britain's Security*, follows the announcement from new Defence Secretary, Dr Liam Fox, that the *Strategic Defence Review* is now under way. The author of the report, Professor Paul Rogers, warns that the Government **"may be shooting itself in the foot, unless it reconsiders costly programmes that are already under way, such as the aircraft carriers and Trident replacement. Carrying on with these will hugely constrain the kind of review that Britain really needs."**

The briefing welcomes the establishment of the cross-departmental *National Security Council* and points to recent Green Papers that begin to discuss issues, such as climate change, economic marginalisation and mass migration as wider future security threats, but concludes that in spite of this, the actual defence posture has barely escaped Cold War thinking and is still not in tune with the new global security trends. **"If these issues are not integral to the review, the size and cost of current projects will determine a role for Britain in international security that bears little relation to the issues of global insecurity and conflict, which will be dominant in the next two to three decades,"** says Professor Rogers.

The report thoroughly assesses the problems and their alternatives and calls for

- A full-scale, integrated inter-departmental review - overseen at Cabinet Office level - that looks beyond power projection and just maintaining the *status quo*. The Review should address underlying drivers of global insecurity such as climate change, competition for energy resources, poverty and marginalisation, mass migration and trans-national radicalisation. These must be at the forefront of a much broader international security review and need to go far beyond the remit of the Ministry of Defence.
- A reassessment of "big ticket" projects, which are inappropriate for Britain's security needs in the 21st Century. The aircraft carrier/F-35 programme should be cancelled and Trident scaled down before more money is wasted.
- On defence spending, tough measures need to be instituted, including the establishment of a Defence Procurement Authority, an independent procurement watchdog, to prevent defence programmes spiralling out of control like the Nimrod MR4A fiasco - described in the briefing.

Paul Rogers argues that a new approach to security is essential: **"Revolts from the margins, such as the Red Shirts in Thailand and the Naxalites in India, are indicators of the unstable world we face in the future, and this is before the impact of climate change begins to kick in. The 9/11 attacks showed that even the most powerful state cannot 'close the castle gates'."**

"Trying to keep the lid on global problems – 'liddism' – simply will not work. We need a fundamental rethink of our attitudes to global security, and a comprehensive security review would be a hugely important first step. If the Government persists with the current narrow defence review, it will be a real lost opportunity, right at the start of a new parliament."

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NOTES TO THE EDITORS

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About the author

Professor Paul Rogers is Oxford Research Group's Global Security Consultant and Professor of Peace Studies at Bradford University. He is the author of [*Losing Control: Global Security in the 21st Century*](#), the third edition has just been published by Pluto Press, 3rd edition, 2010).

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