

International Policy Review Puts Cyber at the centre of the UK's Security

- This week's Integrated Review will commit to a new, full spectrum approach to the UK's cyber capability – keeping our people safe, staying ahead of our enemies and improving the lives of the British people
- The PM will announce the establishment of a 'cyber corridor' across the North of England, creating and sustaining thousands of jobs
- The National Cyber Force is transforming the UK's ability to conduct targeted offensive cyber operations to impose real-world costs on our adversaries

Our ability to detect, disrupt and deter our adversaries while taking advantage of the revolution in the use of smart and cyber technology will be dramatically enhanced by commitments in the Integrated Review of security, defence, development and foreign policy, to be published this week.

The review will set out the importance of cyber technology to our way of life – whether it's defeating our enemies on the battlefield, making the internet a safer place or developing cutting-edge tech to improve people's lives.

Cyber Security is the foundation of our cyber power and the UK has been at the cutting edge of the use of intelligence to disrupt threats online and defend against attacks. We established the National Cyber Security Centre in 2016 to help critical organisations, businesses and the general public protect themselves.

In recent years our adversaries have invested in their own capabilities and are constantly finding new ways to exploit our weaknesses and gain advantage in cyberspace. To cement our competitive edge and keep ahead of our enemies a full spectrum approach is therefore needed.

The Integrated Review will announce a new cyber strategy to create a cyber ecosystem fit for the future, with more investment in education, partnerships with industry and integration across our defence and intelligence services.

The Prime Minister said:

Cyber power is revolutionising the way we live our lives and fight our wars, just as air power did 100 years ago. We need to build up our cyber capability so we can grasp the opportunities it presents while ensuring those who seek to use its powers to attack us and our way of life are thwarted at every turn.

Our new, full-spectrum approach to cyber will transform our ability to protect our people, promote our interests around the world and make the lives of British people better every day.

The Prime Minister will announce this week that the home of the new National Cyber Force and the nexus of this strategy will be in the North of England, establishing a 'cyber corridor' across the region.

Opening the HQ of the NCF in the North of England will drive growth in the tech, digital and defence sectors outside of London and help create new partnerships between government, the sector and universities in the region, placing it in the international centre of cutting-edge developments to keep our people safe.

Defence currently sustains more than 35,000 jobs in the North West of England alone. Digital and cyber jobs will build on the region's history of being on the cutting edge of defence technology – 10,000 people are employed in maritime design in Barrow and 12,000 people work in advanced aerospace engineering and manufacturing at Samlesbury Aerospace Enterprise Zone, where the UK is producing the fifth generation F-35 stealth aircraft.

The North of England is already home to a GCHQ office in Manchester, which is and is Europe's fastest growing major tech cluster, with more than 15% of Manchester's population employed by the digital, creative and technology sector.

The National Cyber Force was created last year to transform the UK's capacity to conduct targeted offensive cyber operations against terrorists, hostile states and criminal gangs. It draws together personnel from both defence and the intelligence agencies under one unified command for the first time.

The kinds of operations the NCF is able to carry out include:

- Interfering with a mobile phone to prevent a terrorist being able to communicate with their contacts
- Helping to prevent cyberspace from being used as a global platform for serious crimes, including the sexual abuse of children
- Keeping UK military aircraft safe from targeting by weapons systems

Recognising the importance of cyber to defence, in addition to the NCF last year the MoD created the 13th Signals Regiment, the first dedicated cyber regiment, and expanded the Defence Cyber School. These enhanced cyber capabilities bolster our defence and will play a vital part in operations including HMS Queen Elizabeth's first global deployment this year. MoD cyber experts comprise almost half of the NCF's cyber operators.

In addition to national security and defence applications, cyber technology can also be used to improve people's lives through smart technology and helping people use the internet safely. In the last year, GCHQ has partnered with tech start-ups to help them develop and use AI to help train companies ensure more space for passengers during the COVID pandemic, alert haulage companies to stowaways in their containers and prevent the spread of misinformation online.

The Government's new cyber strategy will support companies developing dual-use and consumer technology to ensure the UK is a cyber power in every sense.

It will also be critical to our ambition to establish the UK as a global services, digital and data hub.

Foreign Secretary statement on radical changes to Hong Kong's electoral system.

Press release

The UK now considers Beijing to be in a state of ongoing non-compliance with the Sino-British Joint Declaration



The Foreign Secretary said:

Beijing's decision to impose radical changes to restrict participation in Hong Kong's electoral system constitutes a further clear breach of the legally binding Sino-British Joint Declaration.

This is part of a pattern designed to harass and stifle all voices critical of China's policies and is the third breach of the Joint Declaration in less than nine months.

The Chinese authorities' continued action means I must now report that the UK considers Beijing to be in a state of ongoing non-compliance with the Joint Declaration – a demonstration of the growing gulf between Beijing's promises and its actions.

The UK will continue to stand up for the people of Hong Kong. China must act in accordance with its legal obligations and respect fundamental rights and freedoms in Hong Kong.

[Statement on entry into force of the International Agreement on Taxation and the Protection of Financial Interests between the UK and Spain regarding Gibraltar](#)

News story

An international agreement to improve tax co-operation between the tax authorities of Spain and Gibraltar has now entered into force.



The UK has ratified the International Agreement on Taxation and the Protection of Financial Interests between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Kingdom of Spain regarding Gibraltar.

The agreement entered into force on 4 March 2021 and was published in Spain's Official State Bulletin on 13 March 2021.

This treaty will improve tax co-operation between the tax authorities of Spain and Gibraltar. It provides rules for resolving conflicts over tax residency and enables administrative co-operation, through sharing of information and addressing disputes by means of a Joint Committee.

The treaty was signed on 4 March 2019. It is the first between the UK and Spain regarding Gibraltar explicitly for over 300 years. The treaty fully respects the 2006 Gibraltar Constitution.

The Government of Gibraltar was involved throughout negotiation of the treaty, and has passed the legislation required to ensure ratification.

This tax treaty is in the interest of all parties. It demonstrates the shared commitment of the UK and Gibraltar Governments, together with Spain, to ensure the continued prosperity of Gibraltar and the region as a whole, in the same constructive spirit that marked agreement of a framework on 31st December 2020.

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[48,000 businesses already registered to offer workplace testing](#)

- Regular, rapid testing will be a crucial tool to prevent outbreaks in the workplace as we cautiously ease restrictions, keeping employees safe and businesses open
- A major expansion of the free programme now means all businesses can access workplace testing, and are encouraged to register their interest by 31 March

Over 48,000 businesses have [registered their interest in the government's free workplace testing programme](#), using rapid lateral flow tests that can give a result in 30 minutes.

Over 9,000 businesses have already completed the sign-up process, and all other businesses are encouraged to register by 31 March to help keep their employees safe, prevent outbreaks and suppress the spread of the virus. Businesses are encouraged to register before 31 March, even if they're not yet open or are not able to start using the tests straight away.

Around 1 in 3 people with coronavirus do not have symptoms, which means they could be spreading the virus in workplaces without knowing. Rapid testing for people without symptoms detects cases quickly, meaning positive cases can isolate immediately, breaking chains of transmission.

Testing will form a crucial part of everyday life as parts of society reopen. Regular testing could be the difference between a workplace being able to stay open and operational, or needing to close due to a COVID-19 outbreak.

New analysis by NHS Test and Trace shows [lateral flow \(LFD\) tests to have a specificity of at least 99.9%](#). This means that for every 1,000 lateral flow tests carried out, there is less than one false positive result.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock said:

We have built a huge asymptomatic testing system from scratch, which is an essential part of our plan to reopen cautiously.

Rapid testing has been rolled out at a vast scale across a range of sectors, and it is fantastic that now over 48,000 businesses have signed up to offer rapid testing to employees. This is a huge step forward in getting businesses back on their feet and helping to keep people safe.

With around 1 in 3 people with the virus not having symptoms, regular testing is essential to bearing down on the virus and identify new variants of concern as we work towards restoring normal life. I strongly encourage all businesses to register their interest before the 31 March deadline.

Businesses have until 31 March to register for the government's workplace testing scheme, which will remain free until the end of June. Businesses of any size, including those with fewer than 50 employees, can sign up to offer workplace testing. Those who need to leave home for work can also access regular testing through community testing, which is now offered by all local authorities in England.

Regular, rapid testing is already in place for millions of people across the NHS, care homes and schools. The government has also confirmed twice-weekly testing using LFDs for free to all adults in households with nursery, primary, secondary school and college-aged children and young people, including childcare and support bubbles.

This is in addition to the 2 tests for all secondary and college students and staff per week. Staff at private, voluntary and independent nurseries also have access to rapid testing through their workplace.

Case studies

Phillips 66 Humber Refinery

Phillips 66 Humber Refinery produces up to 14 million litres, with around 20% of all UK petroleum products coming from the Humber Refinery. They are testing over 1,000 staff a week and have almost completed 10,000 tests in total.

Darren Cunningham, Lead Executive UK and General Manager at Humber Refinery, said:

When offered the opportunity to take part in lateral flow testing, we jumped at the opportunity. Why wouldn't we? It is another layer of protection to keep our staff, their families and our communities safer. The operation to set up large-scale testing for 1,000 staff weekly – and it did pose some challenges – we are now running smoothly, and happily sharing what we did to help other key industries set up their own LFT facility.

Siemens Mobility

Siemens Mobility has been a leader in transport solutions for more than 160 years and now employs 36,800 people worldwide, with 4,500 of those in the UK. The organisation's core areas are rolling stock, rail automation and electrification, turnkey systems and intelligent traffic systems. In total, Siemens Mobility operates from around 70 UK locations.

William Wilson, CEO of Siemens Mobility Limited, said:

Our people have played vital roles throughout the pandemic maintaining critical national infrastructure and helping essential services to operate safely and efficiently. As we move towards the relaxation of lockdown rules, introducing regular COVID-19 testing, with almost instant results, plays a vital role in helping to track and contain virus spread, as well as provide our employees with peace of mind.

Unipart Group

Unipart Group is a leading UK manufacturer, full-service logistics provider and consultant headquartered in Oxford. Unipart operates across a range of market sectors, including automotive, healthcare and the NHS, manufacturing, mobile telecoms, rail, retail and technology. Around 130 workers are tested every week – 90% of the workforce working from this site.

Debs Astles, Unipart Group HR Director – Corporate Responsibility and Policy, said:

Encouraging our people to get regular tests is an important part of our COVID-safe commitment across our sites, and helps us support our colleagues' safety and wellbeing. This ensures we can continue to provide essential services to customers across key sectors such as healthcare and the NHS, automotive, essential retail and the construction industry.

Birchall Foodservice

Birchall Foodservice is an independent, family-owned business with depots in Burnley, Durham, Sheffield and Stoke-on-Trent. The company employs 150 people. Birchall Foodservice delivers a 'one-stop shop' range of foods, drinks, non-foods and equipment to caterers working in the care, education and hospitality sectors.

Louise Birchall, sales director at Birchall Foodservice, said:

The introduction of rapid testing allows us to quickly identify asymptomatic cases of coronavirus within the business. By isolating

these cases, we can stop any potential spread of COVID-19 and help protect our employees, their families and our customers. We are encouraging all local businesses, no matter the size, to introduce frequent, rapid testing amongst their workforce.

The Glasdon Group

The Glasdon Group is a design and manufacture company specialising in litter and recycling bins, road safety products, a diverse range of building systems, shelters, seating products, water safety products and snow-clearing equipment. The company employs over 250 employees and is based in Blackpool, Lancashire. They have been carrying out testing via their local authority, Blackpool Council, since December 2020, and they now have 5 testing stations where they can process up to 60 tests per hour. The company carries out approximately 400 tests per week.

Gary Butler, Health and Safety Manager at the Glasdon Group, said:

Testing all of our staff and any visiting contractors twice per week is providing us with the confidence that our own control measures are having the desired result of protecting our employees during the pandemic. The rapid test results enable us to isolate any affected staff as quickly as possible, thus reducing the chance of an outbreak on the premises.

The response of the Glasdon employees to the testing programme has been positive and is going a long way to making them feel safe in their place of work during these difficult times. Testing twice per week is also providing a level of assurance to the employees' families that they are not putting their own households at extra risk by coming to work.

Background information

Businesses have until 31 March to [register for the government's workplace testing scheme](#), which will remain free until the end of June.

[Regaining the initiative: General Sir Patrick Sanders sets out the future of Strategic Command](#)

On the night of 28 June 2007 at a junction codenamed Orange 13, I watched the

deceptively slow flight of an RPG-7 heading our way before it ricocheted off the road and streaked over our heads. Moments before and yards away, four soldiers had been caught in a blast bomb as we secured a route for a vulnerable logistics convoy. Our attention was desperately focused on the missing soldiers. But at the back of our minds we had another concern, which would have consequences beyond a bad night in Basra: we had lost the initiative. The UK and the West risk a similar fate. We are ceding the strategic initiative to our rivals. For all we herald the return of great power competition, the truth is it has never ended. While we drained our strength in interventions like Iraq, others used the time and space to further their interests more strategically. China has pursued a strategy of winning without fighting, changing the terms of the international order; Russia has combined military and non-military means to alter the map, attempting to change the balance of power and undermining the cohesion of our societies through disinformation. Both are gaining a decisive advantage in information age military technologies.

The consequence has been a succession of strategic surprises, the erosion of strategic advantage and the loss of initiative. Unchecked it is not unthinkable that we will find ourselves vulnerable in time to a fait accompli, where as a nation we have capitulated without a shot being fired. This all matters because it coincides with a moment of reckoning for the UK. Our departure from the EU means we are a sovereign actor in this competition, so our strategy matters more than any other point since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The Government's Integrated Review will set out a competitive strategy for regaining the initiative. The clue is in the name. It will better integrate our national levers of power to regain strategic advantage, leveraging the formidable international influence we can exert with our allies. It will preserve the best aspects of the old while shaping the emergence of a new order, and defence and the armed forces have a critical role to play. The announcement of a £24.1-billion uplift in spending is an emphatic statement of intent. Alongside investments in modernisation of our conventional fighting force – our ships, armoured vehicles, aircraft, all so critical to our commitment to Allies and partners – we will be guided by a laser-like focus on tackling the emerging threats of the future, shaping different armed forces. We will sharpen our competitive edge, particularly in space and cyber and fields like Artificial Intelligence. The UK Armed Forces will be more active, more dynamic and more global, contesting incursions in the so-called grey zone. And they will be more integrated.

The three traditional services will have a critical role operating in this grey zone as well as providing the foundations of our fighting power. But at the heart of this modernisation lies the more discreet organisation I head, known as Strategic Command. From our headquarters in Northwood, Strategic Command brings together everything that integrates the armed forces – the enabling information age technologies, cyberspace, space (with the RAF), Intelligence, Special Forces, our force design brain and the underpinning support base.

This starts, first and foremost with Defence Intelligence – the expert

assessment of intelligence and risk that allows us to identify long term opportunities for competitive advantage, whilst mitigating vulnerabilities, and further strategic surprise. We won't always get this right, so our approach will be guided by constant experimentation and rapid prototyping of new ideas.

Secondly, we need to compete in Information Age warfare. Eric Schmidt, the former CEO of Google, told the US Senate that 'the sources of battlefield advantage will shift from traditional factors like force size and levels of armaments, to factors like superior data collection and assimilation, connectivity, computing power, algorithms and system security'. Our rivals agree and are investing accordingly. In the UK our research sector gives us an edge. So we are building a digital backbone for Defence and exploiting cloud computing. And we will deliver on the PM's vision of an AI Centre to exploit the advantages of increasingly autonomous systems.

Third we will grow our grey zone capabilities to defend ourselves and our allies and regain the initiative. We are growing the National Cyber Force with GCHQ to become a world class responsible cyber power while securing our own networks and data and regain the edge in electronic warfare. This year for example we are providing cyber defences and cyber effects for HMS Queen Elizabeth's global deployment. And we will transform and expand our special operations forces, maintaining their counter-terrorism skills while growing their ability to work with and train reliable partner forces around the world.

Our ambition is to be the leading integrated force in the world. We have long been among the most effective when it comes to combining our forces – air, land and sea. To these we must now add cyberspace and space, both growing our capabilities in these new domains and designing the force to be seamlessly integrated. A soldier on the battlefield will be able to instantly draw on space-based surveillance, cyber defences and sensors, to craft the precise response needed, whether that's ordering a swarm attack by drones or a long-range precision strike from a ship or aircraft – all without skipping a beat. The ability to pose multiple dilemmas for our adversaries and radically increase our speed of action and decision making, through AI, will make us a respected competitor a more effective ally and will deliver modern deterrence for our nation.

Sooner or later, soldiers, sailors or air force personnel will find themselves in the sort of ugly gritty fight we were caught up in on 28 June 2007. It is an article of faith for all of us leading defence that we must do better to make sure that at the strategic and the tactical level we have given them the tools to seize the initiative. The Integrated Review sets us on that path.