SECURITY STRATEGIES AND POLICIES AFTER 2014

UNITED KINGDOM

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Résumé

Russian aggression against Ukraine was one of the major drivers of the UK security reassessment in 2015, which aimed to put an end to the period of defence spending cuts and openly acknowledged the resurgence of state-based threats. Moreover, the 2015 National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review introduced a whole range of steps to counter this aggression, with special attention to the potential of NATO and other multilateral fora. While public debate before the adoption of the 2015 National Security Strategy largely concentrated on the need to overcome the serious shortcomings of the 2010 strategic documents, only half a year later Brexit posed entirely new challenges to the future of the British security environment and choices, inviting a rethink of the strategy once again. In the realm of practical politics Russia-related security policies followed the documents quite closely and the UK's was one of the most consistent responses within NATO.

1. The revision of strategic documents after 2014

For decades British strategy was defined by reliance on American strategic guidance. It combined a "special partnership" type alliance with the US and (at a later stage) strong economic bonds with the European Communities, toying with the idea of being a meeting point between the EU and the US. Consequently, British security thinking was more concentrated on managing and adjusting its military capacities than on properly considering the country's place in the world. Nearly a dozen post-war defence reviews, accompanied by the yearly Statements on Defence estimates, reflected the UK's slow adaptation to the post-imperial world, the gradual erosion of its influence and engagement worldwide, further concentration on the defence of its own territory, progressive defence spending cuts, and ever-increasing reliance on NATO allies (see Walker and Mills 2015).

The post-Cold War period did not immediately bring strategic reassessment, until mistakes and misperceptions encountered in the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns questioned the limits of following the US lead and demanded defining what British strategic interests and choices really are. Combined with the repercussions of the economic crisis, which imposed austerity and further reduction in funds available to defence, the discourse of the need to "return to strategy" gained a place in British public debate. What strategy should the UK pursue in a new world? How should it respond to the new threats? What are the limits of the special partnership with the US? Should it weigh in the world beyond its limits? Even how should the strategy be defined and implemented and by whom?

The initial 2008 and 2009 Labour Government's takes on creating National Security Strategy were short-lived and criticised for their descriptive and non-strategic approach: "It offers a free lunch where the UK can simultaneously be Europeanist and Atlanticist, pro-sovereignty and pro-human rights; an upholder of 'rules' yet the spreader of values", complained one observer (Porter 2010, p. 6). Thus the 2010 National Security Strategy (NSS) and Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), prepared by the coalition Conservative-Liberal Democratic Government, were expected to become a breaking point of a new era of British strategic thinking. The government aimed to resolve at least three puzzles: to institutionalize strategic thinking capacity, to mend serious budget imbalances via cuts in defence expenditure, and to respond to the changing nature of warfare and new threats of the post-Cold War period. The results proved to be mixed at best.

On the positive side, the institutional arrangement for creating strategy was established. From now on, the government engaged to publish the NSS and SDSR every five years, thus linking them to the parliamentary mandate, as well as to produce yearly reports on progress in their implementation. The "Whole of Government" approach to security was officially adopted: in addition to issues of defence and armed forces, the NSS and SDSR considered counter-terrorism, diplomacy, international aid, homeland defence, border security, cyber security etc. Both documents were prepared across the government, diminishing the role of the MoD. To enhance leadership and coordination, the National Security Council from the representatives of ministries was established to oversee the development and implementation of the NSS and the post of National Security Adviser was created. This structure was largely retained with some improvements for the 2015 NSS-SDSR. Another innovation that persisted was the risk-based approach, which the National Security Risk Assessment ranged the risks (and not threats) to British security in three tiers. The four first-tier risks in 2010 included international terrorism, hostile attacks upon UK cyber space, a major accident or natural hazard, and an international military crisis between states.

On the level of substance however, the results were much less impressive. Relying on the overarching idea that economic security was even more important than military security, and reflecting heavily on the Iraq-Afghanistan experiences, the 2010 NSS and SDSR had assumed that many conventional capacities for state-on-state conflict were outdated and could be scrapped. It supposed that the less numerous and more efficient military would now focus on infrequent stabilisation operations in fragile states overseas, mostly fighting lightly-armed insurgents and terrorists. The NSS and SDSR thus introduced drastic cuts to the military budget (8% fall in real terms to the defence budget up to 2014/15, according to the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review). With retiring Harrier aircraft and delaying the building of new aircraft carriers, the UK was losing carrier strike capability until 2020. With retiring HMS Ark Royal and Type 22 frigates, the surface fleet was reduced to only 19 frigates and destroyers. Cancellation of the Nimrod MRA4 maritime patrol aircraft programme wiped out maritime patrol capacity, making Britain dependent on its allies. The British Army was to go through a reduction in the armed forces by 17,000 personnel and a major restructure (Future Force 2020), thus becoming the smallest in decades. Because of the drastic cuts, US representatives expressed concern over "disengagement" of the UK and inside the country a question arose of whether the army could fulfil its duty at all (Brooke-Holland 2015,

p. 4). Some of the decisions were retracted only 2 years after being taken: Prime Minister Cameron decided to build a second aircraft carrier already in 2012.

Evolving threats have quickly proven that the 2010 documents were at best interim. The huge concentration on Afghanistan became non-relevant within a few years as Russian aggression in Ukraine together with instability in the Middle East and North Africa (Libya, Syria, and ISIS) have created a new security environment, while unprecedented cuts exposed further vulnerabilities. Most tellingly, the capability gap related to scrapping Maritime Patrol Aircraft proved critical since a Russian submarine first appeared off Scotland's shores and Britain was forced to ask its NATO partners for help (The Telegraph 2014).

Thus, an important consensus in favour of the new strategy emerged across parliament (i. e. a series of reports from the Joint Committee on National Security Strategy and the Defence Committee), government (i.e. lectures by the Chief of Defence Staff and Minister of Defence, MoD Global Strategic Trends document (MoD 2014), as well as security experts. In a nutshell, they all demanded development of a new and viable security strategy with a fundamental review to the threats, which would preview both rebuilding conventional capacities and developing capabilities to respond to asymmetric or hybrid warfare, as well as an unwavering commitment of 2% of GDP to defence. The US and other allies exerted additional pressure against any further cuts before the 2015 NSS and SDSR were published.

A whole lot of necessary strategic changes were demanded precisely in connection to Russian aggression against Ukraine: Russia was absent from the 2010 NSS altogether. This included developing analytical capacity to understand Russian motivation and strategy, enhancing the UK's activity in NATO, reassessing defence priorities to be capable of addressing a threat from an advanced military nation (maritime surveillance, CBRN warfare, ballistic missile defence) and ambiguous warfare, including cyber capabilities and special forces capabilities. (see Defence Committee 2014 and Defence Committee 2015, p. 14-17).

After this wave of harsh critique, the November 2015 NSS-SDSR, combined into a single document, took on the task of introducing visible changes as to previous policies on the one side and not exceeding budgetary capacities on the other. It kept the 2010 rhetoric of linking economy and security but shifted attention more to defining Britain's place in the world, although still doing it

in quite a generic way.

"Our vision is for a secure and prosperous United Kingdom, with global reach and influence", declared the NSS-SDSR, defining three "National Security Objectives" – "protect our people, project our global influence and promote our prosperity". The risk assessment had not significantly evolved compared to 2010: Tier 1 risks remained terrorism, international military conflict, cyber and major natural hazards, but two other risks were added (public health risks and instability overseas). Nevertheless, the 2015 document also set out four main challenges for British security: (1) the increasing threat posed by terrorism, extremism and instability, (2) the resurgence of state-based threats and intensifying wider state competition, (3) the impact of technology, especially cyber threats, and wider technological developments, and (4) the erosion of the rules-based international order. Russia's aggressive policy could theoretically be classified under any of these challenges; still the most evident would be challenges 2 and 4, resurgence of state-based threats and erosion of rules-based order.

As the 2010 NSS and SDSR barely featured Russia at all – the country was not present either as a meaningful threat or as a valuable partner– the changes in this part of strategy were imminent and evident. Throughout the document they are palpable on two levels: that concerning immediate response to the Russian challenge and the other, more indirect and influenced by other challenges, concerning general strategic choices.

Direct response to Russia's actions: leading from behind.

The 2015 NSS-SDSR does directly acknowledge the disturbing evolution of Russia's behaviour in several dimensions:

> *3.19 ...Russia has become more aggressive, authoritarian and nationalist, increasingly defining itself in opposition to the West. The illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and continuing support to separatists in eastern Ukraine through the use of deniable, hybrid tactics and media manipulation have shown Russia's willingness to undermine wider international standards of cooperation in order to secure its perceived interests.*

The NSS-SDSR underlines that Russia poses "no immediate direct military threat to the UK mainland", but admits that "with increasing frequency, our

responses are tested by aircraft, including Russian aircraft, near our airspace, and maritime activity near our territorial waters" (4.14), and due to its military build-up, including nuclear, and unpredictable behaviour "we cannot rule out the possibility that it may feel tempted to act aggressively against NATO Allies" 9" (3.20). Finally, the NSS-SDSR admits that "Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and destabilising activities in Ukraine directly challenge European security and the rules-based international order" (5.45).

Having thus assessed the Russian threat on three levels, the Strategy does not propose a direct response on a bilateral level, underlining the UK's commitment to act through alliances and international organisations. Thus, via the UK's work in NATO, the EU, the UN, and the OSCE, the aim is: to ensure that Russia is held to account for its actions, complies with the commitments it entered into at the Minsk Summit, withdraws from Crimea, and meets its international obligations in respect of the rule of law, human rights and democracy (5.45).

Detailing the response via the framework of NATO, the NSS-SDSR pledged that "The 2014 Wales Summit, under UK leadership, delivered an effective and united response to Russian behaviour" (3.20), citing the UK's involvement into the defence investment pledge, Readiness Action Plan, Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, NATO Air Policing Mission in the Baltics, Maritime Patrol Aircraft, UK participation in NATO exercises, as well as training and military expertise sharing with its partners.

Response in the EU framework equally highlights the UK's commitment to the multilateral instruments. This relates to imposing EU sanctions "at UK urging" (3.21) as well as UK support and initiative for the EU Assistance Mission, and a pledge to "work with the EU to shape the single energy market, helping to reduce the EU's energy dependence on Russia" (4.142).

In 5.47 the NSS-SDSR declares its support for a diplomatic resolution of the crisis in Ukraine and pledges to "continue to work to uphold Ukraine's sovereignty, assist its people and build resilience", admits providing humanitarian aid, advice and assistance on fighting corruption, defence reform and training Ukrainian Armed Forces. Simultaneously, there is certain ambiguity as the desire to cooperate with Russia is manifested twice in the document (3.22 and 5.46). Acknowledging Russia's role as one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, it states the will to engage with Russia on a range of global security issues, such as ISIL and referring to "successful cooperation that we shared in negotiations on Iran's

nuclear programme".

General strategy evolution: getting conventional back

The second level of change in security approaches was informed not only by Russian actions, but also by the general changes in the security environment, driven by the acknowledgement that the conflict between states is no longer unimaginable or outdated. According to the PM's Foreword, "we cannot choose between conventional defences against state-based threats and the need to counter threats that do not recognise national borders. Today we face both and we must respond to both" (2015 NSS-SDSR p. 5). Thus, he listed the priorities as "deter state-based threats, tackle terrorism, remain a world leader in cyber security and ensure we have the capability to respond rapidly to crises as they emerge" (2015 NSS-SDSR p. 6).

The first step was to regain credibility via announcing an end to the cuts. Thus, the government has committed to meet the NATO target of spending 2% of GDP on defence every year. Already the Summer Budget 2015 announced that the defence budget would rise by 0.5% each year from 2016 to 2021. To resolve the financing issues, more emphasis was placed on promoting prosperity through international trade (especially with emerging powers such as India and China, as well as boosting defence and security exports). Also, ambitious savings were expected from the MoD (mostly relating to personnel and efficiency, not equipment).

As to deterrence, the most significant decision was that the NSS-SDSR has explicitly committed to retain a nuclear deterrence capacity "as long as the security situation demands" and to launch a costly Successor programme: construction of four new Trident missile-carrying submarines. On another level, the UK committed to lead "a renewed focus on deterrence" in NATO, in order that "our potential adversaries are in no doubt about the range of responses they should expect to any aggressive action on their part" (4.12).

For this deterrence to become credible, a whole range of new acquisitions and regaining capacities has been announced: establishing two additional Typhoon squadrons and an additional squadron of F35 Lightning combat aircraft to operate from new aircraft carriers, buying nine new Maritime Patrol Aircraft, creating two new Strike Brigades, and in the longer term committing to increase the size of the frigate fleet.

The much-criticized Future Force 2020 army structure was to be remodified as the Joint Force 2025, with an increased expeditionary force of around 50,000, up from the 30,000 previewed in 2010 and with closer integration of reserves with regular forces. Again, the explicit obligation not to make further cuts to the army was crucial.

Defence engagement became one of the core tasks for the MoD as building stability overseas in fragile states was deemed a priority for British security. This involved focus on institutional and capacity building, increased training for international partners, as well as committing to doubling the number of military personnel contributed to UN peacekeeping operations (5.12-5.14).

Cyber security was rather on continuity than change track, since the first Cyber Security Strategy (CSS) and the National Cyber Security Programme were established already in 2011. The new CSS, acknowledging the growth of scope and variety of cyber threats and challenges, was adopted in 2016.

2. Changes in security discourses

The 2015 NSS-SDSR went through several rounds of discussion in parliament and government, both before and after its presentation, but it largely failed to initiate a meaningful public debate. Lunn and Scarnell argue that "the apparent semi-eclipse of the 2015 UK NSS" happened because of the feeling that the strategy was more refreshed than transformed (Lunn and Scarnell 2015), which corresponded to Prime Minister Cameron's vision. As a significant portion of army commanders, experts and allies were visibly relieved that the most drastic cuts were finally over, the 2015 NSS-SDSR was greeted somewhat positively. Nevertheless, the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy lamented the generic way to describe a range of threats and risks, lack of clear vision on how three national security objectives would be combined, doubted if Joint **Force 2025 would be able to meet the national security challenges**, or even if the MoD could succeed in making the efficiency savings **of £9.2 billion expected of it over the next five years** (JCNSS 2015).

Still these debates have been quickly outshone by the advent of the Brexit referendum in mid-2016. For political reasons mostly, as the negotiations of PM Cameron with the EU were underway at the time, there were no provisions in the 2015 NSS-SDSR as to strategic challenges to Great Britain in the case of Brexit. Thus, half a year after the adoption of the Strategy, Britain

had to contemplate a modified security environment with new tasks and new threats, for which no recipes had been previewed. Not only did the question of the future of the UK's alliances and its post-Brexit positioning in the world emerge, but even questions of the unity of the UK–with Scotland launching the idea of another independence referendum–or the future of the Northern Ireland peace process with the emergence of the Irish border problem came to the fore. Questions about the financial capacities for security and defence after the UK quits the EU or the nature of future UK-EU security cooperation became imminent.

The idea of developing an ambitious post-Brexit security partnership between the EU and the UK gained its place in PM May's speeches, still the task of rethinking the strategy was reported towards 2020. Meanwhile, the government publicly defended the position that the 2015 NSS was perfectly compatible with the Brexit process: in a first yearly review the Government has reassured that the only commitment that would suffer because of Brexit – is the pledge to champion the free trade agreement between the EU and India (Cabinet Office 2016 p. 7). In her Lancaster House speech, Prime Minister May painted the future of Britain as a globally engaged nation (Lancaster House Speech 2017), which perfectly corresponded to the three national objectives of the 2015 NSS.

In parallel to the general Brexit debate, public rhetoric towards Russia became harder in 2017. Edward Lucas even announced that "the outlines of a new Russia policy are taking shape in Britain", which is 'tough, cautious and pragmatic", and centred on containment and protecting allies (Lucas 2017). In November 2017 Premier May gave two speeches – one at the Lord Mayor's Banquet in London, another at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Brussels. In both she spoke against Russia's threatening of the world order, mentioned Russia's attempts to undermine western institutions, its involvement in the conflict with Ukraine, violations of national airspace of several countries, meddling in elections and mounting a campaign of cyber-espionage and disruption.

> *I have a very simple message for Russia. We know what you are doing. And you will not succeed. Because you underestimate the resilience of our democracies, the enduring attraction of free and open societies, and the commitment of western nations to the alliances that bind us* (PM speech to the Lord Mayor's Banquet 2017).

This hawkish line of discourse, underlining the Russian threat, was supported by other ministers. In the last months of 2017 – first months of 2018 Michael Fallon, former Defence Secretary, underlined that Russia spent twice as much on defence as did the UK. Actual Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson maintained that Russia was looking to damage the British economy and infrastructure, potentially causing "thousands and thousands and thousands of deaths". Chief of the General Staff Nick Carter described Russia as the biggest state-based threat to the UK since the Cold War, warning that Britain would struggle to match Russia's military capabilities on the battlefield. The head of the Royal Air Force, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach warned that Russia is an increasing threat. News about Russian ships and planes appearing close to UK territorial waters and airspace, increase in the activities of Russian submarines near undersea data cables became numerous in the media at the end of the year. On December 3, the intelligence service MI6 reclassified Russia as a "tier one" threat, after years of regarding it as a security issue of secondary importance.

Partly the reason for this heightened attention to the threat from Russia was the National Security Capability Review, commissioned in July 2017 and due in January 2018: at the end of the day, its defence part (Modernising Defence Programme) was reported until July 2018. The review process rendered obvious that the defence commitments under the 2015 strategy have been too ambitious and either more money was needed (which the Treasury resisted), or further cuts were inevitable. Thus, the need to increase defence spending in general, often citing the threat from Russia, was regularly underlined. Michael Fallon, for example believed that the growing threats from Russia and cyber-attacks demanded an increase in the defence budget to 2.5% of GDP. The Chief of General Staff Carter defended retaining a forward base in Germany although the UK is gradually withdrawing troops to be able to return quickly if necessary.

Another line of discussion considered the current projects of economizing in relation to the Russian threat: two amphibious landing ships (HMS Bulwark and HMS Albion) were reported as considered for the chop, together with 28 Wildcat helicopters. The counterargument thus went that these ships and naval helicopters were vital components of the conventional deterrent of Britain via NATO in the Baltic. Also, the British government is believed to be contemplating combining elite units of paratroopers and the Royal Marines, thus reducing the number of military personnel by 14,000. Assessing the proposed changes as to the Russian threat, Mark Galeotti was very sceptical about an independent nuclear deterrent, vast equipment procurement or

concentrating on an aircraft carrier. Instead he underlined the importance of special and intervention forces in deterring Russia as well as keeping a lighter navy such as submarines or frigates. (Galeotti 2017)

Parliament has also been an important contributor to the Russia debate. The opposition decided to investigate potential Russian involvement in the Brexit referendum and June 2017 parliamentary elections via the bots in social media. Ben Bradshaw, a Labour MP, has called for a judge-led inquiry and MPs on the House of Commons media committee wanted to hear from representatives of Twitter and Facebook about ads purchased by Russian accounts. Damian Collins, chair of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, has requested details including how much money was spent on ads, how many times they were viewed, and which Facebook users were targeted. Labour's shadow digital minister Liam Byrne proposed that laws should be changed to safeguard future elections (banning political advertising on social media, recognising Facebook and similar platforms as publishers, and giving the Electoral Commission more possibilities to investigate foreign money in election campaigning). The Intelligence and Security Committee warned that Russia's threat to the UK remains "significant", citing evidence from British agency GCHQ on the Kremlin's influencing campaigns to manipulate public opinion in Europe. Also, the heightened interest in Russian topics was manifested in several reports on relations with Russia, prepared by the Committees of the House of Commons. Most interesting of them were the Defence Committee's "Russia: Implications for UK defence and security, First Report of Session 2016–17" and the Foreign Affairs Committee's "The United Kingdom's relations with Russia, Seventh Report of Session 2016–17".

As to the opposition, Labour under Jeremy Corbyn has been somewhat cautious and dialogue-prone regarding Russia. Jeremy Corbyn himself demanded more evidence to the allegations that Russia is trying to undermine Western democracy, supported a dialogue to ratchet down tensions with Russia and has opposed the deployment of British troops to Estonia, referring to the threat of unnecessary escalation with Russia. Also, Corbyn was disappointed with comparatively little attention to human security in the current strategy and – traditionally – opposed the decision to keep the nuclear deterrent and develop the Successor programme. (Even prior to the 2015 election, the nuclear deterrent was a contentious point: the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru also wanted to get rid of it and the Greens were contemplating for a small defence).

3. Transformation of security policies

The practical British reaction to Russian aggression quite literally corresponded to the priorities and principles outlined in the 2015 NSS-SDSR. Britain was one of the leading countries to formulate the NATO response to Russian incursions at the 2014 and 2016 NATO summits (summarized in Brooke-Holland 2016). The 2014 Newport Summit enlarged the Response Force from 13,000 to 40,000 troops, improved its decision making, created a new Very High Readiness Joint Force (VTJF), introduced continuous presence of NATO forces on a rotational basis and pre-positioning equipment in eastern Europe, established headquarters in Baltic and eastern European states, and decided to conduct more joint exercises. The 2016 Warsaw Summit introduced an 'enhanced forward presence' of four multinational battalions in Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland on a rotational basis from 2017 onwards.

The UK played a prominent role in most of these policy decisions. It became one of seven framework nations leading the VTJF, contributed a battlegroup of up to 1,000 personnel each year, led the VJTF in 2017 and pledged a battlegroup for the Polish-led VJTF in 2020. It also supported establishment of NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUs) in Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania (2015), Slovakia (2016) and Hungary (2017) to ensure that the very high-readiness forces can deploy into an assigned region as fast as possible and contributed manpower.

As to the pivotal decision on 'enhanced forward presence', since May 2017 the UK has led battalion to Estonia, and deploys a company to support the US-led battalion in Poland. It deployed Typhoon aircraft to the Baltic Air Policing mission in 2014, 2015 and 2016 and to the NATO Southern Air Policing mission based in Romania in 2017.It contributed Sentry aircraft for NATO air surveillance missions to Romania and Poland.

The UK has significantly increased the number of personnel deployed on NATO exercises from fewer than 700 in 2011 to over 9,000 in 2016.It also contributed to the Standing NATO Maritime Group in 2016 for the first time since 2010 with a frigate and a destroyer patrolling the Baltic Sea. In 2016 three Royal Navy minesweepers were deployed to Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group.

The UK, alongside other nations, launched the Transatlantic Capability Enhancement and Training (TACET) initiative in February 2016, providing

training and expertise to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. The UK has a lead nation status for the initiative, alongside Germany and the US. Finally, the UK leads a NATO C4 (Command, Control, Communications and Computers) Trust Fund for Ukraine and will contribute over €400,000 to this initiative. In January 2018 it was announced that a radar station on a Shetland island will soon be relaunched in order to track Russian war planes, as already it did during the 1960s and 70s, to better protect both the UK's airspace and that of its allies.

Generally, the UK follows the idea of stepping its presence in countries that border Russia, increasing the number of NATO military exercises with Ukraine, Poland and Estonia, as well as financial commitments to support reforms and security in Central and Eastern Europe.

Conclusions

The short overview of the evolution in British security thinking explicitly shows that the changes to the security situation are quicker than the ability of the government to inscribe them into a viable mid-term strategy. In both the 2010 and 2015 cases, non-anticipated developments demonstrated the limited scope of the strategy: the 2010 NSS was overinfluenced by the Iraq and Afghanistan experiences and did not preview the emergence of new threats in Middle East and Eastern Europe. The 2015 NSS-SDSR fully ignored any possible influence of the perspective of Brexit on the British strategic situation, which granted it again with the temporary status. Nevertheless, the 2015 NSS-SDSR introduced quite a comprehensive assessment of Russian aggression and its implications for the UK and world security on a scale from a resurgence of state-based threats to undermining the rules-based order. The UK's has been one of the most consistent positions of all the European states and it has indeed led the NATO response, particularly reassuring NATO members from Eastern Europe. The UK also made necessary conclusions for its own defence, trying to regain some capacities, restructuring the army, and adhering to the nuclear deterrence disregarding great costs and lack of unanimous public support. Still the lack of will to go beyond multilateral forums combined with limited possibilities to influence decisions inside the alliances have limited the UK's leverage to resolve the conflict as only Germany and France are implicated in direct negotiations. The UK's departure from the EU will weaken this dimension even further.

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