

Shared Security

Security and Defence in an Uncertain World

Policy Paper 6



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Shared Security: Summary

The end of the cold war has removed the most serious potential military challenge to the security of the UK. However, regional tensions, ethnic rivalries and conflicts over resources have proliferated worldwide. The new world is not only far less predictable, but also less peaceful, than the old.

Liberal Democrats want Britain to work with other countries towards an equitable and peaceful international order. Our approach rests on three principles. 'Security' policy must deal with much more than the traditional question of military preparedness to meet a military threat to a sovereign state. We support the principle of common security, implying a preference for supranational and international rather than national means of achieving security. And we recognise the urgent need for a reinterpretation of national sovereignty, and the establishment of criteria under which the world community is justified in challenging the sovereignty of member states.

Global Security

A reformed and restructured United Nations must be the cornerstone of the institutions needed to guarantee global security. Improved methods of information gathering, analysis and dissemination, including the establishment of a UN Information Agency; the development of a global emergency system to anticipate and prevent conflicts; and the extension of preventive deployments are necessary to improve the UN's effectiveness.

Peace enforcement operations can be improved where existing regional security structures - such as NATO - can provide an effective integrated command structure. A military planning staff is urgently needed to provide advice to the Security Council and to oversee operations. A permanent UN peacekeeping force comprising contingents from member nations assigned on an annual basis and available at minimum notice is needed, together with a UN Staff College, preferably sited in Britain, to train officers in peacekeeping and draw up new doctrines. The provision of assured finance, including the establishment of a replenishable peace fund, is essential for effective action.

European Security

The security of Britain is directly linked to that of its neighbours. The security and prosperity of Europe is the first priority for UK foreign and defence policy.

Britain's security is directly bound up in the European Union. EU indecision and division over Bosnia has, however, revealed the weaknesses of the current mechanisms for common foreign and security policy; the separate 'three pillar' structure created at Maastricht must be unified at the 1996 Inter-Governmental Conference.

EU competence should be extended to arms manufacture and trade, and common procurement developed. The closer integration, or 'complementarity', of European armed forces - as displayed in the existing UK-Netherlands amphibious force and the 'Eurocorps' - should be encouraged, and burden-sharing agreements reached to ensure that no one country bears a disproportionate share of the costs of European security.

Despite reductions in the US forces in Europe, we believe that the *Atlantic relationship* is of great importance to European security, and will become more so if political and economic instability in the former USSR grow worse. *NATO* must therefore continue to evolve in the light of changing circumstances, including the development of the EU's common foreign and security policy; *we favour a looser 'two-pillar' alliance of North America and Europe, with each partner exercising rights of independent action.*

The *WEU* has effectively become the 'European pillar' of *NATO*, and we therefore wish to see it act as the crucial bridge between *NATO* and the EU. In the short term, the *WEU* must become more operational, becoming an effective coordinated command structure for European forces. In 1996, *WEU* should be absorbed within the Union. *Our long term objective is to see all members of the EU also members of a reformed and remodelled NATO, with common arrangements for security and defence matters, and strong links to Central and Eastern Europe.*

The *CSCE* also has a valuable role to play as a forum for discussion, in developing arms control agreements and in protecting human rights and minorities.

Controlling the Arms Trade

A global reduction in the arms trade is essential to the reduction of military conflict. The sale of arms and of 'dual-use' technologies to areas of potential or actual tension or to nations failing to adopt democratic institutions or to respect human rights must be strictly controlled; sales should be banned to nations in gross breach of international law. The withdrawal of development aid should be considered from states importing arms other than for defensive purposes.

The UN Register of Conventional Armaments should be strengthened and developed; the UN should also take a leading role in coordinating reductions in sales by the major suppliers. Effective controls on the export of arms and dual use technologies should be developed at EU level, and a mandatory EU register of arms sales established.

Within the UK, proper Parliamentary scrutiny must be exercised over arms exports. UK government support for the arms industry is excessively high and should be reduced. Arms conversion techniques should be developed and the arms industry assisted to convert to civilian production where it is faced with reductions in defence spending. Spending on defence R&D should be reduced and resources transferred to the civilian sector.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

Liberal Democrats call on the Government to ratify the *Chemical Weapons Convention*. We call for an indefinite extension to the *Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty*, and a stronger verification process; we support the aims of Article VI of the Treaty, which requires all nuclear weapons states to negotiate in good faith to end the nuclear arms race, with the ultimate aim of a world free of nuclear weapons. *The negotiations on a verifiable Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty must be concluded as soon as possible, and Britain should propose a new round of strategic arms reductions talks involving all nuclear weapons states.*

While other states possess nuclear weapons, Britain should continue to deploy a minimal nuclear force. *Its threat of use must accord, as far as possible, with customary international law; its only justification is therefore in self defence as a deterrent against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.* Britain should announce that its nuclear weapons would never be used except in response to a clear nuclear threat and against military targets only.

The Trident submarine force can adequately fulfil both strategic and sub-strategic deterrent roles; no other British nuclear weapons are therefore needed. Furthermore, the submarines should not be equipped with a greater number of warheads than at present are deployed on Polaris (a maximum of 192 against 384 quoted by the Government), and a lower number may well be possible.

UK Defence Policy

British defence policy must be developed systematically within the overall framework of foreign and security policy. The current process of piecemeal and uncoordinated cuts must end; reductions in the total size of the regular armed forces are only acceptable as long as the core forces that remain are properly equipped and supplied. More use should be made of reserve forces.

In the *home defence* role, Britain currently has major military commitments in Northern Ireland and the Falkland Islands which require corresponding levels of expenditure; every effort should be made to reach political settlements in these areas.

British armed forces must be reshaped to meet the new and potential threats to *European security*. The current emphasis on the armour-based NATO Rapid Reaction Corps needs to be reviewed, with these formations made fully interoperable with the rapidly developing Eurocorps to provide an effective European defence role.

International peace enforcement will be an increasingly important role, and British strengths in this area should be built on. More emphasis should be placed on mobile forces, such as light armour and airmobile troops, able to move to a crisis area very quickly.

The historic trend of *UK defence spending* since the mid 1950s has been to remain roughly constant in real terms - ie falling gradually as a percentage of GDP. While close cooperation with Britain's European neighbours and possible political settlements in Northern Ireland or the Falklands may help to reduce Britain's defence

burden further, we believe that given the growing demands of UN peace enforcement missions, and following the reductions in defence spending already made and planned, it is now appropriate to return to this overall trend and aim to maintain defence spending in real terms. The post-cold war world, however, is a highly uncertain place; if the international situation worsens so as to threaten European security, we believe that Europe must be prepared to accept the need for an increase in its defence spending.

Introduction: The Need for Security

1.0.1 Defence policy - more widely, security policy - has been a topic which has attracted more attention than many in the history of the Liberal Democrats. When our first policy green paper, *After the Cold War*, appeared in 1989, the Berlin Wall was still intact, President Gorbachev governed a still cohesive Soviet Union, Iraq appeared to be a threat only to Iran, and the armed forces of the Warsaw Pact were still the major external threat to the security of the UK and its allies.

1.0.2 Five years later we face an entirely different world. The end of the cold war has removed the most serious potential military challenge to the security of the UK. No identifiable military threat now exists from any major industrialised power - the first time this has been true since the mid-nineteenth century. Successive arms control treaties, on intermediate and strategic nuclear weapons (the INF and START I and II Treaties of 1987, 1991 and 1993) and on conventional forces (the CFE Treaty of 1992), together with cutbacks in defence spending, have significantly reduced the military arsenals once deployed throughout Europe.

1.0.3 The USA is the only remaining military superpower, with capabilities well in advance of those of any other country. Any large scale UN operation (such as the recovery of Kuwait in 1991) will probably rely upon the US taking the leading role in the foreseeable future. Yet as cases such as Bosnia and Somalia have shown, the US is deeply reluctant to commit its troops - particularly ground forces - to many UN operations of smaller scale, and (not unreasonably) believes that threats to European security ought to be met increasingly by European nations. Part of the psychological problem of the West is that it has become accustomed to US leadership - of the UN, of

NATO, of the 'Western world' in general - whilst there are doubts about US willingness to continue to provide that leadership.

1.0.4 Apart from Russia and China, no other state possesses military strength on anything like the same scale as the USA. Russia's armed forces are in a low state of readiness as resources are no longer available for repair and maintenance (an important exception to this is their nuclear force, which remains formidable). China lacks power-projection capability, restricting its very large army and air force to operations only along its borders. Such armed forces as exist elsewhere lag behind NATO's armies in terms of quality, though in terms of quantity, there are several countries in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and the Far East that deploy land and air forces comparable in size to many Western European ones. Japan in particular already has forces comparable to Britain's, and could easily afford more, although it is understandably reluctant to use them abroad.

1.1 Threats to Security

1.1.1 Although superpower confrontation has ceased, threats to security have by no means ended; indeed, they have proliferated throughout the world. In place of two competing alliance systems, an international situation characterised by regional tensions, ethnic rivalries and political and regional instabilities has emerged. Rising nationalism and intolerance, economic hardship, the collapse of the Soviet empire and the danger of 'warlordism' in many of its successor states, some of which still possess nuclear weapons, could quickly present grave threats to European security.

1.1.2 The new world is proving not only far less predictable, but also less peaceful, than the old. Fighting continues in many countries around the world, most notably and ominously in multi-ethnic states in the former Yugoslavia, the former Soviet Union, and throughout Africa. Although the threat of all-out nuclear war has diminished, proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons is a continuing danger. There is a huge market for all types of conventional weapons systems, a useful source of hard currency for states facing economic difficulties. Russia alone has signed arms contracts worth more than \$2 billion with several countries including China, Iran, India and Syria. Although total global military expenditure has fallen from its historic peak in 1987, it still reached \$815 bn in 1992, a sum almost as great as the combined income of the poorest 50% of the world's population.

1.1.3 One of the most serious threats to global security derives from the pressures on natural resources created by high consumption levels in the developed world and rapid population growth in developing countries (the total world population, now 5.5 billion, is not expected to stabilise until the end of the next century, at between 11 and 15 billion). The result of both these factors is environmental degradation, most seriously the warming of the atmosphere, with predicted effects including the flooding of coastal areas, a reduction in rainfall in the North, and a worsening drought in Africa. Further environmental hazards include the destruction of the ozone layer, deforestation, desertification, toxic contamination and the depletion of natural resources.

1.1.4 As a result, conflicts between nations over the control of resources may become a severe threat to international peace. The industrial world has already been drawn into war over oil; water is now as scarce and as valuable a resource in some areas of the world. As a result of famine, war, religious persecution and drought, movements of peoples and numbers of refugees have soared. Between 1985 and 1992 the world total more than doubled, to 19 million.

1.1.5 Growth in the number of nation states may further contribute to instability. 190 entities are today recognised as sovereign states and there is little doubt that this number will increase. States founded on exclusive principles of nationality, religion, culture or language can foster developments leading to persecution and conflict, and consequently instability and further migration. Conflicts *within* nation states, usually springing from ethnic, religious or tribal conflicts, are widespread and likely to become more so; of the 82 armed conflicts between 1989 and 1992, only three were between states. Such conflicts frequent affect the security and stability of the whole region. In cases such as Somalia, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Rwanda, the collapse of government has led to civil war and a general breakdown of civil society.

1.1.6 Thus the hoped for 'new world order' has failed to materialise. The inability of either the European Union or NATO to act decisively in Bosnia, despite the combined military strength of their member states, has revealed major flaws in the structure of policy-making and decision-making on security matters in Europe. Member governments and their publics have been unprepared for common actions or shared responsibilities. The failure of the United Nations to act effectively in Bosnia, Somalia, Haiti and most recently, Rwanda, and the unwillingness of the world community to fund more and more extensive peacekeeping operations has undermined the optimism of 1989.

1.1.7 A new approach is needed. This paper, *Shared Security*, aims to set out the Liberal Democrat concept of security policy. Clearly, as an opposition party, we cannot be expected to specify *precisely* what changes in government policy need to be made; we share the view expressed by the then Shadow Secretary of State for Defence, Sir Ian Gilmour MP, in 1978, that "*without full access to the books, the Chiefs of Staff, the scientists, the civil servants, industry and our allies, we cannot be specific about what we shall do ... It would be irresponsible and naive.*" Nevertheless, we can indicate the broad thrust and direction of our approach. We start with our underlying beliefs.

The Liberal Democrat Approach

2.0.1 The Liberal Democrat approach to security policy derives from the principles expressed in the Preamble to our Party's constitution. "*We look forward to a world,*" it states, "*in which all people share the same basic rights, in which they live together in peace and in which their different cultures will be able to develop freely Setting aside national sovereignty when necessary, we will work with other countries towards an equitable and peaceful international order and a durable system of common security.*"

2.0.2 We develop this broad statement of principle into a set of three beliefs:

- 'Security' policy must encompass much more than the traditional question of military preparedness to meet a military threat to a sovereign state.
- Belief in the principle of common security, implying a preference for supranational and international rather than national means of achieving security, and means that are peaceful over those that rely on the use or threatened use of force.
- The need for a reinterpretation of national sovereignty, and the establishment of criteria under which the world community is justified in challenging the sovereignty of member states.

2.1 Security Policy and Defence

2.1.1 Chapter One of this paper has shown that a broad definition of security policy is imperative. Real security cannot only be expressed in military terms; it is also economic, social and environmental. Governments need to be as concerned with the threats to their peoples' security, and to that of their

neighbours, from environmental degradation, resource depletion, world population growth, mass migration and the flight of refugees and the maldistribution of food and natural resources as they have traditionally been with threats posed by armed force. This implies that many threats to security may be better dealt with through means other than the use of force; some can *only* be met in this way. Conflicts arising out of poverty and resource depletion, for example, may be averted by economic and technical assistance; potential wars may be prevented by diplomatic and political help, perhaps supported by the presence of a deterrent peacekeeping force.

2.1.2 In terms of domestic politics, defence policy must serve this wider concept of security policy. It must be subordinate to the UK's general foreign policy aims, and must be drawn up against the background of general economic policy, within the context of how much defence expenditure the economy can afford.

2.2 Common Security

2.2.1 The concept of common security was set out in full in the 1982 Palme Commission Report, which expressed the conviction that "*a doctrine of common security must replace the present expedient of deterrence through armaments. International peace must rest on a commitment to joint survival rather than a threat of mutual destruction in the modern world, security cannot be obtained unilaterally. The security of one nation cannot be bought at the expense of others.*" Common security aims to provide for collective action to frustrate aggression. It places particular emphasis on techniques such as crisis management, confidence building measures, verification arrangements and non-proliferation of armament technology. Central to the idea of common security is the requirement to work

through effective international and supranational organisations.

2.2.2 This means participating in and developing the powers of the United Nations. The world of the 1990s is characterised by many small conflicts rather than one overwhelming superpower confrontation. In these circumstances, UN action, whether through diplomacy, peacekeeping or peacemaking, can often be immensely valuable. Yet the current structure of the UN is increasingly overstretched and in urgent need of reform. Member nations' armed forces need to adapt to the new peace enforcement demands of the 1990s. These topics are dealt with in Chapter Three.

2.2.3 Security may best be guaranteed in the first instance through effective multinational regional organisations. For Britain, this therefore means full and enthusiastic participation in the organisations which determine the security of the European continent. Britain is a European country, and its security is directly linked to that of its neighbours. The security and prosperity of Europe, including especially Central and Eastern Europe, and the Baltic and Mediterranean regions, must thus be the first priorities for British foreign and defence policy, as they are for other members of the European Union. Unless the EU is prepared to exercise its influence around its borders in what looks likely to be a turbulent decade, it is unlikely that its members will be able to enjoy security and stability. The evolution of European security organisations is explored in Chapter Four.

2.3 Reinterpreting Sovereignty

2.3.1 Finally, and implicit in the above beliefs, we believe that existing notions of the sovereign equality and integrity of nation states must be reassessed. The world cannot continue

to assume that every problem can be solved by nations acting on their own; and many actions taken by individual nations affect their neighbours. Within the context of international law, criteria must be established under which the world community, acting collectively, will be justified in challenging national sovereignty and intervening within individual states.

2.3.2 Instances which may allow this intervention should include threats to regional or global security arising from gross and persistent denial of the provisions of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, denial of the right to peaceful coexistence of nations and communities, and deliberate widespread and lasting damage to the global or regional environment. The form of this intervention should vary according to circumstances. It could include restrictions on investment or on trade; only in the last resort should it involve military action. (See Federal Green Paper 25, *Beyond the Nation State* (1992) for more details.)

2.3.3 We recognise that the development and application of these criteria will require many years, or probably decades. They may progress faster in some regions than in others, as the development of the world's most effective supranational body, the European Union, has shown. However, the collapse of government in some countries, such as Somalia, and the strong claims to autonomy exercised by peoples such as the Iraqi Kurds, has reinforced the need for the process at least to begin.

2.3.4 We recognise also that there be many cases, particularly in the short and medium term, in which, although grounds for intervention exist, practicalities dictate otherwise. The likelihood of the success of the actions proposed must be an important factor in deciding whether to proceed. This is no counsel of despair; the UN may not be able to solve all of the world's problems, but this does not mean it cannot solve any of them.

Global Security

3.0.1 In successive policy documents Liberal Democrats have stressed the importance of the United Nations and expressed optimism about its continued development. “A reformed and restructured United Nations,” we argued in *Beyond the Nation State*, “must be the cornerstone of the international institutions required for today’s world.” More peacekeeping operations have been launched in the past few years than in all the 40 years of the cold war; there are seven times more peacekeepers in the field now than six years ago.

3.0.2 Recent experience, however, has been mixed. In the former Yugoslavia, aggression has met with at least temporary success, UN humanitarian operations have been undermined and the behaviour of some national contingents has harmed the international reputation of UN troops. The UN-sponsored action by the USA in Somalia stopped the rising toll of deaths from famine, but failed to disarm the militias and managed to unite the country only in opposition to foreign intervention. In Angola, resources provided to ensure that the disarmament process could be carried out were inadequate to the task.

3.0.3 There have, of course, been UN successes - the operations in Cambodia, El Salvador and Namibia being the most prominent. The lesson of the last two years, however, is that while the end of the cold war may have increased the ability of the Security Council to agree (at least for the time being; this may not continue indefinitely), this in itself does nothing to guarantee that its decisions are implemented effectively. The agenda for reform that we set out in *Beyond the Nation State* is needed even more urgently.

3.0.4 The crucial area for reinterpretation, now as then, is Article Two of the UN Charter, which defines the sovereign equality and

integrity of states and prohibits interference in affairs within the domestic jurisdiction of a member state. Such a concept of sovereignty is inappropriate to an interdependent world, a world in which new nations with sizable minorities are being created and old nations are falling apart, ethnic tensions and economic failure are leading to large scale migration, and the actions of one nation can have a major impact on the environment of its neighbours. Section 2.3 sets out our proposals for this necessary reinterpretation of sovereignty.

3.1 Peacekeeping and Peacemaking

3.1.1 Experiences of recent years have highlighted the shortcomings of the current arrangements for UN peacekeeping and peacemaking operations. A number of reforms are necessary. First is improvements in the UN’s intelligence and forward planning capabilities and its ability to prevent conflict occurring in the first place; action taken early is almost invariably more effective and less costly than action taken late. We propose:

- Improved methods of information gathering, analysis and dissemination, including arrangements to make use of existing remote-sensing systems (such as satellites) and the extension of verification capabilities. A new UN Information Agency should collect information on conflict, threat and the global environment and make it accessible to all as of right.
- The development of a global emergency system to anticipate and prevent conflicts, and machinery for organising negotiations and providing arbitration and mediation services.

- The extension of preventive deployments, such as the current UN force in Macedonia, to act as deterrents to conflict.

3.1.2 Second comes improvements in the organisation of peace enforcement forces. The experience of Bosnia has shown that these can be more effectively managed where a strong regional grouping - in this case NATO - exists and can provide an effective integrated command structure. We believe that the UN should in the first instance turn to existing local and regional security structures for peace enforcement needs. Where such structures do not exist, their development should be encouraged.

3.1.3 Recent experiences have also shown that the UN administration is in severe need of military advice and expertise; one of the problems in Bosnia is that commanders have been unable to operate successfully within their mandates because these do not reflect realities on the ground. In the absence of an effective Military Staff Committee (the Chiefs of Staff of the five permanent members of the Security Council, established under the UN Charter in 1945, but effectively disbanded in 1947), we call for the appointment of a military planning staff to provide advice to the Secretary General and the Security Council, to assist in drawing up mandates, to establish effective operational command and control structures and to oversee UN peace enforcement operations.

3.1.4 There are other immediate problems. The difficulty of finding peacekeeping troops at short notice has been a constant problem. We support UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali's call (in *Agenda for Peace*, 1992) for the establishment of a permanent standby UN peacekeeping force comprising contingents from member nations assigned on an annual basis and available at minimum notice. We do not support, however, the creation of a UN 'volunteer army', as some have proposed; problems with selection of personnel, training, discipline and legal status under international law are currently too difficult to overcome. The provision of assigned national troops with

earmarked HQ units providing effective leadership is more realistic.

3.1.5 A UN Staff College is needed to train officers in the difficult task of peacekeeping and draw up new procedures and doctrines, covering such matters as relations with warring parties and humanitarian agencies. Emergency procedures for rapid deployment of peacekeeping forces need to be thoroughly worked out so that they can be followed without delay. The UK, currently taking the lead in drafting a UN doctrine manual, and with long experience in Northern Ireland and elsewhere, is well placed to coordinate this process and host the Staff College. Mechanisms are also required to inspect and guarantee the quality of peace enforcement forces - to monitor standards, deter corruption and ensure the required excellence of performance that will allow the UN's reputation to be restored.

The UN should turn to local and regional security structures for peace enforcement needs.

3.1.6 Finally, and most importantly, there must be security of funding: the provision of assured finance for peace enforcement operations, including the establishment of a replenishable peace fund, is the *sine qua non* of effective action. The current cost of the UN's peacekeeping operations throughout the world is estimated at \$3.2 billion per year - less than one half of one percent of annual global military expenditure - though a third of this is currently unpaid. The costs of peacekeeping need to be compared with the costs of *not* investing in peacekeeping, which are often much higher. The UN's own financial procedures need to be more effective and its spending plans more rational, however, before a substantial increase in funding can be undertaken. A long term possibility for funding

peace enforcement missions could be a levy on the value of the international arms trade.

3.2 Reform of the UN

3.2.1 These military proposals will not by themselves be enough. What recent years have so clearly shown is that the UN's constitutional framework is even more in need of reform. The UN cannot become "*the cornerstone of international institutions*" if the Security Council and the General Assembly continue to be out of tune with each other. The composition of the Security Council must reflect the realities of the world of today, not the world of 1945. Reforms we propose are set out fully in *Beyond the Nation State*; in summary, they include:

- A review of the composition and operation of the UN Security Council, including the

addition of Japan to membership, and a review of the representation of the European Union.

- The creation of a more open and democratic election method for the UN Secretary General, the establishment of Deputy Secretary General positions, and an enhancement of the Secretariat's ability to rationalise, oversee and coordinate the work of the various UN agencies.
- Improvements in the working of the General Assembly, including consideration of the introduction of weighted voting, taking account of nations' population and UN contributions.
- A thorough review and strengthening of UN finances, including the development of UN 'own resources'.

European Security

4.0.1 Britain is a European country; its security is directly linked to that of its neighbours. The security and prosperity of Europe, including especially Central and Eastern Europe, and the Baltic and Mediterranean regions, are therefore the first priorities for British foreign and defence policy, as they are for other members of the European Union. Furthermore, there is no conceivable military threat to the UK which might be a threat to Britain alone. Britain cannot decide its defence priorities without the closest possible consultation with its European partners.

4.0.2 There are currently four international bodies concerned with explicitly European security: the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the Western European Union (WEU) and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Appendix One gives brief background details. The future development of these organisations, and the relations between them, are the main topics of this Chapter.

4.0.3 The future of European security institutions needs to be considered against the background of two important developments. First, the continuing evolution of the European Union, a process which Liberal Democrats have consistently supported. We have always argued for the development of a common European foreign and security policy, and welcomed the Treaty of Maastricht, which established it.

4.0.4 Second, the position of the United States of America. The US presence in Europe has been a mainstay of the NATO alliance since it was founded. But now that the threat from the Soviet Union has virtually disappeared, US forces in Europe have been cut back sharply. There are now scarcely

100,000 US troops in Europe, compared to 350,000 in 1989, and Congressional pressure for further reductions is likely. This implies that European nations - in particular Britain, France and Germany - will have to take a greater share of responsibility for their own security. Yet the Atlantic relationship is of great importance to European security, and will become more so if political and economic instability in the former USSR grow worse. Furthermore, the US is now the world's strongest military power, and possesses capabilities in some areas, such as satellite surveillance and long range heavy airlift, well in advance of those of any other country. A US retreat into isolationism - as occurred between the two world wars - cannot be in Europe's interests.

4.0.5 It is impossible to be precise about the future evolution of European security organisations, since this must depend in large part on changing international circumstances. Nevertheless, our objectives in the development of European security can be summed up as follows:

- To encourage the European Union to develop further as an effective political entity.
- To guarantee the defence of Western Europe against any aggressor.
- To enhance the security of the whole of Europe through the provision of economic and technical assistance, the development of political and cultural links and encouragement for the growth of democratic institutions and respect for human rights.
- To provide an effective military framework for the maintenance of security within Europe and to provide a contribution to

global security tasks outside (see Chapter Three).

- To maintain the Atlantic relationship in a form appropriate to the 1990s.

4.1 The European Union

4.1.1 “*Ultimately,*” declared US President Clinton in his speech to the NATO summit in January 1994, “*you will have to decide what sort of Europe you want and how hard you are willing to work for it You have the most to gain from a Europe that is integrated in terms of security, in terms of economics, in terms of democracies.*” For forty years, the European Community, now the European Union, has been at the forefront of that process of integration. One of its proudest achievements has been to make the thought of war between western European states - an event which has convulsed the world twice this century - unthinkable. The further development and enlargement of the EU offers the greatest chance of extending peace and prosperity to the whole of the continent of Europe. Britain’s security is thus directly bound up in the European Union, a fundamental concern which Euro-sceptics ignore.

Britain’s security is directly bound up in the European Union.

4.1.2 That is why Liberal Democrats welcomed the establishment, in the Maastricht Treaty, of a structure for the common European foreign and security policy. We regret, however, its embodiment as one of the three ‘pillars’ of the new European Union, separated from the normal processes - such as scrutiny by the European Parliament and Court of Justice - of the Community. The insistence (chiefly by the British Conservatives) on sticking to old-fashioned, secretive intergovernmental methods has four adverse effects: policy is badly coordinated with the

external relations of the European Community itself; policy proceeds at the level of the lowest common denominator; the main thrust of security policy, while passing away from the control of national parliaments, is not subject to European Parliamentary or other scrutiny; and the ‘three pillar’ structure causes confusion both at home and abroad.

4.1.3 EU indecision and division over Bosnia has revealed the weaknesses of the current set-up. We therefore call for the unifying of the three pillars under the auspices of the normal processes of the European Community at the next Inter-Governmental Conference in 1996. We believe that this will lead to a stronger defence for Europe and greater cost-effectiveness in defence expenditure. The right of individual countries to withhold their forces from out-of-area operations should, of course, be maintained, as it is in NATO. (For further details, see our European themes paper, *Making Europe Work for Us* (1994).)

4.1.4 There are additional steps that must be taken to assist the development of an effective common security policy. First, the provisions of Article 223 of the EC Treaty, which effectively exempt the production of or the trade in arms, munitions and war material from normal Community rules, must be abolished. These matters would thus be subjected to Community discipline on public procurement, among others, with corresponding benefits to transparency and cost-cutting. Furthermore, common analysis of defence requirements within the Union should lead, through cooperation on research and development, to common procurement and improved interoperability. It is absurd, for example, that western European nations currently produce no less than three different models of main battle tank and three advanced fighter aircraft. The rationalisation of the arms industry which is taking place in the US has barely started in Europe, with worrying implications for future competitiveness.

4.1.5 Second, the closer integration - or ‘complementarity’ - of European armed forces, a move which is long overdue. The Pleven

proposal of 1952 for a European Defence Community came close to being adopted; the creation of the WEU in its current form was its eventual outcome. The existing Anglo-Dutch amphibious force is an excellent example of integration; the gradually evolving 'Eurocorps', including units from France, Germany, Belgium, Spain and soon, Luxembourg, has potential; and there have been further proposals, including the Italian-Spanish idea of a 'Eurocorps South'. Integration may imply specialisation, with various nations taking the lead in areas such as air defence, naval power, or armour, for example. The development of a European framework for such multinational forces is dealt with in Section 4.2, and the role of British forces within these structures in Chapter Seven.

4.1.6 The third dimension to European integration is burden sharing. In 1993, compared to the average WEU defence budget of 2.6% of GDP, Britain spent almost 50% more, 3.8% (though part of this is due to the security needs of Northern Ireland; see Chapter Seven), and its forces have been prominent in UN operations in Bosnia. Conversely, Britain has contributed little to economic assistance for Central and Eastern Europe, compared to, for example, Germany. As the common European foreign and security policy develops, there will be a corresponding need for the creation of joint financial arrangements so that no one country bears a disproportionate share of the costs of European security, broadly defined.

4.1.7 Unless the economies of Eastern and Central Europe are rapidly rebuilt to provide jobs and incomes, economic collapse, poverty and deprivation will lead to migration at best and dangerous instability at worst. Investment in economic and technical assistance, the lowering of trade barriers and the development of association agreements with the new democracies are some of the best ways for western Europe to guarantee its own security - and to help revive its own economies. This topic is dealt with in more detail in *Making Europe Work for Us*.

4.2 NATO and WEU

4.2.1 The justification for the establishment of NATO was the containment of the Soviet Union, an objective which it achieved successfully and peacefully. NATO has reacted imaginatively to the post-cold war world, forging new institutional links with its former opponents on security issues. The North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), created in 1991, has helped to develop cooperation with former Warsaw Pact members and former Soviet republics on security issues. The 1994 'Partnership for Peace' programme is designed to expand and intensify political and military cooperation, including joint training exercises, in a flexible way, adapting to individual countries' wishes. Steps are being taken to facilitate the composition of 'combined joint task forces' (CJTFs) from different national contingents - including elements from non-NATO members - to serve under mobile commands for specific peace enforcement and other operations.

4.2.2 We welcome and support these developments. Nevertheless, NATO must continue to evolve. The main factor to which it must respond in the short- and medium-term is the likely continuing reduction in the US contribution to European defence. Our vision of the future structure of NATO is of a looser 'two pillar' alliance of North America and Europe, with each partner exercising rights of independent action. When completed, the work being done to facilitate the composition of CJTFs will make evolution along these lines much easier. In addition, the North Atlantic Assembly, which comprises MPs from member countries, should play an enhanced role in linking NATO decisions to national parliaments.

4.2.3 Within this framework, NATO will continue to fulfil three main roles:

- The guarantee of borders of all NATO members against attack.
- The further building of bridges to former Warsaw Pact countries, helping them to

- develop the capability of their armed forces for joint operations.
- The provision of an integrated military command and effective forces for peace enforcement purposes within Europe or outside (see Chapter Three).

4.2.4 Links between NATO and the WEU on the hand, and between WEU and the European Union on the other, have steadily been growing. The NATO Summit in January 1994 agreed that CJTFs should be able to operate not only under NATO auspices but also under the WEU, while still calling on calling on NATO communications systems and command facilities. Effectively, therefore, the WEU has become the ‘European pillar’ of NATO just as, under the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty, it has been nominated as the ‘defence personality’ of the European Union.

4.2.5 We therefore wish to see WEU acting as the crucial bridge between NATO and the European Union, particularly as US withdrawal places a greater responsibility on the European members of NATO for European security. In the short term, the WEU must become more operational, becoming an effective coordinated command structure for European forces. In 1998, the Treaty of Brussels establishing the WEU comes up for renewal. We believe that the EU’s 1996 Inter-Governmental Conference should resolve to absorb the WEU within the structures of the new European Union, allowing the EU to take over the WEU’s functions. At the same time the EU must develop an effective decision-making structure for common security policy within the Union.

We wish to see WEU acting as the crucial bridge between NATO and the European Union.

4.2.6 The implications of EU enlargement for European security must be considered. Enlargement to the EFTA countries of Finland, Sweden, Norway and Austria will bring the borders of the EU for the first time next to those of Russia. Only one of these four is currently a NATO member, but an attack on an EU member state would nevertheless engage the security concerns of other members very directly. Our long-term objective is to see all members of the European Union (incorporating the WEU) also members of a reformed and remodelled NATO (as described in 4.2.2), with common arrangements for security and defence matters. We recognise, however, that different members of the EU will want to progress towards this objective at different speeds (even among the current members, Denmark and Ireland are only observer members of WEU), and for an interim period there may well be a central core of EU members cooperating in full on security matters with an outer periphery more loosely tied in. Liberal Democrats believe firmly that Britain should play a full role in the central core.

4.2.7 The same arrangements should apply to prospective EU members in Central and Eastern Europe, though on a much longer timescale. It would be absurd to pretend that British security interests are not immediately affected by insecurity in Central and Eastern Europe. The European war into which Britain was pulled in August 1914 erupted over Serbia and Bosnia. The Munich Agreement overrode French and British security pledges to Czechoslovakia in 1938; in 1939 Britain entered the Second World War over Poland.

4.2.8 Central and Eastern European states are understandably concerned about growing nationalism and instability. They are now asking for a broader security framework which will help to stabilise their region which - for the strongest historical reasons, as well as military weight - cannot be provided either by France or Germany alone. It could, however, be offered by the EU as a whole within the framework of NATO. Developments such as NACC and ‘Partnerships for Peace’ offer practical routes for security cooperation, and the recent

accession of nine Central and Eastern European countries as 'associate partners' of WEU is most welcome. We also wish to encourage closer economic links with the EU; along with these mechanisms for security cooperation, this will encourage economic prosperity, political stability and the development of democracy.

4.3 CSCE

4.3.1 Now established as a regional organisation of the United Nations (as Liberal Democrats proposed in 1990), the CSCE has the unique advantage of including all the countries of north America, western and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The corollary of this broad membership is an inability to react quickly and difficulties in reaching consensus; in addition, the organisation is under-staffed and under-funded.

4.3.2 Nevertheless, the CSCE has provided a valuable forum for discussion, and CSCE missions have been active in the prevention and mediation of conflict (notably in the Caucasus), in monitoring tense situations and in developing confidence-building measures and arms control agreements. Liberal Democrats welcome and support these roles. We wish to see a high priority given to the protection of human rights and minorities (we welcome the creation of the post of High Commissioner on National Minorities), and also, and more widely, combating the causes of conflict within states, as well as between them. Working in tandem with a reformed NATO providing military power for peace enforcement and support, the CSCE could well play an important role in the security of the European region, and must be encouraged to do so.

Controlling the Arms Trade

“Every gun that is fired, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in a final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, from those who are cold and are not clothed. The world in arms is not spending money alone - it is spending the sweat of its labours, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.”

US President Eisenhower

5.0.1 For a world beset by poverty and disease, the international arms trade constitutes a great evil. It is particularly tragic that it is so heavily concentrated in the Third World, which buys over 50% of the arms traded each year. The trade constitutes a vicious circle. It is the insecurity of nations which induces them to invest so much of their resources on military expenditure; but the resulting build-up of arms itself threatens peace and increases the feeling of insecurity.

5.0.2 This is particularly true in today's post-cold war world, where reductions in the industrialised countries' arms expenditures have led manufacturers to concentrate on new markets overseas. Many states in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union have found themselves with extensive armaments industries for which there is little domestic demand.

5.0.3 We believe that an international free-for-all in weapons is incompatible with global stability, and a global reduction in the arms trade and the volume of weapons available for use is essential to the reduction of military conflict and interstate tension. The development of effective international controls on the arms trade would be an important contribution to global security.

5.0.4 This does not, however, imply an end to the production and export of weapons. While military threats to nations' security exist, there

will be a continuing need for arms, and there is no reason why domestic manufacturers should not be able to export to allies and to states in legitimate need of self defence. The issues that need to be addressed are how the market is managed, how the major arms producing states can be encouraged to conduct their trade in a responsible and verifiable manner, and how arms manufacturers in nations, such as Britain, which are reducing defence spending can be assisted to convert to peaceful production.

5.0.5 Our general approach is that the sale of arms and of 'dual use' goods and technologies (which have peaceful as well as military uses) to areas of potential or actual tension or to nations failing to adopt democratic institutions or to respect human rights must be strictly controlled. German companies are already barred by law from sales to areas of tension, an example which we wish to emulate. Absolute prohibitions of arms sales, enforced by embargo if necessary, should be imposed on nations in gross breach of international law, especially in the field of human rights.

5.0.6 Similarly, the withdrawal of development aid should be considered from states importing arms other than for defensive purposes, or attempting to export arms themselves. Conversely, more aid should be available for conversion for those states inheriting large arms industries from the cold war period. The Independent Group on Financial Flows to Developing Countries, chaired by former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, has recommended that the future allocation of aid and loans should favour those countries which spend less than 2% of GDP on military capacity - a principle which we support. (See Federal Green Paper 15, *Shared Earth* (1990), for full details of aid policy.)

5.0.7 Since the arms trade is international and since unilateral reductions by one state

may simply lead to other nations replacing their exports with their own, measures will clearly be more effective if they are taken at international level in accordance with agreed and enforceable regulation. We deal in turn with actions that we propose at UN, EU and UK levels.

5.1 Action at UN Level

5.1.1 The UN has an important role to play in controlling the arms trade. We believe that the Register of Conventional Armaments established in January 1992 is a useful first step, and should be strengthened; a verification process should also be established. We believe it would be impractical to make the Register mandatory at this stage, however, as this could have the effect of deterring potential participants. We support the further development of the Register to include military holdings and procurement from national production, and the establishment of regional registers appropriately reflecting local security concerns.

5.1.2 The UN should start work on formulating a set of rules governing arms sales, including the criteria we have set out above in 5.0.5. The UN should also take a leading role in coordinating reductions by the major suppliers, five of the six biggest of which are in fact the permanent members of the Security Council (the other is Germany). As long as the Security Council is dominated by the major arms producing states, however, the vigour with which these measures will be implemented will be internationally viewed with scepticism. Reform of the Security Council, as set out in Chapter Three, is therefore essential to the long term control of the arms trade.

5.2 Action at EU Level

5.2.1 The EU - particularly Britain, France and Germany - is a major arms trader, accounting for 26% of the world trade in 1992. It is disproportionately important in exporting dual-use technologies which could be used in the production of nuclear, biological and

chemical weapons. As a more effective supranational entity than the UN, however, it is also more likely to be able to impose effective controls.

5.2.2 We therefore call for the 1996 Inter-Governmental Conference to amend the Treaty of Rome to extend the EU's competence to include controls on exports of arms and dual use technologies (this requires the abolition of Article 223 of the EC Treaty; see also para 4.1.4). Until that is achieved, we propose:

- The establishment of a European Code of Conduct for the production and selling of arms, which should be widely publicised to enable public understanding of the issues.
- The inclusion in the Code of export guidelines and criteria for the categorisation of importing countries (see 5.0.5) and common lists of arms and dual use technologies subject to regulation.
- EU-wide moves to end government promotion, financial support and export credit insurance for arms exports except for defensive use (as in 5.0.5).

5.2.3 Once EU competence is extended in this way, a mandatory EU register on arms and dual use technology should be established. This should help to encourage the development of the (voluntary) UN register.

5.3 Action at UK Level

5.3.1 The UK has never accepted the need for restrictions on the arms trade. It has instead tried to expand its export trade and has prevented the development of EU competence in this area. The latest (April 1994) Statement on the Defence Estimates boasts of the UK's success in coming second to the US in world arms exports. And as the Scott inquiry into arms sales to Iraq, and the misuse of overseas aid to persuade Malaysia to buy British fighter aircraft have shown, the present Government will stop at little - including misleading Parliament - to encourage further sales. To cite just one example (reported in the *Economist*, 7

May 1994), a large consignment of ammunition was shipped to Jordan six weeks *after* Iraq invaded Kuwait, despite the fact that intelligence sources were well aware that it was bound ultimately for Iraq.

5.3.2 Liberal Democrats do not share this approach. In the first instance, proper Parliamentary scrutiny must be exercised over arms exports, as it is in the US. All aspects of arms exports must be governed by effective guidelines, with the maintenance of a publicly accessible register of applications for arms export licenses and a register of all sales. The Select Committee on Trade and Industry should have a specific remit to monitor arms exports and scrutinise the activities of those government departments and private sector companies involved in the arms trade. In due course this area should become subject to EU legislation (see Section 5.2).

***Proper Parliamentary scrutiny
must be exercised over arms
exports.***

5.3.3 Secondly, the value of the arms industry to the UK economy itself is increasingly coming under question. It is certainly an important sector; the defence industry employs over half a million workers. However, it also consumes substantial amounts of public subsidy, through R&D provision, funds for tools and technology, paying for promotion and marketing of weapons, the provision of export credits and insurance and linkage to aid to developing countries, chiefly through the Aid-Trade Provision (on which a recent Overseas Development Administration study commented that “*very few real economic benefits for the UK economy as a whole appear to have been realised in practice*”). It is estimated that government subsidies to the arms industry represent about 30% of the total cost of their products.

5.3.4 The defence industry does not operate, in general, in a normal commercial environment, resulting in often substantial inefficiencies, cost overruns and delays. There is little spin-off between military and civilian sectors and due to the disproportionate investment in military R&D the military sector is increasingly seen as a drag on the civilian. Though an effective arms industry is clearly necessary for the security needs of Britain and its allies, a *large* military sector is *not* required for a successful economy; Japan is a good example of a state that has created and maintained a strong and efficient high tech industrial base without one.

5.3.5 We believe that UK government support for the arms industry is excessively high and should be reduced. In particular:

- The Public Accounts Committee of the House of Commons should investigate and analyse government subsidies to the arms industry with emphasis on value-for-money criteria and the knock-on effects for other industrial sectors.
- All companies should be required to publish in their annual accounts the amount invested in R&D, the breakdown between civilian and military production and the level of government subsidy received.
- Coordination of UK policy for the control of the arms trade, including UK arms exports, should become the explicit responsibility of a Minister of State in the Department of Trade & Industry, with an office separated from the DTI’s export promotion activities.

5.3.6 Government must ensure that resources released from reductions in defence spending and the defence industry are used in assisting the transition of the arms industry into productive use in the civilian sector. The present Government’s belief that the market will take care of this is misplaced, as is demonstrated almost daily by the scale of job losses in the defence industries.

5.3.7 The development of arms conversion techniques, and advice with their application are clearly necessary, and should be provided by the DTI and the Ministry of Defence working closely together. In previous papers, we have proposed the establishment of an Arms Conversion Agency to carry out this task, and also to provide support to enable arms manufacturers to convert out of the business. In practice, this may simply lead to subsidising some companies to compete with civilian counterparts; we now believe that the general support for innovation and new product development that we propose elsewhere (see Federal Green Paper 21, *Science and Survival* (1991)), will be adequate. High quality training should also be provided for military personnel leaving the armed forces. If such conversion is achieved successfully, the net effect on the economy should be positive, with higher levels of employment and of GDP than if no reductions are made.

5.3.8 The UK currently spends almost 50% of its government research and development budget on defence R&D, higher than any other Western European country. This over-concentration has hindered the civilian sector, as much specialised defence technology has little applicability outside its own area and because links between the two sectors are poor, due to classification of official information. Against the background of our general commitment to raising UK spending on R&D, we would reduce the proportion devoted to defence, aim to transfer resources from military to civilian sectors and attempt to improve the links between the two.

5.3.9 Finally, the use of defence resources - personnel, machines, research facilities, and so on - for civilian purposes should be encouraged. This covers a wide variety of activities, including disaster relief, development assistance, mine clearing in areas of former conflict, policing marine pollution, and civil or dual use R&D projects.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

6.0.1 International law and custom throughout recorded history prohibited the use in war of weapons of mass destruction, such as poison gas and germ warfare, well before nuclear weapons were invented. Although this prohibition has not always been followed, there are relatively few examples of chemical and biological weapons being used in war; one estimate is ten authenticated examples this century, out of a total of several hundred wars - though this does include large scale use of poison gas in World War One.

6.0.2 Nuclear weapons have not been used in war since Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Now that the cold war has ended, we are able to take a fresh look at the place - if any - of any weapon of mass destruction in British security policy. A related topic is the control of their proliferation. Arms control treaties to prohibit or limit the use, possession, production, testing and trade in such weapons are already in force or are being negotiated at present.

6.1 Chemical and Biological Weapons

6.1.1 The 1925 Geneva Protocol prohibits the use of both chemical and biological weapons; the 1972 Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention eliminates the possession of biological weapons; and the recently-agreed 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention aims to eliminate completely the possession of chemical weapons. The Convention seems to provide a model for future arms control measures in its universality and comprehensiveness. The Convention will apply universally to all chemicals in all signatory countries and it has a thorough verification regime acting in liaison

with national authorities through the new Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to be set up in The Hague.

6.1.2 Britain rightly possesses no chemical or biological warfare capability. While the UK is a signatory of all three treaties, it still has to incorporate the appropriate provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention into UK law and then to ratify it. We call upon the President of the Board of Trade (the responsible minister) to introduce enabling legislation as soon as possible so that the UK can become an original party to the Convention.

6.2 Nuclear Non-Proliferation

6.2.1 In the case of nuclear weapons the principal treaties involving the UK are the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty, banning nuclear tests everywhere except underground, and the 1970 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The UK (together with the US and USSR) is a depositary state for both. The extension of the NPT is due discussion at the New York conference in April 1995. Negotiations in the UN Conference on Disarmament on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTB) opened on 25 January 1994 in Geneva. A Fission Cut-off Convention, aiming to prevent any further production of highly enriched uranium and plutonium which can be used in weapons, is also being discussed in parallel.

6.2.2 The NPT establishes a regime, monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, to ensure that nuclear facilities in non-nuclear weapons states are not used for the production of nuclear weapons. It legitimises the possession (although not necessarily the use) of nuclear weapons by the five nuclear weapons states

(US, UK, Russia, France and China). In effect, it assists the proliferation of nuclear weapons by the weapon states; Article I of the Treaty allows the US and former USSR to stockpile nuclear weapons in Europe and to transfer them to allied forces of other countries for training purposes, provided that the weapons remain under control of the nuclear weapons state. It also allows the continuation of the transfer of nuclear design information and nuclear materials between the UK and US.

6.2.3 Article VI of the NPT, which requires all nuclear weapons states to negotiate in good faith both to eliminate the nuclear arms race and eventually achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, tends to be forgotten. The NPT has thus in practice become a highly discriminatory treaty, placing all sorts of restrictions on non-weapons states but very few restrictions or obligations on nuclear weapons states.

6.2.4 Nevertheless, in spite of its inherent weaknesses the NPT has very usefully paved the way for future arms control treaties, chiefly by the inclusion of the verification procedure monitored by the IAEA. This procedure now covers most civil activity in nuclear materials and forms the basis for the verification procedure adopted by the Chemical Weapons Convention. Liberal Democrats therefore support an indefinite extension to the NPT. The verification process should be strengthened further, with greater powers for intrusive on-site inspection by the IAEA, including special inspection for undeclared activities. There must also be a significant increase in the IAEA's budget devoted to safeguarding if this regime is to be made fully effective.

6.2.5 Only by being committed to a comprehensive and universal regime which applies to all signatories, such as is the case where chemical and biological weapons are concerned, can Britain hope to influence the policy of 'threshold' weapons states. Liberal Democrats, therefore, fully support the aims of Article VI of the NPT, with its requirement on nuclear weapons states to negotiate to end the nuclear arms race with the ultimate aim of a nuclear weapons free world. In this way

nuclear weapons would join chemical and biological weapons as being weapons of mass destruction, the possession of which is banned under international law. This is clearly a long term goal. Nevertheless, some eminent strategists see this goal of a nuclear free world as having important security benefits and of being achievable within 20-30 years. The security benefits of a nuclear-free world, as opposed to a world where some states retain a minimal force of nuclear weapons, should be studied by military planners and strategic thinkers as a matter of urgency.

6.2.6 In light of the 1995 NPT conference, the most powerful non-proliferation measure would be the successful negotiation of a CTB allied to the indefinite extension of the NPT. In Lord Carrington's words of 1982, "*a CTB is important for two reasons. First it will curb the development of new and more destructive nuclear warheads, thereby curtailing this aspect of competition in strategic weapons. Secondly it would demonstrate our good faith towards those countries which under the NPT have formally surrendered the right to develop nuclear weapons The countries which have signed the NPT expect the nuclear weapon states to seek an end to nuclear testing*".

6.2.7 The achievement of a CTB is especially important since the breakup of the USSR. The western nuclear powers need to demonstrate by actions, not just words, that they see no value in the possession of large stocks of nuclear weapons and continuing nuclear weapon development programmes if they are to persuade the successor states of the former USSR to relinquish the nuclear weapons on their territories.

6.2.8 The CTB treaty - which we would like to see ready for signature in time for the NPT extension conference in April 1995 - will be a comprehensive and universal treaty along the lines of the new Chemical Weapons Convention. No signatory will be allowed to explode a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device. There will be a strong verification system, possibly with the IAEA in charge. The UK Government has finally been

pressured by the US into proceeding with the talks. Liberal Democrats call for the negotiations on a verifiable CTB to be concluded as soon as possible.

6.2.9 Nuclear proliferation can also be discouraged through limiting the availability of nuclear weapons material. This is the aim of the Fission Cut-Off Convention currently under discussion, but further steps can be taken. We propose:

- An agreement to end production of plutonium for weapon purposes and highly enriched uranium for any purpose.
- An agreement to store plutonium already separated in internationally-recognised sites under international supervision.
- No support for British Nuclear Fuels Ltd's expansion of plutonium separation, and for its plans to introduce mixed uranium-plutonium fuel into the civil fuel cycle; at present plutonium is not used in commercial nuclear reactors and it should not be introduced. Liberal Democrats have consistently opposed BNFL's plans for the THORP reprocessing plant.

6.2.10 One further measure which would be useful both to deter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to help enforce arms control agreements would be to develop in WEU a satellite surveillance programme for these purposes. France can provide the launch vehicles and Britain can provide much of the required instrumentation. Such a possibility is currently being discussed (for other reasons as well), and we call for its early implementation. Information acquired through these means should be available to our proposed UN Information Agency (see 3.1.1).

6.2.11 Finally, the decommissioning of nuclear weapons under existing arms control agreements is a difficult problem, particularly for the states of the former Soviet Union. Generous financial and technical assistance should continue to be made available from the West for this purpose.

6.3 Nuclear Weapons

6.3.1 The UK is already committed to a world free of chemical and biological weapons. Unfortunately, similar principles do not yet apply to nuclear weapons. Britain's position is currently based on the principles that nuclear weapons deter aggression by potentially unfriendly states and that the possession of nuclear weapons should be restricted to the five original nuclear weapon states. Clearly this argument will not be able to persuade other states such as India, Pakistan and Israel to renounce their nuclear weapons.

6.3.2 Liberal Democrats do not share this approach; we call for further negotiations to reduce and if possible eventually eliminate holdings of nuclear weapons by the five recognised nuclear weapons states. We have called consistently for the UK to be ready to enter negotiations to reduce its own nuclear weapon stockpile, in line with its obligations under Article VI of the NPT. In the current international climate, such talks have an even better chance of success. We therefore reiterate our proposal for a new round of talks covering strategic nuclear weapons, following the START II Treaty, which involve the UK, France and China as well as the US and Russia, to be held as soon as the CTB negotiations are completed.

6.3.3 We also call for the negotiation on a regional basis of nuclear cooperation arrangements, between, for example, India and Pakistan, or Egypt, Israel and Syria. Such regional arrangements would be important steps in the building of mutual confidence between states which are currently driven by fear of each other. The UK, together with its European partners, should initiate discussions with the states concerned in order to establish the preconditions for such negotiations, and the EU, through Euratom, should offer specialised help with the safeguarding of the relevant nuclear facilities.

6.3.4 While other states possess nuclear weapons, however, Britain should continue to deploy a minimal nuclear force. Our underlying

principle is that its threat of use must accord, as far as possible, with customary international law. The only possible way in which this criterion can be satisfied is in self defence as a deterrent against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In that case, the use must always be proportional and not directed at civilian targets.

6.3.5 Only if the nuclear weapons states proclaim that nuclear weapons have no military value (except in the last resort as a deterrent against nuclear attack) can they expect the non-weapon-states party to the NPT to continue with that status in an extended treaty. If the UK proclaims the virtues of flexible response involving nuclear weapons as its military strategy, other states cannot be expected to take it seriously on non-proliferation issues. Britain should therefore announce, at the NPT Extension Conference in 1995, that its nuclear weapons will never be used except in response to a clear nuclear threat and against military targets.

6.3.6 As long as Britain possesses nuclear weapons, therefore, we believe that their deterrent purpose should be strategically as a weapon of last resort against nuclear attack, and sub-strategically to protect British or WEU/NATO forces from nuclear attack. The Trident submarine force, shortly to enter service, can adequately fulfil both strategic and sub-strategic roles, given its capability of accurate targeting of single warheads. We therefore believe that the only other British nuclear weapons, the WE 177 free-fall bombs, should be withdrawn (and not replaced with any other system) when Trident becomes operational.

6.3.7 Before the decision to replace the current Polaris submarine force with Trident was taken, we opposed the purchase of Trident as an unacceptable and unnecessary escalation of firepower. Circumstances have proved us right, but it is too late now to reverse the decision. Given the current international climate, however, the Trident force can function at a lower level of readiness than the present Government plans.

6.3.8 The four Trident submarines, therefore, should not be equipped, when deployed, with a greater number of warheads than at present are deployed on Polaris, however many that may be - a maximum of 192 as opposed to the Trident maximum of 384 quoted by the Government. Given the international situation, and also the accuracy and capability of Trident, whether even the present level of capability will still be needed to assure the security of the United Kingdom should also be open to review. It may well be possible that an appropriate level of minimum deterrence can be provided by a reduction below even the number of warheads currently deployed on Polaris. A greater degree of integration in nuclear weapons policy - covering such matters as patrolling - between the UK and France is also desirable; we welcome the current negotiations with France.

6.3.9 We further believe that the number of warheads deployed should be stated explicitly and be open to independent verification. The Government's refusal to do this damages the cause of non-proliferation. We support the German proposal for a Nuclear Weapons Register as an extension of the UN Register of Conventional Armaments (see 5.1.1).

UK Defence Policy

7.0.1 Defence policy, as we have identified before (see 2.1.2) must be subordinate to the wider aims of foreign policy. Recognising this, we can identify three key aims for UK defence policy:

- The defence of the UK and its overseas territories against perceived threats, internal and external.
- A contribution to European defence (see Chapter Four).
- A contribution to UN and other global peace enforcement operations (see Chapter Three).

7.0.2 Defence policy also has to be determined within the wider context of economic policy; total defence expenditure must be maintained within the capabilities of the economy. Throughout the postwar period, Britain has spent on average significantly more than its western European neighbours on defence, at some cost to its overall economic performance.

7.0.3 British defence expenditure has been falling, however, since its high point under the Thatcher Government in 1984-85; by 1994-95, it will have been cut by 26% in real terms. Yet the Treasury and the Ministry of Defence have completely failed to coordinate this process. Too much has been expected of the forces provided (leading to 'overstretch'); too little is supplied for the forces raised (leading to 'hollowed out forces'); and more money is promised in forward projections than is in fact produced. The Government's 1991 *Options for Change* exercise was supposed to reduce forces to the point where, in future, they could be properly paid, equipped, supplied, housed and trained within the sums of money realistically available. Budgetary pressures led almost

immediately to the abandonment of this aim and to the same problems as before.

7.0.4 This process must end. Reductions in the total size of the regular armed forces are only acceptable as long as the core forces that remain are properly equipped and supplied. In the short term at least, the need for British troops is likely to be for relatively small but well-trained and well-equipped forces for peace enforcement purposes: the third of the three roles we identify above. Contributions to the first and second roles can usefully be made by forces at a lower state of readiness - including reserve and Territorial Army units - provided that the capability of regenerating them into fully operational units should the international situation worsen is retained. In addition to making more rational use of resources, this process would also help to reduce international tension.

7.0.5 The remainder of this Chapter sets out some of the implications this could have for the British armed forces. What is needed is a systematic examination of security needs in the light of changing circumstances. This differs from the Government's present approach in two ways. First, it would be comprehensive and coordinated, not piecemeal. Second, it would be carried out in concert with Britain's European allies; the UK's defence policy can *only* be formulated within the overall context of European security. It is notable that the most recent French and German defence white papers were drawn up together; it is regrettable that the UK played no part in this exercise.

7.0.6 The overall direction of security policy also need to be considered. The ability of government to coordinate a comprehensive security policy incorporating foreign and defence objectives (see Section 2.1) needs to be improved. The ability of the Cabinet Office to lead a strategic planning process and subject

the different Departments' proposals to coherent and continual external scrutiny should be enhanced. Ministerial responsibilities also need to be reviewed, with the aim of ensuring that defence policy is set firmly within the wider context.

7.1 Home Defence

7.1.1 National defence commitments include support for the civil power, fishery protection, and so on. The major commitment currently is Northern Ireland, which accounts for 12 regular infantry battalions (12,000 troops): six resident and six on six-month roulement; and a further six battalions comprising the home service element of the Royal Irish Regiment. This compares with a pre-1969 level of three or four resident battalions. As such it is a major drain on resources, and alone requires a higher level of defence spending than would otherwise be the case. A lasting political settlement could have a substantial impact, allowing the UK, if it chose, to reduce its defence spending to nearer the European average, or to increase its commitment to UN peace enforcement operations. (Liberal Democrat proposals are set out in Policy Paper 4, *A New Deal for Northern Ireland* (1994).)

7.1.2 Britain currently maintains three major overseas defence commitments: Hong Kong, Cyprus and the Falklands. The first will come to an end in 1997, but we believe that there are further possibilities for reductions in the resources needed for the other two. The Cyprus commitment is a prime candidate for the 'burden sharing' argument we advance above (see 4.1.6).

7.1.3 The Falklands provides a more difficult case. The long term security of the Islands will clearly depend on agreement with Argentina, and the UK should continue to make efforts to reach one. When one is successfully negotiated, however, the troop commitment can be scaled down. A peaceful resolution to this problem has wider implications for defence spending, since the Falklands provides probably the only foreseeable scenario in which the Royal Navy might be involved in a major

war without military support from other nations. The present deterrent deployment to the Islands places a considerable strain on existing resources.

7.2 European Defence

7.2.1 The shape of future military challenges in this area will clearly be very different from those of the recent past; with the withdrawal of the last Russian troops from Germany, the old rationale for keeping large forces (including substantial amounts of armour) in Germany will have disappeared. There is clearly substantial scope for changes in the structure and deployment of UK armed forces, carried out in conjunction with Britain's European neighbours - most importantly France and Germany - within the context of the developments in NATO and WEU which we propose in Chapter Four.

Defence policy must be set firmly within the wider context of foreign policy.

7.2.2 Government needs to consider what kind of armed forces will be best able to meet the challenges of the future. Unless Russia both recovers economically and militarily and adopts a consistently hostile foreign policy approach - of which there would be substantial warning time - no identifiable military threat to the West now exists from any major industrialised power. The adversaries of the future are likely to be smaller and more localised, will probably lack any significant 'blue water' naval strength and will almost certainly lag far behind in overall technological capability. Nevertheless, it is important not to underestimate the potential dangers to security.

7.2.3 The current major role of British armed forces has been the commitment to NATO's Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC), most of which is

stationed in Germany; by the late 1990s, half the British Army is due to be components of the ARRC. This emphasis, we believe, is misguided, primarily because Germany is no longer threatened by potentially hostile land and air power as it was a few years ago. What is more likely to be needed are lighter, strategically mobile forces for international peace enforcement (see Section 7.3) and out-of-theatre operations generally. A major task of the Royal Navy and the RAF becomes to transport, supply and support these units.

7.2.4 We therefore wish to see British armed forces reshaped to meet these new security needs. The ARRC formations must be made fully interoperable with the rapidly developing Eurocorps (see 4.1.5) to provide an effective European defence role. We welcome the Defence Secretary's recent decision to consider making more military assets available to the WEU in the future, and urge him to go further. In this context, we would welcome higher visibility for the German troops currently training in Britain; European security must be, and must be seen as, a EU-wide shared commitment, rather than a scenario in which British troops have to be based in Germany.

7.2.5 If this approach is accepted, it carries a number of implications for UK armed forces. First, the roles of those allocated primarily to defence against the former Soviet threat need to be reassessed. This is particularly relevant to the RAF's air defence forces, the role of the Royal Navy in the North Atlantic, the army's armoured forces, and the number of the new Eurofighter 2000 multi-role aircraft needed for the RAF. Second, as long as the quality and technological edge of UK troops can be maintained, it may be possible for the size of the armed forces needed for the collective defence role to be further reduced. Third, as overall size is reduced, it must make sense for the gradual process of the closer integration of European armed forces to be speeded up; see 4.1.5 above.

7.3 International Peace Enforcement

7.3.1 Chapter Three sets out our commitment to the further development of United Nations peacekeeping and peacemaking capabilities, including the need for member nations' forces to be assigned on an annual basis and available at minimum notice, and the desirability of relying more on regional security organisations such as NATO. This area will, we believe, be an increasingly important task for armed forces, and the present Government's relegation of it to a secondary role is indefensible.

7.3.2 The kind of forces needed for international peace enforcement are those possessing the capability to move to a crisis area very quickly. Light armour and airmobile troops, possibly deployed in battalion groups with organic logistical support, will be more important in this role than large armoured formations. UK armed forces have many advantages in this area, which should be built upon. British commando, parachute and special forces are among the best in the world, and should be maintained together with appropriate transport. The 'blue water' capability of the Royal Navy is also likely to be valuable. British instructors are proving themselves highly effective at training new armies - in, for instance, South Africa - and we wish to see this continue in emerging democracies.

7.3.3 A further area for examination is the possibility of using civilian airliners for force projection. The RAF's entire air transport fleet is currently only sufficient to lift one light armour battalion. In the US, many civilian airliners, mainly Boeing 747s, have been converted so that they can be requisitioned in wartime and rapidly converted from a passenger-carrying configuration to a cargo-carrying one. This is a relatively inexpensive way to make a huge difference to air transport capability.

7.4 Defence Spending

7.4.1 The level of UK defence spending is currently higher than almost all other European states as a proportion of GDP: 3.8% in 1993 compared to a WEU average of 2.6%. This has fallen from a peak of 5.3% in 1984, and is due to fall further to 3.2% in 1995. In real terms, this represents a cut of 26% in total spending between the mid-80s and the mid-90s. Military personnel will fall from 326,000 to 244,500 over the same period. These reductions are similar in magnitude to most of Britain's allies other than France, which is currently undergoing substantial re-equipment to rectify deficiencies revealed in the Gulf War.

7.4.2 *Reshaping Europe* stated our belief (in 1990) that given a continuation of the improvement in international relations caused by the end of the cold war, success in a number of further disarmament negotiations that we proposed, and genuine progress towards a common foreign and security policy in Europe, a 50% reduction in total UK defence spending by the year 2000 might be possible. This paper was written at probably the most optimistic point in international relations, following the liberation of Eastern Europe but before the Soviet coup attempt or the wars in the former Yugoslavia. For these reasons, we argued in 1992 that any reduction in spending could only proceed after a reduction of commitments. Our general election manifesto called for “*a comprehensive review of UK defence policy which will be dictated by a rigorous analysis of defence needs rather than by fixed monetary targets*”. The Government's own policies on spending have changed with changing circumstances, as successive Defence White Papers have made clear.

7.4.3 In the long term, it cannot be in Britain's interest to continue to spend a higher proportion of GDP on defence than its economic competitors. This is one of the reasons why we stress the coordinated European approach to security, including the establishment of a common European policy for arms procurement (see 4.1.4), the integration of European armed forces (4.1.5) and the development of burden sharing agreements (4.1.6). If *domestic* circumstances changed drastically - for example, if the problems of Northern Ireland or the Falklands were successfully resolved - then it may be possible to review overall levels of UK defence expenditure, depending, of course, on the international situation at the time and Britain's international obligations.

7.4.4 The historic trend of UK defence spending since the mid 1950s has been to remain roughly constant in real terms - ie falling gradually as a percentage of GDP. In the circumstances of 1994, with growing demands for UN peace enforcement missions and the continuing need for home security, and against the background of the reductions in defence spending already made and planned, we believe that it is now appropriate to return to this overall trend and aim to maintain defence spending in real terms. However, as we recognised in Chapter One, the post-cold war world is a highly uncertain place, and it is entirely possible that the international position may change rapidly. Demands for peace enforcement forces around the world seem likely to continue to rise, and the stability of the former Soviet republics is far from guaranteed. If the international situation worsens so as to threaten European security, we believe that Europe must be prepared to accept the need for an increase in its defence spending.

Appendices

1 International Institutions

Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe

The CSCE comprises 53 participating states, including all European countries, all the former Soviet republics, Turkey, the USA and Canada. Its role centres around the prevention of conflict. Since the 1992 Helsinki Summit, the CSCE has extended its role, taking on crisis management and peacekeeping tasks in addition to its traditional functions in the security field of developing confidence-building measures and arms control agreements. To carry out the new tasks, the CSCE has become established as a regional organisation of the United Nations and has created more formal institutions.

CSCE missions are active in several of the former republics of the Soviet Union and in Macedonia, and have been crucial in helping to prevent renewed conflict in Georgia. The 1993 CSCE Rome Council of Ministers agreed that tackling the root causes of conflict was a priority; it recommended strengthening the CSCE's crisis prevention and management role in the areas of early warning and preventive diplomacy. The protection of human rights and minorities remains a priority, drawing for the latter on support from the CSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities. The CSCE's Forum for Security Cooperation concentrates on exchanges of defence planning information, a programme of military contacts and cooperation, stabilising measures for localised crisis situations and principles governing conventional arms transfers.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NATO has 16 members: all EU member states other than Ireland, Iceland, Norway, Turkey, Canada and the USA. It is built around a structure for political consultation, assignment of forces and an integrated command. Created to guarantee the collective defence of Western Europe, NATO adopted in November 1991 a new 'Strategic Concept' placing increased emphasis on the Alliance's political dimension and crisis management. Resources and expertise have been offered to support peacekeeping and humanitarian operations overseen by both the UN and the CSCE.

In December 1991 the North Atlantic Cooperation Council was established, comprising the foreign ministers of the NATO, former Soviet and Central and Eastern European countries. Dialogue and cooperation take place within the Council on political and security-related issues, including, since December 1992, peacekeeping operations.

The Brussels Summit of January 1994 marked an important step in NATO's evolution. It welcomed the development of the WEU as the defence component of the EU; endorsed the concept of Combined Joint Task Forces (see 4.2.1 and 4.2.4) to enable NATO to reflect the emergence of a European security and defence identity and to enable it to undertake new missions such as peacekeeping and humanitarian operations; and launched the 'Partnership for Peace' programme (see 4.2.1 and 4.2.8).

Western European Union

The entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty enabled the WEU to take on fully the role of responding to EU requests having defence implications. The WEU comprises all the EU member states other than Ireland and Denmark, which are observer members. Iceland, Norway and Turkey (the European members of NATO outside the EU) are associate members with the right to participate fully in WEU activity, and in May 1994 nine Central and Eastern European countries (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) became 'associate partners', attending WEU meetings and entitled to participate in WEU peacekeeping operations and military manoeuvres.

The WEU is also seen as a means of strengthening the European pillar of the NATO Alliance. In June 1992, the decision was taken to identify military units for use by WEU when not required for NATO tasks. These are currently the 'Eurocorps' (see 4.1.5), the NATO Multinational Division (Central), to which the UK, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands contribute troops, and the UK-Netherlands Amphibious Force. WEU has provided naval forces in the Adriatic to enforce the UN arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia.

2 UK Armed Forces

Sources: mostly *Defending Our Future* (HMSO, Cm 2270, July 1993) and *Statement on the Defence Estimates* (HMSO, Cm 2550, April 1994)

Defence Expenditures compared, selected NATO countries 1993:

Country	Total exp (US \$m)	Exp per capita (US \$)	Exp as % of GDP
France	42593	738	3.4
Germany	38629	481	2.0
Italy	21185	365	2.1
Spain	7211	183	1.5
UK	35257	608	3.8
USA	293741	1142	4.7

Changes in UK Armed Forces

The following table indicates changes in troop strengths from 1990 to the middle of the decade, under both the previous Options for Change plans, and under current plans. It is not exhaustive.

		Projected for 1995		Current plans
		1990 actual	'Options for Change', 1991	
Navy				
Nuclear-powered submarines	14	12	12	
Conventional submarines	10	4	0	
Destroyers/frigates	44	40	35	
Mine-protection ships	38	34	25	
Army				
Infantry battalions	55	38	41	
Armoured regiments	13	8	8	
Air Force				
Tornado F3 interceptors	92	122	92	
Tornado strike aircraft	148	112	90	

UK Defence Policy Areas: Gross Costs

The following table indicates the gross expenditure attributable to particular policy areas defined by the current Government. The total nominal expenditure comes to just under double the actual spending level because of 'multiple earmarking', assigning forces to several tasks on the assumption that not every contingency will have to be met at once.

Policy Area	Gross Costs (£m, 1993-94)
Nuclear deterrent	3900
Security and integrity of UK in peacetime	1500
Northern Ireland	1600
Dependent territories - peacetime deployments	700
Dependent territories - reinforcement	5100
NATO reaction forces	9700
NATO main defence forces	6500
NATO augmentation forces	1400
Regional security - peacetime activities and deployments	3700
Regional security - intervention capability	8300
Miscellaneous tasks	700
Total	43100

This Paper has been approved for debate by the Federal Conference by the Federal Policy Committee under the terms of Article 5.4 of the Federal Constitution. Within the policy-making procedure of the Liberal Democrats, the Federal Party determines the policy of the Party in those areas which might reasonably be expected to fall within the remit of the federal institutions in the context of a federal United Kingdom. The Party in England, the Scottish Liberal Democrats and the Welsh Liberal Democrats determine the policy of the Party on all other issues, except that any or all of them may confer this power upon the Federal Party in any specified area or areas. If approved by Conference, this paper will form the policy of the Federal Party.

Many of the policy papers published by the Liberal Democrats imply modifications to existing government public expenditure priorities. We recognise that it may not be possible to achieve all these proposals in the lifetime of one Parliament. We intend to publish a costings programme, setting out our priorities across all policy areas, closer to the next general election.

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Note: Membership of the Working Group should not be taken to indicate that every member necessarily agrees with every section or every proposal in this Paper.

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