

## **British Defence Secretary's talk on 'Strategic Defence and Security Review' at VIF**

**22 November 2010**

The United Kingdom is committed to an enhanced partnership with India – one that celebrates and recognises India's position as a central player in contemporary world affairs.

Yes, we have long historical connections. Yes, we have strong ties between our peoples. But as the Indian thinker Kautilya wrote: 'There is some self-interest behind every friendship. There is no friendship without self-interests'.

Fortunately, we do have over-lapping self-interests, such as in trade and in security, which are a strong basis for our future relationship.

The aim of the Vivekananda International Foundation is to promote a stronger, secure and more prosperous India playing its rightful role in global affairs.

The new British Government supports this aim, and it is why in Opposition we have long supported India's permanent membership of the UN Security Council for a number of years.

Our countries are in the middle of the most intensive political conversation we have had for many years.

In July, our Prime Minister, David Cameron confirmed his respect for, and friendship with, Prime Minister Singh, heading one of the largest delegations from Britain to visit India in recent times.

Our Defence ties are just one part of this, but we are determined to make this an essential part of the relationship.

The UK Chief of the Air Staff attended the successful joint air exercise held here earlier this month.

And over the next six months my visit will be followed by a series of visits by my Ministerial team, the Chief of the Defence Staff and the Head of the British Army and Royal Navy, among others. So you better get used to seeing us here.

In Britain we have just completed the first comprehensive and strategic review of our defence and security requirements for over a decade, and I would like to share some of our conclusions with you today – particularly on the security challenges that we share with India.

### *Necessary Partnership*

From terrorism to climate change, proliferation to energy security, no country acting in isolation can achieve their aims and meet the needs of their national security.

The world is changing, and we must change with it.

In today's world, neither Britain, nor any other country, can afford to emulate the *kupamanduka* of the old Sanskrit texts – the frog who lives his whole life in a small, dark well seeking no enlightenment, shutting out the world, keeping his head down.

Today with our economies linked, our people connected and our interests convergent, threats originating in one part of the globe, can become threats in all parts of the globe and very quickly.

Our approach must be one of necessary and beneficial partnership, not optional isolation. In the world today nations have to be facing outward and forward, not inward and backward.

So the UK National Security Strategy, which underpins our Strategic Defence and Security Review, both published last month, make it clear that our national interest requires our continued full and active engagement in world affairs.

To do so we will use all of our national levers to project power by taking a cross government approach. We will also use our unique network of alliances and relationships, starting with the United States and our partners in Europe, but increasingly with strategic partners across world – including with India here in South Asia.

We recognise that India's interests are not confined to this region, and that India too will need to use her unique international relationships, including her deep-rooted and historic relationship with Britain, to protect and promote her national and international security.

### *Terrorism*

As an example, let's just take the threat from trans-national terrorism.

Five years ago, on honeymoon with my wife, I spent a wonderful few days at the beginning of our honeymoon at the Taj hotel in Mumbai.

Two years ago, almost to the day, that very same hotel was the epicentre of the horrific attacks across the city that killed or wounded over 450 people citizens from over 25 different countries, including Britain.

Like 9/11 in New York and Washington, like the 7/7 suicide attacks on the London transport network – the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai are a stark reminder of the brutality and barbarism of trans-national terrorism.

The UK government has repeatedly emphasised that the perpetrators of the Mumbai attacks should be brought to justice.

Our Prime Minister, David Cameron, has made crystal clear of our country's position.

A stable, democratic, successful Pakistan is in all our long-term best interests.

Our counter-terror strategy includes building on the UK's long-term relationship with Pakistan and continuing to work with the Pakistani Government to tackle all violent extremist groups.

The only way the threat of trans-national terror can be met is through trans-national co-operation.

We wish to ensure that we have learnt all we can from you in countering this type of threat.

To give one example, Britain understands the security challenges India faced with the Commonwealth Games and welcomes your recent success in delivering a safe and secure Games.

We look forward to building on the bilateral security cooperation between our intelligence and police services for the Olympics in London and Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

The UK National Security Strategy judges trans-national terrorism in the highest priority tier of risk.

That is why our Strategic Defence and Security Review continues to prioritise counter-terror action – from policing, to intelligence, from detection to prevention.

Co-operation on counter-terrorism should be a key part of our enhanced strategic partnership.

It goes to the heart of our shared challenges because this shared threat is likely to be with us for some time to come.

### *Lessons of the Cold War*

The struggle against trans-national terrorism is our generation's challenge, just as the Cold War was the previous generation's challenge.

So it is worth reflecting on the strategic lessons from the Cold War.

First, that when our adversaries are driven by an ideology that is in opposition to our own, the battle of ideas will be at least as important as the physical battle.

We can and do act to disrupt terrorist capability.

But the key to lasting success against terrorism is to remove terrorists' underlying motivations – and that is much harder.

You can't shoot an ideology – you have to show why the alternatives are better.

That is why the struggle, as now being played out in the form of a counter insurgency operation in Afghanistan is about people – creating a better alternative for them and not simply killing those who threaten security.

This requires partners determined to stand together with the patience to stay the course, however difficult it becomes.

The second lesson from the Cold War is that economic strength underpins power and influence.

That is why the UK National Security Strategy published last month recognises that economic security and national security are inextricably linked.

The stability and openness of the global financial and trade system is a key part of the security and prosperity shared between partners.

It is no surprise that the attacks of 9/11, 7/7, and 26/11 took place in global financial centres.

The success of free markets and the rule of law, properly regulated both domestically and internationally, bring in their wake development, stability and wealth.

This threatens those who stand in opposition to freedom and liberty and all that flows from them.

On all these issues, the partnership between our two countries and mutual security would be enhanced by deeper co-operation.

This is equally true when it comes to the international campaign to support the Afghan Government in its struggle with the Taliban-led insurgency.

### *Afghanistan*

British Armed Forces are in Afghanistan, first and foremost, to protect our national security by ensuring that trans-national terrorists cannot find safe and unhindered sanctuary there as they did before 9/11.

With around 9,500 troops in Afghanistan, as well as a range of air assets, the UK is the largest troop contributor to the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) after the United States and a leading member of the broad 48 nation NATO-led coalition.

The NATO Summit in Lisbon last weekend set out a clear plan for the transition of lead security responsibility for districts and provinces to be progressively handed over to the Afghan Government. Under this strategy the Afghans will take the lead for security across the country by the end of 2014.

This is why British Forces will be out of a combat role in Afghanistan by 2015.

But that is not, and cannot be, the end of the story.

We will of course be supporting Afghanistan in many ways including reconstruction, aid and through military support and training, for many years to come.

That is why NATO agreed at the Summit to a long-term partnership which will provide a framework for our continued support to the Government of Afghanistan well beyond 2015.

The International community will not abandon Afghanistan again as we did in the early 90's.

Let me be clear, just as terrorism cannot be defeated by force of arms alone, so we recognise that there is no wholly military solution to the insurgency in Afghanistan.

The ultimate solution is a political settlement that preserves Afghanistan's territorial integrity, supports the Afghan Government's ability to preserve its own security, and does not upset the regional security balance.

It is for the Afghan people to shape a political settlement that reflects the needs, culture and aspirations themselves.

Afghanistan will need the support of all its friends and neighbours, including India and Pakistan for years to come.

India is already making a significant contribution to this through its aid programme. The \$1.2 billion India has generously pledged since 2001 to help rebuild Afghanistan makes India the world's 5th largest bilateral donor to Afghanistan. Something the international community is extremely grateful for.

Coalition forces in Afghanistan are neither colonisers nor occupiers.

We are there under United Nations authority at the invitation of the Afghan Government.

We are not in Afghanistan to create a carbon copy of a western democracy, and we are not there to convert the people to western ways.

We insist only that it does not pose a threat to our security, our interests or those of our friends and allies.

*The UK Strategic Defence and Security Review*

The character of the conflict in Afghanistan has informed our thinking on the UK's future defence posture as part of the Strategic Defence and Security Review.

But it has not defined it.

We can never assume that the conflicts of the future will be the same as the conflicts of today.

Afghanistan may be indicative of the asymmetrical nature of the challenges we may face from terrorism or in fragile states, but it is not a blueprint for all future conflict.

Just as the threats we face are in rapid transition, so the character of the conflicts they may produce is in transition.

So in support of the policy framework set out in our strategy, we will pursue an 'adaptable posture' which requires our Armed Forces to become a more flexible and agile force maintaining global reach and capable of providing nuclear and conventional deterrence, but also ready to intervene when required.

We will retain our place among the very top rank of the world's military powers supported by the fourth largest defence budget in the world.

We have a military presence in many of the world's most challenging places and we maintain a global military reach if required.

We judge that asymmetric tactics, such as economic, cyber and proxy actions instead of, or in support of, direct military confrontation will play an increasing part in warfare of the future.

So we will retain a full range of traditional capabilities.

But we will also invest in advanced programmes that will provide flexibility for the future – for example in unmanned and cyberspace technology.

In doing so we will, because we have to, cut back on those things that we are less likely to need in a world where the character of conflict demands precision weaponry.

Our future Royal Navy will be among the most technologically advanced in the world.

Our carrier strike capability operating the carrier variant of the 5th generation Joint Strike Fighter will be designed to be inter-operable with our major NATO partners.

A surface fleet including the Type 45 Destroyer and the Type 26 Global Combat Ship will be supported by seven new nuclear powered hunter killer submarines.

Britain and India share a number of common naval interests including countering piracy – an area where we are both very active.

This was underlined only last week by the MV Orinoco incident when the INS Veer and INS Delhi went to the aid of a merchant ship being attacked by pirates.

We intend to strengthen the excellent naval cooperation that already exists including through doctrine development and the annual KONKAN exercise.

The UK's future Royal Air Force will be configured around a fast jet fleet of Joint Strike Fighter and Typhoon – two of the most advanced aircraft in the world.

The RAF has been working with the Indian Air Force to develop long-term interoperability between our fleets.

I was particularly pleased with the success of the last month's exercise – *Indra Dhanush*.

This joint Exercise including Britain's Typhoons, Indian SU-30s and India's new AWACS aircraft, has helped to improve mutual understanding and the skills of both air forces.

Indeed, the Typhoon has just performed outstandingly in a technical assessment by the Indian Air Force in evaluation trials for your Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft programme.

The future British Army will be consolidated around 5 new self-supporting multi-role Brigades with a wide range of capabilities from infantry to engineers, artillery to intelligence. These are in addition to our two specialist role brigades of Paras and Royal Marines.

We would like to build on the recent company level exercise SHAMSHEER BUGLE which was the first exercise including a British Army Unit in India in over 60 years.

Companies from the UK's 4 Rifles and India's 18th Battalion Sikh Regiment shared experience in counter-insurgency operations.

We hope to host an Indian Army company in the UK next year and are keen to share our experience gained in operations in Afghanistan.

Overall, our Strategic Defence and Security Review ensures we maintain significant military power across the land, sea, air and cyber domains.

Furthermore, it ensures that we maintain the autonomous capacity to sustain a considerable and commanding military force on an enduring basis for both intervention and stabilisation operations almost anywhere in the world.

This ability is benefited from Armed Forces, and the equipment that they use, which is both combat tested and combat proven as a result of high intensity operations in Iraq and more recently in Afghanistan.

### *Conclusion*

In conclusion Ladies and Gentlemen, the relationship between our two countries has never been stronger and defence has a major role to play.

As India's defence transformation gathers pace, we offer practical support to India's efforts to maintain stability in South Asia.

We wish to accelerate the bi-lateral programme of exercises, exchanges, training and equipment co-operation wherever we can.

We believe India matters not just because it is a significant power, but because it is a responsible power as well. The vibrancy and energy of India's people, the dynamism of your economy, the contribution of your thinkers and doers, have placed this country at the centre of our globalised world.

Ours is a partnership based on democratic values, mutual respect, and the shared challenge of the future.

Nehru once said to Nikita Khrushchev 'You don't change the course of history by turning the faces of portraits to the wall'.

Britain and India should not turn our portraits to the wall – we cannot rewrite our shared history – both the good and the bad – but we can forge a new history together.

As India moves forward with confidence, be assured Britain stands with you - as partner and friend.