1. **What do you understand by the term 'modern deterrence'? And how does this differ from the conventional concept of deterrence?**

   - Will the Government’s work on ‘modern deterrence’ be undermined by the lack of firm information about the armed forces’ future capabilities?
   - Which areas of national security policy should be prioritised under the concept of modern deterrence?

   The first question related to the term "modern deterrence". I understand the term to apply to the whole spectrum of deterrence and the need to keep deterrence policy up-to-date in the light of changes in the threats to our national security. Specifically, this would cover:

   - nuclear deterrence policy, in the light of the emergence of what is in effect a new nuclear power in the case of North Korea, and a near-nuclear power in the case of Iran. This would mean developing the statement in the 2015 SDSR: "there is a risk that states might use their nuclear capability to threaten us, try to constrain our decision-making in a crisis or sponsor nuclear terrorism. Recent changes in the international security context remind us that we cannot relax our guard";

   - deterrence by conventional forces, including the return to a policy of forward deployment by UK and other NATO allies to deter Russian adventurism;

   - deterrence of unconventional threats, in particular aggressive cyber attacks which could undermine our national security.

   I do not believe that work on modern deterrence defined on these lines should be limited by lack of certainty about the outcome of the Defence Modernisation Programme in terms of the future capabilities of the Armed Forces. I understand the term to refer more to the policy of deterrence, which would need to be elaborated in consultation with the US and other NATO allies, rather than the precise capabilities needed to implement it successfully.

2. **Should the 2015 NSS & SDSR have discussed the security threats posed by China, Iran and North Korea to the UK in more detail?**

   The second question related to whether the 2015 NSS and SDSR should have discussed the security threats posed by China, Iran and North Korea to the UK in more detail. With hindsight, the documents could no doubt have given more prominence to these specific threats. But I note that at the outset (paragraph 1.11) the SDSR sets out as an objective to "exploit the full spectrum of our capabilities and work with our allies to respond robustly to the re-emergence of state-based threats". Chapter 3 on the national security context has a section on the resurgence of the threats. It concentrates on Russia but refers to other states including North Korea. I would agree that the national security risks posed by certain of China's policies do not figure in the documents (paragraph 5.74 on China does not refer to them). To be fair to the drafters, the evidence of assertive Chinese behaviour in the South China Sea, and scale of their military build-up, has probably become clearer in the last 2 years. However, this point illustrates one of the perennial weaknesses of National Security Strategies. Inevitably, with hindsight, they tend to underestimate the speed at which threats and risks can develop.

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