Submission from the Campaign Against Arms Trade to the Defence Committee's inquiry "Towards the next Defence and Security Review"

1. The Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) in the UK was established in 1974 and works to end the international arms trade. It believes that large scale military procurement and arms exports only reinforce a militaristic approach to international problems.

2. The 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) presents a real opportunity for a break from past policy. Even though most of the threats identified by the 2010 National Security Strategy (NSS) are not military in nature, to date the Government's response has been predominately grounded in military thinking.

3. A strategy based on matching action and resources to the real challenges would bring far greater security than at present, as it would be less likely to exacerbate the threats. As a starting point "security" needs to be disassociated from the military approach, which has, misleadingly, become known as "defence". Resources need to be reallocated to address the problems which underlie insecurity, UK military spending reduced, support for the arms trade ended and overseas military interventions removed as a policy option.

Risks

4. The Annual Report on the NSS and SDSR published in November 2012 looked at the major risks to UK security identified by the 2010 NSS and how far they had materialised during the previous year. Only two of the fifteen risks, or threats, identified involved a military attack by another state on the UK - this, of course, had not happened.

5. Only three other potential threats have any military component at all and force had, thankfully, not been used in response. The other seven are non-military and include cyber attack and terrorism as well as energy security and natural disasters. However, the resources allocated to the threats neither match the severity of the tiers to which they were originally allocated within the NSS nor to their occurrence subsequently. It is impossible to know the future, but this does not justify the overwhelmingly military emphasis of the resource allocation.

6. Global threats stemming from climate change, resource depletion and income inequality would be far more effectively addressed by fully committed, preventative action rather than relying on containing outcomes. National threats such as crime
(including cyber attacks and terrorism) and natural hazards do not require armed forces. The emphasis should be on building-up civil services to more specifically address the identified threats and providing genuinely preventative measures for the wider international threats.

**Pressure for maintaining the status quo**

7. The status quo suits the armed forces and arms companies which can claim new threats to justify their funding. They have successfully argued for military spending of 2% of Gross Domestic Product without explaining how such spending will enhance security. NATO countries which do not reach this spending level are chided.

8. The arms companies and ex-military personnel have an enormous influence on decision-making which it is hard for outsiders to question. This influence comes about, primarily, through the day-to-day contacts involved in procurement for the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and export promotion. These contacts take place at all levels, sometimes formally, sometimes informally. The former includes a plethora of joint government-military industry bodies which typically include Ministers and industry leaders.

9. There is also the stream of former politicians and civil servants who move into private companies - the reports of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments show that many of these are military. According to "The Guardian" (15.10.12), the figures show 231 jobs went to former officials and senior military personnel in 2011-12, a rise from the previous year's total of 101. Over 3,500 jobs had been approved since 1996.

10. The cumulative effect of the movement from the public sector to commercial bodies inevitably reinforces the relationship between the two and predisposes decision-making, by way of their lobbying and contacts, towards solutions that involve spending on military equipment, rather than on non-military alternatives. UK policy is stuck in a rut that is advantageous to the arms companies, but which exacerbates the threats to UK security.

**Exacerbating the threats**

**Intervening militarily**

11. If military action and preparedness continue to be prioritised as a means of addressing problems, it will certainly lead the UK down a path that fosters instability and insecurity. The ventures in Afghanistan and Iraq are appalling illustrations of this. They have resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of civilian lives as well as hundreds of lives of UK military personnel (and thousands more seriously injured), have wasted billions of pounds of taxpayers' money each year, increased the threat of terrorism in the UK, and left governments wondering how to extricate themselves from the mess.

12. Even when the military intervention has ostensibly been undertaken with a view to protecting civilians, such as in Libya, the chaotic outcome leaves a profound insecurity, not only in the country or region concerned, but also provides a breeding ground for terrorist groups with a potential impact on the UK.
Supporting repressive regimes

13. Global peace and security has been undermined as successive UK governments have failed to give consistent support to democratic institutions, and have instead provided backing to authoritarian regimes. The UK has armed several regimes it has subsequently gone to war with. The military interventions against Argentina in the Falklands/Malvinas, Iraq and Libya were costly in human and monetary terms. Campaigners had long pointed out the repressive nature of these regimes, but were ignored as UK governments and military companies continued to pursue arms sales.

14. Even where UK-supplied military equipment is not later used against UK military forces, it does undermine the Government's stated policy on promoting human rights. The Committees on Arms Export Controls (CAEC) July 2012 Report urged the Government to acknowledge that: "there is an inherent conflict between strongly promoting arms exports to authoritarian regimes whilst strongly criticising their lack of human rights at the same time." Unfortunately, the Government did not accept that recommendation.

15. The promotion and sale of UK arms conveys a message of international acceptance and approval. As an example, Saudi Arabia is identified by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as a country of major human rights concern. It is ranked at 163, where the worst country is 167, on the Economist Intelligence Unit's "Democracy Index 2012", which reflected the situation in December 2012. By courting the Saudi Royals to sell arms to Saudi Arabia on behalf of BAE Systems, criticism of its human rights record is muted. This opens the UK to criticisms of hypocrisy and provokes despair among those campaigning for human rights.

16. Some agreements also reinforce the message that military collaboration and arms sales trump human rights. An example is the October 2012 Defence Cooperation Agreement with Bahrain. This has been followed by trips to Bahrain by Foreign Office Minister Alistair Burt and by the Senior Military Advisor to the UK government's arms sales unit. While human rights issues may have been raised by the former visitor, their importance would have been totally undermined by the latter.

Providing excuses for terrorism

17. Close relationships with human rights abusers has led to antagonism to the UK and increased the terrorist threat. A Fatwa issued by Osama bin Laden in 1996 ("Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places") cited corruption in Saudi Arabia and arms purchases by the Saudi government as justifications for the call for a Jihad.

Proliferating nuclear weapons

18. Nuclear weapons threaten the lives of billions. They are immoral. There is no credible threat that they counter. Even if not used, there is a huge opportunity cost. Spending the same amount of money on non-military security as well as the health service, education, the arts, infrastructure and the like would do far more to protect UK citizens' way of life than the spending on nuclear weapons.

19. In addition, attempts by the UK to limit nuclear proliferation are hampered by the UK's retention and renewal of its nuclear weapons. To renew Trident, for example, invites the charge of hypocrisy on a basic intuitive level, when, for instance, the UK challenges
Iran or North Korea on the issue. It is also at odds with the UK's Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations which states that each party should “pursue negotiations in good faith.... on a treaty on general and complete disarmament”.

Privatising war
20. Personnel employed by "corporate mercenaries", otherwise known as Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) are taking on many tasks previously undertaken by members of national armed forces, including those of the UK. The growth of piracy in the Indian Ocean has also seen the increased use of armed guards on commercial shipping travelling through those waters.

21. While many of the activities of PMSCs are innocuous, others present dangers, particularly when taking place in unstable areas of the globe. In September 2010, the Government asked the arms industry's trade association ADS to develop UK national standards for PMSCs - this is no substitute for Government regulation. Additionally, an International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers has been developed under the auspices of the Swiss government. This latter may help transparency, but again falls far short of proper accountable regulation. Without this, there is a continuing danger of incidents that alienate the local population where the PMSCs are operating.

Killing without trial
22. Unmanned aircraft are being increasingly used both for reconnaissance and offensive action. "Drones" can have legitimate civilian uses, but their military use is spreading and gives rise to many issues. Certainly, they should never be used for "targeted assassination", the imposition of the death penalty without even a trial. Such action is also responsible for the deaths of wrongly-targeted people as well as bystanders. Drone use embitters many in the countries where they are used.

Increasing security
23. The opportunity presented by the SDSR should be taken to look at all aspects of the UK's security with no preconception that these are military. The Government needs to consciously set vested interests to one side, with military and arms company input limited to that accorded other viewpoints.

24. Putting support for human rights at the heart of the UK's foreign policy will alleviate many of the threats to UK security. The UK government needs to remove its official backing for arms proliferation as a vital first step in reducing the suffering caused by the global arms trade, as well as the anger engendered by the UK sales to, and military support of, repressive regimes. To this end the 150-strong arms sales unit, the UK Trade and Investment Defence and Security Organisation, should be shut and export credit support for military goods ended.

25. To address the specific threats to the UK outlined above, firstly it is vital that the UK adheres to its Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty commitments and that UK nuclear weapons be decommissioned and not replaced.
26. Secondly, the UK government should introduce proper national regulation of PMSCs, which should certainly include a ban on all combat activities. It should also promote international regulation.

27. There is also a need to look again at international agreements with respect to drones. For instance, the 1987 Missile Technology Control Regime should be strengthened to take account of technological developments and include, for example, components.

**Tackling real threats and enjoying economic benefits**

28. The NSS recognises energy security as a threat. This can be addressed by investing resources in renewables. This could bring economic benefit to the UK. It could also meet the concerns of those who are worried about the employment implications of a reduction in military spending.

29. The introductory paragraph for a Jane's conference on Energy, Environment, Defence and Security that took place in May 2011 explained: "The defense market worldwide is worth a trillion dollars annually. The energy and environmental market is worth at least eight times this amount. The former is set to contract as governments address the economic realities of the coming decade; the latter is set to expand exponentially, especially in the renewables arena."

30. Robin Southwell, president of ADS told The Observer on 15th April 2012: that the arms industry "is flat lining at best." Exports are no way out for UK companies he continued: "The trouble is, everybody is exporting."

31. The arms industry, and the jobs in it, depends on taxpayer spending and as the Financial Times pointed out on 2nd September 2009: "Spending on defence is no better at creating jobs than support for other sectors. Defence R&D may produce spin-offs, but so too may R&D with civilian applications."

32. Many of those employed in the arms industry are skilled engineers, and there is a generally acknowledged shortage of these. One sector that could benefit from these skills is renewable energy. Since energy security is an identified threat it would seem to be a win-win situation to use the skills of current arms industry workers as well as those seeking employment to address this. Talking of MoD budget cuts, Barry Warburton, the Chief Executive Officer of the West of England Aerospace Forum said: "This is a perfect opportunity for diversification and renewable energy presents a massive new market ... A turbine blade is not dissimilar to a helicopter blade. It's electrical and mechanical engineering... What is an aircraft made of? What are components of a vehicle made of? When you think about it the technology in the defence industry is very value added and is very flexible." (Insider, 1st November 2010)

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