Contrasting Narratives

A Comparative Study of European and North American National Security Strategies
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Acknowledgements

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Introducing Rethinking Security

Rethinking Security is a network of UK-based organisations, academics and activists. We hold a shared concern that mainstream approaches to national and international security are failing to provide sustainable security for all. We believe it is time to challenge the assumptions and interests that underpin these approaches, and revisit some fundamental questions. What does security really mean? What is needed to build security in the world as we find it? How should these responsibilities be shared?

These are formidable questions, and it is likely that answers can only be found through wider exchanges, new perspectives and a genuine commitment to learning from the evidence of what has and hasn’t worked.

This study is one contribution to such efforts. Focusing on the roles of states in contributing to national and global security, it examines the contents of national security strategies: public documents that provide an overview of a state’s approach to the question of ‘national security’ for a defined period of time.

The study provides a comparative analysis of 20 European and North American national security strategies. It offers the reader an introduction to these documents, and highlights the similarities and differences between them. It sheds new light on individual strategies, by situating them in the broader context of other states’ approaches to the same questions. Importantly, it also demonstrates that the focus, scope and priorities selected for national security strategies are a matter of political choice, with a variety of options available.

We hope the study provides valuable information for policymakers who are tasked with developing national security strategies, and for parliamentarians and citizens who are concerned with scrutinising such strategies and holding governments to account. We welcome opportunities for further discussion about these strategies, and about the values, assumptions and choices that underpin approaches to security.

For further information about Rethinking Security, please visit: www.rethinkingsecurity.org.uk

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National security strategies are framework documents that summarise a state’s over-arching approach to security. They typically include several key features, describing how security is conceptualised, how national interests are defined, how the wider context is analysed, which priorities are identified, and how implementation is organised and reviewed. Frequently signed off by the Head of State, they often articulate a “whole of government” approach to security as a multi-dimensional concept. They convey vision as well as the specifics of policy. They therefore provide a useful entry-point for understanding and comparing the different ways in which states respond to the challenges of 21st century security.

At the same time, national security strategies are best understood as an articulation of a state’s public position, rather than necessarily as an accurate reflection of how it behaves in practice. They are primarily rhetorical public statements with a political purpose, intended to make a persuasive argument for, and convey a positive impression of, the government’s chosen approach. They are written for a range of audiences, including parliamentarians and the wider public at home, and policy-makers in other states. As such, they are instrumental in defining the tone and focus of public and political narratives about security, alongside other rhetorical and practical interventions. They also provide a reference point, and offer potential as a tool, for democratic oversight and accountability.

Key findings

Defining security

Ten of the twenty national security strategies analysed in this study offer a precise definition of “security” or “national security”, with some strategies supplementing the definition with a wider discussion of the scope of the term for policy purposes. The remaining ten documents display varying degrees of conceptual clarity. At a minimum, strategies present a series of security “objectives” or a list of “key interests”; in some cases, this leaves the overarching vision of what constitutes security, or the intended outcomes of policy, rather ill-defined.

Among those strategies that describe a state’s conceptual understanding of security, three protections feature most frequently: protection of civilians, protection of the constitutional order and democratic rule of law, and protection of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state.

In addition, many strategies acknowledge that security concerns intersect with other areas of public policy, such as health, socio-economic development, the environment, education, and transport. This suggests an appreciation of the diverse factors that influence a society’s experiences of security: increasingly, it is seen not only as a question of “Defence”, of military capability, or of international influence, but as the fulfilment of basic human needs and rights.

The power of assumptions

All the security strategies contain assumptions that shape how states choose to respond to contemporary challenges. Alongside the fundamental, shared assumption of the role of the state as the primary security actor, the strategies all emphasise that security has both international and domestic dimensions.

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Executive Summary
Beyond that, assumptions vary. Internationally, the most frequent assumption is that security is built through cooperation based on shared values, followed by the assertion of the importance of international law and individual rights and freedoms. The centrality of deterrence and military superiority is an assumption emphasised by only a small minority of states; unsurprisingly, these are the same states that have in the past exercised these military powers to greatest effect in the international arena.

Domestically, many states assert the primacy of state sovereignty and territorial integrity in ensuring security. There is also a strong emphasis in some strategies on the importance of enabling domestic socio-economic development, including poverty eradication and the provision of a “social security” system.

Three key questions arise in relation to the assumptions identified in the strategies. To what extent should a state’s historical experience of, and approach to, security shape its current response strategy? To what extent is security either a foundation for, or a product of, other areas of public policy, such as socio-economic development or the protection of rights and freedoms? And to what degree do the multiple assumptions contained within each strategy add up to a coherent rationale – or a series of contradictions?

The power of assumptions in shaping states’ approaches to security challenges is such that many strategies could be greatly improved by a concerted effort to address these fundamental questions. Unless assumptions are made clear, national security strategies risk being built on shifting sands.

Identifying the priority security challenges

The identification and prioritisation of security challenges represents the area of greatest consensus across the 20 security strategies. Many core concerns feature in all the documents, notably international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, state aggression, state failure, regional conflicts, cyber-attacks, climate change, natural disasters, critical infrastructure vulnerabilities and pandemics.

While all the strategies agree on the significance of these concerns, they do not all accord them equal priority. For example, states such as France, Germany, the UK, and the USA foreground international terrorism as one of the most severe security challenges, while other states describe this risk as low. Many of the former Warsaw Pact states are more concerned about Russian aggression or regional instability.

A smaller number of strategies emphasise the importance of longer-term systemic drivers of insecurity, such as inequality, marginalisation, demographic change and corrupt governance. However, very few of the strategies go beyond naming these challenges to prioritise addressing them, or explaining how they will do so.

All the strategies adopt a “top down” approach to analysing security challenges; none of the documents considers the significance of gender, race or class in shaping and differentiating everyday experiences of security or insecurity among the general population.

Strategic responses

Each strategy contains a substantial section describing how the state intends to respond to security challenges. These sections are shaped by the way in which challenges have been framed and prioritised in previous chapters of each document.

All the strategies present a response framework that reflects the multi-dimensional challenge of building security; they recognise the necessary contributions of different government departments or policies to achieving security objectives. Most of them give particular emphasis to the contributions of diplomacy and the military, with frequent attention also accorded to internal affairs and international development.¹
The larger and more militarily and economically powerful states (e.g. France, the UK and the USA) accord greater priority on short-term security challenges of an international military character. This contrasts sharply with many of the smaller or less powerful states (e.g. Netherlands, Spain, Slovenia), which emphasise a broader range of security challenges, combine both domestic and international dimensions, and place greater emphasis on cooperation and alliance-building. This raises questions about the extent to which strategies are shaped by a state’s history and pre-existing capabilities, rather than necessarily by the needs of a changing context.

Strategies such as those of France, Germany and the UK, which combine a National Security Strategy with a Defence Review, have a far greater emphasis than others on the role of military capabilities in delivering security objectives. Many strategies make limited reference to the role of the military, which is often considered in detail in a separate Defence Strategy. This raises important questions about how states understand the relationship between security and defence.

There are also variations in approach to the role of international alliances in building security. For several states, an emphasis on consolidating and expanding alliances suggests that this is considered a strategic goal in itself, reflecting assumptions that security is best achieved through co-operative relationships and a rules-based international order. Other states appear less invested in the strategic success of these alliances as a security ambition in itself.

**Democratic participation and oversight**

While many strategies assert the importance of public support for national security approaches, relatively few documents provide any detail regarding efforts to build this support. Comparatively little is said about public information strategies, consultation processes, or opportunities for participation, whether by democratic representatives or the wider public.

Only four strategies cite opportunities for public consultation in the preparation of the documents, and only three refer to mechanisms for the participation of parliamentarians in this part of the process. There is greater evidence of a role for parliament in approving strategies, or in monitoring implementation, with ten strategies referring to such practices.

Several strategies cite the existence of National Security Councils, and a few give details of their composition, powers and functions. Most frequently, the purpose of these bodies is to coordinate activities across government departments, although a few strategies suggest that the Councils have powers to formulate policies or direct implementation. Others seem to be concerned primarily with oversight, in the form of review, evaluation and verification of compliance. Overall, it is unclear whether the existence of these Councils contributes to more democratic and accountable decision-making.

Once strategy has been decided, there are very few opportunities for public involvement in its delivery or in monitoring implementation. The Canadian government strategy is alone in having established a "Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security", with the aim of facilitating the engagement and feedback of members of Canada’s ethnocultural and religious communities.

**Room for improvement?**

Between them, the 20 documents offer many instructive insights into the factors that make for a compelling and coherent national security strategy. Future strategies could benefit from addressing current gaps, in both the content of strategy and how it is formulated and scrutinised.

Five key propositions are detailed in the Conclusions section of this paper. In summary, they suggest that coherent strategies include clear definitions of security, and explicit assumptions about how it is built. They are strengthened by analysis of long-term as well as short-term security challenges, and by including "bottom up" as well as "top down" perspectives. Response frameworks are more
strategic when they clarify the intended outcomes of particular actions or investment decisions. Finally, given the importance of public support for security policy, all strategies ought to strengthen opportunities for meaningful public engagement and oversight, paying particular attention to the insights and concerns of those communities who suffer most from the impacts of insecurity.

**Contrasting narratives**

Overall, this review highlights the diversity of perspectives on and approaches to national security that exist even among a relatively narrow category of Westernised, industrialised and democratic states. Clearly, all governments make choices about how they understand security, which challenges they prioritise and how they respond. Only by understanding why these choices were made – and recognising that there are alternatives – can we get a full picture of how a particular state makes the case for its approach to national security.
The scope of this study is limited to a textual analysis of the published national security strategies of selected states. The study includes all 20 European and North American national security strategies that are readily available online in English. Within this, it includes those documents that combine a national security strategy with a defence review.

It does not extend to considering whether any of the strategies are consistent with a government’s other policy documents, or the extent to which actions taken by a government in the name of “national security” are consistent with its published strategy.

Given the breadth of these documents, and the variety of possible points of comparison, this study has chosen to focus on the following aspects:

- How security is defined
- The assumptions underpinning policy choices
- Analysis of security challenges
- Strategic responses and alliances
- Mechanisms for democratic participation and oversight

Variations within and limitations of the sample

The sample of national security strategies displays significant variation, particularly in respect of the relative population size and economic wealth of the states in question. These variations inevitably have a substantial impact on the range of security choices that are realistically available to different states – and therefore place limitations on the scope for comparison. The small sample size of 20 documents also limits the extent to which conclusions can be drawn about the relative popularity of certain approaches overall.

The publication dates, and intended time-span, of the strategies also vary widely. The oldest documents in the sample date back to the mid-2000s (Canada, Slovakia), while the most recent were published between 2015–17 (France, Germany, Sweden, UK, USA). While some take a mid- to long-term perspective of 10–15 years (Canada, Finland), others have a more short-term, 5-year outlook (Iceland, UK). This invariably influences the prioritisation of security challenges, as the strategies seek to respond to shifting regional and global dynamics.

Presentation of findings

As the purpose of the study is to facilitate comparison, the findings are presented thematically, rather than state-by-state. In some sections, tables are used to present more detailed description of the discrete approaches taken by each state; these are included in the appendices. Other sections present summarised findings in narrative form. All sections include a concluding set of questions for policymakers and concerned citizens, intended as a prompt for further discussion.
Key Findings
What does “security” mean? How does it relate to “national security”? Such questions are not only the stuff of academic exploration and debate: definitions provide the means of framing and understanding a concept. In the context of strategy, they clarify the purpose and intended outcomes of planned activities.

Appendix 1 summarises the key material presented in each of the 20 national security strategies in respect of the following two questions:

1) How is national security defined or conceptualised?
2) What security goals does each strategy set out?

As Appendix 1 indicates, approaches to defining national security, or describing security goals, vary considerably between the documents. Some strategies articulate a clear, single definition of national security, while others offer a lengthier elaboration of the concept. Some offer no definition at all. Some documents describe a single security goal or purpose around which strategy is framed, while others list key objectives. Still others frame the security strategy in terms of the requirement to advance or protect “national interests”, (also labelled as “key” or “vital” interests) which are often then described in detail.

Where precise definitions of security are available in the documents, these have been presented in Appendix 1. More detailed concepts have been summarised. Where it was not possible to identify a clear definition or concept in the text, this has been indicated.

### 1.1 Starting points: civilian protection, constitutional order, territorial integrity

Figure 1 illustrates the three security definitions and objectives about which there is greatest consensus across the 20 strategies: 1) protection of civilians; 2) protection of the constitution and democratic rule of law; and 3) protection of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state.

Within this consensus, it is notable that some states (e.g. Slovenia, Sweden) give greater emphasis to civilian protection, rights and freedoms, while others (e.g. Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania) accord more weight to state sovereignty and territorial integrity.

### 1.2 Broadening the concept: comprehensive approaches

Several strategies (Austria, France, Canada, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Slovenia, Sweden) frame security as “multi-dimensional”, “comprehensive” or “holistic”. They acknowledge that in addition to the traditional focus on defence, international relations and internal security policy, other areas of public policy such as health, socio-economic development, education, transport, communications, etc are increasingly relevant to security outcomes. Within this, some strategies (Austria, Germany, Slovenia, Sweden) draw on established conceptual frameworks such as the Human Security framework to articulate an approach which incorporates a broad range of public policy areas.

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A further objective identified in a few strategies (Austria, Netherlands, Slovenia) is that of “social peace” within the state, described in terms of both the wellbeing of individual citizens and the stability of intra-societal relations.

1.3 Security and economic prosperity

Some strategies (in particular, Germany, Poland, UK, USA) emphasise the relationship between security and a successful economy. The Polish strategy describes its goal as “ensuring sustainable and balanced socio-economic development” within its society, while the German strategy wants to ensure “prosperity for citizens through a strong German economy as well as free and unimpeded world trade”. The UK and USA both go further, emphasising economic prosperity as a first-order objective of security policy, with the implication that security practices play a significant role in contributing to a favourable economic context.

1.4 International security

Several strategies (Canada, France, Germany, Slovenia, Spain, UK, USA) articulate the objective of contributing to international security, either as part of their concept of security or as central to their strategic purpose. This reflects a frequent recognition of the links between the security dynamics within a state and the wider global security environment. Despite this convergence, there is a variation in specific points of emphasis. States such as Slovenia frame their objectives in terms of “fulfilling international obligations and contributing to peacekeeping and strengthening of security and stability in the international community.”
Assumptions are ideas that we believe to be true, in contexts where facts and evidence are unable to provide a complete picture, or may be excluded. In a complex and unpredictable world, assumptions about what security is, and how it can be created, play a powerful role in shaping policy responses. Consequently, identifying and testing assumptions is an important process: it reveals the underlying thinking that guides decision-making and explores its validity.

All the national security strategies in this study are based on, and contain, a range of assumptions about how security is created. However, the presentation of these assumptions varies considerably. Some states, such as Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden, offer a detailed explanation of how security is conceptualised for the purpose of strategy, making underlying assumptions fairly clear. Other strategies, such as the UK’s, offer less explicit explanation of the beliefs that shape policy choices, and the assumptions have to be teased out from the language and framing of strategic priorities.

2.1 Which assumptions are most prevalent?

All the strategies in this study reflect the mainstream international consensus that security is primarily a responsibility of the state. However, while some documents clearly emphasise the importance of a state’s capacity to create the conditions necessary to maximise the security of its citizens, other strategies focus on ensuring the security of the state itself, or appear to conflate the two ideas. This raises a key question about the intended beneficiaries of security policy.

All states also interpret security as having both international and domestic dimensions, acknowledging that a state’s ability to provide security is influenced by factors both external and internal to its borders. Several documents describe this in terms of “indivisibility”, asserting that a state’s security is inextricably linked to wider regional or global security dynamics.

Beyond these fundamental assumptions, the strategies also acknowledge the complexity of building security. As with the definitions, many documents assert the importance of a “comprehensive approach”, referring to the need to integrate security objectives across many different areas of government. For example, the Slovenian strategy lists the relevant aspects of public policy as follows:

“The National Security policy of the Republic of Slovenia consists primarily of foreign policy, defence policy, internal security policy and the policy of protection against natural and other disasters. The security aspect of the state policy in economic, social, environmental, medical, demographic, educational, scientific and technological information and other areas is also taken into account in accordance with a modern, multi-dimensional understanding of the national security concept.”

These similar starting positions are perhaps unsurprising among a group of states who have all chosen some degree of relationship with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and many of whom are part of the European Union (EU). But there are also some variations in emphasis, which indicate important nuances in the security postures presented in the documents.

Tables 1 and 2 summarise the most and least prevalent assumptions about how security is created, taking the international and domestic dimensions in turn.

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11 The strategies of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Lithuania and Slovakia all refer to the “indivisibility” of security, asserting that state security cannot be achieved in isolation from the security of allies.

12 The prevalence of assumptions has been measured according to how many of the 20 strategies incorporate these ideas explicitly in their text.
Table 1: Assumptions about how security is created in the international arena

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevalence</th>
<th>International dimension</th>
<th>Number of documents stating this assumption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most prevalent</td>
<td>Security is created by strengthening co-operation</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Security is created by upholding international law and individual rights and freedoms</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Security is created by supporting international socio-economic development</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Security is created by military deterrence</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least prevalent</td>
<td>Security is created through projecting power and influence</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 Assumptions about how security is created in the international arena

Security through cooperation

17 of the 20 strategies stress the importance of regional and international cooperation. The following quotations illustrate different states’ assumptions regarding the value and purpose of cooperation:

“Security is the objective and outcome of international co-operation.”
National Security Concept of Estonia.

“Many security challenges have far-reaching and transnational impacts. Broad-based international cooperation is called for to meet these challenges, since Finland’s security is closely connected to international development.”
Finland Security Strategy for Society.

“Developments in Sweden and the world are increasing requirements on our ability to safeguard our security. This is so closely correlated with global security that it is necessary for Sweden to build peace and security together with others. […] Sweden endeavours to achieve collective security and wants to develop security in solidarity and cooperation with others. Fundamental to this collective security is cooperation, exchange and close contacts. Threats to peace and security are best countered together in cooperation with other countries and organisations.”
Sweden National Security Strategy.

“…both national and multilateral cooperation are required to respond to the risks and threats which compromise security in this day and age. Unilateral and isolated responses, as they are incomplete and partial, are not effective against challenges which require a multidisciplinary approach and joint action.”
The National Security Strategy, Spain.

“Strong alliances and partnerships worldwide are more important than ever. In almost every aspect of national security and prosperity, we must work with others, not because we cannot work alone, but because the threats and opportunities are global.”
UK National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review.

These quotations indicate a desire for cooperation rooted in recognition of the interconnected nature of contemporary security challenges and confidence in the effectiveness of collective action. Other states provide greater detail about the importance of particular mechanisms for enabling cooperation, with some states referencing the centrality of the European Union as a security project, or highlighting the cooperation and collective defence enshrined in the NATO treaty, or both, as follows:
“Converging threats against Europe requires Europeans to commit more heavily to ensuring their own security, and to work towards the goal of shared strategic autonomy.”

France Strategic Review of Defence and Security.

“It is only in cooperation with others that Germany can protect its territory and open society, make effective use of its profound but limited resources, and unfold its innovative and productive potential. Pursuing German interests therefore always means taking into account the interests of our allies and those of other friendly nations. … We know that our security is best served by responsibly shaping security policy together with our partners and in our alliances – with a strong NATO and a capable Europe.”


“Allied solidarity, which also includes the collective defence of NATO member states, as well as the transatlantic bond, are the cornerstone of Hungary’s independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security. Hungary’s security is strengthened furthermore by the cooperation and political solidarity within the European Union.”

Hungary’s National Security Strategy

Security through upholding international law and individual rights and freedoms

Several strategies refer to the importance of upholding international law and protecting individual rights and freedoms. The French strategy notes that “France will continue to work tirelessly to promote a vision in which power politics are regulated by law, based on the UN Charter as a cornerstone.” In a similar vein, the German strategy asserts that “It is not might but right that creates lasting peace and stability.” The Swedish and UK strategies also make this case:

“Our approach to security also reflects the strong links between peace, security, sustainable development and international law, including human rights. There is a connection between internal oppression and external aggression. Peace and security are necessary preconditions for development. Democracy, human rights and economic and social development provide the best foundation for both human security and international security. Sweden aims to be a leading force for gender equality and the full participation of women in all endeavours to promote peace and security.”

Sweden National Security Strategy.

“Democracy, the rule of law, open, accountable governments and institutions, human rights, freedom of speech, property rights and equality of opportunity, including the empowerment of women and girls, are the building blocks of successful societies. They are part of the golden thread of conditions that lead to security and prosperity. Their absence limits opportunities for the individual, and drives resentment, political instability and conflict.”

UK National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review.

Most of the states that stress the importance of international law and individual rights and freedoms are also the most politically and economically powerful of those examined in the study; their conviction may be grounded in both their previous and potential influence in shaping these norms and institutions to reflect their interests and values. However, while some of these states register concern at the erosion of these standards, none acknowledges its own role in contributing to that trend.

Security through supporting international socio-economic development

The relationship between socio-economic development and security features strongly in several strategies. Some states cite sustainable development as a prerequisite for global and national peace and security, as in the following excerpt from the German strategy:

“An international order based on partnership, equitable globalisation, commitment to ensuring universal respect for human rights, the fight against extreme poverty and hunger, the protection of our natural environment so that all people can live in dignity in their native countries, and the creation of human security worldwide are all factors that contribute to our national security.”


The references to gender equality in this document echo the Swedish government’s commitment to a “feminist foreign policy” as introduced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2014. For further details, see: http://www.government.se/government-policy/feminist-foreign-policy/ [Accessed February 2018].
The Security Policy Proposals that underpin Iceland’s National Security Resolution point out that “Iceland must focus on the root of instability and conflict, which can often be traced to poverty and injustice.” It notes that Iceland must contribute to international cooperation focused on economic and social development – a sentiment also echoed in the Swedish strategy. The UK strategy also makes a similar connection, and commitment:

“We will help to address the causes of conflict and instability through increased support for tackling corruption, promoting good governance, developing security and justice, and creating jobs and economic opportunity. These are essential elements of the golden thread of democracy and development, supporting more peaceful and inclusive societies.”

The US strategy sets out its approach to development assistance in a section on “advancing American influence.” It describes how US assistance has resulted in the creation of profitable markets for American businesses and cemented regional balances of power in favour of the USA. The strategy indicates that future development assistance “will place a priority on economic support that achieves local and macroeconomic stability, helps build capable security forces and strengthens the rule of law”.

Security through military deterrence

Few strategies in the study refer explicitly to military deterrence as a primary means of creating security. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the three nuclear-armed states included in the sample, France, the UK and the USA give most prominence to this assumption. The US strategy makes frequent reference to the importance of US military superiority as per the following example:

“The United States must retain overmatch – the combination of capabilities in sufficient scale to prevent enemy success and to ensure that America’s sons and daughters will never be in a fair fight. Overmatch strengthens our diplomacy and permits us to shape the international environment to protect our interests.”

The UK strategy incorporates similar thinking:

“Defence and protection start with deterrence, which has long been, and remains at the heart of the UK’s national security policy. Deterrence means that any potential aggressors know that any benefit they may seek to gain by attacking the UK will be outweighed by the consequences for them… We will use the full spectrum of our capacities […] to deter adversaries and to deny them opportunities to attack us… We remain ready and willing to use armed force when necessary to protect our national interests.”

The French strategy also highlights the importance of deterrence, which it identifies as one of the five core strands of its approach to security. It focuses on the role of its nuclear weapons system in deterring state-based threats, and notes the importance of conventional military capabilities in bolstering this capacity.

Finland expresses greater reservations about the efficacy of military power in enhancing state security:

“In an interdependent world it is more and more difficult to advance national interests by means of military power politics, nor would they achieve lasting results the way they did in the past. However, even though the viability of force as an instrument of policy has diminished, military capabilities still matter, especially as the dimension of regional influence.”

Security through projecting power and influence

Two strategies give prominence to the role of power and influence in shaping the global security environment in a state’s interests, with the focus on military and economic power. The US National Security Strategy is the strongest example. It asserts that its foreign policy celebrates America’s influence in the world “as a positive force that can help set the conditions for peace and prosperity and for developing successful societies”. In the section entitled “Preserve peace through strength”, the strategy states:

“To prevail, we must integrate all elements of America’s national power – political, economic, and military… The United States will seek areas of cooperation with competitors from a position of strength, foremost by ensuring our military power is second to none and fully integrated with our allies and all of our instruments of power.”
The UK strategy also has a substantial focus on “projecting our global influence”, which is presented as the second of three top-level strategic objectives:

“We project our power, influence and values to help shape a secure, prosperous future for the UK and to build wider security, stability and prosperity.”

2.3 Assumptions about how security is created in the domestic arena

Many strategies refer to the importance of domestic dimensions of security, in addition to the fore-mentioned international dimensions. Again, it is possible to identify a range of assumptions about what this entails, appearing with varying degrees of frequency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevalence</th>
<th>National/domestic dimension</th>
<th>Number of documents stating this assumption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most prevalent</td>
<td>Security is created by ensuring territorial integrity and state sovereignty</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Security is created by ensuring public support for and cooperation with policy</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Security is created by protecting and promoting individual rights and freedoms</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Security is created by facilitating domestic socio-economic development</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least prevalent</td>
<td>Security is created by promoting integration or co-existence of different social groups</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Security through protection of territorial integrity and state sovereignty

Given that the strategies all position the state as the central actor in providing security, it is understandable that the most prevalent assumption about domestic security is that it requires the preservation of territorial integrity and state sovereignty. Estonia’s strategy provides an example of this assumption:

“Estonia’s security policy is guided by the principles stipulated in the United Nations Charter, including the right and freedom of every country to choose their own solutions for security needs.”

National Security Concept of Estonia.

The point is also given particular emphasis among other states that were also formerly part of the Soviet Union or the Warsaw Pact, with the strategies of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia all underscoring this idea.

However, the centrality of this assumption also features prominently in other strategies. The Swedish strategy notes that independence and territorial integrity are prerequisites for maintaining other values and wider social goals:
“the objectives for our security are to safeguard the life and health of the population, as well as the functionality of society, along with the ability to maintain fundamental values such as democracy, the rule of law and human rights and fundamental freedoms. In order to achieve these objectives our country’s political independence and autonomy must be secured and our territorial integrity must be able to be maintained.”

The French strategy has a similar emphasis:

“Strategic autonomy remains a key objective… due to its decisive impact on our sovereignty and freedom of action. In an international system where instability and uncertainty prevail, France must preserve its capability to decide and act alone to defend its interests.”

Security through public support and cooperation

A large number of strategies, including Austria, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden assert the importance of public support for national security policy, arguing that it is essential to its effective delivery.

“While it is primarily the Government’s duty to safeguard security, the active cooperation of Czech citizens, businesses and entrepreneurs is desirable in efforts to mitigate threats. This strengthens society’s overall resilience to security threats.”

Security Strategy of the Czech Republic.

However, despite the frequency with which this assumption is stated, there is rarely any further elaboration of the reasons for its importance, or indeed of the social contract between state and citizen that might be required in order to build such support or cooperation. This raises questions about the basis on which citizens are encouraged or expected to cooperate, and indeed about states’ expectations regarding the desirability of democratic debate about approaches to security. The Canadian strategy is the only one that alludes to possible public tensions around the implementation of security policy, acknowledging that security policy can cause controversy or dissent. It notes:

“The Government needs the help and support of all Canadians to make its approach to security effective. Therefore, it will introduce new measures to reach out to communities in Canada that may feel caught in the “front lines” of the struggle against terrorism.”

Security through upholding rights and freedoms

Many strategies refer to the relationship between security and liberal, democratic values. Some, such as the Austrian and Swedish documents, suggest the latter are the foundations of domestic security:

“Fundamental human rights and the needs of human beings are thus at the heart of all considerations relating to security”.

Austrian Security Strategy.

“Our open and dynamic society, with a high level of trust between people, shall continue to form the basis for security in Sweden. The vulnerabilities that can be seen in our society should not result in us compromising our fundamental values, but rather in us better ensuring their protection.”

Swedish National Security Strategy.

Other strategies approach the relationship differently, suggesting that the provision of security comes first and provides the basis for the exercise of human rights:

“Slovakia guarantees security to its citizens and sees this as a prerequisite for the exercise of human and civil rights and for the harmonious development of society as a whole.”

Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic.

The Bulgarian strategy does not take a view on causality, simply asserting “the interdependence of security and the citizens’ fundamental rights and freedoms.” And the US strategy has a distinct approach:

“We are committed to protecting the rights and dignity of every citizen. And we are a nation of laws because the rule of law is a shield that protects the individual from government corruption and abuse of power, allows families to live without fear and permits markets to thrive.”

These contrasting assumptions are likely to be of fundamental importance in shaping a state’s approach to ongoing debate about the relationship between security and liberty, and how it addresses this in practice.⁴

Security through domestic socio-economic development

For some states, domestic socio-economic development plays a crucial role in building security. The Romanian strategy asserts the significance of this, as well as highlighting the importance of a social safety net:

“Building, for the first time in the history of Romania, a complex and effective social security system, able to encourage work, high performance, the capital and solidarity of the partakers in the socio-economic processes will represent an essential contribution to strengthen national security.”

The Hungarian strategy takes a similar perspective, suggesting that the country’s security rests on “solid social foundations”. These include efforts to eliminate the causes and prevent the rise of poverty, as well as mitigating the “serious disadvantages it causes.”

Other documents appear to view the relationship between development and security differently. The Estonian strategy notes that “security policy provides the basis for sustainable development and welfare”, a sentiment echoed in the Polish strategy: “Poland strengthens its national security capacities in order to ensure a stable development of the country and an improvement of the living conditions of its citizens.”

Still others, such as the UK and USA, approach the question differently, with emphasis falling on the relationship between security and economic prosperity, rather than on “social security”. This approach is encapsulated in the following statement from the UK strategy:

“Our strong economy provides the foundation to invest in our security and global influence, which in turn provides more opportunities at home and overseas for us to increase our prosperity.”

The more recent US strategy echoes this sentiment: “Promoting American prosperity makes America more secure and advances American influence in the world.”

Security through promoting integration or coexistence of different social groups

The strategies of Austria, Canada, Hungary, Poland, Spain all emphasise the importance of promoting integration and peaceful relationships between different social groups.

The Austrian strategy sets out its assumptions as follows:

“Integration improves social peace and increases economic success. Internal security is also reinforced by good quality of coexistence between all of the individuals living in Austria. Integration is the task and responsibility of each individual. In order to achieve integration, all of the necessary framework conditions must be in place and all of the relevant stakeholders coordinated.”

The Spanish strategy also highlights the importance of integration with particular reference to immigrant communities, highlighting the importance of “(promoting) social integration with areas of coexistence and support for the most vulnerable immigrants.” It goes on to note that “the responsibility of communities of immigrants will be encouraged in a framework of shared political and social interests.”

The Hungarian strategy takes a different tack, highlighting the importance of coexistence and diversity, rather than integration:

“Successfully ensuring the traditional coexistence of different cultures and the preservation of diversity and the identity of the communities – as the recognition and protection of common values – is one of the key elements of creating long-term stability.”

2.4

Scrutinising the assumptions

Three key questions arise in response to the range of assumptions espoused in the documents:

How does interpretation of history shape assumptions about security?

Little is written in any of the strategies about the historical factors that have shaped a state’s experiences of security or insecurity. Yet it is likely that prevailing interpretations of history exert a powerful influence on security narratives, providing a strong storyline regarding the factors that have contributed to security or insecurity in the past. As noted above, countries that were previously part of the Soviet Union or Warsaw Pact place a particularly heavy emphasis on the importance of state sovereignty and territorial integrity in creating security. Elsewhere, it is probably not a coincidence that imperial powers of the past and present cleave to assumptions about the centrality of deterrence and military superiority, or that they seek to aggrandize their current influence or present it as an unquestionable strategic necessity. And it is also unsurprising that smaller states, with little or no history of exercising global influence, emphasise cooperation based on shared values as the most effective course of action in responding to security challenges.

But while interpretations of historical experience exercise an understandable influence on expectations about security, it is arguably a limited perspective from which to plan for the future. In a rapidly changing world, assumptions are likely to need to be continually interrogated and updated to reflect contemporary realities.

Negative or positive security: a foundation for, or a product of other areas of public policy?

One of the key variations in the documents is the extent to which security is understood as either a foundation for, or a product of, other areas of public policy. Some strategies appear to be based primarily on the assumption that it is the provision of “security” (presumably understood in terms of protection against “threats”) that creates the foundation for development, prosperity and the enjoyment of rights. Others prefer to emphasise the view that security is a condition arising from policies that promote international cooperation, the protection of rights, socio-economic development and democratic governance. This is a crucial variation, and a question that goes to the heart of discussions about what security means and how it can be built.

Arguably, this variation has echoes of the distinction made in the academic field of Peace Studies regarding “negative” and “positive” peace. Here, “negative security” would imply an emphasis on protection from external violence, while “positive security” describes an understanding of the importance of providing the basics of “human security” for people, whether domestically or globally.

Does the presence of multiple assumptions result in coherence or contradiction?

All the strategies incorporate multiple assumptions about how security is created, and how it relates to other areas of public policy. Given the complexity of the challenges of insecurity, this is unsurprising. However, the strategies also leave some of the harder questions unacknowledged or unanswered. What is the rationale or evidence underpinning the assumptions? Which assumptions – and which paths to building security – are most important? How will any tensions between competing or contradictory assumptions be managed? Will the implementation of security strategies...
incorporate opportunities to test the validity of the assumptions in practice? Given the crucial influence of assumptions in shaping policy responses, many strategies could be greatly improved by a concerted effort to address these fundamental questions.

**QUESTIONS FOR POLICY-MAKERS AND CONCERNED CITIZENS**

- What are the dominant assumptions that characterise current strategy in your national context? Should they be made more explicit? Are there alternative assumptions that would provide a more appropriate guide for analysis and action?

- To what extent is security understood as a foundation for, or a product of, other areas of public policy? Are rights and freedoms perceived as a precondition for security or as a result of it? Is socio-economic development perceived as a precondition for security or as a result of it?

- Who currently determines the assumptions that guide security strategy? To what degree are they democratically determined? How are they tested, reviewed and refined?
The identification and prioritisation of security challenges represents the area of greatest consensus across the 20 security strategies. The challenges are typically described as “threats”, and there is usually a brief description of how they are understood and the nature of the risks they pose.

3.1 The most frequently-cited security challenges

The following challenges feature in all the documents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International terrorism</th>
<th>Natural disasters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State failure</td>
<td>Pandemics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyber attacks</td>
<td>Regional conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental damage</td>
<td>Illegal or uncontrolled immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial or economic crisis</td>
<td>Climate change and scarcity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMD proliferation</td>
<td>Critical infrastructure vulnerabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State aggression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised crime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland and Slovenia all describe this risk as low. Many of the former Warsaw Pact states are more concerned about Russian aggression or regional instability.

In addition to the most frequently-cited security challenges, Table 4 lists a number of other concerns that feature across several strategies:

Table 4: Additional security challenges

- Globalisation
- Inequality and unequal development
- Destabilising behaviour by global powers
- Demographic change
- Social marginalisation
- Radical nationalism
- Erosion of international norms
- Corruption

These concerns tend to feature in strategies that take a longer-term, or more holistic view of security challenges, such as Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Netherlands, Slovenia and Spain. While some of these security challenges may not present an immediate risk of external violence, they are nonetheless key factors in perpetuating many more immediate security concerns.

A small minority of strategies (Iceland, Netherlands, Slovenia) go beyond naming these challenges and give priority to addressing them.

All of the strategies adopt a “top down” approach to understanding security challenges: they are presented as though their significance and impact is uniform throughout a state and its population. None of the documents adopts a “bottom up” approach, disaggregating the significance and impact of different security challenges according to key variables such as gender, race, class or age. This raises questions about who determines the prioritisation of security challenges, and to what extent this process reflects variations in people’s everyday experiences of and concerns about security or insecurity.

17 For a fuller exposition of this argument, see Rogers, P., (2016). Irregular war: ISIS and the new threat from the margins. I. B. Taurus.
3.2

The analytical presentation of security challenges

A few strategies offer interesting analytical frameworks for understanding security challenges.

Spain offers a framework which categorises concerns according to whether they are “risks and threats” or “multiplier factors”. Disappointingly, the subsequent analysis provides no further explanation of the significance of the multiplier factors nor the proposed role of the security strategy in addressing these, concentrating exclusively on the trends that are categorised as “risks and threats”.

The Slovenian Security Strategy takes a different approach, analysing security challenges according to three different categories: global, transnational and national. Global concerns include climate change, economic and financial risks, and crisis areas – all of which are seen as drivers of other concerns. Transnational risks are terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, organised crime, illegal migration, cyber threats, foreign espionage and military threats. National challenges are identified as threats to public safety, natural disasters, environmental degradation, and the spread of infectious diseases. Finally, the strategy lists some “factors of uncertainty”, such as negative demographic trends and the difficulties of preserving Slovenian cultural heritage and identity.

Finland’s Security Strategy takes a similar approach to the Slovenian document, also distinguishing between categories of threat. It starts with the individual, extending to national and global threats, as presented in the Figure 2.

The Netherlands strategy stands out from all the other strategies in the study, by focusing primarily on generating a framework, mechanisms and processes for analysing security concerns in future, as the basis for responsive action. The document classifies “threats” according to three categories: classic, socio-economic and natural. It defines classic threats as international breaches of peace, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and international organised crime; socio-economic threats as social vulnerability and marginalisation, lack of economic security, lack of digital security; and natural threats as phenomena such as climate change and pandemics. This framework then informs its subsequent strategic priorities and lines of action. The strategy also introduces a “working method”, which incorporates a review of “strategic” (long-term) security challenges every two years, an annual analysis of a selection of themes, and a twice-annual scan of short-term threats. The strategy document goes on to accord priority to three “strategic” themes as the first example of this exercise in practice: climate change; polarisation and radicalisation; and energy supply assurance.

QUESTIONS FOR POLICY-MAKERS AND CONCERNED CITIZENS

- To what extent does the language of “threats” shape identification and treatment of security challenges?
- Who determines the prioritisation of security challenges? How would strategies be different if they incorporated a gender, race, class or age lens in their analysis of what constitutes a security challenge?
- Why do so few strategies prioritise concerns regarding the underlying, systemic drivers of insecurity, such as climate change, inequality and marginalisation?
- How could strategies achieve a better balance between addressing underlying drivers of insecurity and short-term crisis prevention measures?
Figure 2. Finland Security Strategy for Society: Threats on the individual, national and global levels

All the strategies contain a substantial section explaining how the state intends to respond to security challenges. These sections are largely shaped by the framing and prioritisation of challenges in previous chapters of each document. Some strategies provide considerable detail on the specifics of responses and the capabilities required, while others offer a brief summary of intended lines of action.

The strategies vary widely in the level of detail they provide regarding priorities and actions. The shorter documents (15–20 pages) essentially serve as a broad indication of the focus of actions and resources. Some of the longer documents (80–150 pages) give more precise information about planned activities and purchasing decisions. The Finland Security Strategy for Society provides the most detailed information for monitoring purposes, describing a “desired end state” in relation to each priority response.

4.1 Policy emphasis

All the strategies incorporate a response framework that reflects the multi-dimensional challenge of building security; they recognise the necessary contributions of different government departments or policies to achieving their security objectives. Some documents describe this as a “comprehensive approach”, and most give particular emphasis to the contributions of diplomacy and the military, with frequent attention also accorded to internal affairs and international development.

In the absence of clear information about the budgetary commitments attached to actions, this study relies on the rhetorical weight given to these respective areas of policy to reveal a particular state’s emphasis.

As noted in the section on Scope and Methodology, the study includes strategies produced by those states (France, Germany and the UK) that have chosen to combine their “security” and “defence” policies within one “national security and defence strategy” document. In all cases, there is a strong emphasis on the role of military capabilities in responding to the identified security challenges.

Other states, such as Canada, the Netherlands and Spain, have approached the policy process differently; they pay relatively little attention to military capabilities and focus in greater detail on a range of civilian capabilities. For example, the Canadian strategy focuses on policy responses such as intelligence, emergency planning and management, public health emergencies and border security. The Spanish strategy gives as much emphasis to policies for managing migratory flows and energy security as it does to “national defence” and combating terrorism.

States such as Austria, Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia have approached the security strategy as an amalgam of different departmental policies, summarising the relevant contributions of foreign policy, defence policy, internal/home affairs, and civil protection.

Comparative analysis of the 20 documents reveals a spectrum of responses, as represented in Figure 3. Analysis reveals that, at one end of the spectrum, the larger and more militarily and economically powerful states (e.g. France, the UK and the USA) place greater emphasis on short-term security challenges of an international military character, while at the other end of the spectrum, many of the smaller or less powerful states (e.g. Netherlands, Spain, Slovenia) emphasise a broader range of security challenges, combining both domestic and international dimensions.

The latter states tend to place a greater emphasis on cooperation and alliance-building as a security strategy. Many states situate themselves between the two ends of the spectrum, with Germany probably the best example of a “centrist” posture, offering the clearest combination of both approaches.
States take differing approaches to international alliances. For several states, a strong emphasis on consolidating and expanding alliances suggests that this is considered a strategic goal in itself, reflecting assumptions that security is best achieved through co-operative relationships and arrangements. The French, German and Spanish strategies provide clear examples of this, with each document highlighting the importance of the European Union and NATO in creating and extending the conditions of security. Many other states, including Austria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland and Romania take a similar approach, with a strong focus on these two institutions.

However, not all these states take the same approach to both organisations. Whereas all the states see NATO primarily as a provider of military security (and refer in particular to its commitment to the collective self-defence of its members), some states, such as Austria, Finland and Sweden, have chosen not to be NATO members, but have opted for a looser affiliation with the alliance through its “Partnership for Peace” programme.19

Attitudes towards the significance of the European Union also vary amongst those states that see it as critical to their security strategy. Some – such as France and Germany – have ambitions to build a more integrated EU capacity for defence and security, understood in largely military terms. Others, such as Poland, see the EU’s contribution to security primarily in socio-economic and developmental terms, while states such as Sweden emphasise its value in facilitating an integrated and principled approach to foreign policy.

Other states appear to be less invested in the strategic success of these alliances as a security project in themselves. Predictably perhaps, in light of the subsequent referendum on its membership, the UK strategy makes very limited reference to the role of the EU, and gives greater emphasis to its ‘special relationship’ with the United States and its bilateral relationships with other countries and regions. Canada also gives relatively little emphasis to the role of alliances in its strategy. The US strategy refers to alliances primarily as a means to a geopolitical end:

“Sustaining favourable balances of power will require a strong commitment and close cooperation with allies and partners because allies and partners magnify US power and extend US influence. They share our interests and responsibility for resisting authoritarian trends, contesting radical ideologies and deterring aggression.”

19 For further information on the NATO Partnership for Peace programme, see https://www.nato.int/cps/su/natohq/topics_50349.htm. [Accessed February 2018].
Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Sweden and the UK all emphasise the importance of the United Nations as the primary forum for multilateral co-operation, and assert their commitment to strengthening its role. The French strategy makes the following statement:

“Faced with global challenges, the world needs effective multilateralism, embodied by a strong United Nations. Furthermore, absent a robust multilateralism, the emerging multipolarity risks returning the world to spheres of influence. History has shown us the dangers of such a situation. As a result, France will continue to work tirelessly to promote a vision in which power politics are regulated by law, based on the UN Charter as a cornerstone.”

France Defence & National Security Strategic Review.

Many other strategies make briefer references to the UN’s role, with frequent allusions to the requirement for its reform.

Appendix 2 summarises the key elements of each state’s strategic response framework, and the role of alliances in this. It also highlights noteworthy features of the strategy, particularly insofar as they reflect a more comprehensive approach to security or demonstrate an interest in strengthening non-military capabilities to respond to security threats.

### QUESTIONS FOR POLICY-MAKERS AND CONCERNED CITIZENS

- How does incorporating a defence review or military development strategy within a national security strategy affect its focus?
- To what extent do a state’s existing military capabilities affect its strategic response preferences?
- How important are international alliances in building the conditions of security? What should be the principles underpinning these alliances?
- How is the balance to be struck between short-term, reactive measures and those aimed at addressing the underlying drivers of insecurity?
Democratic participation and accountability

“National security policy should reflect not only the point of view of the current government and other state institutions, but also those of the men and women of the population whose views are sought through democratic representation or public consultation.”

While many strategies assert the importance of public support for national security approaches, it is striking that relatively few documents provide any insight or detail regarding efforts to build this support. Comparatively little is said about public information strategies, consultation processes, or opportunities for participation, whether by democratic representatives or the wider public.

This section summarises the limited information that can be found in the documents regarding mechanisms and practices to facilitate wider input into security policy. It looks in turn at: 1) consultations undertaken as part of the strategy formulation process; 2) mechanisms for democratic oversight; and 3) opportunities for public engagement in strategy implementation. Appendix 3 provides an overview table showing which states refer to the various mechanisms and practices in their strategies.

5.1 Consultation

Only four strategies appear to have incorporated consultation processes to enable external input into their formulation: the Czech Republic, France, Germany and the UK.

The German strategy notes that:

“The White Paper is the first of its kind to be based on an inclusive participation phase. National and international experts as well as interested citizens were given various opportunities to participate in the discussion about the future of German security policy.”

No details are provided about the nature of the opportunities for participation, but the document goes on to note:

“With this inclusive and participatory approach, the 2016 White Paper reflects a modern understanding of strategy development. It is fostered by the participation, contributions and critical suggestions from the worlds of politics, science and civil society, as well as from industry, the interested public and international partners.”

The UK strategy notes that the government “sought the views of external experts, our allies and the public” during the formulation process. It describes engagement with over 50 different organisations, including academics, think tanks, non-governmental organisations and industry throughout the UK. The document also notes discussions with the UK’s “closest allies, including in NATO and the EU.”

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21 This conclusion is based exclusively on the evidence provided in the strategy documents themselves. It is possible that consultation processes were used to inform additional strategies in the study, but not mentioned in the documents.
Finally, it refers to 2,000 contributions from the public during an open submissions process.

The French Strategic Defence and Security Review provides the highest level of transparency. The document includes Annexes which provide details of Terms of Reference for the review and the composition of the Review Committee, as well as the names of all those interviewed by the Committee. The Annex on consultations records further details of the nature of those consultations.

The only other notable document is the Netherlands National Security Strategy. As noted on page 20, it takes a different approach from the other strategies, with a large part of the document dedicated to describing a working method for future strategy development. Part of this working method includes a “government-wide analysis of threats and risks”. The document indicates that this exercise is to be informed by a process of “knowledge-sharing” with domestic and foreign government organisations, the business community and the academic world. It notes that consideration will be given to engaging “(international) persons and institutes” capable of peer-reviewing this analysis. The analysis is to be reviewed every two years by the Cabinet, who then identify priorities for further in-depth analysis.

Parliamentary engagement and oversight

Parliamentary engagement and oversight provide important opportunities to ensure government accountability in relation to both the design of a national security strategy and its implementation in practice. Study of the documents suggests a variety of practices with regard to parliamentary involvement.

A small minority of documents refer to an active role for parliamentarians in the strategy formulation process. The Czech Security Strategy is described as a government document, drafted in consultation with Office of President and parliament, with the aim of seeking non-partisan approaches. The Iceland National Security Strategy refers to policies as arising from the proposals of a Parliamentary Committee, established by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the basis of a Parliamentary Resolution. The Slovenian strategy indicates that the National Assembly provides the long-term legal framework and guidelines for the strategy, while the government directs and coordinates the implementation of policy. This is in turn monitored by the National Assembly.

Several strategies (Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Lithuania and Slovakia) indicate that parliamentary approval is required at the point of publication, while others (Canada, France, UK) refer to a process of tabling or presenting the document before parliament in what possibly amounts to a “lighter” approach. A few documents, such as Bulgaria, Lithuania, Spain and the UK, refer to a process of annual reporting to parliament on progress with implementation.

The Bulgarian National Security Strategy provides the greatest level of detail with regard to democratic engagement and oversight. It describes the roles of both the National Assembly and a “Consultative National Security Council” in this regard, as well as referring to “regional security councils”. It states explicitly that “democratic control on [sic] the security system is exercised by the National Assembly and civil society organisations”.

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22 The public consultation has been criticised by some analysts for the way it was managed. The deadline for submissions to the online consultation process was two weeks before the 96-page document was published. See The Ammerdown Group (2016), Rethinking Security: a discussion paper: https://rethinkingsecurityorguk.files.wordpress.com/2016/16/rethinking-security-a-discussion-paper.pdf. [Accessed February 2018].

23 The Annex records that the President of the Committee carried out consultations both in Paris and outside France, meeting fifty individuals in Paris, and at least sixty individuals during meetings in Berlin, Brussels, London and Washington. The committee also benefitted from a seminar involving 50 young researchers, and a high-level seminar bringing together a further 52 participants, held at the Ecole Militaire on 29–30 August 2017.
It is also possible that states have parliamentary committees facilitating engagement and oversight functions that are not mentioned in the strategy documents. This is the case, for example, in the UK, where the parliamentary Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy plays an oversight role. The Canadian strategy proposes the creation of such a committee.

5.3 National Security Councils

Several strategies refer to the existence, or creation, of National Security Councils. The composition of these bodies varies. Some National Security Councils (Germany, Iceland, Spain, UK) comprise government ministers and (sometimes) senior officials from relevant departments. Other strategies refer to the existence of a National Security Council without clarifying who participates (e.g. Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland and Slovenia). The Canadian model appears to be the most unusual, with the strategy referring to a National Security Advisory Council composed of experts external to the government.

The functions and powers of the different National Security Councils also vary. At least one (Slovenia) appears to have been created in order to facilitate a “comprehensive approach”, with the coordination of different government ministries as its primary function. In other cases (Bulgaria, Spain, Germany, UK), there appears to be a greater role for the Council in determining strategic security priorities and directing implementation. Others seem to be concerned primarily with oversight, in the form of review, evaluation and verification of compliance (Austria, Canada, Iceland, Sweden).

5.4 Citizen engagement

Few strategies provide details of mechanisms to engage citizens in the process of delivering or monitoring the implementation of security strategies.

For example, the German strategy notes that: “The White Paper is… a contribution by the German government to the security policy debate in our country. Its purpose is to intensify and enrich that debate.” It goes on to emphasise this point further:

“The White Paper is also an invitation and a request to actively continue the security policy debate following its publication, as security policy is a permanent endeavour for society as a whole in an open and healthy democracy.”

It does not, however, provide any details of mechanisms or processes to foster this debate.

The Finnish strategy takes a different tack, noting that the purpose of issuing reports on the implementation of strategy is “to gain broad political consensus and the support of the citizens on Finland’s security and defence policy.”

The Austrian strategy notes that:

“The population of Austria shall be continually provided with comprehensive information on the security situation in Austria and abroad. For this purpose, a security policy information plan shall be developed and concrete measures set forth, within the framework of the Austrian “Civic Education” instruction principle.”

Three other strategies (Poland, Romania, Slovakia) also highlight the importance of civic education in enabling active citizen involvement in agreeing and implementing security policy; however, no details are provided as to how this happens in practice.

24 For more information about the UK Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy, see http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/ national-security-strategy/ [Accessed February 2018].
The Canadian Strategy provides the most interesting example of a mechanism to actively facilitate citizens’ input into implementation. Noting the possibility that some communities in Canada “may feel caught in the “front lines” of the struggle against terrorism”, it highlights the creation of a Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security. This body comprises members of Canada’s ethno-cultural and religious communities. Its functions are described as follows:

“It will engage in a long-term dialogue to improve understanding on how to manage security interests in a diverse society and will provide advice to promote the protection of civil order, mutual respect and common understanding. It will be a partnership with all communities to work to ensure there is zero tolerance for terrorism or crimes of hate in Canada. The roundtable will work with the Minister for Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and the Minister of Justice.”

In addition, the Canadian government also organised “national security consultations” in 2016, with the stated purpose of “(engaging) Canadians, stakeholders, and subject-matter experts on issues related to national security and the protection of rights and freedoms.”

QUESTIONS FOR POLICY-MAKERS AND CONCERNED CITIZENS

- What opportunities are there to further democratise the process of determining how security is defined, and the formulation and review of security priorities and policies?
- What steps are necessary to facilitate meaningful public participation in debate about security policy formulation and implementation?
- What mechanisms are necessary for policy processes to incorporate the voices of those most directly affected by security policy?
- Should there be opportunities for individuals from other countries to participate in the formulation and review of security policy? If so, who and why?
- Are there transparent and accessible mechanisms for parliamentarians and citizens to scrutinise the implementation of national security strategies?

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Conclusion:
Options for strengthening future national security strategies

The 20 documents analysed in this study offer many instructive insights into the factors that make for a compelling and coherent national security strategy. Drawing on the strengths of different approaches, five key propositions are offered to those involved in developing strategies, and to those concerned with holding governments to account.

1. Definitions matter

50 per cent of the strategies define the concept of security in public policy. This definition provides the fundamental conceptual clarity essential to any document that purports to be “strategic”. In turn, it increases state accountability for the vision of security it is trying to achieve, and its effectiveness in working towards that outcome. In a world of increasingly transnational security challenges, states should consider setting out their understanding and vision of both ‘national’ and ‘global’ security.

2. Articulate and test assumptions

Assumptions about how security is created play a critical role in determining strategic responses to contemporary challenges. Effective strategies benefit from clearly articulated assumptions, as well as examples of any evidence underpinning them. Crucial assumptions to explore include: prevailing interpretations of historical experience and their relevance to current approaches, the salience of international cooperation as well as military defence in building security; and the intended balance between “negative security” (protection from external violence) and “positive security” (the state’s capacity to provide elements of human security for its population).

Each strategy in this review could be improved by clarifying its understanding of these ideas, and explaining how such assumptions are tested, reviewed and refined.

3. Deepen analysis of security challenges

Analysis of security challenges could be strengthened by an improved balance between attention to long-term challenges, such as economic inequality, climate change and political marginalisation, and short-term challenges such as international terrorism and state-based aggression. While the underlying systemic drivers of insecurity may not present an immediate risk of external violence, there is substantial evidence that they aggravate or perpetuate many short-term risk factors.

Analysis could also acknowledge that security and insecurity are not experienced in a uniform manner by a state’s population. In light of the significance of factors such as gender, race, class and age in shaping such experiences, there is a strong case for considering these differences in the process of strategy formulation and reflecting them in the final content.

4. Strengthen strategic responses

Strategic responses should flow from a comprehensive analysis of security challenges, as well as reflecting assumptions and evidence about how security is built, both nationally and globally. Given the breadth of security challenges, strategies ought to reflect the range of public policy areas that contribute to building security. This includes policies with an international dimension, such as contributions to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and international climate change targets, as well as domestic “social security” policies, such as poverty reduction, socio-economic development, and social inclusion.

Since military capabilities represent only one facet of state responses to contemporary security challenges, the incorporation of defence reviews within national security strategies risks over-emphasising the role of the military. There is a strong argument for undertaking separate defence reviews in a manner that is informed by, but subordinate to, the development of national security strategies.
Only one of the 20 strategies provides clear indications of the intended outcomes of specific actions or investment decisions. Including such information allows progress to be measured, monitored and evaluated, and strategies to be subsequently adjusted and improved.

5. **Strengthen democratic participation and oversight**

All the strategies have scope to strengthen mechanisms for democratic participation and oversight. States can create opportunities for meaningful public consultation, explicitly seeking the input of communities who experience greatest insecurity. Opportunities for parliamentary engagement can also be extended in both the formulation and oversight phase, and care should be taken that the role of a National Security Council strengthens transparency and accountability, rather than the reverse. Finally, governments can create mechanisms to enable citizens’ engagement in respect of the implementation of security policy, particularly on issues where there are tensions and sensitivities. Such efforts make valuable contributions to the democratisation of security policy.
Appendices
### APPENDIX 1: Definitions and goals of national security

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Definition or concept of national security</th>
<th>Goal of national security strategy</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Presents an understanding of security as encompassing both external &amp; internal aspects, as well as civil and military dimensions. Highlights its relevance to diverse policy areas and instruments, including economy &amp; social affairs, integration, development, environment, agriculture, finance, transport &amp; infrastructure, education, information &amp; communication and health.</td>
<td>States that the goal is to make Austria the safest country with the highest quality of life. Social peace is to be strengthened and people in Austria are to be enabled to live a life in security and freedom. Identifies 3 objectives: working towards a situation conducive to security of Austria and the EU; preventing threats from emerging; protecting against &amp; coping with threats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>No precise definition is given.</td>
<td>The strategy aims to guarantee individual rights &amp; freedoms; sovereignty, territorial integrity &amp; unity of the nation; protection of the Constitution and protection of the population &amp; critical infrastructure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Includes a section which conceptualises national security, using a diagram to highlight its relationship with personal security &amp; international security. “National security deals with threats that have the potential to undermine the security of the state or society. These threats generally require a national response, as they are beyond the ability of individuals, communities or provinces to address alone.”</td>
<td>Identifies 3 core interests: 1) protecting Canada &amp; safety of Canadians at home &amp; abroad; 2) ensuring Canada is not a base for threats to its allies; 3) contributing to international security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Defines security as the continuous task “of safeguarding not only sovereignty, territorial integrity &amp; independence, but also the democratic rule of law &amp; the fundamental rights &amp; freedoms of citizens.”</td>
<td>Identifies vital interests: the safeguarding of the Czech Republic’s sovereign existence, territorial integrity, and political independence, and the preservation of all prerequisites of a democratic rule of law, including the guarantee and protection of the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>No precise definition is given.</td>
<td>Defines the goal of Estonian security policy as safeguarding Estonia’s independence &amp; sovereignty, territorial integrity, constitutional order &amp; public safety. Notes that security policy provides the basis for sustainable development and welfare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>No precise definition is given.</td>
<td>Describes the most important tasks as: “safeguard national sovereignty, territorial integrity and basic values, promote the population’s security &amp; well-being and maintain the functioning of society.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>No precise definition is given. The concept of security is linked to vital national interests, the core of which are described as territorial integrity and protection of the population, as well as wider international interests and responsibilities emerging from Treaty obligations.</td>
<td>Describes the most important challenges as ensuring 1) protection of the national territory; 2) capacity to respond to a regional crisis; 3) supremacy in the face of threats from non-state actors in regions of interest to France; and 4) ability to manage any confrontation with other state actors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Offers the following explanation: “Our identity and understanding of security is [...] comprehensive. It is about more than the absence of war and the provision of security for our country and its citizens. On the basis of a united Europe, our ambition is also to improve the conditions of human coexistence in a sustainable manner and to protect and strengthen international human rights norms.”</td>
<td>Identifies key interests as protecting citizens as well as the territorial integrity of the country; protecting the territorial integrity, sovereignty and the citizens of allies; maintaining the rules-based international order on the basis of international law; ensuring prosperity for citizens through a strong German economy as well as free &amp; unimpeded world trade; promoting the responsible use of limited goods &amp; scarce resources throughout the world; deepening European integration &amp; consolidating the transatlantic partnership.</td>
</tr>
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27 The goal is understood as the top-level purpose. In the strategies, this top-level purpose is sometimes described as the goal, the aim, or the objectives; it sometimes described in terms of interests.
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<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Notes that the concept of security is interpreted in increasingly comprehensive manner to include political, military, economic, financial social, as well human &amp; minority rights &amp; environmental concerns.</td>
<td>Identifies fundamental interests: sovereignty, territorial integrity, constitutional order, stability, economic, social &amp; cultural development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>No precise definition is given.</td>
<td>Describes the purpose of policy as to ensure Iceland’s independence and sovereignty, territorial integrity, the safety of its citizens, and the protection of its governmental system and social infrastructure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>Refers to a Law on the Basics of National Security, and notes that national security is perceived as the preservation of Lithuania’s vital interests.</td>
<td>Refers to the goals of national security as being defined in law as follows: to develop &amp; strengthen democracy, to ensure the safe existence of the nation and internal and external security of the State, to deter any potential aggressor and to defend the independence, territorial integrity and constitutional order of the State of Lithuania. Identifies vital interests &amp; primary interests. Vital interests: sovereignty, territorial integrity, constitutional order; civil society, respect for human rights &amp; freedoms, peace &amp; welfare in the state.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Dedicates a chapter to exploring the meaning of national security. Explains that the strategy is concerned with “the protection of society and people within the nation’s territory against internal and external threats.”</td>
<td>Identifies 5 vital interests: territorial security; economic security; ecological security; physical security; social &amp; political stability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>No precise definition is given, but notes that “the Republic of Poland ensures the security of the state and of citizens by creating conditions to pursue national interests and fulfil strategic objectives.”</td>
<td>Defines the goal of the strategy: “to ensure the stable development of the country and an improvement in the living conditions of its citizens”. National security interests are defined as: possession of effective national security capacities; strong international position of Poland; individual and collective protection of citizens against threats to life and health; individual rights &amp; freedoms; and ensuring a sustainable and balanced socio-economic development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>National security is described as &quot;the prerequisite for the existence of the Romanian nation and state, and the main goal of democratic governance; it encompasses the national values, interests and objectives. National security is a fundamental right that stems from the people’s full sovereignty; it is based on constitutional order and is fulfilled in the context of regional, Euro-Atlantic and global security.”</td>
<td>The goal of strategy is to meet the need and obligation of legitimate protection against the risks and threats that endanger fundamental human rights and freedoms, as well as the foundations of the Romanian state’s existence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>No precise definition is given.</td>
<td>Notes that the role of the security policy is to actively exert influence on the security environment with a view to protect, promote, safeguard, defend and assert security interests of the Slovak Republic. Lists security interests as: guaranteeing security of citizens &amp; their rights and freedoms; territorial integrity; sovereignty; democracy; rule of law; market economy; prerequisites for sustainable development; strengthening transatlantic partnership; improving effectiveness of international organisations; developing good relations with other states; contributing to global freedom, democracy, peace, human rights.</td>
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<td>State</td>
<td>Definition or concept of national security</td>
<td>Goal of national security</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>No precise definition is given, but the document notes that security policy consists primarily of foreign policy, defence policy, and internal security &amp; the policy of protection against natural and other disasters. It further highlights the relevance of security to other areas of public policy as part of a “multidimensional understanding of the national security concept”.</td>
<td>Describes the fundamental purpose of national security policy as ensuring the highest possible level of human security, appropriate social development &amp; welfare of the Slovenian society, preserving the national identity of the Slovenian nation as well as fulfilling international obligations and contributing to peacekeeping and strengthening of security and stability in the international community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Defined as “state action aimed at protecting the freedom and well-being of its citizens, guaranteeing the defence of Spain and its constitutional principles and values, and contributing together with our partners and allies to international security in compliance with the commitments undertaken.”</td>
<td>Beyond the definition, no specific goal of the strategy is provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>No precise definition is given, although the foreword describes security as incorporating various dimensions – being equipped to respond to military threats, as well as protection against diseases, protection from terrorism and organised crime, secure transport, food and energy supplies, opposing devastating climate change and supporting initiatives for peace &amp; development.</td>
<td>The goal of the strategy is “to safeguard the life &amp; health of the population, functionality of society &amp; ability to maintain fundamental values such as democracy, rule of law, human rights &amp; fundamental freedoms.” It notes that in order to achieve these objectives, the country’s political independence and autonomy must be secured and territorial integrity must be maintained. The strategy goes on to list 12 national interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>No precise definition is given.</td>
<td>The vision underpinning the strategy is described as “a secure and prosperous United Kingdom, with global reach and influence”. Identifies 3 strategic objectives: 1) protect our people; 2) project our global influence; and 3) promote our prosperity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>No precise definition is given.</td>
<td>Defines 4 national interests: 1) protect our people, homeland and the American way of life; 2) promote American prosperity; 3) preserve peace through strength; and 4) advance American influence</td>
</tr>
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27 Until 2017, the website of MI5, the UK Security Services, used to display the following information regarding the definition of national security: “The term ‘national security’ is not specifically defined by UK or European law. It has been the policy of successive Governments and the practice of Parliament not to define the term, in order to retain the flexibility necessary to ensure that the use of the term can adapt to changing circumstances. As a matter of Government policy, the term ‘national security’ is taken to refer to the security and well-being of the United Kingdom as a whole. The ‘nation’ in this sense is not confined to the UK as a geographical or political entity but extends to its citizens, wherever they may be, and its system of government.” [Accessed January 2017, but no longer available].

28 While not defined in the US strategy, National Security is defined in the Department of Defence Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms as: “A collective term encompassing both national defense and foreign relations of the United States with the purpose of gaining: a. A military or defense advantage over any foreign nation or group of nations; b. A favorable foreign relations position; or c. A defense posture capable of successfully resisting hostile or destructive action from within or without, overt or covert.”
## APPENDIX 2: Summary of states’ strategic response frameworks

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Strategic response framework</th>
<th>Alliances</th>
<th>Noteworthy features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Presents a “comprehensive approach”, comprising 1) internal security; 2) defence policy; 3) civil–military cooperation and 4) diplomacy and hosting of international organisations.</td>
<td>Describes itself as a neutral country. The EU is described as the “central framework of action” of Austria’s security policy. The UN, NATO and OSCE also feature strongly.</td>
<td>Austria aims to be active within the UN on crisis management and civilian protection. It has an active interest in mediation. The strategy includes detailed criteria for participation in international missions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Identifies policy priorities starting with good governance, the assurance of a fair trial and promotion of lawful business. Then clusters actions in relation to the following priorities: financial and economic security; social security; energy security; man–nature relationships; justice and home affairs; external security policy; defence policy.</td>
<td>Strong commitment to both NATO and the EU as tools for strengthening stability and security.</td>
<td>Unusually strong emphasis on strengthening internal governance systems &amp; practices. Section on social security highlights actions to improve healthcare, integration &amp; relations between different minority ethnic groups &amp; modernisation of primary and secondary education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>6 key security activities: intelligence; emergency planning &amp; management; public health emergencies; transportation security; border security; international security.</td>
<td>Alliances are referred to in the context of key security activities &amp; actions. Emphasis on the USA.</td>
<td>Limited focus on military capabilities, except for brief reference to their need to be flexible and responsive to the evolving nature of threats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>4 lines of action: active involvement in collective defence through participation in NATO and the EU; prevention and suppression of specified security threats; an economic framework for safeguarding security interests; maintaining a robust institutional framework (diplomatic, military, emergency services).</td>
<td>Czech security policy is described as being governed by its own interests, as well as solidarity with other NATO and EU-member states.</td>
<td>The strategy highlights a strong preference for joint actions within international organisations &amp; groupings of states, that advocate peaceful conflict resolution, a collective approach to security &amp; mutually beneficial economic cooperation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>4 directions: foreign policy; defence policy; internal security; resilience and cohesion of society.</td>
<td>Strong emphasis on participation in NATO and EU as key to ensuring security in Estonia.</td>
<td>Defence policy is framed around “national defence”. Estonia maintains a voluntary “Defence League” in addition to its armed forces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Policy is framed along 2 lines: securing the vital functions of society and crisis management. Vital functions are described as management of government affairs, international activity, defence capability, internal security, functioning of the economy &amp; infrastructure, citizens’ income security &amp; psychological resilience.</td>
<td>Strong emphasis on the EU, and to a lesser extent, NATO.</td>
<td>The policy outlines the desired “end state” in relation to each of the vital functions of society, and then sets out the strategic tasks required to accomplish this.</td>
</tr>
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<td>State</td>
<td>Strategic response framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>The strategy seeks to build greater European strategic autonomy, increase the strength of its diplomatic capacity, reinforce its military industrial and technological base, consolidate its five strategic functions (deterrence, protection, knowledge &amp; anticipation, intervention and prevention) and adapt the Armed Forces for the challenges of the future</td>
<td>Seeks increased European cooperation and integration through the EU’s Common Defence and Security Policy, as well as full engagement with NATO. Stresses commitment to strengthening multilateralism &amp; importance of UN.</td>
<td>Distinctive focus on building “European strategic autonomy”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Priorities: 1) strengthening NATO and the EU; 2) ensuring supply line, communications, transport &amp; energy security; 3) early recognition, prevention &amp; resolution of crises &amp; conflicts; and 4) commitment to rules-based international order. A second section of the strategy covers plans for the evolution of the Armed Forces.</td>
<td>Emphasis on playing an active role in the UN, strengthening NATO’s European pillar and strengthening the EU, including working towards a European Security &amp; Defence Union.</td>
<td>Strong emphasis on multilateral action, and specifically on building resilience, supporting capacities of fragile states to prevent &amp; manage crises; and human security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Membership of NATO and the EU seen as central to ensuring &amp; contributing to security. Strategy outlines proposed responses to regional conflicts, proliferation of WMD, terrorism, financial volatility, cyber &amp; energy security vulnerabilities, climate change, natural &amp; industrial disasters, organised crime, drug trafficking, migration &amp; extremist groups. Actions need to be underpinned by social &amp; economic foundations &amp; broad-based public support.</td>
<td>Strong focus on NATO and EU alliances. Brief mentions of the UN and OSCE (principally in relation to international missions).</td>
<td>The section on the social foundations of security policy highlights the importance of managing Hungary’s social and demographic problems – particularly mitigating deep poverty &amp; social marginalisation. Supports the strengthening of multilateral cooperation. Stresses the importance of international development in addressing root causes of insecurity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>Comprises three core elements: active foreign policy, defence policy &amp; civil protection. 11 equal “points of emphasis”: 1) international cooperation; 2) environmental security in the Arctic; 3) membership of NATO; 4) defence agreement with the US; 5) cooperation with Nordic countries; 6) preparedness of defence infrastructure; 7) civil protection, especially in relation to climate change; 8) cyber security; 9) terrorism &amp; organised crime; 10) ensure Iceland’s waters are free of nuclear weapons; and 11) establishing a national security council.</td>
<td>Cooperation with NATO Allies, the US as per the 1951 Defence Agreement, and the Nordic countries.</td>
<td>Iceland does not maintain its own Armed Forces. Reference is made to the possibility of declaring Iceland a nuclear weapon-free zone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>Priorities are clustered into 1) foreign and defence policy and 2) internal security policy. Foreign &amp; defence policy includes active membership of NATO and the EU; strengthening a range of bilateral relationships, including with Russia; strengthening defence capabilities and diplomatic capacity. Internal security policy priorities relate to strengthening energy &amp; cyber security, combatting corruption, improving financial security, ensuring social security &amp; health care, fostering cultural &amp; national identity.</td>
<td>Emphasis on NATO and the EU.</td>
<td>Internal security policy contains a substantial section on social security &amp; health care, including reducing social exclusion, enabling job creation, strengthening health care &amp; prevention of addictive disorders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>The Netherlands approach to its NSS is to make a biannual selection &amp; in-depth response to key themes that merit long-term strategic attention. The key themes chosen at the time of the 2007 publication of the NSS were: climate change; polarisation &amp; radicalisation and energy supply assurance.</td>
<td>Emphasises the importance of cooperation within the frameworks of the UN, EU, NATO and OSCE.</td>
<td>The document contains very little detail on proposed civil or military response strategies, which are covered in other government policy documents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Poland    | Identifies 4 types of actions:  
Defensive actions – diplomatic & military actions to ensure favourable international conditions, cyber defence, intelligence-gathering, defence production  
Protective actions – effective functioning of civil institutions such as the judiciary, critical infrastructure, health systems  
Social actions – strengthening national identity, education for security, social security  
USA seen as next most important relationship. Reference also made to the UN and OSCE. | The framework of actions (defensive, protective, social and economic) offers an interesting comprehensive approach. |
<p>| Romania   | Describes the strategic priorities as contributing to international security; building a new European &amp; Euro-Atlantic identity; increasing regional security, homeland security; good governance; strengthening socio-economic activity; modernizing institutions; developing critical infrastructure | Strong emphasis on NATO and, to a lesser extent, the EU. (NB the document was published prior to Romania’s accession to the EU) | Highlights the importance of increasing stability &amp; security in the Black Sea region, and its intention to contribute through initiatives such as the Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation. |
| Slovakia  | Describes a security system with components of foreign policy, economic, defence, internal, social rescue and environmental instruments. Lists actions related to each of the security challenges identified in its context analysis | Stresses importance of UN, NATO, EU, OSCE, plus various other multilateral organisations &amp; relevant states. | The strategy explains Slovakia’s purpose and objectives in relation to its engagement with various international organisations. |</p>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>4 primary components: foreign, defence, internal security, protection against natural &amp; other disasters. Also notes security implications of many other areas of public policy. Goes on to highlight responses to challenges previously categorised as global, transnational, national and “factors of uncertainty”.</td>
<td>EU and NATO member. Refers also to active engagement with UN, OSCE, Council of Europe and other international organisations.</td>
<td>Foreign policy stresses importance of contributing to the peaceful resolution of disputes, cooperation, observance of human rights standards and importance of low carbon sustainable development. Strong emphasis on responding to climate change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>12 priority areas of action listed – each of which responds directly to one of the strategy’s 12 identified risks. Each priority area has its own objective, followed by 4–11 “strategic lines of action” in relation to objectives. There are no objectives or lines of action in relation to the “threat multipliers” outlined in the chapter analysing security challenges.</td>
<td>Strong focus on strengthening the EU. Key regions: the Mediterranean &amp; Latin America. Relatively limited focus on NATO.</td>
<td>Limited coverage of military capabilities, outside the first action area on “national defence”. Section on economic and financial security highlights importance of a model of sustainable economic growth and a social and employment framework to reduce unrest and foster social peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>The strategy identifies measures to tackle eight priority areas: military threats, information &amp; cyber security; terrorism &amp; violent extremism; organised crime; energy supplies; transport &amp; infrastructure; health &amp; climate change.</td>
<td>Emphasis on increased EU integration and principled foreign policy as critical to security. As a militarily non-aligned state, Sweden is a NATO partner. Highlights important role for OSCE, especially in the Baltic region.</td>
<td>Measures to respond to terrorism &amp; violent extremism focus on addressing underlying causes, strengthening human rights &amp; freedoms, democracy &amp; gender equality, as well as longer-term conflict prevention. Sweden’s response to climate change includes the ambition to be one of the world’s first “fossil-free welfare nations”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>3-pronged strategy: 1) Protect our people – deterrence, development of military &amp; counter-terrorism capabilities; 2) Project our global influence – diplomacy, development, strengthening the international order and tackling conflict &amp; instability overseas; 3) Promote our prosperity: economic opportunity, innovation; defence &amp; security industry and skills.</td>
<td>Strong emphasis on NATO and the US, plus relationships with France &amp; Germany. References to EU’s role in sanctions, &amp; the referendum on UK membership. Emphasises the importance of the UN in shaping the rules-based international order.</td>
<td>As the Strategy incorporates the Defence Review, there is extensive detail on the development of military and counter-terrorism capabilities. Section 2 on Projecting Global influence includes emphasis on strengthening human rights, promoting women’s roles in peace &amp; security, preventing sexual violence in conflict and tackling the drivers of instability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>4-pronged strategy: 1) Protect our people – secure borders, defeat terrorism &amp; organised crime, improve cyber security, increase resilience; 2) promote US prosperity – improve economy, build strong &amp; fair trading relationships, lead in research, strengthen innovation base, embrace energy dominance; 3) preserve peace through strength – renew military capabilities, strengthen diplomacy; 4) advance American influence – development assistance, shaping multilateral forums, championing American values.</td>
<td>Dedicats a chapter to describing intended approach to relationships with key actors in each region of the globe.</td>
<td>Of all the strategies, the USA contains the strongest emphasis on domestic economic interests and objectives.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 3: Mechanisms for democratic engagement and accountability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Consultation</th>
<th>Parliamentary engagement or oversight</th>
<th>National Security Council</th>
<th>Citizen engagement or oversight</th>
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<td>Czech Republic</td>
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✔ Denotes the existence of information within the strategy about this activity or mechanism.

✶ Denotes reference to the importance of citizen engagement or education, but provides no details of mechanisms to facilitate or deliver this.

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31 The data presented in this table reflects the information presented in each state’s national security strategy about the existence of the different mechanisms for democratic engagement and accountability. However, it is possible that some states have also adopted these mechanisms without referring to them in the strategy documents.
APPENDIX 4:
Bibliography of National Security Strategies

The links to online versions of the following documents were all accessed in February 2018:


**Canada**: Securing an open society: Canada's national security policy (2004)  

**Czech Republic**: Security Strategy of the Czech Republic (2015)  


**France**: Strategic Defence and Security Review (2017)  
https://www.defense.gouv.fr/content/download/520198/8733095/file/DEFENCE%20AND%20NATIONAL%20SECURITY%20STRATEGIC%20REVIEW%202017.pdf

**Germany**: White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr (2016)  

**Hungary**: Hungary's National Security Strategy (2012)  

**Iceland**: Parliamentary Resolution on a National Security Policy for Iceland (2016)  

**Lithuania**: National Security Strategy (2012)  


**Poland**: National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland (2014)  


**Slovakia**: Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic (2005)  


**Spain**: The National Security Strategy: sharing a common project (2013)  

**Sweden**: National Security Strategy (2017)  
https://www.government.se/4aa5de/contentassets/0e04164d7eed462aa511ab03c890372e/national-security-strategy.pdf


**USA**: National Security Strategy (2017)  

**Key resources**

Many national security strategies can be accessed via these websites:


**Further reading**

The Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces.  


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