
BRITAIN RECONNECTED

**A FOREIGN POLICY
FOR SECURITY AND
PROSPERITY AT HOME**

DAVID LAMMY MP



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Summary

- In this publication, David Lammy MP explores the three major trends he sees as shaping the foreign policy landscape the next Labour government hopes to inherit: geopolitical competition, weaponised interdependence and the blurring of the distinction between foreign and domestic policy.
- He then sets out three principles in response to these trends that will guide the next Labour government's approach to foreign policy. These are: putting pragmatism over ideology; making foreign policy choices with working people at the forefront of our minds; and reconnecting Britain with its allies and partners to take back control for the British people.
- Lammy argues that the Conservatives have left Britain increasingly disconnected from our closest allies, with a tarnished international reputation and reduced influence in the world. Labour believes it does not have to be this way – and that with the right priorities, the right partnerships, and the right values, the UK can, and will, thrive. He sets out a new mission statement for the FCDO based on five goals that are explored in the remaining chapters. Together, they will create a Britain Reconnected, delivering security abroad and prosperity at home.

Key policies include:

- A new joint FCDO-Home Office State Threats Cell, a Transatlantic Anti-Corruption Council to coordinate the fight against corruption, an anti-kleptocracy summit, and a new UK-EU security pact to protect the UK's security.
- A supply chain working group within the G7, a global supply chain commission in the United Kingdom, a new focus on regulatory diplomacy, and using the UK-EU 2025 Trade and Cooperation Agreement review to increase the UK's prosperity.
- A clean power alliance of developed and developing nations committed to 100 per cent clean power by 2030, a push to make climate action the fourth pillar of the UN and a new law against ecocide to help tackle the climate crisis.
- Restoring the UK's leadership in international development with a new model that can meet the challenges of the 21st century and ensures that diplomacy and development are related but distinct.
- A commitment to the rule of law, an open-ended campaign to reform the UN Security Council and reform of the FCDO around its new mission statement to revitalise UK diplomacy.

FOREWORD

When my friend Keir Starmer phoned me up one Monday and asked me to become Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, I thought of my parents.

My father emigrated from Guyana to London in 1956 and my mother made the same journey later, in 1971. Both were part of the Windrush generation. They were, and saw themselves as, British citizens relocating to the 'Mother Country'. Both had relatives who had served in the second world war. Both grew up reading Charles Dickens, Jane Austen and Arthur Conan Doyle. And both were obsessed with the monarchy, lining our house in Tottenham with glitzy royal memorabilia. My mother was a master of West Indian cuisine, but the last meal she ever cooked, while sick with ovarian cancer, was roast beef, with Yorkshire pudding and all the trimmings.

I thought of my parents not only because of their pride in their British identities, but also because of the hardship they experienced on

these islands. My appointment was a modest but significant reflection of the progress the UK has made. The son of parents welcomed by signs which read 'No Blacks, No Irish, No Dogs' had been allowed to represent the Labour party, and hopefully one day the country, on the world stage.

My view of Britain's place in the world comes partly out of my parents' sustained optimism for what a modern, multicultural Britain can be, despite its challenges. This is the spirit I plan to take to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. With an honest understanding of our shared past and present, we can have confidence in our collective future.

There is so much to be upbeat about. The UK is home to world-leading universities, scientists at the cutting edge of new technologies, vibrant cultural industries that continue to shape the global conversation, and some of the most dynamic service sectors in the world. At its best, Britain has been a powerful force for good in the world, from shaping international institutions

like NATO and the UN, to the last Labour government's role in securing peace on the island of Ireland through the Good Friday Agreement, to playing a leadership role in the stewardship of the international economy in the wake of the 2008 financial crash.

But we must not be naïve. In a world increasingly shaped by geopolitical competition and regional blocs of

power and trade, we can't build on our strengths by going it alone. That is why with Labour in government, Britain will be proudly internationalist. Our vision is of a Britain Reconnected, for security and prosperity at home. My parents, David and Rosalind, would have proudly flown the flag for this future. That is why I am dedicating the text that follows to them.

CHAPTER 1

A DIVIDED WORLD AND A BRITAIN DISCONNECTED

In January 2022, a few weeks before Vladimir Putin launched his full-scale invasion of Ukraine, I stood in front of the the Wall of Remembrance of the Fallen for Ukraine in Kyiv. It was covered by the faces of those killed since the conflict in the Donbas began in 2014. A veteran told me of the agonising pain he felt about those commemorated as fallen heroes. Despite receiving foreboding briefings from the UK's intelligence services on privy council terms before my visit, I could never have predicted the scale of the destruction in Ukraine today.

Estimates suggest 100,000 Ukrainians have been killed since 24 February 2022, with tens of thousands of homes, schools and hospitals – and hundreds of cultural sites – turned to rubble. Europe has seen the largest refugee flows since the second world war. Across the world, the impact of the war has been felt through sky-rocketing energy prices and rising food insecurity.

On many measures, the UK and its allies and partners have shown remarkable unity over the past year in providing military, diplomatic and economic support for Ukraine, from

economic sanctions coordinated on a scale previously unthinkable to the provision of tanks, rocket launchers, mortar grenades, assault rifles, anti-tank weapons, helicopters and military training for Ukrainian forces. In the vote for the first UN resolution condemning Putin's invasion in March 2022, 141 countries voted for the resolution, while five voted against it and 35 abstained.¹ However, these figures disguise the fact that less than half of the world's population live in countries that supported the US resolution to condemn Russia's actions.² The positions taken in the first UN vote reflect a broader fracturing of the world order and a new age of geopolitical competition.

This is the first of the three global trends that make the foreign policy landscape the next Labour government plans to inherit more divided than at any moment since the peak of the Cold War. We no longer live in a unipolar world defined by the hegemony of the UK's most important bilateral ally, the United States. Instead, the world has become multipolar. In 1997, when Labour last took office, the UK economy was almost double the size of China's. Today,

China's economy is five times the size of our own. Its Belt and Road initiative – spanning the globe, from Jakarta to Nairobi to Rotterdam – has enabled it to invest in more than 150 countries since 2013, seen most clearly in the thousands of kilometres of railways and highways and hundreds of ports and power facilities it has supported in African nations.³ China is now the top trading partner of 120 countries in the world and, in 2022, 37 per cent of poorer countries' debt payments were owed to it. China's rising economic and political power is the most significant change in global politics in the last three decades. China's growth has been matched by greater repression at home and more assertive behaviour abroad – in Hong Kong and Xinjiang, Taiwan and the South China Sea. Meanwhile it has singled out our allies – like Australia and Lithuania – for hostile treatment and undermined the economic level playing field.

At the heart of this new age of geopolitical competition is an accelerating rivalry between the US and China that is leading to a conscious decoupling of technology, knowledge, and, in some areas, trade. China's authoritarian turn has made many countries reconsider the nature of their relationship with Beijing. The US and China are competing fiercely for influence across the world, instrumentalising their economic power even while bilateral trade between the two remains vast. This has already limited the capacity for cooperation on issues like the climate crisis which require common solutions from the world's two largest emitters.

The diminishing space for common ground, or even dialogue, creates the risk that this becomes a systemic, generational struggle between the US and China, with all of the dangers that entails.

The race between China and the United States is only part of the geopolitical story. As the US has become more focused on national resilience and less on other parts of the globe, rising powers – including Turkey, Iran, Indonesia, Brazil, Nigeria, South Africa and Saudi Arabia – have become more influential in their regions. India is emboldened by sustained growth in the face of global economic instability, leaving it, if this trend were to continue, on track to become the world's third largest economy by 2030.⁴ Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Turkey demonstrates the increased leverage of middle powers and their willingness to use it positively and negatively. On the one hand, it helped broker the deal to allow grain to be transported across the Black Sea, assisting Ukraine and the global community. On the other, it has exploited Finland and Sweden's NATO applications to extract political concessions, unhelpfully delaying their accession, while its imports from Russia have doubled in value.⁵

Meanwhile, the flows of trade between countries are shifting from the era of globalisation Labour governed through in its last period of office. It is not that trade is reducing. In fact, many economists still expect trade to continue to rise significantly in the next decade. Instead, we are living in an era of what former US Treasury Secretary

Larry Summers has called ‘intelligent globalisation’, characterised by the increased regionalisation of trade in goods, services and data, facilitated through regional structures like the EU Single Market, African Continental Free Trade Area, the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership and the US-Mexico-Canada agreement. Post-Brexit Britain will have to be agile and creative to thrive in this more regionalised global economy – or else risk falling between two stools and facing growing barriers to our prosperity.

The second global trend shaping our world is weaponised interdependence, a term coined by political scientists Henry Farrell and Abraham Newman.⁶ The idea that, as nations become more interconnected and interdependent, they become more vulnerable to manipulation and coercion, sounds paradoxical. Indeed, in 1933, the British journalist Sir Norman Angell won a Nobel Peace Prize for *The Great Illusion*, a book which argued that economic interdependence would make war obsolete.⁷ Yet today, in a world of deepening geopolitical competition, economic interconnections have become instrumentalised as tools of state power, as shown sharply by the war on our continent. Putin has leveraged Russia’s control over energy supplies to exert pressure on Ukraine and its supporters; we, in turn, have rightly used sanctions and technology controls to stunt Russia’s economy and undermine its war effort. It is not only state actors that weaponise interdependence. Multinational companies have joined

in too, with social media companies using their power over public narratives to cut off Russian political advertisements and state media. The concept applies much more broadly than to Ukraine. The US is taking extensive steps to reduce its dependence on and exposure to some Chinese technology. China slapped sanctions on Australia for calling for a global inquiry into the origins of Covid-19. Global issues like climate change and the pandemic have been used as tools for some countries to pursue their interests.

The third global trend is one that brings the other two together, and is crucial in understanding how the UK’s approach to foreign policy must shift: there has been a blurring of the distinction between foreign and domestic policy. As President Biden has said: “There’s no longer a bright line” between the two.⁸

In every village, town and city across the UK, this is visible. I am best known in politics for being the MP for Tottenham in north London, the place where I am proud to have been born and grown up in. The impact of globalisation on Tottenham is self-evident, in the sounds, smells and rhythm of Green Lanes, and the gleaming new Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, where it is not just me and 60,000 others in the crowd, but millions watching across the world. What is less well understood is the impact of global trends on towns and cities like Peterborough, a place where I spent many of my teenage years as a chorister at a state boarding school. In my book *Tribes*, published in 2020, I argued that the world’s impact on

this archetype of middle England has been just as vast. A couple of years ago, I went back to have lunch with Clive and Cathy, the parents of my best friend from school. I spent countless weekends at their home as a child, and I have fond memories of playing football in their garden. Over tea in their bungalow, they told me how at home they were in Peterborough when they were young, feeling comfortable letting their children walk around the city on their own. Now, they tell me they feel too insecure on their street to walk home at night themselves. Most of the families they knew on their street moved out long ago, eroding their sense of community, while the tentacles of international criminal gangs have become visible through drug and violent crime rising on their streets.⁹ Clive and Cathy did not only feel insecure about the crime that has become a blight on their lives. They also felt powerless as they watched their grandchildren struggle to find decent jobs. When their son, my friend, left school at 16 after not getting the grades for sixth form, he quickly found work at London Brick, a nearby firm that dominated British brick production for much of the 20th century. Today, London Brick produces a fraction of the bricks it once made, with new building materials sourced more cheaply from elsewhere. London Brick's fall in output is symptomatic of declining manufacturing across the UK, as cheap labour abroad and technological innovation have steadily replaced the manual jobs that once supported so many British families.

It is not that Clive and Cathy were craving the return of the industrial

workplaces of the past, but they could feel the impact of the gap they had left and Britain's failure to replace them with the jobs of the future.

This is not only down to domestic policy failures in policing, education and macroeconomics, of which there have been many. It also comes from a failure of this Conservative government to grasp the very real impacts of foreign policy on all our communities. There is an old belief in Westminster that the public does not vote on foreign affairs. In a world this interdependent, that is no longer true. People vote on the price of their bills, which have been driven up by the brutal war on our continent, but also made worse by a decade-long failure to accelerate Britain's energy transition and to end our dependency on fossil fuel autocrats. People vote on their job prospects, which have been hurt by the Conservatives' poor Brexit deal and the failure to develop an industrial strategy to compete in a global race for renewable technologies and green jobs. And people vote on how safe they feel, which has been hurt by the Tories' abrasive approach to diplomacy, which has weakened our global alliances at a time when we most need them, and chronic mismanagement of the defence budget, which has produced a decade of decline in our armed forces.

I believe that with the right choices and right values Britain can and will thrive in this divided world. However, the last decade has shown that the Conservatives are unable to chart a course for security and prosperity amid these global crosscurrents. They have run head-first into the risks and been unable

to grasp the opportunities. At the root of this are three failures. First, they have governed by exploiting division and repeatedly showed their willingness to place short-term party political interests over long-term strategy. Second, fuelled by a false nostalgia for a mythic past in which Britain should stand in splendid isolation, they have undermined the UK's relationships around the world, most of all in Europe, leaving us diplomatically disconnected. And third, they have mismanaged and degraded the tools of our influence in the world, be that our development expertise, climate leadership, or the diplomatic excellence of the Foreign Office itself. The result has been to leave Britain disconnected from our allies, from our major markets, and from our partners within multilateral institutions. Our global standing has taken a hit, and that has put Britain on a path of decline, with too many people left behind.

The Conservatives have a blind spot over the importance of foreign policy to Britain's domestic success and it is making our communities feel increasingly lost – and disconnected. Successive Conservative governments have made poor choices and shown bad leadership since they came to power in 2010. But, in truth, the roots of this failure began to sprout much earlier, with the dawn of the neoliberal era under Margaret Thatcher. As I wrote in *Tribes*, lifelong careers and traditional class structures broke down with the deindustrialisation of our towns and cities, leaving many people feeling like they had lost their identities. The effects of the 2008 financial crisis

compounded this feeling that world events were taking control out of the hands of communities. The longing for belonging after an age of individualism explains the tribalism the Conservative party exploited in its aftermath. Using Europe as a punching bag for domestic political gain, the Tories sought to use division to give communities a sense of belonging defined in opposition to an *other*, instead of using Britain's diplomatic influence to improve their lives at home. This is less about the act of leaving the European Union, and more about the way it has been done.

Rather than seeking to bring the country together since 2020, the Conservatives have sought to profit from Brexit divisions, engaging in petty spats with the EU while proposing to unilaterally break the withdrawal treaty that they themselves had negotiated. The lowest ebb came when Liz Truss, in her successful campaign to become the leader of the Conservative party, said, to rapturous applause from Tory members, that 'the jury's out' on whether the French President, Emmanuel Macron, is a 'friend or foe'. The fact that the issue was only solved when Rishi Sunak finally did what Labour had been calling for – negotiating pragmatically – shows how futile this populist spasm was. Meanwhile, this trend continues with the Conservatives' dangerous attack on the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty that was originally envisioned by Winston Churchill and proudly drafted in large part by British lawyers.¹⁰

Strong British foreign policy has always started with secure alliances

in Europe. And, ever since the creation of the English and then the British state, our security has depended on strong relationships with our closest neighbours. Indeed, the oldest continuous treaty in the world is between England and Portugal, signed in 1373.¹¹ It kept Portugal neutral in the second world war, secured the Azores base to help counter U-boats, and supported our position during the Falklands War. The Conservatives often hark back to the past when they advocate a minimal relationship with Europe, but it is they who have broken with our diplomatic traditions and damaged our position. Labour believes there is a way to make our relationship with the EU work from outside of its structures, but the Conservatives have so far failed to find it.

It is not only the government's handling of our post-Brexit relationship with Europe which has led to Britain's disconnection. Across vast swathes of the world, Britain's influence has waned under the Conservatives. When I meet with ambassadors and politicians from the Middle East, they tell me they feel as though the UK has neglected them. The Conservatives axed the full-time role of the Middle East minister, slashed £90m of conflict prevention work in the Middle East and North Africa, and cut half of the funding for de-mining in countries like Lebanon and Syria.¹² Caribbean leaders express similar sentiments, noting the UK's weak response to hurricanes that have struck the region. In Africa, the UK government has no coherent strategy, failed to show sufficient support over Covid-19, has consistently missed its commit-

ments to climate finance, and has cut bilateral development funding. There have been just three visits to Africa by Conservative prime ministers since the beginning of 2014; while French President Emmanuel Macron has been to the continent 19 times since 2017.

No image is more telling of the UK's disconnection than that of the then Foreign Secretary and now Deputy Prime Minister, Dominic Raab, lounging on a beach in Greece as the Taliban took Kabul. The Foreign Affairs Select Committee rightly said the manner of the UK's withdrawal from Afghanistan was "a disaster and a betrayal of our allies that will damage the UK's interests for years to come."¹³ Despite having 18 months to prepare for a possible evacuation, the UK government failed to shape or influence the US decision to withdraw, to foresee the Taliban's takeover, or to ready the UK's army for the evacuation of Afghans who had worked tirelessly to support the UK.

Much has been made of the government's so-called 'Indo-Pacific tilt.' However, there is mounting evidence to suggest that it is more rhetoric than substance. The UK's diplomatic presence in key countries in the region – including India, Pakistan, and China – has been slashed by up to 50 per cent over the past eight years. Across the region, nearly 100 diplomatic posts have been lost. Ministerial visits to the Indo-Pacific, where both the US and China are competing for relevance and leadership, are running at barely a third of the peak number in the years before the pandemic, despite the removal of most Covid restrictions.

By 2050, Asia is likely to comprise more than half of the global economy, and the next Labour government will properly recognise the region's crucial importance. But this is not about 'tilting' one way or the other. Maintaining serious, long-term strategic approaches to the Indo-Pacific, through arrangements like AUKUS, is an essential response to the shifting centre of gravity in world affairs. And it cannot come at the cost of our security commitments in Europe or mean that we can safely ignore our own neighbourhood.

Finally, the government has undermined the tools of British influence abroad. First, it has damaged Britain's leadership on international development. One of the last Labour government's biggest achievements was to forge a new political consensus in this area. We argued that as one of the world's largest economies, this was not only the moral approach, but that it was in the interests of the British public's security and prosperity to play our part in reducing poverty, suffering and conflict. This Conservative government squandered that leadership, overseeing a mismanaged merger between the Department for International Development and the FCO, cutting our development target from 0.7 per cent to 0.5 per cent – stripping billions from vital aid programmes in the process – and then bailing out the broken asylum system via the ODA budget. By some estimates, more than half of the UK's bilateral official development assistance is now spent in the UK, much of it to house

asylum seekers waiting months for decisions.

Britain's soft power has also taken a hit. The BBC World Service, an unparalleled resource that reaches nearly 400m people a week globally, has had to cut back jobs and services since the FCDO ceased to fund the bulk of its operations. The British Council has had to close 20 offices around the world. Our reputation for the rule of law has been severely undermined by successive, intentional, attempts to breach it.

Facing this new era of geopolitical competition, weaponised interdependence and the merging of foreign and domestic policy, we need a new blueprint for success. My vision is of a "Britain Reconnected". It is self-evident in today's world that no country can pursue its interests or secure its objectives alone. Britain is always a stronger and a more effective force for good when we work with others. This pursuit of coalition-building is more critical than ever as we enter an era of intense geopolitical competition, where international institutions are declining in influence. A Labour government's foreign policy will be routed in a diverse network of alliances and partnerships as the best route to defending our interests and advancing our values. We will ensure Britain is secure at home and strong abroad. A confident country, outside of the EU but a leader in Europe once again. A reliable partner, a dependable ally and a good neighbour. NATO's leading European power. A development superpower once more. At the vanguard of climate action. Driving forward the industries of the future

for Britain. A diplomatic entrepreneur. And a country that keeps its word.

In government, we will announce a new mission statement for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office designed around five clear goals.

1. A Britain reconnected to defend the UK's security, with strong armed forces, strong alliances and partnerships, and resilience against 21st-century threats.
2. A Britain reconnected to champion the UK's prosperity, and lead the industries of the future.
3. A Britain reconnected for climate action, turning our response into an engine of growth.
4. A Britain reconnected for international development, helping to promote the UK's security, health and jobs in the process.
5. A Britain reconnected for diplomacy, to re-establish the UK as a trusted, reliable and influential partner while protecting Britons abroad.

Together, these priorities can create a Britain Reconnected, for security and prosperity at home.

Underlying each of these goals are three political principles. The first is that the Conservatives were right that our foreign policy should seek to take back control for the British people. However, they were fundamentally wrong to suggest this means we must go it alone. As the world splits into blocs, China, America and the EU are increasingly developing policies which help them domestically, while shutting others out. The danger is that the Tories' self-isolation is occurring at precisely

the moment when size matters, because great powers are increasingly seeking to reduce their foreign dependency, particularly in energy and technology. Labour's goal is to find a strong place for Britain in this new world order – rather than being isolated from all the blocs.

The second is that our foreign policy must put pragmatism over ideology. Under the Conservatives, UK foreign policy has too often been driven by the ideology of their most hard-line MPs rather than the interests of the British people. The government's approach to Europe has damaged UK jobs and prosperity, and it has meant that we have overlooked the opportunity to maintain a strong security partnership. The sudden and chaotic cut in development spending has damaged our reputation with both our partners and fellow donors. The Conservatives' preference for putting ideology before the national interest was also evident in the government's approach to the Australia trade deal, where Liz Truss put her personal political timetable and desire to become prime minister before giving our negotiators a strong hand. Labour will not make the same mistake. We will return UK foreign policy to one based on our country's interests in prosperity and security. At the heart of our approach will be a recognition that, in foreign policy, most problems are best solved in partnership with others.

The third principle is that our foreign policy choices must be made with working people at the forefront of our minds. As Keir Starmer has laid out, Labour's

plan for prosperity will move away from the failed trickle-down ideology to a new model, based on building our economy from the bottom up and middle out. A Labour government will use diplomacy to enhance the platform for the public to succeed,

working in partnership with businesses, trade unions and local and national leaders. The test that will lie behind Labour's foreign policy choices is simple. Will our actions abroad help hard-working British families succeed in this newly divided world?

CHAPTER 2

BRITAIN RECONNECTED FOR SECURITY

In 2023, the global security context is the most challenging in the post-Cold War era. The full-blown invasion of Ukraine has brought war and the acute threat that Russia poses to the forefront of the British public's consciousness, but it is just one of many challenges. Iran continues to advance its nuclear weapons programme at the same time as providing to Russia the drones that have harassed Ukraine's cities. China's growing hostility towards Taiwan has heightened tensions with the US and with China's neighbours. North Korea continues to develop ballistic missiles and its nuclear programme. Afghanistan is once more run by the Taliban. A dangerous and deepening cycle of violence has gripped Israel and Palestine. Yemen and Tigray remain scarred by conflict and humanitarian suffering. Violent armed groups, from the M23 group in the Democratic Republic of Congo to Islamist insurgencies in the Sahel, have caused chronic instability in several countries.

The vectors of threat are diversifying: be that influencing operations targeting our democratic process, organised

crime groups with tentacles stretching across the world, or ever increasing cyberattacks and industrial espionage. The rapid pace of technological change is generating new and morphing threats and poses potentially even existential risks to humanity. And the climate crisis serves as a threat multiplier.

Should Labour win the next election, we will face a daunting task. But we have been here before. Labour governments of the past demonstrated the foresight, leadership and conviction needed to protect the national interest and to take decisions that continue to shape our world today.

Take the creation of NATO. It was the vision and commitment of the great post-war Attlee government, and a Labour Foreign Secretary in Ernest Bevin, which was the driving force behind the foundation of the transatlantic alliance.¹⁴ He recognised the need for Europe to have the capability to defend itself and the importance of winning the peace in a war-shattered continent to avert another conflict. And he knew the fundamental importance of binding the US and Europe together through

a commitment to common defence and collective security.

As he signed the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington, Bevin described it as a day “of consecration for peace and resistance to aggression”. Today, as then, Labour’s commitment to NATO is unshakeable, and our conviction that aggression must be challenged is undiminished.

That is why from the beginning of Putin’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Labour has stood shoulder to shoulder with the UK government in providing the military, economic, diplomatic and humanitarian assistance the country needs to defend itself from Putin’s imperial enterprise. Our commitment to Ukraine will remain until it prevails. In the face of Russia’s threats, we remain steadfastly committed to the security of allies and the strength of the NATO alliance. That is why I prioritised visiting Stockholm and Helsinki last year to show our support for their NATO ambitions, which must be fulfilled. Our commitment to Britain’s independent nuclear deterrent is unambiguous.

While there will be continuity on national security issues that go beyond party politics, the next Labour government will undertake a foreign, defence and security review. Much of the analysis in the government’s 2021 Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy was sound. It correctly identified that we are entering an era of intensifying competition. It put a welcome emphasis on developing the UK’s leadership in science and technology and building national resilience. But amid

its much-vaunted tilt to the Indo-Pacific, it had little to say about Europe beyond NATO, and says almost nothing about the EU. It made no mention of the risk of a Taliban return in Afghanistan nor of a Russian invasion of Ukraine. It does not even mention Taiwan. In too many areas – from the fight against kleptocracy to the importance of international law – rhetoric and ambition contrasted painfully with government inaction or hypocrisy. Important decisions, like the merger of DFID and the FCDO and the decision to cut ODA spending to 0.5 per cent of GNI, were taken before the review had even concluded. And in security and defence there was chronic short-sightedness. Following the integrated review the government claimed to be pushing for persistent global engagement, but at the same time decided to cut another 10,000 troops, scrap Hercules planes, and drop to 148 Challenger tanks. These are the troops now reinforcing NATO allies, the planes used in the Kabul airlift, and the tanks being sent to Ukraine. The 2023 update attempted to rectify some of these shortcomings but the gap between rhetoric and reality remains.

Labour’s defence and foreign policy will be grounded in a clear-eyed assessment of the threats to the UK’s security and prosperity. It will build on the lessons of the war in Ukraine and the new security context facing Europe. It will grapple with the challenges of our economic security in a world becoming more competitive and protectionist. The review will inform the government’s first spending review. Tough decisions will have to be made, but as history has

shown us, Labour is no stranger to this. It is worth remembering that during the 1997 to 2010 government, Labour invested in strong defences. The defence budget rose by 20 per cent in real terms during those 13 years. When Labour left office, Britain was spending 2.5 per cent of GDP on defence, a level that has never been reached since. The next Labour government will determine its spending levels based on the threats we face. That is why Labour has committed to undertaking a strategic defence and security review on day one of a Labour government, to make sure our capabilities match the threats.

A guiding principle of a Labour government's foreign policy will be sustaining and building a diverse network of alliances and partnerships. First and foremost, that means ensuring Britain's place as the leading European nation in NATO. And we know the value in deepening our alliances beyond Europe too, be that with Australia through AUKUS or new defence cooperation with Japan. After the tumultuous years of the Trump administration and the recent withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan, many questioned the resilience of our Western alliances. But the response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine has shown that our core alliances have not lost their relevance and that our cohesion remains a force to be reckoned with.

In the face of military aggression, the US has been instrumental in providing more than \$27bn in security assistance to Ukraine. But we must not forget the contributions of our EU friends, who have provided vital

military, economic and diplomatic support, while shouldering the bulk of the burden in supporting the more than eight million Ukrainian refugees fleeing the conflict. The wider G7-plus coalition has been crucial in developing and enforcing sanctions.

Our prosperity and security depend on our ability to work together with our allies and partners and reject the insular and self-defeating politics of isolationism. We are in a more competitive age, where the strength of international rules and institutions is weakening, and where success depends on having credible coalitions on our side. Our broad and diverse partnerships will be the key to navigating this uncertain terrain.

In today's world, tanks, planes, and ships matter as much as they ever have. However, traditional tools of warfare are just the tip of a much larger security iceberg. Modern conflicts are being waged through manipulating energy prices, using critical technologies or resources as bargaining chips, launching cyberattacks and spreading misinformation, and detaining foreign nationals.

These threats often exist in the grey zone, blurring the lines between peace and war. We need a coordinated response to counter modern state threats. To address these challenges, the next Labour government will create a new joint FCDO-Home Office State Threats Cell. This cell will work in partnership with intelligence and security agencies to assess state threats, disrupt hostile actors, improve resilience in both government and the private sector, coordinate with international partners and include new frameworks

to protect democracies from interference and misinformation.

Labour believes in rebuilding the foundations of our defence and leading in NATO, but this alone is not enough to protect the British public. In today's rapidly changing security environment, it is crucial to take a holistic approach to security threats and respond proactively to safeguard our national interests.

A NEW SECURITY PARTNERSHIP WITH THE EU

As Shadow Foreign Secretary, I have travelled extensively throughout Europe's capitals. One message is clear: our European friends value British capabilities and diplomacy, but there is so much more that we can achieve together.

NATO will continue to be the cornerstone of European defence. But I believe there is much more that we can do with Europe – in partnership with the EU and bilaterally.

Throughout the Ukraine war, the EU has demonstrated that it is a security actor in its own right, with a significant and growing role in areas like defence spending and procurement. The EU has deployed or coordinated some of the most significant tools to combat Russia's aggression – be that in energy policy or in ten rounds of economic sanctions or in using its large budget to finance arms supplies. And as President Biden has made clear, the US supports strengthening EU-NATO cooperation.

That is why, in government, Labour will seek a new UK-EU Security Pact, to complement our unshakeable com-

mitment to NATO. There are various models for how it could function while maintaining the sovereignty of both sides. It must start with communication. This is why we will seek to institutionalise our cooperation through a structured dialogue at both the political and official levels, enabling ministers and experts to exchange ideas and information more freely and at a regular tempo – much like the kind of deep and structured relationship we currently enjoy with the United States and France. The US-EU Trade and Technology Council provides another institutional model worth exploring.

It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of areas for potential cooperation, as this would be subject to negotiation. But I will explore a few examples of where there is room for more collaboration. EU and UK officials have worked together to coordinate sanctions policy, exchanging intelligence on persons and entities. It is counter-productive to impose sanctions on one of Putin's oligarchs in the EU if the red-carpet is still being rolled out for them in London, and vice versa. A more formal partnership agreement would allow officials to deepen cooperation including on how those sanctions are enforced and on working out where corrupt assets are hidden.

As my excellent colleague and friend, the Shadow Defence Secretary John Healey has proposed, we could negotiate new mechanisms for cooperation on hybrid threats between EU and UK defence industries. We could work together to tackle international criminal gangs, organised immigration

crime, and counter-terrorism through intelligence sharing, database sharing and real-time joint operations. Energy security is another crucial area where we should seek to work together. The EU already plays a vital role in this sector, and we are deeply interdependent. New technologies, from artificial intelligence to automation and biotech, come with risks, as well as rewards, that should be addressed multilaterally. The forces that drive us to compete with each other are powerful, so we must establish mechanisms for collaboration that serve our common security interests.

We also believe we can deepen our bilateral security relationships with Europe, in particular with France, building on the foundations of the Lancaster House treaties, and with Germany, which, under Olaf Scholz and SPD leadership, is pursuing an unprecedented programme of investment and modernisation in security and defence. The Ukraine conflict has also seen the UK develop deepening security ties, and often a shared analysis, with Poland, the Baltic countries, and the Scandinavian states, and we should explore new ways to deepen these partnerships and promote security cooperation in northern Europe, as the leading member of JEF. At its best, Britain can be a leader, a mobiliser and a bridge, helping to forge common European positions on major foreign and security issues.

In addition to cooperation within Europe, we must be more creative in fostering cooperation between the UK and the EU on our approaches to partners outside of Europe. We can

work more closely together, for example, on joint diplomatic efforts, local knowledge, intelligence-sharing, and international development programming. The last Labour government initiated a new diplomatic track on Iran's nuclear programme, involving France, Germany, and the EU. This led to the E3+3 process and resulted in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), showing the value of such a formula. We should be open to using the E3+EU format in the future, perhaps in the case of a new crisis in the Balkans or Mediterranean. Again we should build on past progress, such as that led by Cathy Ashton who, as the EU's High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, helped negotiate the first agreement of principles governing the normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo.¹⁵

THE NUCLEAR MENACE

One of the consequences of the Ukraine conflict has been an escalation in nuclear rhetoric. President Putin has repeatedly made irresponsible veiled threats. Last month, Russia suspended its participation in the New START treaty, the last remaining arms control agreement between the United States and Russia. The global arm control architecture has collapsed over the last five years, with the Trump administration and Russia both withdrawing from the INF and the Open Skies treaties. Each agreement removes another plank designed to lower nuclear risk. At the same time, China is investing heavily in its nuclear arsenal, complicating future efforts

at arms control. And technological advances risk creating new nuclear risks. Meanwhile, proliferation fears remain acute, following the failure to restore the JCPOA and North Korea's continued ballistic missile programme.

It is clear we are living in an age of heightened nuclear risk. In this context, a Labour government will remain totally committed to maintaining a strong independent nuclear deterrent and the conventional forces necessary to protect it. The UK's nuclear deterrent provides a vital protection and is a crucial element of NATO's nuclear deterrence, ensuring that the burden of nuclear deterrence does not fall solely on US and France. The UK should continue to work closely with its American and French allies on nuclear matters.

As one of the five recognised nuclear powers in the non-proliferation treaty and a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, the UK also has a vital role to play in supporting multilateral nuclear arms control and reducing nuclear risk.

It is at the moments of greatest tension when efforts to reduce nuclear risk and miscalculation are most important. And history shows that it is in the immediate aftermath of nuclear crises – in the mid 1960s and again in the late 1980s – that the greatest opportunities for arms control have presented themselves. We should therefore prepare for the possibility that a weakened post-Putin Russian govern-

ment might be more open to such talks, as was the case with Gorbachev in the 1980s. If China is willing to engage with a new arms control agenda – and its concern over recent Russian nuclear threats suggests it might be – the UK, France and the US should respond positively, even if we have differences on other issues. A Labour government will ensure that the UK is at the forefront of this discussion, pressing for practical measures to reduce the risks of nuclear war. Although last year's Non-Proliferation Review conference failed to agree a final text as a result of Russia's veto, the rest of the world was unanimous on the need for progress in this area.

It is important to remember that the last Labour government played a key role in establishing the permanent five nuclear dialogue in 2008. This dialogue continues, and we must maintain it in the hope of a future climate where meaningful progress is possible.

There is no room for complacency. No nuclear weapon has been detonated in war for almost eight decades. Yet, along with the climate emergency, the threat of a large-scale war involving nuclear-armed states remains one of the most profound challenges facing the UK and the world. As all the permanent five powers acknowledged as recently as January 2022, this essential truth remains: a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.

CHAPTER 3

BRITAIN RECONNECTED FOR PROSPERITY

The experience of poverty is often oversimplified by those looking in from the outside. A few years ago, the Sunday Times published an important feature on the children ‘dreading’ their summer holidays spent ‘shut away’ on the Broadwater Farm estate in Tottenham.¹⁶ It highlighted the challenges many families face and raised an impressive £300,000 for children from a local school. However, it failed to show much humanity in the people it described. Growing up in deprivation just a stone’s throw from the Broadwater Farm Estate, in Thatcher’s Britain, I know what it is like to have parents constantly arguing about money, not being able to afford to send me on school trips, and sometimes leaving very little food in the fridge. But poverty is never a simple tale of anguish, pain and suffering. My memories of spending summers with my cousins in Broadwater Farm are filled with laughter, dignity and pride, just as much as they contained stress, confusion and occasional hunger pangs.

The lives of those feeling the heaviest burden of today’s cost-of-living crisis

must be understood in this context. Whether you are growing up in poverty in Tottenham or Torquay, you are not living a separate existence from the middle-class kids down the road. You have the same aspirations, the same dreams and the same potential. Keir Starmer has a mission to deliver the highest sustained growth in the G7 for the benefit of all families, wherever they live. This a vital national effort not because it is an act of charity. It matters because Britain’s future rests on the potential of the children in estates like Broadwater Farm, right across the country, being realised.

You might wonder what economic growth and economic justice in Britain have to do with foreign policy. Isn’t this a matter for the Treasury, the Department for Education and the new Department for Business and Trade? Of course, it is central to each of these ministries, but we overlook the foreign policy dimension to Britain’s prosperity at our peril.

The past few years have shown that we must make our economy more resilient to geopolitical tensions

and external shocks. The conflict in Ukraine has caused a sharp increase in the cost of essential goods and resources – from grain to oil – driving inflation and contributing to a cost of living crisis. And we must be more resilient in the face of so-called black swans: supposedly rare and difficult to predict systemic shocks. Britain’s lack of pandemic preparedness left us in a scrambling to buy PPE around the world long after Covid-19 began to tear across the UK, even though a severe respiratory pandemic was one of the more well-known risks Britain faced.

The continuous cycle of crises has brought to light the UK and other advanced economies’ vulnerability to disruptions in global supply chains. As we shift away from fossil fuels in our race to net zero, we will increasingly rely on critical materials such as cobalt and lithium. But where is Britain’s diplomatic effort to secure these resources and reduce our vulnerability to geo-economic pressures? The US’ CHIPS legislation will provide \$52bn in subsidies for US chip manufacturers. The EU’s CHIPS Act will provide €43bn. It is a monumental oversight that so far the UK has responded by allocating just £700,000 for a research project on the subject.¹⁷

Unlike the US, which has the potential to develop something close to self-reliance in critical technology and materials, the UK cannot do this on its own. The challenges posed by China are complex and multifaceted, and we must work together to counter its attempts to secure near-monopolies on key goods, minerals, processing, and

technologies, as well as its efforts to steal our intellectual property. China’s modus operandi is to target small and mid-sized powers who try to take robust actions on their own, as we have seen with its recent sanctions against South Korea, Australia, and Lithuania.

Britain can only hope to counter these challenges by working multilaterally. We must work together, with the EU, the US and other reliable partners in Australasia, North America and Africa, to ensure that Western onshoring does not simply mean American onshoring, to reduce our reliance on geo-economic pressure points and to boost the resilience of supply chains. To achieve this goal, a future Labour government will establish a supply chain working group within the G7 and create a global supply chain commission in the United Kingdom. This commission will increase transparency, identify potential long-term risks, and provide support to businesses to help them realign.

As we remodel our economy to make it fit for the new age of geopolitical competition, we must be conscious of the flaws in trickle-down economics. Rishi Sunak’s lobbying for a lower global minimum corporate tax rate was a severe blunder. As Chancellor, he should have prioritised bringing in an additional £131m weekly to the UK for our NHS and other public services while preventing our high streets from being aggressively undercut. We need greater global coordination on tax evasion, which sees some companies shifting profits and undermining the funding of public services. We should bear down

on tax havens and secrecy jurisdictions, some of which are UK Overseas Territories. Looking forward, we must use our diplomatic influence to persuade other countries to legislate to impose the agreed global minimum tax rate into domestic law. We will widen our trade focus from simply securing new trade deals to also take in regulatory diplomacy, which will help shape norms and standards that shape modern trade in Britain's interest while promoting exports and growth.

This year the UK's economic growth will be worse than all the world's major economies, including Russia. To build a prosperous Britain, we must confront reality, and that includes our geography. The truth is that the government's misguided handling of Brexit has left our economy in disrepair, with 45 per cent of businesses saying they are having difficulties trading with the EU and the number exporting to Europe falling by a third.

We need a new approach to trade with Europe that recognises the damage that has been done by the Conservatives' bad Brexit deal, and which charts a course towards renewal and recovery. Our proximity to the European market is an opportunity, not something that is holding us back. For centuries, it has been a central principle of British strategy that we must maintain our connections to the continent, and that principle remains as relevant today as it ever has. Labour plans to reconnect with Europe while remaining outside of the EU, the Single Market and the Customs Union. We will fix the bad Brexit deal that the Tories have foisted

upon us, using the 2025 UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement review to seek to reduce friction on food, agricultural, medical and veterinary goods, strengthen mutual recognition of professional standards and qualifications to unlock trade in services, unblock participation in the Horizon scheme to unleash research and development, and improve links between our students and universities. In addition, Labour will seek longer term economic security arrangements with our nearest neighbours, recognising that the reality of our geography means the bulk of our supply chains are with the EU.

At the same time, we recognise that the world is changing and that we must change with it. We will seek to build new partnerships and alliances beyond our traditional allies in Europe, North America, and the Commonwealth. We will work to forge new connections with Africa, recognising the continent's enormous potential and the fact that by 2050, one in four people will be from the continent.¹⁸

Refocusing Britain's foreign policy to focus on prosperity, economic diplomacy, sustainable growth and accelerating our transition into a clean energy super power will not be easy. It will require the retooling of the FCDO, in a way that is shaped by the reality of new technologies, the rise of economic nationalism, and the paralysis of the post-war multilateral system. But it is of vital national importance after 13 years of Conservative economic decline. Britain has always been a nation of pioneers, innovators and creatives. We have

always been at our best when we have embraced change and looked to the future with optimism and determi-

nation. Together, we can build a better Britain, one that is prosperous and ready to face the challenges of the 21st century.

CHAPTER 4

BRITAIN RECONNECTED FOR CLIMATE ACTION

What do London's City Airport, the Oxo Tower, Shakespeare's Globe, large swathes of Essex, at least half of the Isle of Sheppey, Dengie National Nature Reserve, Rye, Bognor Regis, Weston-super-Mare, Newport, much of Cardiff, the Gower coast, Llanelli, Pembrey, Southport, Teesmouth National Nature Reserve, much of Hull and Scunthorpe, Skegness, Boston, King's Lynn, Ely, Peterborough and Great Yarmouth have in common? Under the most optimistic projection for global heating, two degrees by 2100, without action all will be submerged as a result of rising sea levels.¹⁹ Based on current pledges from governments around the world, the UN warns we are actually on track for 2.8°C of warming.²⁰ In a worst-case scenario, where temperatures spiral to four degrees, considerably more of the UK could suffer the same fate as the fictional city of Atlantis.

It is not only rising sea levels we have to worry about. Last summer, temperatures in parts of the UK went past 40°C, leaving scientists in shock. Simmering heatwaves may well become a more

common feature on the British Isles. This will result in "increased pressure on water resources, reduced productivity, and [affected] livestock and crops," according to Chloe Brimicombe, a heatwave academic.²¹ It will also lead to thousands of premature deaths: 2,556 Brits were killed in the three heatwaves of 2020 alone.²²

Without the necessary action, the global impact could be even more apocalyptic. In the worst case four degrees temperature rise scenario, the damage is estimated to cost more than \$600 trillion – double the world's existing wealth. There would be nine per cent more heat-related deaths, eight million more people would catch dengue fever each year in Latin America, and the number of lives lost to conflict would double.²³ The costs of the climate crisis cannot only be counted in lost human lives. The impact on wildlife, biodiversity and our ability to grow food will also be catastrophic. On current projections, the environmental crisis is expected to create 200 million more climate refugees by 2050, many of whom will

seek sanctuary in the more temperate parts of Europe including the UK.²⁴

In this context, Keir Starmer's green prosperity plan, with its landmark ambition to deliver zero-carbon electricity by 2030, will be one of the most pivotal policies of the next Labour government. Implementing it will require a massive rollout of renewables: quadrupling offshore wind, tripling solar, and doubling onshore wind by the end of this decade, while backing nuclear, hydrogen, and tidal power. More details will follow over the coming year, but we have already begun to set out how we would do this, with catalytic public investment, GB Energy – a publicly owned generation company – reform of planning rules and a clear industrial strategy, supporting the creation of more than a million jobs over the next decade.

Domestic action to reach net zero is vital, but we know the climate crisis will never be solved in Britain alone. The UK is the world's 18th biggest emitter, with a carbon footprint only a fraction of countries like China, the US, India, Russia and Japan. It is vital we lead by example in the race to net zero, but also that we focus our diplomatic efforts on reducing the emissions of our partners around the world. Central to this will be Labour's proposed clean power alliance of developed and developing nations committed to 100 per cent clean power by 2030. An idea developed by Ed Miliband, Labour's next Secretary of State for Climate and Net Zero, this will be a positive version of OPEC, positioning the UK at the very heart of the single most significant technological

challenge and opportunity of this century. The next Labour government will put addressing the climate crisis at the heart of our foreign policy. Alongside seeking a clean power alliance, we will push for climate action to be recognised as the fourth pillar of the UN, and we will work with international partners to create a new law of ecocide to prosecute those responsible for severe, widespread or long-term damage to the environment.

A narrow, domestic lens also misses that we are not alone in our pursuit of green technologies. China, the US, and the EU are all making huge strides in the energy transition. China already dominates the global solar panel market, while the US has passed ground-breaking Inflation Reduction Act legislation, which is worth \$370bn in new spending and tax breaks geared towards renewable energy.

I welcome the initiatives taken by other countries to achieve net zero emissions, but we must be wise in how we apply our resources so that we do not fall behind. That is why Labour's plan centres around our bold effort to generate more than 200,000 jobs over the next decade. And it is why there must be a significant international component dedicated to building diplomatic, commercial and scientific alliances to ensure that we are focussing and amplifying Britain's strengths. We have significant opportunities in the UK. Thanks in part to innovative legislation under the last Labour government, we have emerged as a world leader in wind power and have a globally admired research base across the renewable sectors.

Climate action is not just a matter of ethics. It is essential to protecting our prosperity and security. We must make the transition to clean power as quickly as possible, not just for the sake of our country and our planet, but to undermine Putin's war efforts and make Britain energy independent. Every solar

panel is a shield against Putin's aggression. Every wind farm is an escape hatch from our dependence on authoritarian states. The benefits of climate action do not stop there. It is the pro-business choice, the lower bills choice, the choice for growth and jobs, and the choice for the security of our communities.

CHAPTER 5

BRITAIN RECONNECTED FOR DEVELOPMENT

In 1952, a group of Labour MPs, led by future Labour prime minister Harold Wilson, published a pamphlet called *The War on Want*. The document laid out a challenge not only for the UK but for the whole of the Global North and our allies. It argued that the gap between the rich and the poor of the earth would be the supreme challenge of the next 50 years, transcending all immediate problems. The group recognised that inequality in wealth, dignity, and power offends us on a moral level as much as suffering touches us on an emotional one.

It would be wrong to fail to recognise the progress the world has made since Harold Wilson launched his war on want. In 1950, nearly two-thirds of the world were living in extreme poverty. Today that figure is estimated at around 9 per cent. Yet, understandably, few of us look upon the world with optimism at present.

The world today is facing acute humanitarian crises, not only stubborn poverty and pervasive inequality, but also famine, conflict, climate change, refugee and migration flows, and global

health insecurity. In Afghanistan alone, 19.9 million people are facing potentially life-threatening food insecurity.²⁵ This is just one pocket of desperation in a world that is becoming increasingly insecure: More aggressive, more transactional, more short-termist, more dangerous.

As we neglect the multilateral institutions that have been at the heart of so much progress, China is intent on reshaping them – and in some cases replacing them, creating their own institutions through which to make investments and deliver aid.

Western development assistance is just one part of shifting financial flows. ODA from donor countries – totalling \$180bn last year – is dwarfed by remittances, which were \$773bn last year, more than four times bigger. And funding and debt from authoritarian states are reshaping the development map. These funds come without the restraints and expectations of development assistance, but with other strings attached.

The role of the IMF is now rivalled by Chinese investment, which is now the largest official bilateral creditor in

more than half of the world's 73 poorest countries. It should come as no surprise to us that countries in the Global South make calculations about their own interests, including who and what they vote for at the UN.

We are still working out how to compete in this current reality while remaining committed to our values, but we do not have time to waste. In the decade ahead, these trends reshaping the world will only intensify.

The most significant of all is the climate emergency – the greatest challenge the world faces. The UN warned recently that the world is on course for a catastrophic 2.8°C of warming, in part because the promises made at COP26 a year ago have not been fulfilled. This would deliver devastating consequences for our natural world and dangerous, destabilising effects for all countries. It would usher in an era of cascading risks as the uncontrolled effects of global heating resulted in more frequent extreme heat, sea level rises, drought and famine. This would end up hitting us in the UK too. We are already seeing its effects, with floods and heatwaves becoming the norm, not the exception. Global heating will hurt us all. But the truth is that developing countries and people living in poverty are the most exposed to the worst consequences of the climate emergency.

The Horn of Africa is experiencing its longest drought in 40 years, with more than 36 million people left hungry across the region.²⁶ In Lebanon, real terms food inflation has spiked to 143 per cent. This state of affairs is unacceptable, and a new global

coalition – Hungry for Action – has been formed to campaign against this outrage, standing in a long tradition from the anti-apartheid struggle to Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History.

But while this new effort shares its heritage with those great campaigns of the past, it is also new because, for the first time, it brings the worlds of development and domestic poverty together. It is wrong to say to people in the UK and other developed countries that their pain, in this terrible cost of living crisis we are facing, somehow matters less than that of our brothers and sisters overseas. We must work together to address poverty and inequality, wherever they occur, recognising that they are interconnected and that we are all human.

Under Labour's leadership from 1997, the UK committed to spending 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) on overseas aid, which helped lift three million people out of poverty each year, provided clean water and sanitation to one and a half million people, supplied HIV and AIDS drugs to three million people, and helped 40 million children attend school. Labour also played a critical role in the international campaign to cancel 100 per cent of multilateral debts for the world's poorest nations, securing an extra billion dollars in aid.

To their credit, David Cameron and George Osborne sustained that commitment, keeping aid spending at 0.7 per cent. While there is much that I disagree with them on, this was an important area of broad cross-party consensus. But in recent years, the Conservative government has

engaged in a sustained assault on the country's leadership on international development. The government has cut development spending to 0.5 per cent of GNI and stripped vital aid programmes of billions of pounds, all while failing to live up to commitments on climate and Covid-19. It launched a new development strategy that was widely derided as marking a return to a narrow 'aid for trade' approach and a move away from multilateralism. Additionally, the government oversaw a haphazard merger of the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign Office, compounding their incompetence.

Labour made Britain a world leader in development before and we can do it again. We must be able to lead by example – not break our word or commitments. That goes for the treaties we sign with our closest partners in Europe or the promises we make to deliver climate finance to the developing world. It means not reducing our focus on development while asking others to do more. It means not preaching to others about net zero without a credible plan to get there ourselves.

But our approach to development must also evolve with the world we are living in. We must be realistic about the role and contribution of Western donors. Development finance and policy are vital but they are not the only – or indeed the main driver – of global economic development. Overstating our own influence downplays the other profound forces at work and undermines the agency of developing countries themselves. We must have a clearer

understanding of the role of state and local elites in the success or failure of development.

And we must be focused on where we can really make a difference. We must adapt to a world where lower- and middle-income countries across Africa and Asia have greater economic weight and greater political influence. Our approach should be grounded in a deeper understanding of our own history, and the way people in many countries in the Global South view the historical role of the UK. It must be sensitive to the criticisms of aid as patronising or paternalistic, and build instead modern relations of equals, two-way partnerships based on respect and mutual trust.

Let me give one example of need for fresh thinking. The development sector was understandably preoccupied with the fair distribution of vaccines around the world at the peak of the pandemic. It was of course a grave injustice that millions of Europeans were vaccinated many times over while much of the world waited for a first dose. This cannot be repeated when the next pandemic strikes. But our goal as we prepare for future global health crises must be more ambitious. Britain should partner with countries to share its manufacturing expertise and scientific excellence around the world and overcome intellectual property barriers so that next time countries in the Global South are able to produce their own vaccines, not left waiting for our leftovers.

That is what I mean when I talk about partnership. Development programmes should provide the financial investment

required to help enhance capacity in developing countries, as well as supporting effective public services, capable governance, fair labour practices, and workers' rights. Development programmes should focus on how to tackle the twin challenges of climate change and conflict, by supporting peace-building, climate finance, and the green energy transition.

Labour is committed to becoming one of the world's leading conveners on international development. To achieve this, Labour will work with developing and developed partners. We will work alongside European partners, the United States, the UN, World Bank and IMF, the G7 and the G20, the Commonwealth and the African Union. Labour will offer the best of Britain as a partner in development, offering alternatives to Chinese infrastructure and aligning it with British innovations in education, healthcare, and governance.

Labour will restore the UK's leadership in international development, not just as a moral duty but also as a strategic imperative.

This leadership will prioritise early, smart, and innovative development interventions using locally driven information. Labour will establish a new task force to coordinate private sector support for development finance where interests align. Our development policy will be proudly feminist, recognising the disproportionate impacts of poverty on women and girls.

We will revitalise our nation's soft power, influence and impact with a renewed strategy for modernising international development. We will put in place a new model for development that can meet the challenges of the 21st century, reflecting that diplomacy and development are related but distinct as well as the important role which diplomacy should play in supporting development. The model will ensure we have the necessary independence and prioritise transparency and value for money.

Ultimately, Labour's commitment to international development will reflect our desire to help shape a world that is more secure, more peaceful and more just for future generations.

CHAPTER 6

BRITAIN RECONNECTED FOR DIPLOMACY

My first real experience of seeing how Britain is perceived by our allies came in my early 20s, when I was lucky enough to become the first Black Briton to study at Harvard Law School. As a bespectacled student with a North London accent on Harvard's pristine, red-brick campus, I forged relationships with many Americans who have gone on to become political colleagues in Washington DC. Back then, in 1997, the dawn of the New Labour era meant we were seen as a country on the move, dynamic and forward-looking. Above all, we were trusted as a reliable ally, a country that would uphold the rule of law and defend the international system.

On my recent visits to the States, it has become clear that the chaos created by the UK government long ago stopped being a source of amusement and became instead a cause for great concern. We welcome the fact that the UK government under Rishi Sunak finally rolled up its sleeves to put an end to the Northern Ireland protocol fiasco, which was almost as damaging to our relationships in Washington DC as it was to those in Brussels. But the prime

minister has followed that with new threats to the ECHR.

The Conservatives' attempt to unilaterally override an international agreement they signed up to just a few years previously was a shameful chapter that will have lasting consequences on the perception of Britain in the world. We cannot expect to lead if we cannot lead by example. Undermining international law runs counter to Britain's interests. It damages our moral authority and political credibility. It makes us appear unreliable and untrustworthy, making future agreements more challenging to reach. In doing so, it serves the interests of authoritarians and dictators who seek to weaken the rule of law. This is not fitting for a country of the UK's stature. Just as the impact of Donald Trump's presidency on how the US is perceived by its allies cannot be entirely fixed by a simple change in leadership, we will have to invest in rebuilding trust in Britain for years to come.

What leaders in Washington think of the UK may seem distant and abstract to the public, but it is of vital importance. It matters when we seek

to secure trade deals to benefit British businesses. It matters when we call on US senators and house members from both parties to continue their bipartisan support for Ukraine. And it matters when we strive to work with the US to tackle kleptocracy and the supply of illicit drugs that end up on UK streets.

Over the past year, it has finally become impossible for the government to ignore the dirty money from Russia and other authoritarian states that has been infiltrating London for more than a decade. Money laundering has seen London homes become the bitcoins of kleptocrats, pricing out our frontline workers and leading to corruption, bribery, and even the financing of terrorist organisations. I was reminded of this during my visit to Ukraine almost exactly one year ago, where I met with anti-corruption campaigners who were angry that Putin's oligarchs could launder their dirty money in Mayfair. They called on Britain to take action.

A Labour government will. In government, I will invite all the foreign and interior ministers to London from the US, the rest of Five Eyes and the EU to develop a common strategy and platform to coordinate the fight against kleptocracy, creating inter-agency and international working groups with clear deliverables. And Labour has backed senators Sheldon Whitehouse and Jeanne Shaheen in their calls for a new Transatlantic Anti-Corruption Council to be established to coordinate the fight against corruption. Kleptocracy is not just a problem for law enforcement: it is a matter of foreign policy.

To move forward, Labour's foreign policy must prioritise diplomacy. It will fall to us to heal the rifts with the US that the protocol fiasco opened, to restore our bond with Europe to counter shared challenges, build on partnerships with a rising India and rapidly growing African nations and make best use of the unique framework of the Commonwealth to deepen our relationship with the Global South.

It would be a huge mistake for Labour to overlook the importance of Africa. The continent is poised to experience the most significant population growth in the coming decades. While many of its states face significant challenges, including poor governance, climate change, and conflict, African countries play a growing role in shaping global politics and there are also remarkable economic opportunities that should not be ignored. We will develop a new initiative to build dynamic partnerships with African nations, recognising the continent's vast trajectory for growth.

Visit the capitals of the developing world and it is glaringly obvious who is the key external driver of investment and construction: China. China's rise is indisputably the greatest change in the global system in my lifetime.

For too long, the government has been divided and inconsistent on China. Flip-flopping between tough talk and muddled actions. Labour will be strong, clear-eyed, and consistent, beginning with a full audit of the UK-China relationship. Our strategy will be based on three Cs: compete, challenge and, where we can, cooperate. We will prioritise Britain's national

security above all else. We will stand firm on human rights. However, we also recognise it is important that the UK engages with China where it is in our interests to do so – whether on climate change, trade or global health.

THE RULE OF LAW

Now that a negotiated agreement to fix the protocol has finally been reached, with unequivocal Labour backing, we must use this opportunity to reset our diplomatic relations, with a renewed commitment to the international rule of law. The rule of law is the cornerstone of any just and prosperous society. That is why, as a lawyer and with a boss who is a lawyer, the rule of law will be at the heart of our approach.

The rule of law is not a Labour or Conservative value. It is our common inheritance. Since the issuance of the Magna Carta in 1215, it has been one of the great contributions our country has made to the world. No party owns it, and no government should squander it: Britain must recommit itself to being a country that keeps its word. With Keir Starmer KC as prime minister, the Labour government will be a leading advocate of the rule of law, promoting London's role as the centre of the global legal community and supporting international legal institutions like the ICC. We will respect the the rule at home and champion it globally.

MULTILATERALISM

In an increasingly interconnected world, the importance of international rules, multilateral institutions, and political leadership cannot be

overstated. Yet these pillars of global governance are under severe strain. The UN Security Council is paralysed by the veto power, the World Trade Organisation dispute settlement system is faltering, the World Bank is failing to address the climate emergency, and the World Health Organisation needs reform before the next pandemic strikes. As we neglect the multilateral institutions that for decades have been the bedrock of progress, China seeks to reshape and, in some cases, replace them. But we must not lose faith in multilateralism, flawed though it may be, for it remains our best hope to tackle common challenges. Our goal cannot be to simply preserve the international order that was designed after the second world war, but to adapt it to the challenges of the future. A Labour government will launch an open-ended campaign to reform the UN Security Council in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We will create a coalition of like-minded countries inspired by the 'Liechtenstein Proposal', supporting the suspension of the veto in cases of mass atrocities. It is simply wrong that a rogue state like Russia can have a veto over the condemnation of its own crimes. In addition, we will advocate for a World Bank that is fit for purpose and focused on climate mitigation and adaptation in the developing world, supporting proposals put forward by the G77 group of developing countries among others. While we work to revitalise these core international institutions, we must also be prepared to operate in their absence. This will require a more resilient Britain, adept at building new

networks and coalitions for action in emerging areas such as protecting vital undersea infrastructure.

SOFT POWER

Refocusing Britain on the rule of law and modernising the international institutions the world order is built on is valuable in itself, but it will also help restore Britain's soft power. Joseph Nye, an international relations scholar, defined soft power as the ability of a state to influence the behaviour of others through attraction and persuasion, rather than coercion or payment. However, after Russia invaded Ukraine, some argued that the era of soft power was over, playing into the narratives of Putin and other autocrats. I fundamentally disagree. Values, like governments, succeed through their power to attract, not by force. The longer battle that lies ahead is one of values and ideas.

It would not be right, nor would it be possible, to coerce those countries who abstained or opposed the motion to condemn Russia at the UN to change their minds. Across much of the developing world, concern about the war's inflationary impacts is held alongside a different calculation of their own interests in what is seen as a European war, as well as scepticism regarding the West's motivations and track record. What is needed instead is a new effort to understand and listen to the concerns of countries in the Global South as the basis for long-term partnerships. That will be the best basis for making the case that our interests are converging. Whether

we look towards Asia, the Middle East, or Latin America, a struggle to persuade lies ahead that will persist beyond the war in Ukraine and define the middle decades of this century.

We are currently at a hinge moment in the battle of ideas, and those who believe in liberal democracy are in danger of losing. By most measures, freedom has been on the retreat for over a decade. In this context, it is crucial to find new and better ways of convincing others. As President Obama once said, the best way to do that is through the power of our example, not the example of our power.

The Conservative government has squandered the UK's position to play the convening role that has characterised Britain's most successful diplomacy of recent times, from the Northern Ireland peace process to work to reduce the impacts of climate change and sexual violence in conflict. After the Brexit vote, ministers talked up new agility and alliances under a buccaneering post-imperial Global Britain. But what has Global Britain delivered in practice? A world in which many of our Commonwealth partners look to China before the UK. A situation in which the EU and the US – through their Trade and Technology Council – are establishing the future frameworks for growth while we look on from the sidelines.

The process of domestic renewal, the revival of the UK as a serious development actor and diplomatic reconnection in the world must proceed together. We cannot encourage others to accelerate their climate change commitments while rolling back our

own. We cannot denounce populism abroad while proroguing parliament and undermining the judiciary. We cannot combat disinformation abroad while continually attacking the BBC – the organisation that has done more than any other to deliver objective news globally – and the British Council, which builds cultural connections, understanding and trust with peoples and partners around the world.

Global Britain was an empty slogan, which the government has spent seven years failing to explain or deliver. It is meaningless to our allies and tone-deaf to the concerns of our critics. In East Asia, India and Africa – areas of the world where the need to convince is most pressing – it smacks of post-imperial hubris. Labour believes it does not have to be this way. The UK is home to cutting-edge technology and services, world-leading universities, vibrant cultural industries, and unparalleled global connections. With the right priorities, the right partnerships, and the right values, Britain can, and will, thrive. Our vision is to see Britain Reconnected: to increase prosperity and security at home, build stability abroad, and tackle global challenges.

REFORMING THE FCDO

Delivering this vision needs a world class diplomatic and development operation. The Foreign Office was once the Rolls-Royce of Whitehall, envied and admired by our allies and partners. However, years of disregard and inept ministerial leadership have left it with a blown engine and deflated tires. The

mismanaged merger, the cuts to ODA, the erosion of the deep regional and language expertise which was at the heart of the FCO's reputation, the growing pressure on the core diplomatic budget have all had a corrosive effect. It is now a place where allegations of bullying by Conservative politicians, low morale and a loss of expertise are leading to poor foreign policy outcomes for Britain.

Beyond the toxic environment Tory ministers appear to have created, the fundamental reason this great office of state has lost its way is that it lacks a clearly defined purpose, with inconsistent and irrational structures. And it is a failure of Conservative leadership that the FCDO lacks a sense of mission beyond a vague idea of working in the 'national interest', which means different things to different people.

The Conservatives have failed to modernise the diplomatic service in the way that is necessary for Britain to navigate the challenges of the future. The FCDO lacks the economic and industrial expertise necessary to navigate the challenges of the modern global economy, whether it be the regulation of emerging technologies or the race to secure the supply of rare earth elements. Contrast this with France, where the Quai D'Orsay, the French foreign ministry, is receiving an increasing budget, an expanding number of diplomats, and moving toward the 0.7 per cent aid target, not away from it.

We need an FCDO equipped for the challenges of the future, retooled and re-equipped for a new era of geo-economics, disinformation, and

technological changes, driven by sustainable growth in the UK and accelerating our transition into a green superpower. This requires more work with open-source intelligence, more technical knowledge in fast-moving technologies such as artificial intelligence and quantum computing, and a more agile, digitally enabled set of tools to influence our friends and adversaries alike.

We need an FCDO that reflects the diversity and talents of Britain and which is invigorated by a clear sense of purpose, to focus the efforts of our diplomats, development professionals, and intelligence agencies. The five priority areas I have set out can provide a framework for the foreign policy reset Britain needs, with a capable, confident Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office at its heart.

POSTSCRIPT

Early on after being appointed Shadow Foreign Secretary, I decided Afghanistan should be the destination of one of my first foreign trips. It was not an easy task. For starters, when I got the job, we were still in the midst of a global pandemic. Secondly, travelling to a country under the Taliban's control is not as simple as browsing for flights on Skyscanner. I was quickly advised that I would need assistance from the government. FCDO officials deserve huge credit for often going out of their way to provide generous support to foreign visits for the official opposition, but this was not one of those occasions. When they got wind of my proposal, they tried to block it on safety grounds.

Given the UK's responsibility for the mistakes made during the conflict and in the calamitous evacuation, I remained convinced I needed get there. No other Western politician had taken the trip to Kabul since it collapsed to the Taliban's authoritarian control. I wanted to highlight the plight of the millions of Afghans facing starvation in the UK and global media. But I also wanted to send a message to the Afghan people: not all of the West will look the other

way in your time of need just because it is politically convenient.

Thankfully, Martin Griffiths, the UN's Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, and his excellent office, made it possible, offering me the chance to stay in the UN compound in the summer of 2022 after most of the Covid-19 restrictions had lifted.

I flew to Dubai, before taking a rickety plane to Afghanistan. Arriving at the compound, on the dusty outskirts of Kabul, I was shown to a basic room, which was stocked with a bullet-proof vest and a helmet, and was quickly given a drill on how to get to a bunker if the compound was attacked.

The pain, suffering and indignity of what I saw in Afghanistan still keeps me up at night. I will always remember sitting in a classroom in district 17 on the north-west outskirts of Kabul with a group of women helping children displaced by war. One told me she was considering selling a kidney so she could put food on the table for her family. Another explained she was having suicidal thoughts. A third asked me: "Two or three generations have suffered. Will another generation

suffer? Should we have hope or is it just hopeless?”

The UK's abandonment of Afghanistan in its hour of need tells a wider story. Tory politicians have not just turned a blind eye to the plight of Afghans. The same pattern was repeated when I later visited an Khan Al-Ahmar, a Palestinian village overshadowed by an unlawful Israeli settlement. The UK is conspicuous in its absence from any meaningful diplomatic efforts towards a two-state solution. And when I visited Kosovo earlier this year – a country which still fondly remembers the role the last Labour government played in its liberation – yet again the same story was repeated. We were locked out of the diplomatic process for the normalisation of relations with Serbia, which was led by the EU, France and Germany.

This UK's withdrawal from pressure points around the world is symptomatic of the Conservatives' sticking-plaster politics. A phenomenon which is just

as visible in foreign affairs as it is in domestic issues like crime, education and the NHS. The UK's foreign service used to have an extraordinary ability to multi-task. It maintained a strong diplomatic presence in the Middle East, Africa, South America and the Indo-Pacific, at the same time focusing efforts on strengthening our relationships with our closest allies in Europe and the United States. But today, too often, the government lurches from crisis to crisis, driven by what Fleet Street's foreign hacks are focusing on at that particular moment, and lacking the foresight to get involved in international efforts to quell problems before they explode into front-page stories.

The next Labour government will not make the same mistakes. Using the strategic approach to foreign policy I have set out in this publication, we will create a Britain Reconnected, for security and prosperity at home.

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BRITAIN RECONNECTED

DAVID LAMMY MP

Over the last few years, Britain has become increasingly disconnected from the world, its longstanding relationships with its allies undermined and its influence diminished. Yet now more than ever we cannot stand alone. Increasing challenges, from security threats to the climate crisis, demand that we work together with our global partners to shape a better, safer and greener world.

In this pamphlet, David Lammy MP sets out his vision for the next Labour government's foreign policy – a vision of Britain reconnected. It is an approach will see Britain once again play its full part in the world, safeguarding our national interest, building new partnerships, tackling humanitarian emergencies and tacking action for the climate. Our prosperity and security at home depend on our ability to work together with other nations and to reject the insular and self-defeating politics of isolationism.

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