

Professor Gwyn Prins and the Marquess of Salisbury published 'Risk, threat and security: The case of the United Kingdom' in RUSI Journal in February 2008.

The full text of the article is available at:

[http://www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/Prins\\_and\\_Salisbury\\_RUSI\\_Journal\\_FEB08.pdf](http://www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/Prins_and_Salisbury_RUSI_Journal_FEB08.pdf)

In 'Risk, threat and security', Prins and Salisbury warn that 'the security of the United Kingdom is at risk and under threat'. The armed forces, they warn, are not funded sufficiently to meet the demands that are made of them. The most important suggestion that they make in their article is that two new defence committees are created, fulfilling a largely strategic function: ...assessing risks and threats, and our capabilities in addressing them, in order to make judgements as to the balance and proportions of policy across the full spectrum of government activity. It would not be concerned directly with operational matters... Its principal task would be to exercise judgement as to the necessary levels of capability and the overall balance of effort and planning, long term.

Prins and Salisbury argue that the creation of such new structures would increase public confidence in government defence policy, legitimise the policymaking process and improve the government's response to security threats. It would also, they point out, reinforce the role of Parliament in making and influence defence and security policy.

#### Media reactions

This – the principal message of 'Risk, threat and security' – was, however, largely lost in media coverage after journalists focussed on the authors' criticism of the lack of integration of immigrant communities. The United Kingdom, they argue in the paper, is 'a fragmenting, post-Christian society', and they complain of a refusal to integrate, a lack of leadership and a failure to 'lay down the law to immigrant communities'. Their suggestion that the UK is 'a soft touch for terrorists' resonated much more strongly than their call for new mechanisms to deal with security threats.

'Defence and security put "at risk" by ignoring parliamentary government' [press release], RUSI (14 February 2008)

Robert Winnett, 'Britain "a soft touch for terrorists"', Daily Telegraph (15 February 2008)

Michael Evans, 'Britain is a "soft touch" for terrorism, defence institute says', Times (15 February 2008)

'Multiculturalism is making Britain "a soft touch for terrorists"', Daily Mail (15 February 2008)

Melanie Phillips, 'A warning that cannot be ignored', Spectator (15 February 2008)