

HOUSE OF LORDS  
MINUTES OF EVIDENCE  
TAKEN BEFORE  
THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE EUROPEAN UNION  
(SUB-COMMITTEE C)

**THE EUROPEAN SECURITY STRATEGY**

THURSDAY 22 MAY 2008

MR DAN SMITH OBE

Evidence heard in Public

Questions 1 - 35

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THURSDAY 22 MAY 2008

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Present

Anderson of Swansea, L  
Crickhowell, L  
Hamilton of Epsom, L  
Hannay of Chiswick, L  
Roper, L (Chairman)  
Symons of Vernham Dean, B  
Truscott, L

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Witness: **Mr Dan Smith OBE**, Secretary-General of International Alert, London, gave evidence.

**Q1 Chairman:** Good morning Mr Smith. Thank you very much indeed for coming to meet the Committee this morning. We are just starting an inquiry into the European Security Strategy which is due to be reviewed and perhaps revised in the second half of this year. We thought as a Committee it would be useful to take evidence both from people who have concerns about the issues which it treats as well as people who have direct knowledge of the way in which the EU operates in this area. We really want to begin by assessing how far the existing Strategy has worked and as well as that look forward to see what a new European Security Strategy might do and how it can be improved. I would like to begin by asking you what you see as the purpose of the existing European Security Strategy and to what extent it has proved a useful tool for addressing the security challenges faced by the European Union and its Member States.

**Mr Smith:** Thank you very much for the invitation to present some views and some ideas today. I think you have to begin by thinking about the political role of the European Security Strategy and the period in which it was first started and promulgated. It was an attempt to be

a politically unifying document between different views and conceptions about security, about the security threats and actually quite a big shift in security thinking was happening – in my view it is still happening – and the Security Strategy was in part designed by the office of Javier Solana to cut a path through some of that confusion. Because of the tensions between the different conceptions of security and especially because of different views about how much emphasis should be put on the terrorism threat and how much should be put on other threats I think that the document, although it is well written, is not as clearly a clarion call for a new conception of security as maybe some of its architects wanted it to be. I think that it did prove useful at the outset in offering some degree of cohesion, some degree of coherence in balancing between these different ideas of security. I also think it has provided some useful mapping points and reference points for the EU institutions, maybe less so for the Member States who have actually paid it less attention. As quick bits of evidence to support that idea I think that in the number of ESDP missions, including the ones that were already under way at the time the Strategy was finalised – there have been 20 – there has not actually been a notable acceleration compared to 2003 in the numbers started year (with the exception of 2005 when I think seven were started), but there has been momentum in those ESDP missions. The European Security Strategy might not have caused that but it explains it, it provides a background to it, it provides a reference point for it. I think also that you can see the influence of the Security Strategy at work in the work that the special envoy on the Great Lakes region of Africa, Roeland van de Geer has done and the contribution he has made - which has been quite widely praised – towards trying to get some sort of agreements between the government and the different fighting groups in Eastern Congo. I would say it is a political utility with a political purpose to it with some usefulness in relation to the EU institutions, much less in relation to the Member States.

**Q2 Lord Anderson of Swansea:** Mr Smith, can you say how you define the parameters of this? Probably when you and I were brought up we thought of security almost purely in military terms, now it is defined almost beyond what it can contain. Where do you think are the limits of security and are they adequately addressed in the document?

*Mr Smith:* I think of the two concepts of security that I was referring to one is the more traditional one, not purely military any more but very distinctly state-based, based on the idea of national interest and reflected in the academic discourse and often in political discourse by what is often called realist analysis or, when people are being pejorative, real politique. On the other side, beginning I suppose in the early to mid 1990s, there has been a different strand which has gone by the name most commonly of human security which argues that it is not the security of the state which is the main objective, it is the security of individuals and communities which is the main objective. When this was being used to expand the notion of security to include explosive remnants of war which in a village area will stop the farming going on after the war is over, I think this is very useful. When the notion is expanded to include the idea of the security sector – the police, the prison service and so on – it remains a very useful notion. Sometimes I hear the notion of human security being expanded so far that you are only secure if you feel happy. I heard one major spokesperson for human security ideas say that human security is knowing what will happen tomorrow. Surely one's response is, "Well, that's not life, is it?" I think there are some conceptions of it which have pushed the outer limits beyond what is feasible.

**Q3 Lord Anderson of Swansea:** It can be defined out of existence.

*Mr Smith:* Exactly.

**Q4 Lord Anderson of Swansea:** Where do you draw the line?

**Mr Smith:** I think I draw the line more or less pragmatically at the operation of the state security sector and then, in a different way, those factors which can lead to violent conflict. I would therefore include poverty, the environment, good governance under the heading of security concerns. I would want to make sure that the security strategy was consistent with policies leading towards development, environmental responsibility and good governance. I would not necessarily put that policy into the hands of the state security sector.

**Q5 Lord Hamilton of Epsom:** Following on from Lord Anderson's point, it strikes me that this thing has been set up by a committee and everybody has thrown their bit of interest into it - I do not think the EU committees are any different to any others on that - and you end up with something trying to do almost everything. There does not seem to be a single problem facing the world that is not included here in the parameters of this. Is it not trying to do too much?

**Mr Smith:** I think there is bound to be a constant iterative process, moving back and forth in this argument to try to find the right balance point. I think since before the end of the Cold War one found NATO looking at new security threats, thinking about movement of people (that was one of the first that came up) and looking at those threats which came from the south which were not threats from state actors but state threats arising out of the conditions in parts of Africa, for example. To exclude those from the conception of security is to exclude way too much, but obviously there is the risk the other side that you go too far and you include absolutely everything in. Then you are talking about the business of government rather than a component of government. I would love if there were a neat answer, if somebody could come and say, "Here it is; here are the parameters". I think instead what there will be consistently is a debate in which people are trying to find more or less the right balance point, but it is always going to be slightly unstable and new issues and new problems will come up. I think it would be a mistake either to go to the outer limits of possibility

defining everything as human security or to say that because it is possible to go to the outer limits then by contrast I prefer to stick with the core of military defence against threats from other states. There has to be a mid-point somewhere in there but I do not think arguing it out is a scientific way to do it.

**Q6 Chairman:** Is it primarily the external - external either to the state or in this case to the Union - that we are considering?

*Mr Smith:* I would say primarily it is but these issues have reflections, as we have seen, echoes – very violent ones – within the Union and within the states. I think we also have to think about the way in which national policies can inadvertently contribute to those external issues.

**Q7 Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** I have two questions about your knowledge of the origins of the Strategy. What I had always heard – perhaps you can confirm this – was that it was in fact virtually untouched by the Member States; it was produced by Javier Solana and Robert Cooper and miraculously went through a process that only lasted three or four weeks and emerged as the Union's Strategy in a much more coherent way than had often been the case in the past and was therefore not the construct of a committee. The second question I would like to ask you is to what extent you feel that the experience in the Balkans in the 1990s and Kosovo was one of the main motivating forces behind the definition of the strategy and one of the experiences that, as it were, informed it, similarly of course bringing in the question of human security which was very prominent in the Kosovo crisis.

*Mr Smith:* On your first point, a draft of the Strategy went to the June meeting of the Council of Ministers where it was noted and, subject to correction on actually looking at the communiqués and so on, encouraged further work. What I have understood is that that went away into this small team that produced it and wrote it. It is well written and it is a coherent

document. It is trying to square a number of circles but that is the reality they were dealing with. My anecdotal understanding is that there was really very little change in it once the second version was produced. As to the background, I have always thought that the Balkans and Kosovo lay in the background but I have also thought that what drove forward the recognition of the need to have a strategy were the disputes in the first half of 2003 and of course also late 2002 essentially about Iraq but also to the related question of counter-terrorism. My understanding is that it was the British, French and German governments which were the first to identify this as something that had to be resolved and a joint view produced. Without having done detailed research on it that is my understanding.

**Q8 Lord Anderson of Swansea:** Was there also in the background a wish to give a repost to the US Strategy at a time when Europe and the US were diverging in terms of analysis of a number of key problems?

**Mr Smith:** There were certainly a lot of people – observers active in politics – who wanted the Strategy to be a repost to the US and you can indeed look into it and find things which are such, but you can also look into it and find other things which seem like they are concessions, they are alongside the US positions and are compatible with them. Steering that course is what the strategy was trying to do. At a time when it felt as if the Atlantic was getting wider and those divisions were then being replicated in Europe rather destructively, it was an attempt to pat those divisions back a little bit into place, not to completely obscure the differences but to get them back to manageable proportions again. I think there was a general view that what had happened in the first half of 2003 was not viable long term.

**Q9 Lord Truscott:** Mr Smith, do you agree with the analysis of the global challenges and specific threats as set out in the first part of the European Security Strategy? How would you rank energy dependency as a security threat?

*Mr Smith:* I think there is a lot of great interest and value in the analytical parts of the security strategy. It puts the emphasis on threats not being from states but arising out of phenomena or syndromes or processes – or whatever you want to call them – in international politics, some which are specific to regions and some which are to do with the nature of the world system. I think that its emphasis on a multi-faceted threat, a rather complicated threat is right and the idea that one has a multi-faceted response using a lot of different instruments of government is also appropriate. It is right that in a globalising world distance is not as important as it used to be in assessing security threats. The idea that EU enlargement, in a general sense an expansion of an EU zone of piece, is an important part of an overall security strategy; I think it is also very valuable and worthwhile. I find various absences, perhaps some of these are based on retrospectively looking back with five years of additional knowledge, but climate change is a glaring absence. The lack of attention to the problem of injustice and unfairness in the world is also important because the perception and understanding of that is a major aggravating feature of a great many of the conflicts which give rise to some of the direct threats which we are concerned about. The focus on terrorism as a thing in itself is incomplete. I think one has to look at what terrorism grows out of as well as the specific terrorist threat. There is also a big thing which I would like to introduce into the discussion. It does not surprise me at all that it was missing in the European Security Strategy. I think though that it hints in this direction, that there is a major change going on in the nature of violent conflicts that are challenging the world system and major players within it. The notion of inter-state war of course is still real but it is much less important in the post-Second World War and especially the post-Cold War period. We are now seeing, as the Human Security Project has reported, a decline in the number of intra-state wars, but we are beginning to see, identify and understand what is being referred to as non-state wars and beyond that I think it is necessary also to pay increasing attention to that zone where what we

have thought of as armed conflicts having political purposes intersect with pure criminality. What I wonder is whether some of the driving forces behind armed conflict in terms of a marginalisation of people which makes it possible to mobilise them in conflict is now going to be mobilised in things that we would understand more in terms of gangs and crime rather than political movements and war. I think there is a shift happening in the nature of armed conflict worldwide. It is part of a development in the world system; it is part of the development in world economics but also in world politics which is putting increasing sanctions against those who use violence for political purposes. Those sanctions are still not powerful enough; there is still too much political violence. I think I am almost arguing that violence or violent conflict is a sort of homogenous fluid which, if it cannot get an outlet through political causes, we are going to see it happening in ways that we understand as being more social. To go back to your question, I think that the analytical section is interesting, important, many parts of it are valid, but there is a case for re-writing now.

**Q10 Lord Truscott:** You did not answer the point about energy dependency. One of my views is that the major security threat facing all of us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be the competition for natural resources: water, food and energy. How would you rank energy?

**Mr Smith:** I think that energy issues may carry a dimension of risk that is different from what we have been talking about in the last decade perhaps when we have been discussing security issues. An awful lot of discussion of global security issues is really based on the risks for the poor in the world and the risks to all of us that arise from neglecting the condition and the situation of the poor. In terms of climate change you can argue quite clearly that the greatest negative effect of climate change will be felt by the poorest of the poor living in low income, badly governed states. Energy dependency or energy issues will hit those people and those societies as well but they may also, if we are not careful, hit European developed OECD countries as well. I would not say this is something that I was thinking in five to ten years'

time, but untreated and unregarded perhaps in the middle of this century we would be seeing tensions and issues arising between the rich countries in a way that we have perhaps not seen in the last many years.

**Q11 Lord Hamilton of Epsom:** I was very interested with your diagnosis of these internal conflicts and criminality. I have a lot of sympathy and find it very interesting, but what do we actually do about it? Let us take an extreme example of this, Afghan warlords who, let us face it, are about as criminal as they come, but the drugs trade gives them a fantastic cash flow which really enables them to buy almost any military hardware they want. Is there anything other than a military solution from the point of the view of the West when dealing with these people? I cannot see that sanctions would have any effect on them at all.

**Mr Smith:** I think the military or the policing solution is obviously an important part of it. I think that providing alternative livelihoods for those who are doing the farming is also part of it.

**Q12 Lord Hamilton of Epsom:** That is not easy though.

**Mr Smith:** No, it is not easy, but good governance in Afghanistan – as in other countries where the issue arises – is also a part of it. The problem in some ways lies in ourselves in western societies, whether or not we can manage to find a solution. As long as there is a market for the poppies they will be grown. Also, at the other end and looking at how we manage those issues internally in our own societies - I do not want to get into a discussion of what I, as an ordinarily ill-informed citizen, think would be a reasonable drug policy in the UK - you are right, you have to have that hard-headed policing and military core to this but if you were taking the other actions then it would be treating symptoms without getting even close to treating the causes. The two must different kinds of approach must go hand in hand.

**Q13 Lord Anderson of Swansea:** Do I understand you to say that the report fails or inadequately deals with the inter-relationship between various heads – terrorism, organised crime – and could the same, for example, be applied to migration flows and demography? Do you think the report addresses the problem of world population – the division between the developing and developed world in terms of population - adequately?

*Mr Smith:* My preference is to treat the question of migration with great care because it is such an emotive term. When my organisation looked at the question of climate change and its potential effect in causing migration one of the things we thought was necessary to make clear is that an awful lot of the migration we are talking about is not from the south to the north, it is not from the poor world to the rich, it is within the poor world. It is from areas which, in scenarios of climate change, absolutely cannot cope with the impact of climate change to areas which can barely cope, then putting increased pressure on those areas. I do think that there is a series of inter-relating or inter-locking issues which form the background to the specific security threats that are faced and are addressed, and that the European Security Strategy document was not clear enough about those inter-relationships. At the same time I hasten to add that I do not think that a strategy document like this should become a major academic disquisition on absolutely everything. It has to keep that political clarity about and therefore I would not expect it to go into the analytical depth that one would like in some contexts.

**Q14 Lord Anderson of Swansea:** Clearly one factor in migration is the very pressure of population.

*Mr Smith:* Yes.

**Q15 Lord Anderson of Swansea:** Has that been addressed adequately?

*Mr Smith:* No.

**Q16 Lord Crickhowell:** Just following up on the point raised by Lord Hamilton, clearly Afghanistan is uniquely difficult as a situation but recent history in, say, Colombia does suggest that policing good governance is a way of dealing with some of these issues in some parts of the world. I am actually in the middle of planning a visit to Colombia which I do not think I would have been doing five years ago. While Afghanistan may be uniquely difficult, there are parts of the world where, if these things are tackled seriously and in the right way, great progress can be made.

**Mr Smith:** I think maybe one would have said maybe 15 or 20 years ago that Colombia was uniquely difficult and it is still extremely difficult. You are talking about a background of essentially permanent violent conflict ever since independence and indeed before it. This war itself goes back at least 40 years and its roots can be found in the previous war in La Violencia in Colombia. The intersection with cocaine has given Farq and the other groups enormous resources and enormous power and at times they have completely out-numbered and out-powered the Colombian army. In recent years the Colombian government - with a number of different initiatives heading first in one direction, sometimes correcting course, some initiatives which did not work out, did not go right – does seem to be making progress. I think the problem about this is that the pace of progress in these circumstances is always at a snail's pace. Sometimes maybe there is an impatience amongst policy makers to achieve a solution within what is actually an unrealistically short timeframe. When a conflict goes back decades and centuries one should not expect two or three years or the lifetime of a government to solve it.

**Lord Hamilton of Epsom:** I would like to remind Lord Crickhowell that Colombia still has one of the highest homicide rates in the world.

**Lord Crickhowell:** Yes but the fact is in the major cities you can now visit probably in greater safety than you can visit in parts of London. Enormous progress has been made and it is now a growing tourist country as a result.

**Q17 Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** We have really begun to cover this ground in the previous questions and answers, but looking at the Strategy do you think it sufficiently and clearly enough emphasises the main drivers of insecurity, challenges to the rules-based international system, climate change (you have already said it does not and is in a way reflected in the fact that the Commission and the Council Secretariat actually produced note for the March Council on that aspect), competition for energy resources (Lord Truscott asked you about that), water resources, poverty, inequality and poor governance. I suppose we should add now food security or anyway we should think a bit about it. To what extent do you think that the Strategy as drafted in 2003 identifies these drivers sufficiently? Are there any that are missing from it? Does the Strategy take sufficient account of the inter-relationship between what you might call classical security issues and classical development issues which are now recognised as being part of a wider security nexus in, for example, the High-Level Panel's report to the secretary general in 2004? Arising out of that do you think that the Security Strategy should have specifically said that achieving the Millennium Development Goals was a desirable objective for the European Union?

**Mr Smith:** To take the first part of the question addressing the drivers and insecurities, I think the European Security Strategy makes a reasonable start on that. As I think I have already said, I see some major absences there. The one footnote I would add to that – to nuance it in a way – is that one needs to be careful that the analysis does not re-visit the same issue simply under different names, for example poverty and food insecurity or indeed climate change and food insecurity. I am not arguing that food insecurity is unimportant; I think it is critical. Food insecurity is a major transmission mechanism from some of these underlying social or

climatic or economic drivers, through food insecurity and livelihood insecurity which can lead then to people moving – migration – and thus in that particular chain of cause and effect increase the risk for armed conflict. Exactly how to reflect this network of issues in a document I think requires some careful thought. Where International Alert went to, as we were analysing this, was to attempt to stay away from simple chains of cause and effect and rather to talk about the interaction of different elements. Thus, in a situation where you have bad governance, a history of conflict, low levels of human security and low income, then the effect of climate change, interacting with those weaknesses in society and inequality are going to produce a higher risk of armed conflict than climate change may in a completely different circumstance. Take two low lying countries, one rich and one poor: why do we worry so much about Bangladesh in the context of climate change but really think that the Dutch will handle things? It is the interaction between the social realities and the natural phenomena that produces risk. Carefully addressed, introducing that element, would be a real strengthening of the European Security Strategy because those specific threats which are then being talked about which need to be addressed whether it is with military preparations or with policing or specific programmes are being put into a background and a context that makes sense. On the relationship between security somewhat classically understood and development somewhat classically understood I think the expression of that relationship in the European Security Strategy is quite inadequate. I refer to the previous part of the answer just now to say what I think there ought to be. I do think that it is in the interests of the European Union that the Millennium Development Goals be achieved but I would caution against writing achievement of the Millennium Development Goals as specific targets into a new European Security Strategy. The reason for this is that I feel that the Millennium Development Goals actually function best when they are seen as aspirations and I have a lot of reservations when they are made into bureaucratic objectives, wholly quantifiable and a tick-box approach is taken to

them because that homogenising view of world development misses the distinctions and the differences between the different countries. I far prefer the trend in the development debate which is looking under the heading of the fragile states discourse looking at the specific issues which are arising which are different in Nepal from in Tanzania, which are different in Liberia from in Indonesia. I prefer an approach therefore which takes us towards the specifics rather than one which is happy resting at the generalities.

**Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** I would follow that very much; it is a theme which in a debate in the House of Lords recently on the Millennium Development Goals it came out very clearly. Presumably in a document which is necessarily a general document you have to found your contribution to dealing with specifics into some general principles and that is where this comes in. I think your reply is very helpful.

**Q18 Lord Anderson of Swansea:** Had the Strategy been involved ten years ago probably there would hardly have been a mention of climate change. If one projects ten years hence the likelihood is that climate change will be even higher up the agenda. As you have already mentioned, it is fundamental to a whole series of threats to human development, be it population movements, be it natural disasters, conflict over water, general environmental matters. Lord Hannay has already mentioned the report of the Council and Commission which I think was presented in March of this year. In your judgment is there currently a sufficient emphasis on climate change as a driver and factor in change? Does that report in its own analysis adequately tackle the subject in its recommendations?

**Mr Smith:** As I said when talking initially about the European Security Strategy, it is good to begin with understanding the political moment. At the beginning of 2007 I think it was almost an eccentric position to be talking about the connection between climate change and security. When the UK Government used its chairmanship of the UN Security Council to convene a debate on that in the spring of last year there was really quite a lot of critical

comment by other states, including ones to which HMG would normally feel pretty close. The case that there is a connection between the consequences of climate change and security issues I would say at that point, in April/May last year, was not broadly understood. This is around the time we were beginning to take up the issue as well. I got onto a number of radio and television programmes on the basis that here was somebody saying something completely different that we have not really heard before. During 2007 the debate shifted enormously, first of all because the fourth assessment report from the IPCC – the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – came out and secondly because a lot of people were critical about it. The Nobel Peace Prize Committee gave the award to Al Gore and to the IPCC itself which at least pushed people into talking about the connection. Now we come round to the early part of 2008 and this is beginning to be a mainstream view. It is nonetheless still at a fairly early stage of really working out what that connection is. The effects of climate change are being felt now. On a lot of the problem areas the analysis in the report is right. I found a couple where I found it rather hard to trace causality but those were minor objections and I would not go into them. The general sense that climate change is going to break the back of a pretty weak camel I think is right. I think then, however, that the conclusions and the recommendations which came out of the report are relatively unambitious. There is a slight sense that the authors of this report were sort of going through the motions, not really sure what actually can be done about this but needing to put down a few paragraphs at the end under the heading of recommendations. I would very much hope that those recommendations would get revisited. As the former Chief Scientist of the Government, Sir David King, has said it is going to be three and a half decades under even the best scenario before mitigation really changes things around. In the meantime, especially for poor countries, there has to be a huge amount of emphasis on adaptation. People will adapt to climate change; they will adapt in some cases by changing crop cycles, by changing the way their houses are built. Let us

hope that that is done with support from governments and the international community. In the worst case they will be adapting by running, by moving away, by fighting with each other over scarce resources. There will be an adaptation to climate change but some of that process of adaptation can be counter-productive and what we want is to encourage a form of adaptation and models and systems for it which are conducive towards peaceful social relations rather than towards violence.

**Lord Anderson of Swansea:** Is it fair to say that global warming is broadly preferable to global freezing.

**Q19 Chairman:** So there is benign adaptation and malign adaptation and what we need to look for are the ways of encouraging the former.

**Mr Smith:** That is right. I think that in a lot of circumstances the malign adaptation will occur because the benign has not been planned, prepared and implemented properly.

**Q20 Lord Crickhowell:** You have moved onto the point I was going to raise with you. Having spent a large part of the last year on the Joint Committee and then debating the Climate Change Bill, having taken considerable interest in the challenge made by Nigel Lawson in his recent book, while I do not agree with the main thrust I think he makes some very serious points which have to be taken seriously, not least on this whole question of adaptation. Earlier you referred to Bangladesh and Holland and the difference in approach. Would it not be right that up to now the European approach has perhaps had most of its emphasis on emissions trading and controlling CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and so on and not enough on the priority which we have to give to adaptation? You observed quite rightly that it is going to be a very long time before we find a solution, a fact that Al Gore almost totally ignores incidentally in his report, he does not talk about solutions. It is going to take time and ought there not to be much more emphasis on adaptation?

**Mr Smith:** That is absolutely my position. There should be much more emphasis on adaptation not because mitigation is unimportant but, as we have said, it will take time, even in the best scenario, before it has its effect. Adaptation has been the poor relation within the climate change debate and the emphasis when there has been reference to adaptation, because it gets sparked by major events, is looking at things like the Burma cyclone now and adaptation is understood as being readiness for disaster. It is not just sudden onset changes or sudden shocks that we have to worry about, it is also the slow onset change. Year by year things move, just slightly, and you barely notice. That also needs to be prepared for. Adaptation to help people in that context is also part of it.

**Q21 Lord Crickhowell:** Particularly as some of these great shocks probably have nothing to do with global warming.

**Mr Smith:** Maybe, maybe not.

**Lord Crickhowell:** Everyone now takes a natural disaster and blames global warming. There is very little evidence that they do necessarily arise from global warming. The point you make I think is a very important one.

**Q22 Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** Moving onto the strategic objectives that were set out in the European Security Strategy, it sets out three strategic objectives for the EU: address the threats which have been identified; build security in the EU's neighbourhood; and work towards an international order based on effective multilateralism. In your view, were those the right strategic objectives? Are they still the right strategic objectives? If so, what should be the balance of priorities between them, if any? Or should the priorities be found within each of the three?

**Mr Smith:** I think one can do a certain amount of re-organising of objectives and how they are expressed which would maybe make things look a little more elegant but which does not

have a real substantive effect. For personal preference I would say that to address the threats would be bullet point one and point two would be to address the source of the threats. That task of addressing the source of the threats I think can be looked at within the EU neighbourhood, among fragile states and in the international system. That would be an intellectual scheme which I would lay out but I do not think I would get to very different places in terms of substance when compared to the Security Strategy. I think that in terms of the priorities I would say that these tasks within the EU, in the neighbourhood, among fragile states and in the international system are tasks of equal importance but that does not mean that each task is as expensive or as resource heavy to carry out. It would be from that direction that I would go into the argument. Ensuring the smooth functioning of the world system, of ensuring its better functioning, a multi-lateral system, rule-based/law-based international relations could be probably fulfilled with very little extra cost – perhaps non extra – compared to what is being spent at the moment. That does not mean that it is a low priority, in fact I think it is fundamental. One thing perhaps that should be said in the European Security Strategy is a statement of values which explains why a law-based system is absolutely fundamental. In terms of use of resources I think that ESDP missions should and will continue. I think there could possibly be a slightly greater pace in them; on average in the last three or four years they have been doing two new ones a year. I think as experience is gained it may be possible to go up to more. I would assume that the need for ESDP missions within the European Union neighbourhood would be tailing off over a period of time and therefore there would be opportunities for shifting those kinds of resources to the wider international sphere and fragile states. The kind of work that has been done in the DRC for example, there are other places where it is worthwhile to ramp that up a bit.

**Q23 Lord Truscott:** Following on from what you have just said, do you think the European Security Strategy does make the right recommendations for action both in the short term and long term?

**Mr Smith:** To be honest, except in very broad terms and then in one or two specifics, I do not see very much by way of recommendation for action and I am not sure that that is a problem. It could over-burden a single document to try to go all the way from the general statements of values, through the principles, through the major mechanisms and instruments and analysis of threats through to action. I think it is true that Mr Solana actually resisted attempts to turn this into an operational document, preferring to keep it as a political declaration. It is more of a doctrine or a concept – as some of our continental colleagues would say – rather than what we would normally think of as a strategy. I am not quite sure, to be honest, what my own opinion is as to whether it is therefore a real gap in the Strategy that it does not see it all the way through to action. I think one can argue the benefits either way, but I think it was a legitimate position or a legitimate decision to say, “Let’s leave it as a political declaratory document” because there was a need for that at the time. I think in 2008 there is still a need for clarity about how to play off these different issues, how to understand the relationships between these different kinds of threats, where to put the emphasis in terms of the importance of multi-lateralism, the law-based approach. At least I would be open to the idea that there is continuing work in a renewed political declaration and it does not matter if it does not go into details of action.

**Q24 Chairman:** The Strategy which may come out at the end of this year should be broadly of the same sort of nature as the one before, although the issues that we have already discussed might well have to be reviewed and revised and put into some of the wider context you have discussed.

**Mr Smith:** I think it is right; I think that is what makes sense.

**Q25 Chairman:** The Strategy does call on the European Union to be “more active, more capable and more coherent”. How far do you feel the European Union has responded to this call and what more can be done in practice?

**Mr Smith:** I think “more active”, yes, for sure. The ESDP missions, the role of Roeland van de Geer, these are good steps forward and things have been done which are worthy of praise. As I said earlier the European Security Strategy may not have caused that but it is part of that direction of the evolution of policy and approaches and it helps explain and justify those sorts of things. The second one was “more capable”. I feel there is still a long way to go with that. I think there is still a long way to go with that as one looks through all components of the EU. In the institutions I think that there is still more to do. There is a lot of stovepipe thinking. I have had precisely the experience of sitting in an office talking to somebody about conflict and the way this was holding back things which the EU wants to achieve and being told, “Ah yes, but you are talking about conflict; I do development” and so I had to go to another office in another building in order to be able to talk about conflict. The High-Level Panel but also everybody and their second cousin have been pointing out the close relationship between development and peace issues and it seems to me to be strange when one finds systems or institutions still structured according to these separate stovepipes. I think that the capability question still needs to be addressed more. A lot of the problem here is that it needs to be addressed in detail, issues of the detail of how different people with different professional experience work on issues as those issues expand and redefined. Very often that sort of detail is well below the radar scanner as far as the political leaders or even the senior civil servants are concerned. That is really extremely important. As to coherence, I think that in the past couple of years there was the famous incoherence of Commission and Council actually at war in the courts with each other, but I think that more recently in fact the coherence of actions is improving. There are an awful lot of forums in which staff from the Commission and staff

from the Council of Ministers get together and hammer out joint positions. It is much less of a challenge for them now to develop a common position and I think the climate change paper that we have been referring to is to some extent an example of that. I can also think of other examples, one case in point would be looking at how it has worked in DRC where I see the nature of the work is moving forward pretty coherently.

**Q26 Chairman:** We are spending a great deal of time at the moment of course considering the Lisbon Treaty, the European Union Reform Treaty. Do you feel there are provisions in that which ought to help in terms of achieving these objectives?

**Mr Smith:** I cannot comment; it is not my bedtime reading. What I do think is that the Treaty offers the opportunity to address some of these issues and as the External Action Service has put together I do not see that it needs to be put together with the same sort of separated institutional structure internally that the Member States are used to. I would like to see that issue up on the table and being talked about.

**Q27 Lord Crickhowell:** I would like to probe rather further how the Strategy has been and is being implemented. Right at the start of this discussion you talked about it providing useful mapping points for EU institutions. Biscop and Anderson, in their recent analysis which has been given to us, say that “it serves as a reference framework for day to day policy making in a rapidly evolving and increasingly complex international environment”. They say that “it has been omnipresent in EU discourse in many policy documents and decisions on different aspects of foreign policy, especially those relating to the CFSP and its military dimension”. They go on to the ESS and the European Security and Defence College training and various aspects. Yet when I pick up – as we happen to have it before us this morning – the Commission’s Annual Policy Statement for 2009 and I go through it and I read it from cover to cover, I cannot find a single reference to it. What I really want to discover is how far it is

being implemented. It is great to have a strategy that is having an impact and it does seem to be in certain aspects, but I do find it slightly curious that there is not even the smallest mention of it in the Commission's Annual Policy Strategy.

**Mr Smith:** With respect I think that that quotation you read out was slightly overheated. It is having an impact; it is there in the background of thinking. It is a handy thing to refer to in documents from time to time in order to explain why a decision or an action is being taken. The question which you ask about that Strategy document could also be asked about the country strategy papers. Surely if one has a European Security Strategy which is addressing this broad range of problems, threats and issues, it should be somehow reflected in the papers which the Commission draws up for its relations with and its activities and support for other countries outside the EU. As far as I can see, having seen some early drafts – I am not quite sure whether I should have, but anyway I have – it is not referred to. It seems to me that the gap which you point to is replicated. I think this is a case where there is a horrible word that one uses a lot and finds sometimes devoid of meaning, but it is mainstreaming. Something like the European Security Strategy or indeed a climate change policy or many other kinds of policy should be having their impact and having an identifiable impact which one can point to in these different areas. Even if it got into all the documents, would it actually be really being implemented on the ground? That is an open question, but surely it should first of all be in all the documents.

**Q28 Chairman:** Going back to something you said in response to an earlier question, is the problem that it looks very much as a Council Secretariat document and the Commission does not feel they have much ownership of it and therefore perhaps in the document and the Commission's work strategy it is less likely to feature than perhaps in documents which are Council led?

**Mr Smith:** I think that is very possible and I think it is also particularly possible that this will be felt within the area of the European Commission's work which, to use Lord Hannay's term, is the pretty much traditional development work. That is where there has been resistance to the bringing in of security notions and this is also a political resistance which has been straightforwardly expressed and argued through in the European Parliament in the process of shaping the financial perspectives for the current period. I think that that is right. Being the property of the Council to begin with probably made that whole process of adoption more efficient and quick, but may have then hindered the absorption of those ideas into the EU institutions, particularly into some parts of the Commission. I would say by contrast that those parts that I know within the Commission dealing with security and conflict prevention are pretty much awake to this and it is a real thing for them that influences and helps guide their work.

**Q29 Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** On this issue of the perceived gap between the promulgation of a strategy and its reflection through into individual policy papers, actions and so on, I wonder if you could take a heroic attempt to compare how that takes place between a national presidential directive in the United States and their practice in foreign policy, how it takes place in this country where the Foreign Office now publishes a strategy, and this European one? How would you rank those three in terms of the connection between the generalities of the strategy and the practical delivery of policies?

**Mr Smith:** You are asking me not only to be heroic but to make some unfair comparisons in this. The changes which you see in US national security doctrine from one administration to another, while they may be the stuff of politics and are being fought out on the hustings and so on and so forth, actually result in relatively small changes. There are changes in policy but not fundamental changes in approach. The task of absorption then is perhaps somewhat less. What you certainly do see in the US – as I think you see in pretty much every national

governing structure – is that depending on how dynamically and forcefully the institutions are led, that is going to have an awful lot of impact on the absorption. For example, when you have a strong leader in the Pentagon as, whatever his other merits or demerits may have been (and I do not want to go there), Donald Rumsfeld was a strong leader in the Pentagon and he saw to it that the ideas which he saw as being central to US national security needs and strategic thinking were absorbed as they needed to be. People were shifted around and moved. One of the advantages in the US system is the number of political appointments which are made within the government institutions. I think in the case of the UK, if I take one of the specific issues which we have been talking about, the relationship between development and peace, over the past three or four years I have seen quite considerable movement in the way in which traditional diplomats are thinking about these issues and the way in which people within DfID in traditional development are thinking about these issues. I am always impatient that it pushes further. I think that the perspectives, without trying to stroke you too much, outlined in the High-Level Panel report seem to be approximately the place where this needs to go. I am impatient that they should be taken up further, but I cannot deny and do not want to deny the very visible progress that there has been in that debate moving forward.

**Q30 Chairman:** In London?

**Mr Smith:** Yes, in London. In the case of the EU I think this big division between the two institutions – between the Council of Ministers and the European Commission where you do not just get inter-departmental rivalry, you get something deeper and bigger than that - the gulf has been a bigger one to cross. What I think is impressive that I have seen in the last couple of years are increasingly conscious efforts being made to cross that gulf, partly with the idea of the External Action Service in mind, the understanding that many people are going to be working in a quite different institutional context and they have been trying to prepare

themselves for that. I think you get inter-departmental rivalry within the Commission, if you like; you get something else between the Commission and the Council of Ministers which of course also reflects in that they are recruited in very different ways as well.

**Q31 Lord Anderson of Swansea:** Mr Smith, you speak of increasingly conscious efforts within the European Union to bridge the gulf. You have spoken also of a greater coherence in EU policy. I would like to examine with you how this is reflected in EU policies to other actors on the world stage. Clearly the EU has a series of strategic partners; each of those partners has fairly similar interests in terms of climate change and other matters and the impact on their own external policies be it countries or international organisations, the UN (you have already mentioned) and Lord Hannay's High-Level Panel and NATO. To what extent in your judgment has this increasing internal cohesion within the EU impacted on its strategic relationships with other countries and those with other international organisations? I recall that the US Security Strategy appeared at about the same time as the earlier EU one; presumably there will not be a new US Strategy until the new administration is in place, but do you know about the inter-relationships between the planners and others within the EU and within the National Security Council's State Department of Defence? How much effort is there made to align where possible the security objectives of US and the EU?

**Mr Smith:** I think if you were trying to do that now, that sort of alignment, it would be an extremely puzzling task to try to take on. I think you have to call the result of the November election, put all of your money on that horse and hope that the thing comes in. The document like the National Security Strategy that was announced in the US in 2002 is really a very political document and the drafting of that is led from a very high level and done with very close aids working on it and trusted advisers and so on. So it would be the group which is most closely around the leaders of the national security team of whichever is the new administration who would be the key people to be relating to there. In terms of the first

question it is very important to make a distinction between coherence within the EU institutions and coherence that also includes the EU Member States. What often holds the EU back from being a coherent actor is not positions or policies which are being taken within the Commission or any dispute that there might or might not be between the Commission and the Council of Ministers; it is that the Member States which are all sovereign states with their own interests and their own policies have got to cobble together some kind of a compromise or come to a great understanding with deep vision and profound foresight for moving forward on very, very complex and difficult issues. My hunch is that if you look at the more high profile issues you will tend to have a pretty poor estimate of EU coherence and if you look at the less high profile issues your assessment of EU coherence would become a little bit rosier. In various contexts in countries where we are working we would certainly see the European Commission delegation as being part of a pretty coherent group of western donor governments that is primarily the EU Member States plus, for example, Norway and Switzerland (one or two which are close to EU on a lot of policies and issues). I think we would see quite considerable coherence there and we would see that as helping in the relationship between those players and, for example, the US and/or the UN. The way in which this plays out will be different in different places and to some extent it all also depends on personalities. However, when these things are below the level of concern that is going to get the headlines in the European newspapers and the questions in Parliament and the real active, engaged interest from the foreign minister or the prime minister, it is actually then sometimes a lot easier to identify coherent actions going ahead. There are these two levels and I am not saying that one is more important than the other; I am simply suggesting that they are different and that in the more high profile cases you get more varied interests coming into play and it is therefore necessarily harder to achieve coherence. On some of the more

low profile questions people and institutions are very often more pragmatic and therefore you get more coherence.

**Q32 Lord Anderson of Swansea:** Certainly on the low profile ones you have mentioned, presumably the fact of the External Action Service can only help in improving implementation on the ground.

*Mr Smith:* Yes, that would be my assessment as well; it can only help.

**Q33 Chairman:** The Brussels development of the External Action Service would mean that you would not have separate desk officers in the Council and in the Commission working on these sorts of issues.

*Mr Smith:* That is right. I do think it is true that coherence begins at home and the EU's coherence with other actors therefore begins in internal coherence.

**Q34 Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** Could I take up a completely different issue which is the public perception of these security strategies in the United States, in Europe and indeed nationally here at home, but particularly between the first two of those? In the United States the national security doctrine is a pretty high profile document which gets debated at every political level, it gets debated around the country, arouses enormous press interest and so on. The European Security Strategy, if you went out into the streets and asked people if they had heard about it they would all say they had not. If you asked a lot of people in government if they had heard about it most of them would say they had not. How on earth are we to set about shifting the situation so that a document like the European Security Strategy – which is to be revisited at the end of this year – becomes something that people discuss seriously, not just between people like us here and you in your NGO activities who obviously take it seriously and know a great deal about it? How do we move that debate out so that people

have some understanding of it? The Council actually produced an excellent European Security Strategy in booklet form; I have never seen anyone who has it except me.

**Mr Smith:** I presume the vast difference arises because everyone understands that the USA is an important actor in world affairs and that case is much less easy to make about the EU for, amongst others, some of the reasons that we have been talking about this morning. I think that in a way the answer to your question is that as the process of thinking through the Security Strategy and linking that to the formation of the External Action Service begins to produce an EU which is more often than it has been in the past a significant actor on key world issues, then the importance of that will arise. However, while the EU remains, as I am more or less presuming it will for the rest of my conscious period on this planet, an alliance – albeit a very close one – of sovereign states, there is always going to be a difference between what the EU is capable of doing and what a single state of that population and wealth would be capable of doing. People will react to that accordingly. It may be that in the context of the External Action Service, the movement forward of the European Security Strategy it becomes a slightly larger circle of people who know what that Security Strategy is but I doubt that if you ask a random person on the street they will quickly tell you and will have an opinion about it because I do not think the EU will ever be a European equivalent of the United States of America.

**Q35 Chairman:** Mr Smith, thank you very much indeed for coming and answering our questions this morning. As I said at the beginning, you are our first witness and this is the very beginning of our thinking about this issue. It has been very helpful to have you and cover the whole ground so comprehensively. We are really very grateful.

**Mr Smith:** Thank you very much for the opportunity.