



HOUSE OF LORDS

Liaison Committee

1st Report of Session 2009–10

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The Liaison Committee

The Liaison Committee advises the House on the resources required for select committee work and allocates resources between select committees; reviews the select committee work of the House; considers requests for *ad hoc* committees and reports to the House with recommendations; ensures effective co-ordination between the two Houses; and considers the availability of Lords to serve on committees.

Current Membership

The Members of the Liaison Committee are:

Lord Brabazon of Tara (Chairman)
Baroness Corston
Baroness D'Souza
Lord Fellowes
Lord McNally
Baroness Perry of Southwark
Baroness Royall of Blaisdon
Lord Strathclyde
Baroness Thomas of Winchester
Lord Wakeham

Declaration of Interests

A full list of Members' interests can be found in the Register of Lords' Interests:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld/ldreg/reg01.htm>

General Information

General information about the House of Lords and its Committees is on the internet at

http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/parliamentary_committees26.cfm

Contacts for the Liaison Committee

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Liaison Committee, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW. The telephone number for enquiries regarding the Committee's work is 020 7219 4911.

First Report from the Liaison Committee

Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy

1. The Leader of the House has put forward a proposal for a new sessional Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy¹. The Memorandum from the Leader is appended to this report. She proposes a joint committee of 22, to be chaired by an MP, with terms of reference “to consider the National Security Strategy”.
2. It is proposed that the Committee will have 12 Commons and 10 Lords Members. It is likely that seven of the Commons nominees will be the chairmen of existing departmental committees (Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs, Defence, International Development, Justice, Energy and Climate Change and Business, Innovation and Skills). It is intended that the Chairman of the Intelligence and Security Committee, who has always been an MP, will also be a member. The broad remit of Lords committees means that there is no current Lords sessional committee with a relevant area of scrutiny which might justify such ex-officio membership of the joint committee, though the Constitution Committee, the European Union Committee and the Science and Technology Committee have all produced reports touching on the matters raised in the Strategy. The Lords membership would therefore be selected in the usual way.
3. The Government’s intention is that the joint committee would act with a light touch, and the high level nature of the Security Strategy document would in any event make it difficult for any single committee to attempt detailed oversight. Given this, and the potential for overlap with the work of other committees, we understand that one option might be for the joint committee to invite House of Commons departmental committees with an interest in aspects of the Strategy to undertake detailed consideration of specific areas, which could inform the deliberations of the joint committee. We emphasise that it would be open to the joint committee also to seek the views of any relevant House of Lords committees in the same way.

Resources

4. The proposed joint committee is unlikely to need to meet with great frequency—perhaps 3 to 4 times a year. It is likely that this level of additional activity could be absorbed within existing staff resources. Other costs are not anticipated to be substantial.

Conclusion

5. **The Committee recommends to the House the appointment of a joint committee on the National Security Strategy, as proposed by the Leader of the House.**

¹ The current iteration of the Strategy is contained in Cm 7590, published in June 2009.

APPENDIX: MEMORANDUM BY THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Background

1. In March 2008, the Government published The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom—Security in an Interdependent World (Cm 7291) setting out the nature of the new security challenges to the UK, how the security landscape has changed, and how the Government are responding. Subject to consultation, it proposed establishing a joint Parliamentary National Security Committee to help monitor the implementation and development of the strategy.
2. On 22 July 2008, the Prime Minister made a Written Statement about national security. In it he announced:

It is important that we have the right form of parliamentary oversight of the national security strategy and its delivery. There are already a number of Select Committees, and the Intelligence and Security Committee, who have an interest in the development and implementation of the national security strategy; and any new arrangement should not duplicate their existing scrutiny work. I propose therefore to consult the parliamentary authorities and the Opposition through the usual channels about the establishment and terms of reference of a Joint Committee on the national security strategy comprising the Chairs of the key departmental Select Committees with an interest in national security, and other Members of Parliament and Peers with particular interests or experience.

Proposal

3. Those cross-party consultations have now taken place, and the Liaison Committee in the House of Commons has also been consulted. I accordingly invite the Committee to agree to the appointment of a joint committee on the National Security Strategy. The joint committee would be appointed by motions in the two Houses in the usual way. I envisage that the joint committee would be appointed on a sessional basis.

Terms of reference

4. The proposed terms of reference for the Committee are “to consider the National Security Strategy”.

Membership

5. Subject to agreement by the two Houses, the intention is that the Joint Committee would have 10 Lords members and 12 Commons members. In the Lords, Members of the Joint Committee would be appointed in the usual way, following nomination by the Committee of Selection and approval by the House. In the Commons, agreement has been reached that the Committee will be constituted on the basis of the Chair of the Intelligence and Security Committee, the Chairs of the following Select Committees:

Business, Innovation and Skills Committee,
Defence Committee,
Energy and Climate Change Committee,
Foreign Affairs Committee,

Home Affairs Committee,
International Development Committee,
Justice Committee;

plus 4 other Members. The intention is that the Committee will be chaired by an MP.

6. I invite the Committee to agree to this proposal.

2 DECEMBER 2009

BARONESS ROYALL OF BLAISDON