The UK government has announced that it will subject the defence elements of the National Security Capability Review (NSCR) to further review.

Professor Malcolm Chalmers, Deputy Director-General of the Royal United Services Institute has warned, however, that a long delay in the Defence Modernisation Programme 'could risk damaging consequences for the country's international credibility, especially if it has not been concluded before the NATO summit in July 2018. Despite being billed as a low-profile 'refresh', the NSCR has already lasted longer than either of the last two full Strategic Defence and Security Reviews (SDSRs), in 2010 and 2015, respectively. '

However, Professor Chalmers states that the review 'could be an opportunity for a more radical look at the balance of defence investment, accelerating the shift of resources into capabilities that are most relevant to a rapidly changing strategic environment.'

Even if more cash is available for UK defence spending, Professor Chalmers states that the Review 'will still have to make hard choices if it is to ensure that the resources available for defence are spent on the capabilities that are most relevant to a rapidly changing strategic environment.'

In his analysis, Professor Chalmers outlines the following areas that the Defence Modernisation Programme must examine:

Maintaining capabilities able to respond to possible conflict on at least two fronts, contributing to NATO's deterrent capability against Russia while retaining the ability to play an active role in responding to crises and conflict in Europe's turbulent southern neighbourhoods.
An increased focus on the new technologies, capabilities and doctrines (including cyber and electronic warfare, robotics and artificial intelligence, air and missile defence, anti-submarine warfare, hardening and rapid dispersal) that are likely to be key in maintaining UK military credibility over the next ten to fifteen years.
Additional resources for the remuneration packages and employment flexibility that will be needed to attract the best people into defence, including through greater use of reservist and part-time personnel;
Rescheduling selected major procurement programmes, for example those for F-35B aircraft and Apache helicopters, spreading their costs over a longer period.

A demonstrated readiness to cut back on lower-priority capabilities (equipment and personnel), taking advantage of the possibilities afforded by new technology and new systems.

Access analysis at: https://rusi.org/commentary/uk-defence-modernisation-programme-risk-and-opportunity

Watch recent speech from Chief of the Genral Staff General Sir Nicholas Carter at RUSI: https://rusi.org/event/dynamic-security-threats-and-british-army

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