



## Scottish Independence Convention

### SCOTLAND'S SECURITY

The Scottish Independence Convention's second Transition Paper, "Scotland's Security" by Isobel Lindsay, comes at a timely moment with the UK Prime Minister's recent sabre-rattling pronouncements after a return to gun-boat diplomacy post-Brexit. In her paper Lindsay presents the case for using a human security model and a clear and realistic assessment of the security challenges an independent Scotland might face including our position as a major nuclear base. She proposes the immediate establishment of a **Secure Scotland Commission** and starting preparations now for setting up a **Scottish Security and Intelligence Agency (SSIA)**, a **Scottish Defence Force (SDF)** (comprising of navy, army and air force), a **Scottish National Defence Academy** and a strengthened **coastguard service**. The following is an abridged version of "Scotland's Security".

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Fresh thinking is needed as a traditional narrow focus on "defence" issues is not appropriate for Scotland. With independence Scotland has the opportunity to shape a security policy that is appropriate to 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges (such as cyber security, climate change, pandemics, organised crime, radiation leaks) and our geographical position and aspirations.

There is still an assumption that defence organisation and procurement should be based on the belief that the main purpose is preventing attack from opposing armed forces or protecting overseas interests. But ideas of security shaped by 20<sup>th</sup> century European wars, cold wars and lingering echoes of empire are inappropriate as the guiding framework for contemporary challenges. In contrast, the perspective of human security has developed out of the experience of many poorer countries whose citizens face serious deprivation and internal violence but the existential threats of climate change, global pandemics and nuclear weapons affecting all of humanity make a human security approach just as relevant to more economically developed states. It provides a framework to evaluate serious threats that could undermine the viability of the structures that play a fundamental role in sustaining the core essentials of community and personal safety and survival. It also provides a holistic threat assessment model rather than one driven by the interests of the military-industrial complex.

In order to implement a human security approach a Secure Scotland Commission can be established now with existing Holyrood powers and would become an integral part of Scottish state structures. Some of the important powers required to increase resilience on a national level, particularly in relation to the effects of climate change, are already devolved. The Commission would undertake risk assessments, serious disaster preparedness and pandemic exercises and contingency planning. It would comprise of the Scottish Government and its agencies, parliamentary and civil society representatives. The military forces and hardware required by an independent Scotland must be subordinate to a broadly-based assessment of the existential risks we might face.

Scotland is particularly fortunate in that it is in one of the geopolitically stable regions in the world. As indeed is the present UK. We are not surrounded by boundary disputes (although post-Brexit may see some related to fishing rights). Scottish borders are clearly legally defined. We are distant from the worst conflict areas in the

world (some of which we have helped to create and sustain). Hostile state invasion would not be in the significant risk category (and this is similar to the current UK risk assessments). And Scotland is unlikely to be engaged in future expeditionary warfare projects that have characterized much of UK policy. The respect in which we are outstandingly vulnerable is in having a major concentration of nuclear weapons.

Scottish armed forces have to be placed in the context of new security challenges and the responses required, and take into consideration the value of investing in soft power as in the case of Ireland. There are some initiatives that can be taken now by the Scottish Government that are both useful in themselves and create a bridge to the institutions of an independent state. Creating a Secure Scotland Commission and upgrading the status of the intelligence centre at the Scottish Crime Campus at Gartcosh to a “provisional” or “pre-natal” Scottish Security and Intelligence Agency (SSIA) would be viable initiatives that can be undertaken with the current devolved powers. Serious risk issues for Scotland – cyber-attack/failure, organized crime, protection of marine resources and possible malicious state or commercial action – requires a good intelligence service designed for Scotland's needs. The SSIA could be largely modelled on the Danish PET in that it would form part of the national police service but would be responsible for both domestic and foreign intelligence operations. Combating organized crime is Police Scotland's responsibility and therefore the structures and much of the resourcing is already in place. However, the response to combat it also involves Customs and Excise and the taxation system (which are currently reserved to the UK Government).

With independence Scotland will have a special opportunity to develop a Scottish Defence Force (SDF) made up of a navy, army and air force appropriate to the risk environment we face, but with some capacity to adapt under changed circumstances. It should be modest with an estimated 11,000 SDF personnel needed on a 70/30 ratio of regular/reserve forces, as proposed by Stuart Crawford and Richard Marsh who said in their revised Scottish defence strategy (quoted in Source, 19 September 2019), "we continue to see no utility for high end weaponry, and have therefore discounted aircraft carriers, submarines, tanks, army attack helicopters, heavy artillery, and fast jet attack aircraft". The establishment of an SDF will also provide an opportunity to improve conditions for Scottish armed forces personnel with some recommendations on this already included in the SNP MPs' submission to the UK Government's 2020 Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Affairs. A Scottish National Defence Academy should provide an integrated education, training and research facility for the armed forces, but should also include some shared educational work with police, customs, paramedics, coastguards and other relevant services.

Protection of marine resources is a much higher priority for Scotland than the rest of the UK. Scottish waters are a rich source of fish and off-shore wind-turbines, future tidal energy technology and the under-water grid connections will all be key energy sources. There is an existing international legal maritime framework and Scottish waters are legally defined. However, we must assume that our long and vulnerable coastline (11,602 miles) will require protecting/policing (including ensuring safe marine transport and that Scottish vessels obey international rules). A high priority will be to develop a substantial and well-equipped **coastguard service**, which is currently under-resourced..

The exceptional risk factor for Scotland is having the largest concentration of nuclear fire-power in Europe and having Trident nuclear submarines based close to our large population centres. What is required is a very clear pathway for the removal of nuclear weapons from Scotland and a formal public notification of this after a Yes vote. The SNP and the Greens have supported such a pathway and detailed technical work has been done on this. The process of formal ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) has been completed and it will formally come into force in January 2021. There are defence issues which should be included in a Scottish Constitution and there is support from the SNP, the Greens and civic groups for a constitutional clause prohibiting the presence of weapons of indiscriminate mass destruction on Scottish territory, including biological, chemical and nuclear weapons.

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