



THE BRITISH
PARLIAMENT-HOUSE
OF COMMONS



UN Society
Universidad EAFIT

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1. Letter from the Chair.

Dear Members of Parliament,

It is our honour to welcome you to EAFITMUN and to the committee. We are Eduardo Tisnes Zapata, law student at EAFIT University and Federico Freydell Mesa, law student at El Rosario University, and we will be chairing EAFITMUN's House of Commons. The last few years, have put this House under pressure for reasons involving the exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union, overseas and domestic terrorism and security crises; the flow of migrants from the Middle East and Africa and the lack of political consensus between the Government and the Opposition.

The challenges you will face in the committee will not only require from you background academic knowledge, but they will demand your best abilities to negotiate between parties and to propose solutions that work best for the British people, meeting halfway and reaching across the House. As it is obvious we cannot have 650 MPs, therefore we will try to reproduce the Commons' majorities and parties representation in the House. Nevertheless, no party will hold an overall majority, making solution and policymaking more challenging.

Even though the main focus of this committee will be counter terrorism and border security, we expect the House to be able to address all sorts of issues that may arise. In addition we expect the highest level of debates, both in and out of the House Chamber, and the best bills you can propose and negotiate!

Finally, and although this is an innovative and challenging committee, we hope that in the three days of debate and negotiation, you enjoy the EAFITMUN experience, meet new people and reach possible and innovative solutions.

We are both looking forward to meeting you all,

The Chair,

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2. Introduction

The House of Commons is the lower house of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. In addition, it is the public elected house of Parliament, in contrast to the House of Lords, where members are appointed by Her Majesty the Queen, who are hereditary peers or members of the Church of England. The House is located in the Palace of Westminster in London, and its official name is the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament Assembled (Parliament, 2018).

Members of Parliament (MPs) are elected in general elections that are usually held every 5 years. Historically, snap elections could be called at any moment by the Prime Minister; however, after the Fixed-term Parliaments Act of 2011 (Parliament, 2011), those powers were greatly limited. Today, snap elections can be called after the Parliament is dissolved as a result of a non-confidence vote (which usually occurs in the case of a hung parliament or political gridlock), or through the vote of two-thirds of the vote of Parliament. A hung Parliament occurs when no party has an overall majority of 326 MPs.

The main four functions of the House consist in (a) checking and challenging the work of the Government, (b) making and amending laws, (c) debating current affairs relevant to the country and (d) revising Government spending and funding (Parliament, 2018).

Through these functions, the House can have a close control of Government. Nevertheless, regarding some affairs of national security, the Government is not obliged to inform or brief the House before.

Making laws is a function shared with the Lords, albeit, since 1911, the upper house lost its veto right over the Commons, and was restricted in its capacity to delay legislation. Nonetheless, while laws may originate in the Lords as well, since 1911 important laws come from the Commons and are usually approved by the peers.

2.1. History

Although the origins of Parliament can be traced back to the Norman Conquest and the reign of King William I, the most relevant event occurred in 1215, with the sealing of Magna Carta by King John I. The Great Charter (alternative name given to Magna Carta) was the result of ten days of negotiations between the King and rebel Barons; the Barons had revolted over the excessive taxation and the governance of the King. Even though the King had an organised administrative system (Britannica, 2018), the Barons pushed as well for the recognition of individual liberties and the acknowledging that law applied to everyone, including the Monarch. The Charter of 1215 was the first of a series of documents declaring the “rule of law” in England, setting the foundations for a representative government.

Parliamentary rights over the Crown were reasserted in 1688 with the Glorious Revolution. One year later Parliament passed the Bill of Rights, a declaration that embodied a series of individual liberties and public duties related to religion and the Crown. In 1707 both Parliaments of England and Scotland passed the Acts of Union, uniting England and Scotland and giving birth to Great Britain, both Parliaments united and for the first time 45 Scottish MPs sat at Westminster (Parliament, 2010).

As King George II, from the House of Hannover, lived outside the country, he appointed Robert Walpole First Lord of the Treasury, he was in charge of His Majesty's Government and thus, considered to be the first Prime Minister (PM). The position of Prime Minister has existed ever since under the principle of "primus inter pares", first among equals; for this, the Prime Minister has always been a member of either house of Parliament and holds the office of the First Lord of the Treasury as well. As it happened with Scotland, the Act of Union of 1800 unified the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland; 100 Irish MPs were sent to Westminster. In 1801, the first Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland met (Parliament, 2010).

In 1911 the Parliament Act was passed after the Lords' rejection of the "People's Budget"; the Act removed the Lords' right to veto bills coming from the Commons. The House of Lords can now only delay legislation related to money by one month and other legislation by two years. They can only veto bills extending the life of Parliament. Although, bills may originate from any House, important bills usually come from the Commons.

Post-war Parliament was not reformed very often. PM Harold Macmillan introduced Prime Minister's Questions in 1961, where the entire House can inquire the Government on current affairs, a tradition that has been held weekly by all Governments ever since. Since then, the House of Commons has sought to be more open to the public, allowing strangers to enter the House as spectators and broadcasting debates by radio and television since 1990. Under the Blair Government and its policy of devolution of powers, extensive prerogatives were transferred to the Scottish Parliament, the Northern Ireland Assembly and the National Assembly for Wales in 1999. That same year, the House of Lords Act gets Royal Assent, this restricted the number of hereditary peers to 92 in the House of Lords (Parliament, 2010).

2.2. The House of Lords

The House of Lords is the upper house of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. As stated before, it has lost power in relation to the Commons, but still, they can propose new laws and debate on proposed bills by the Commons. They can still delay legislation and hold the Government accountable. Even though the House of Lords still holds a significant role, the House of Commons can pass bills and can seek directly Royal Assent without consulting the Lords. Although the Lords can attend Commons' sessions, they cannot vote or speak. The Queen, who can sit and participate at the House of Lords cannot enter the Commons' Chamber. Members of the Royal Family holding titles of dukes, marquesses, earls, viscounts, barons or baronets are entitled to sit at the House of Lords.

Its members can either be part of party or be crossbenchers, not officially joining a political party. As the House of Commons, the House of Lords has a Lord Speaker, elected among the members of the House.

The House of Lords is made up of 785 peers that are divided between:

- a. Lords Spiritual: Bishops, they cannot be partisan.
- b. Lords Temporal: Life Peers (non-hereditary, are appointed by Her Majesty on the advice of the Government) and Hereditary Peers (after the House of Lords Act of 1999 they were cut to only 92).

2.3. The Westminster System

The Westminster System (WS) is the government system ruling the United Kingdom and most of the Commonwealth of Nations' member states. It gets its name from the tradition of government at Westminster Palace, that is of course, the British Parliament (Public Service Commission of NSW, 2013). Although the United Kingdom does not have a written constitution, the group of laws and traditions have developed the system and have set it as the structure of our government and political system.

The Westminster System (WS) has the following characteristics (Public Service Commission of NSW, 2013) (they have been adapted to the United Kingdom):

- a. A head of state. In the UK, Her Majesty (HM) Queen Elizabeth II. As a constitutional monarch, HM the Queen holds limited political, but large ceremonial powers. In other countries with the WS the head of state might have the title of President, Governor-General, etc.
- b. A bicameral Parliament.
- c. A Government formed with majority support in the Lower House. In the United Kingdom, the Prime Minister, leader of the government, is elected among MPs and he or she is the leader of the largest party/coalition in the House of Commons.

d. A Ministry made up by MPs at the Prime Minister's invitation. In the United Kingdom, the Government and its Cabinet can be composed of other citizens from the House of Lords, the Public Service, the Armed Forces or even the Royal Family; the Cabinet exercises executive authority in the country on behalf of HM the Queen. The Ministry is accountable to Parliament.

e. An independent Public Service in charge of the administration of the country, although it is headed by the government it serves no specific party.

f. An independent judiciary that interprets and applies the law.

2.4. The Queen in Parliament

Although the relationship between Parliament and the Crown has not always been friendly, the Monarch's relevance in parliamentary tradition is still important. The United Kingdom's legislature exists under the principle of Queen In Parliament or Crown in Parliament (Royal, 2018). According to this principle, the legislature consists of the House of Commons, the House of Lords and the Crown, that is HM the Queen. Formally the laws are enacted and proclaimed by Her Majesty after they get royal assent, so technically the term refers to the Crown acting on advice of the Parliament. Nevertheless, the last time a monarch refused to approve a bill passed by both Houses of Parliament was during Queen Anne's Reign in the 18th Century.

According to the Royal Household (2018) Her Majesty's duties are "opening each new session of Parliament, granting Royal Assent to legislation, and approving Orders and Proclamations through the Privy Council". As it was stated before, political power residing in the Crown has decreased, Polish Chancellor Jan Zamoyski said, "the King reigns, but does not govern" (The Polish Institute, 2018).

2.5. Composition of the House

Currently, the House of Commons has 650 members, representing the 650 constituencies (electoral districts) of the United Kingdom. Most of MPs are members of a political party currently, and since the 1920s, the two major political parties have been the Conservative Party and the Labour Party. After each general election HM the Queen invites the party with a majority of 326 in the Commons to form a government; if no party reaches that majority, multiple parties can form a coalition government or other parties can declare themselves in "confidence and supply" of another party and help them reach a majority. For this, after every general election a new government is formed, no matter if it is from the same party or has the same person as Prime Minister.

After the 2017 General Election, the House of Commons' composition is as follows:

Party	Seats
Conservative	317
Labour	256
Scottish National Party	35
Liberal Democrat	11
Democratic Unionist Party	10
Independent	8
Sinn Féin	7
Plaid Cymru	4
Green Party	1
Speaker	1
Total number of seats	650

Figure 1. Parliamentary composition. Adapted from "Current State of Parties" by Parliament, 2017. Parliament. Retrieved February 17th 2019, from <https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/current-state-of-the-parties/>. Open Parliament Licence v3.0.

As to EAFITMUN's House of Commons, the composition is as follows:

- 10 Conservative MPs.
- 8 Labour MPs.
- 3 Scottish National Party MPs.
- 3 Democratic Unionist Party MPs.
- 1 Liberal Democrat MP.

2.6. The Speaker of the House

The Speaker of the House has the duty of chairing sessions of the House of Commons. He or she is an elected Member of Parliament who other MPs elect as Speaker. Although the Speaker is member of a political party, he must remain impartial at all time, as he is the highest authority in the House. One of his roles is to represent the Commons to the Monarch, the Lords and other officials, at home and in the overseas. According to Parliament (2010), by chairing debates, the Speaker has full authority to make sure MPs follow the rules of the House during debates. This can include:

- a. "Directing an MP to withdraw remarks if, for example, they use abusive language
 - b. Suspending the sitting of the House due to serious disorder
 - c. Suspending MPs who are deliberately disobedient - known as naming
 - d. Asking MPs to be quiet so Members can be heard"
- (Parliament, 2010).

3. Members of Parliament (delegate expectations).

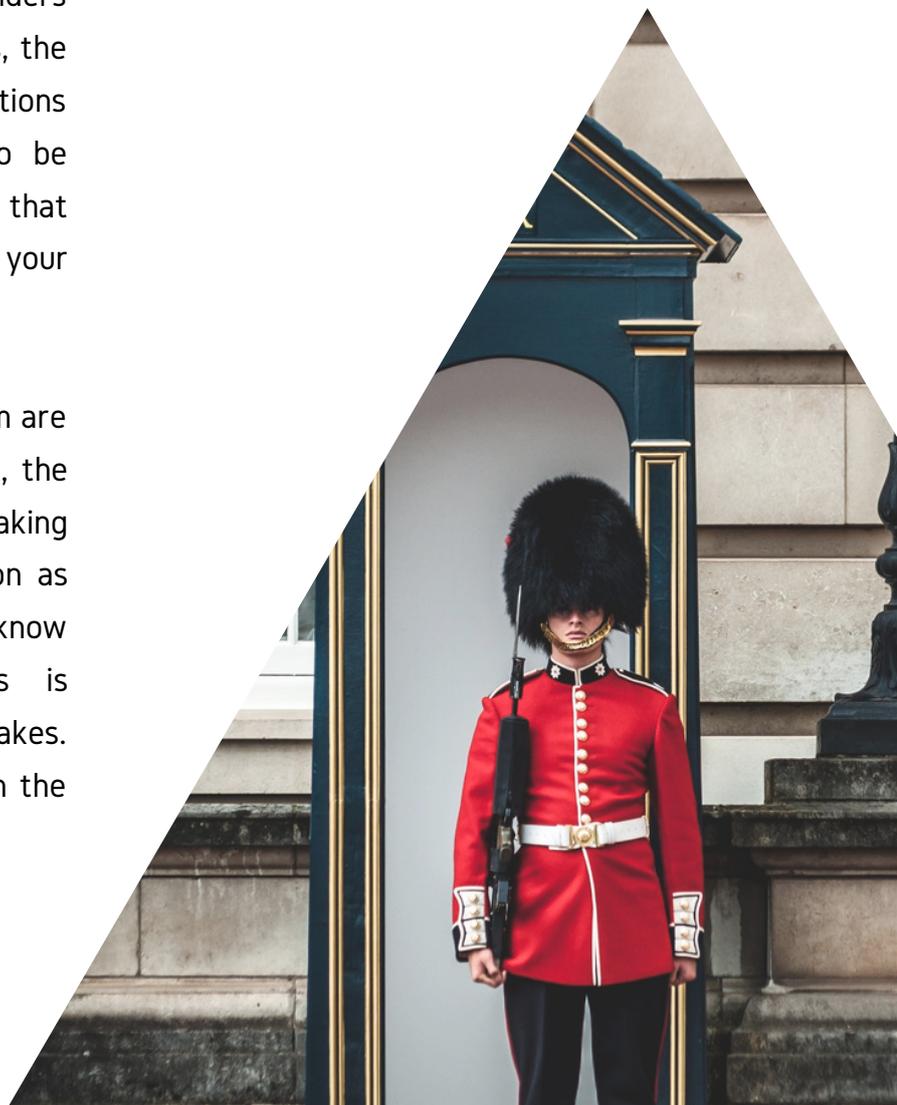
First of all, it is important for the correct development of this committee, that all MPs have read, studied and understood the special procedure of the House. As Chair, we know it can be hard to understand how this committee works, that is why we encourage you to ask every question you have. Before the the first session starts we will have a Q&A and an explanation of the procedure.

As we have said previously, MPs are expected to be cooperative in order to find possible solutions that fit best to the issues and challenges the House and the Country face. It is important for delegates to know that as the United Kingdom has other political, judicial and economic stakeholders such as Trade Unions, international partners, the Lords, among others, these might affect actions among MPs. We expect from delegates to be dynamic in the way you negotiate, knowing that even though you represent a constituency, your party has also certain interests.

MPs must be aware as well that some of them are members of other structures as the Cabinet, the Board of Trade, etc. This might help MPs taking decisions and actions regarding their position as secretaries and such. As well, MPs must know what constituency they represent, this is important as constituencies hold different stakes. We invite MPs to be strategic and realistic in the bills they propose.

Although we wish all of this country's problems could be solved through one act of Parliament, they cannot. Bills need to be detailed and specific if they address certain affairs of State.

Nevertheless, the most important thing we expect from you, is the respect and diplomatic spirit. Remember that although all of you will represent different political positions, EAFITMUN seeks to build bridges between delegates and to find peaceful solutions among opposing sides. That is why we expect from you solutions that transcend positions.



4. Special Procedure

Due to its specialized nature, the House of Commons will operate with a procedure more similar to that of the House of Commons in real life than to that of a regular MUN Committee.

A. CODE OF CONDUCT.

Because of the fact that delegates will be representing Members of Parliament, and not the delegations of States in the United Nations, there is no restriction in the use of first-person pronouns. In other words, delegates can refer to themselves as “I” and generally use the first person in discourse. However, this does not mean that all parliamentary language is invalid within the House of Commons - all other points of parliamentary procedure still apply and the use of terms outside parliamentary conventions or any blatantly disrespectful interventions will still be sanctioned.

Besides the ordinary norms of debate, Members of Parliament are expected to never refer to each other directly - in other words, the use of second-person pronouns is prohibited. All speeches must be addressed to the Speaker of the House, and other Members of Parliament must be referred to in the third person. Usually, the convention is to call the Speaker of the House of Commons “Mr. Speaker”; the Prime Minister must be referred to as “the Prime Minister”; members from the same party are usually referred to as “my right honourable friend”; and members from the opposite party are usually referred to as “the Right Honourable Member of Parliament”.

B. DEBATES.

The Speaker of the House has the right to choose any Member of Parliament to intervene within a Formal Debate or Moderated Caucus, which will occur using the same rules of procedure as in any other committee in EAFITMUN. The procedural difference between a regular committee and the House of Commons, however, lies in the way a MP can request the Speaker to recognize them: the Speaker can decide whether to use the placard system or whether the more traditional system in which an MP requests the floor by standing up will be used.

During debate, Members of Parliament are allowed to express approval of the speaking MPs interventions. This will be done by a short, respectful and quiet utterance of the words “hear hear”. That being said, the Chair will be able to point out at any point whether the noises being made are disruptive, and call for order: after which all such noises will be considered out of order.

C. BILLS.

Bills are the legal documents drafted by the Chamber with the intent of eventually becoming Acts, legislative documents that have the same weight as Laws in other legal systems. Bills can either be a proposal for the creation of a new law, or the modification of existing laws that the Chamber has decided must be modified. Broadly, two kinds of bills exist: public bills (those that change the law as it applies to the entirety of the British public) and private bills (those that give specific organisations broader powers than generally allocated to the public or the Government). Occasionally, private bills affect the broad aspects of society - these are called hybrid bills. The procedure for all three types of bills is identical.

Bills are introduced through either house of the British Parliament (although tax bills are always introduced to the House of Commons) and must be, in theory, approved by both chambers and the Monarch (although the House of Lords does not have the power to veto legislation any longer, and Royal Assent has only been refused a handful of times in history). Once a bill is passed through both Chambers, it becomes a law.

Bills can be presented by private organizations, Her Majesty's Government, or any individual Member of Parliament (MP). In the case of this committee, it is clear that all bills will be introduced by the present Members of Parliament, and must include the same essential elements as a regular resolution within the rules of procedure of EAFITMUN, with a preambulatory aspect that includes the essential context of the bill, previous legal references that must be taken into consideration when discussing the new bill and the intent of the legislator and resolute articles that tackle the problem in question and introduce concrete solutions to the problem.

To pass as Acts, bills must pass a comprehensive process of legislation and debate, which involves several stages of procedure. First of all, occurs a reading, in which the author of the bill presents its contents, and opens a new debate. This debate has a series of specific steps that must be followed:

- The MP that has drafted the bill (in the case of a bill composed by several MPs or the Government, an official spokesperson chosen to represent the group) will present the content and general principles of the bill, and then issue a short statement in favour of this bill.
- A spokesman chosen by Her Majesty's Most Loyal Opposition must then issue a statement that exposes the Opposition's views on the Bill, and whether they consider it should pass as an Act or be archived.

- A period of debate is introduced in which all members of Parliament have the right to express their viewpoints on the bill, through a period of moderated caucus.
- Eventually, the bill is voted upon: to become a law, it must pass with a simple majority (half plus one of those present).

The voting procedure of bills consists of the Speaker calling MPs to state their stance on a bill, this after a motion to vote a bill is passed. A “voice vote” system is used in the House; where MPs must express whether they support or not the bill. MPs in favour of the motions shall shout “aye”, those against, shall shout “no”. If there is no clear majority, the Speaker or any MP may call a division. In a division, the Speaker will cry “Division, clear the lobby!”, then all non MPs are expected to leave the House, and passed certain time each MP will be asked to approach the Chair and state their vote.

D. MOTIONS.

The House of Commons will, in general, use EAFITMUN’s motion system. That being said, Members of Parliament have a few additional motions that can be used in the voting and debating process of a new bill (Parliament, 2019):

1. Members of Parliament can issue a motion to take note to establish a new sub-topic in the agenda, which will be discussed without the necessity of reaching an agreement or arriving at a written document at the end. The motion to take note will work in the same way as a motion to establish a moderated caucus.

2. In the case of a law being passed that the Members of Parliament disagree, they may propose a prayer motion, at which point they request that the Queen evaluate and maybe strike the new law. That being said, the prayer motion is not very effective, as it has been a long time since the Queen struck down a piece of legislation.

3. In the case a law is passed that Members of Parliament object to, they may also propose a Non-fatal motion, which is used to leave on the record the particular disagreements the Members of Parliament had.

Motions are passed with a single majority of the votes. A “voice vote” system is used in the House; here MPs are asked to express whether they support or not the motions. MPs in favour of the motions shall shout “aye”, those against, shall shout “no”. If there is no clear majority, the Speaker may use a conventional placard system.

E. THE SPEAKER.

The Speaker of the House of Commons is a Member of Parliament who, after being chosen by his or her colleagues at the beginning of each Parliament (following a general election), is awarded special faculties in his or her new role as representative of the Commons. These new roles include, but are not limited to: controlling debate, deciding who can and cannot speak, deciding which amendments will be taken into consideration, allowing Urgent Questions or Emergency Debates, exercising the deciding vote in the case of an exact tie, and upholding parliamentary rules. The Speaker of the House, in exchange, loses his or her right to vote in normal parliamentary procedure, can no longer be a part of the political party he or she once belonged to, and cannot campaign in general elections. (Institute for Government, 2019)

In this Committee, the role of Speaker will be held by the Chair, who will be granting the floor to Members of Parliament.

5. Topic: Counter terrorism in Great Britain.

A. HISTORY OF TERRORISM IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

i. The Troubles (1969-1998).

The Troubles was a period in British history that was marked by highly sectarian violence, mainly in Northern Ireland (or Ulster), but it expanded all over the country. It is possible to mark the beginning of the Troubles in August, 1969, when British troops had to be deployed in Ulster after the riots in Derry. In this conflict, there were three sides (BBC, 2018):

(a) Republican Paramilitaries: Catholics, with many military organisations (IRA, IPLO, etc), sought an end in British rule in Ulster, the unification of Ireland under a republic and the dominance of Catholic faith. In Ulster, the great majority of the population is protestant.

(b) Unionist paramilitaries: Mainly Protestants, organised in armed groups as well (UVF, UDA, etc), they were called Loyalists too for their support of a British Ulster and their loyalty to the British Crown.

(c) Governments of Britain and Ireland: Although many of the attacks occurred on British soil, the Republic of Ireland was a victim too. Both governments sought to maintain peace and security and to tackle terrorist groups.

During the Troubles, Ulster was site of deadly attacks by both Unionist and Republican paramilitaries; bombings and attacks on Catholic and Protestant churches, attacks against the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the British Army, among others. London and other cities in Great Britain were targets too, the capital was bombed repeated times and many attacks on high profile politicians were common (BBC, 2018). The conflict ended with the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, proposed by PM Tony Blair and that saw a complete ceasefire in 2006. The Troubles resulted in around 3,500 deaths (CAIN, 2014), among combatants, senior British military officers, senior politicians, one senior member of the Royal Family and civilians.

ii. Main Terrorist Attacks.

Aside of attacks related to the Troubles, Britain has been target of other terrorist acts. This section will include the most relevant attacks in British soil to 2019, this according to The Guardian (2018), The Telegraph (2017) and the BBC (2017).

1. Pan Am 103 bombing: December 21, 1988, Lockerbie - 270 killed.
2. 7/7 Attacks: July 7, 2005, London - 52 killed.
3. Glasgow Airport car attack: June 30, 2007, Glasgow - 5 injured.
4. Murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby: May 22, 2013, London - 1 killed.

5. Leytonstone station knife attack: December 5, 2015, London.
6. Murder of Jo Cox MP: June 16, 2016, London - 1 killed.
7. Westminster car attack: March 17, 2017, London - 6 killed.
8. Manchester Arena Bombing: May 22, 2017, Manchester - 22 killed.
9. London Bridge car attack: June 3, 2017, London - 7 killed.
10. Finsbury Park car attack: June 19, 2017, London - 1 killed.
11. District line train attack: September 15, 2017, London - 51 injured.

B. THREAT OF TERRORISM AT HOME.

As stated in the section above, the United Kingdom has been target of terrorist attacks multiple times. Although in the past the biggest terrorist threat came from Northern Ireland, nowadays the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Al Qaida rank first in international terrorism (MI5, 2019). According to the Metropolitan Police (2019), the threat of a terrorist attack in the United Kingdom is “severe”, that means that is highly likely to happen, on the opposite, the threat from an attack from Northern Irish terrorism is “moderate” meaning that although it is possible, it is not likely.

The current crisis in the Middle East has increased the risk of terrorist activities in Western nations, including the United Kingdom. In addition, Britain’s commitment to defeat extremism and radicalism, its engagements in Iraq, Afghanistan and other conflicts, make it a very likely target for terrorist attacks (MI5, 2019). This has fire the alarms at the large amount of British citizens travelling to and from countries and territories under the influence of extremist groups. These particular citizens are radicalised and set to perpetrate terrorist attacks against the British people. About this, the Secret Service states (2019):

The majority of terrorist attack plots in this country have been planned by British residents. There are several thousand individuals in the UK who support violent extremism or are engaged in Islamist extremist activity. British nationals who have fought for extremist groups overseas continue to return to the UK, increasing the risk of terrorist attacks. Using skills acquired overseas, they may organise attacks under direction from outside the UK, or on their own initiative, or they might radicalise others to do so. While the majority of returners will not mount attacks in the UK, the large numbers involved mean it is likely that at least some of them will attempt to do so.

Not only British nationals working with extremist groups as ISIL, but the so called lonewolves, are a huge threat too; these represent a harder challenge to the security agencies as their actions are less planned. Aside of other methods of recruiting Britons, social media has played an important role; the recent years have seen a surge in the activity of radical groups in social media (MI5, 2019).

Terrorist plotting against the United Kingdom does not only consist of carrying out attacks, supporting terrorist organisations poses also a threat as well to the wellbeing of the country. Support may be as well (a) the radicalisation of individuals to believe in terrorist causes and actions, (b) helping raise funds for extremist organisations and individuals at home or in the overseas and (c) helping in convincing British nationals to join foreign terrorist organisations in the Middle East (MI5, 2019).

According to the Security Service (MI5, 2019), terrorists often target official government locations and places frequented by large crowds and Westerners. It has been seen how terror plots usually aim to attack State property like diplomatic venues, army facilities, police officers and members of the Armed Forces on guard duty; an example of this is the 2017 Westminster Attack in London. The other main target for terrorism are public places with large crowds; pubs, theatres, national monuments, public transport, among others.

As terrorist wish to provoke the largest damage they can, they seek places with large influx of people, as happened in the 7/7 London Attacks when the London Tube was the main target.

Since 2001, when the Terrorism Act of 2001 was enacted by Parliament, other 13 terrorism related acts have been introduced into British legislature (Legislation, 2019). These acts have given the Government and the security agencies the framework of dealing with possible terrorist threats. They have as well expanded the criminal offences related to terrorism, allowing the prosecution of more persons of interest. These acts have been praised by some as they showed the way of how to deal and proceed to address terrorism, on the other hand some have called for a review of them saying they limit personal freedoms and give a free leash to the security agencies. Others say that these laws are not enough to cope with the terrorist menace.

C. ROLE AND SCOPE OF THE SECURITY AGENCIES.

The United Kingdom's security relies on a series of police and intelligence organisations that keep the country safe from terrorist attacks, among other threats (The National Archives, retrieved 2019). These agencies prevent attacks but also react to them. The most relevant agencies in fighting terrorism in the United Kingdom are:

a. MI5.

Also known as the Security Service, MI5 has the task of protecting the country from (a) terrorism, (b) espionage, (c) cyber attacks and (d) weapons of mass destruction (MI5, 2019). In opposition to the SIS (MI6), MI5 main task is protecting Britain at home, to gather intelligence related to threats to domestic security. Nevertheless, it is not limited to the national territory, as it operates abroad as well in cooperation with other foreign intelligence services. It is part of the Home Office, meaning that the Home Secretary is responsible to Parliament.

b. MI6.

Officially the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), MI6 operates as the foreign intelligence agency. Its mission is to give the Government wide global covert capability (SIS, 2019). This organisation strictly works outside the national territory, collecting information and mounting operations overseas to “prevent and detect serious crime, and promote and defend the national security and economic wellbeing of the United Kingdom” (MI6, 2019). It is part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), meaning that the minister responsible is the Foreign Secretary.

a. GCHQ.

The Government Communications Headquarters, is responsible of providing the Government with signals intelligence (SIGINT), which means collecting communications by the interception of signals, aiming to prevent and alert government agencies and the Armed Forces of possible threats (The National Archives, retrieved 2019). It works with partner organisations in the United States, New Zealand and Australia, signatories of the UKUSA Agreement. The GCHQ maintains a permanent surveillance of communications of interest to British security (GCHQ, 2019). Although it is not part of the FCO, the minister responsible is the Foreign Secretary.

b. NaCTSO.

The National Counter Terrorism Security Office, is the organisation within the Home Office that prepares and coordinates the Government’s counter terrorism strategy within local police forces around the country (Government, 2019). The minister responsible is the Home Secretary.

There are other agencies working against terrorism in Britain such as the Metropolitan Police of London, all the local police forces, the Ministry of Defence’s Defence Intelligence, among others.

Surrounding the security agencies listed above, are controversies of human rights violations in their operations. Regarding the operations of GCHQ, it has been argued that the constant gathering of communications and interception of such is a constant violation of the right to privacy. When Parliament passed the Investigatory Powers Act in 2016, many spoke out against the bill stating that not only the right to privacy but freedom of speech would be affected as the act significantly enlarged the Government's surveillance powers (Reporters without Borders, 2016). This act did give the Government large surveillance and information collection powers, something that some see as positive for the security of the country and some others, as a violation of human rights.

Another controversy related to the MI5 and MI6 is the alleged cooperation and perpetration of torture. The ISC Detainee Reports of 2018, show that members of the Armed Forces and of MI6 and MI5 were involved in tortures and renditions in Afghanistan, this after the 911 attacks (Parliament, 2018). After these reports, there was a call to reform the way the agencies operate, the Government responded that since 2010, there has been a guideline for interrogations and detainments, nevertheless, some argue that more public control of these operations is necessary (The Guardian, 2018).

D. BORDER SECURITY AND MIGRANT CRISIS.

Protecting the borders of the United Kingdom is a task entrusted to the Border Force (BF), part of the Home Office. The BF is in charge of maintaining a control at the country's 140 airports, seaports, rails and land borders, the last in Ireland. The responsibilities of the BF include:

- a. "Checking the immigration status of people arriving in and departing the UK
 - b. Searching baggage, vehicles and cargo for illicit products or illegal immigrants
 - c. Patrolling the UK coastline and searching vessels
 - d. Gathering intelligence
 - e. Alerting the police and security service to people of interest"
- (Home Office, 2018).

These responsibilities have become utterly important to keep Britain safe in the wake of radical terrorism. Although many of the perpetrators of the recent terrorist attacks in the United Kingdom have been British passport holder or even British citizens, foreign terrorists still try to enter national territory. One of the priorities of the BF is to "deter and prevent individuals and goods that would harm the national interest from entering the UK" (Home Office, 2018).

The individuals that may pose a threat to the country and its people, are subject of arrest and deportation from Britain, arrests can be made by port or inland officers, meaning that the BF does not only operate at points of entry to the United Kingdom; in order to deport someone, there must be a court order, this according to the Immigration Act of 1971 and the UK Borders Act of 2007; of course, British citizens are not eligible to deportation under these provisions.

the BF and other law enforcement agencies more tools to prevent terrorism coming to the United Kingdom. According to the Immigration Act of 1971, part 1, article 2A, someone can be striped off the right to abode (the right to freely come and go from the country without the Government's authorization), if he or she meets certain conditions that make him or she a person of interest. This gave authorities the possibility to prevent suspected terrorists of leaving the country or getting back in, even if they are British citizens.

Although British borders are well secured, the BF still faces a huge challenge regarding the migrant crisis. The constant influx of migrants from Africa and the Middle East into Europe has posed a challenge to European governments in how to handle it. As to the United Kingdom, the challenge comes from the sea border with France at English Channel, as considerable migrants try to illegally cross from Calais (BBC, 2018).

Although many migrants wish to come to this country for a better future, illegally crossing the Channel and arriving to British land without the BF and other authorities' checks poses a threat to the national security. According to David Beasley, head of the United Nations World Food Programme, extremist groups in the Sahel and the Middle East, are using the migrant crisis and the lack of opportunities in Africa to recruit and infiltrate Europe with their extremists (The Guardian, 2018).

In 2018, a deal was made between the governments of France and the United Kingdom regarding the crisis, addressing, among other things, the Channel Crisis. In this treaty the United Kingdom and France Committed to allocate more resources to address the crisis (BBC, 2018). Nevertheless, after many efforts made by both governments, even a Royal Navy frigate being sent to the English Channel, many illegal migrants still try to cross the Channel (BBC, 2019).



6. QARMAS.

- How can intelligence organizations be strengthened to ensure the reduction of acts of terror realized in the United Kingdom?
- What measures can be taken regarding border security in Northern Ireland without reigniting the violence of The Troubles?
- What should be the role of United Kingdom intelligence agencies in cooperating with the rest of the world, and specifically, the European Union after Brexit?
- To which degree will Parliament choose to establish measures to protect border security in its borders with the European Union, and what consequences will this bring?
- What are the main sources of threat to British security, and how can they be dealt with?
- Should the Government be held accountable to Parliament regarding the actions taken by security agencies?
- Should British citizens be deprived of their citizenship if involved in foreign terrorist plots?

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