

The Labour Party Manifesto 2010

Meeting the challenges of the new global age



The challenge for Britain

To harness our strengths and values, as we develop Britain's world role in a global era, using our alliances and networks in order to promote security, economic prosperity, development and to safeguard the environment. The contrast with the Tory view could not be starker: they are stuck in the past, spurning alliances in Europe and helpless to defend our interests or secure the global change we need.

The next stage of national renewal

- **Conduct a Strategic Defence Review to equip our Armed Forces for 21st Century challenges, and support our troops and veterans.**
- **Use our international reach to build security and stability – combating terrorism and extremism, curbing proliferation, preventing and resolving conflict, and tackling climate change.**
- **Lead the agenda for an outward-facing European Union that delivers jobs, prosperity and global influence.**
- **Re-energise the drive to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, supporting sustainable growth and combating poverty.**
- **Reform the UN, International Financial Institutions, the G8 and G20, and NATO to adapt to the new global challenges.**

Afghanistan: our commitment

There is no greater responsibility than to commit our troops into action. That is why we take our responsibilities in Afghanistan and to our Armed Forces so seriously. A stable Afghanistan and a

stable Pakistan means a safer Britain: if Afghanistan fell to the Taleban, Al Qaeda could regroup, and Pakistan's stability and our national security would be threatened.

Our Armed Forces are serving with incredible courage and skill alongside representatives

of more than 40 other nations. They are a credit to the country and an example to the world. We have met every request for extra equipment for Afghanistan: in the last four years we have doubled the number of helicopters, and spent £1.7 billion on 1,800 new vehicles – including the Mastiff, brought into service in record time and saving lives with world-leading protection against mines and roadside bombs.

Our forces are working to a clear strategy – to protect the Afghan people and train Afghan security forces. The London conference in January 2010 agreed there should be 300,000 Afghan Army and Police by the end of 2011, with British forces and other countries shifting more of their effort into training to begin the process of handing over responsibility for districts and provinces to Afghan forces later this year.

Afghanistan is not a war without end. Together the military and civilian effort is designed to create the conditions for a political settlement that keeps Al Qaeda out, reconciles tribal interests, and involves Afghanistan's neighbours. It will lock in the long-term gains delivered by our aid programme since 2002

– with millions more children, especially girls, going to school, big reductions in child mortality, and better access to basic healthcare. It requires stronger local administration and less corruption, combined with a way back for former fighters who are prepared to renounce links to Al Qaeda and abide by the Afghan constitution.

Strengthening our Armed Forces and national security

The first duty of government is to protect the security of its citizens. We have created Britain's first ever National Security Strategy to strengthen our response to fast-moving and interconnected threats, from terrorism and nuclear proliferation to new challenges like cybersecurity. We have trebled investment in counter-terrorism at home, combined with multilateral action against terrorism and extremism abroad, not just in the Afghan-Pakistan border areas – still the main source of the threat – but also in Yemen and Somalia.

Our commitment to defence is non-negotiable. Defence spending has increased by ten per cent in real terms since 1997. Funding for Iraq and Afghanistan is additional to that, with the Treasury Reserve

providing £18 billion in total so far and an estimated £5 billion in the next year.

Despite this continued investment, acute cost pressures remain in long-term defence projects. We are reforming defence procurement, making further reductions in civilian staff, and cutting lower-priority spending on headquarters costs, travel and consultancy.

A Strategic Defence Review will look at all areas of defence, but we will maintain our independent nuclear deterrent. We will fight for multilateral disarmament, working for a world free of nuclear weapons, in the Non Proliferation Treaty Review conference and beyond – combining support for civilian nuclear energy with concerted action against proliferation.

We are committed to a strong Navy based on the new aircraft carriers, an Air Force with two state-of-the-art fast-jet fleets as well as additional helicopters, transport planes and unmanned drones, and a strong, high-tech Army, vastly better equipped than it was in 1997.

The growth in the core defence budget has also enabled us to guarantee fair pay for all our forces, including the first ever tax-free bonus for those

on operations abroad, while strengthening our support for their welfare. Service families can now retain their place on NHS waiting lists when they are deployed to another part of the country. Further education is free for those leaving the forces with six years' service or more.

We have invested hundreds of millions of pounds to reverse a legacy of decades of neglect of forces' accommodation, and we are helping service personnel get onto the housing ladder. Homelessness among service leavers has been sharply reduced, and the law changed to give them better access to social housing.

The new Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham will have a military-run ward and the largest single-floor critical care unit in the world. Headley Court and the new Army Recovery Capability will continue to offer world-leading support to those rehabilitating after serious injury. We have doubled the lump-sum payments for the most seriously injured to £570,000, and increased the lifetime-income payments by up to a third.

As a sign of our continued commitment to the military community, we will introduce a Forces Charter to enshrine

in law the rights of forces, their families, and Veterans. A Veterans ID card will help Veterans access their improved benefits and will be free to service leavers. We will continue to strengthen mental health provision in partnership with the Combat Stress charity, and roll out our Welfare Pathway to give personnel and their families better support and advice.

A strong Britain in a reformed Europe

We are proud that Britain is once again a leading player in Europe. Our belief is that Britain is stronger in the world when the European Union is strong, and that Britain succeeds when it leads in Europe and sets the agenda for change. Sullen resistance and disengagement achieve nothing.

Stronger competitiveness must be Europe's economic priority. Europe will only grow and prosper if it is dynamic and knowledge-based, with excellent universities, competitive companies, and thriving start-ups, underpinned by a modern infrastructure of digital communications and low-carbon transport. The EU should strive to improve the regulatory environment, in particular for small and medium sized business. But we reject

any attempt to renegotiate or unravel social rights for the British people, and believe that economic strength and social protection go hand-in-hand – a modern EU must enhance competitiveness and growth while guaranteeing security and fair rights at work.

Fundamental reform of the EU budget remains necessary, with further changes to the Common Agricultural Policy on the way to ending export subsidies. Transfers within the EU must target those areas that are least well off. On the Euro, we hold to our promise that there will be no membership of the single currency without the consent of the British people in a referendum.

We support the enlargement of EU membership to include Croatia, and believe that all Western Balkan states should open negotiations on EU accession by 2014 – one hundred years after the start of the First World War. Turkey's future membership is a key test of Europe's potential to become a bridge between religions and regions; there must be continued progress on its application to join the EU. In its foreign policy, Europe should play a key role in conflict resolution and the promotion of security, and work bilaterally to achieve its goals

with the leading global powers in each region of the world.

On climate change, the EU has a critical leadership role to play in securing a legally binding UN agreement, reducing its emissions by 30 per cent on 1990 levels in the context of an ambitious global deal. It must also offer stronger leadership on global poverty reduction.

We will strengthen co-operation with our EU partners in fighting crime and international terrorism, and support practical European co-operation on defence, in partnership with NATO. To symbolise its commitment to global peace and justice, and energise its young people, we propose a European Peace Corps.

The poverty of the Tory vision is summed up by their false choice between an alliance with the United States and one with Europe. In Europe they are not just isolated, but marginalised – in a tiny group of far-right parties that endorses extreme views and is stuck in climate-change denial. Elsewhere in the world their anti-European attitudes are seen as undermining British influence. They are helpless to shape change, or defend our interests.

Strengthening global security and preventing conflict

We strongly believe in co-operation between nations for a safer world. We will continue to press for stronger international action against terrorism and learn the lessons of recent experience to prevent and defuse conflict and build stability and the rule of law in places that would otherwise shelter terrorist networks. We have shown in Afghanistan and elsewhere that our military, diplomats and development staff can set an international standard for joint working, but we will not put the aid budget under military control. We will spend at least half of our new bilateral aid in fragile and conflict-affected states.

Having played a leading role in the international agreement to ban cluster bombs, we are leading the campaign for a legally binding global arms trade treaty in 2012.

We will continue to drive reform of the humanitarian agencies at the UN and work to build an international consensus on 'responsibility to protect', while supporting the International Criminal Court in bringing previously untouchable criminals to justice. We will

advocate a new international convention to enable the prosecution of perpetrators of genocide and crimes against humanity.

There is no more important part of the world for global security than the Middle East. We support the creation of a viable Palestinian state that can live alongside a secure Israel. All the countries of the region have a role to play in delivering the vision of the Arab Peace Initiative – normalised relations between Arab states and Israel in return for a Palestinian state. They also have a shared interest in preventing the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iran. This is the gravest nuclear threat to global security since the foundation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in the 1960s. We support engagement and pressure on the Iranian regime; it is threatening its own people as well as the security of the region and the world.

In Africa, Labour has made aid, trade, conflict prevention and good governance a priority. We will support the final stages of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan, and maintain the pressure for Zimbabwe to transition back to democracy as quickly as possible.

We will work with Greece and Turkey for long-term stability in Cyprus; and continue to support bilateral efforts by India and Pakistan to improve relations. The two countries have profound ties to the UK, which we are determined to nurture. We will keep up the pressure for the release of Aung Sang Suu Kyi and a return to democracy in Burma.

We strongly support reconstruction and reconciliation in Sri Lanka. We believe that both the LTTE and the Government of Sri Lanka must be held to account for the loss of civilian life, and we will continue to urge the Sri Lankan Government to fulfil its commitment to a full and fair investigation into war crimes committed in the final months of the civil war.

Human rights and democracy are a central feature of our foreign policy for a simple reason – we believe human rights are universal, and it is the job of strong and mature democracies to support the development of free societies everywhere – while upholding our own legal and moral obligations.

The global poverty emergency: our moral duty, our common interest

Labour's international leadership on development has helped transform the lives of millions across the world. Yet too many people still live in extreme poverty, die from treatable diseases, or are denied the chance to go to school.

We will lead an international campaign to get the Millennium Development Goals back on track. We remain committed to spending 0.7 per cent of national income on aid from 2013, and we will enshrine this commitment in law early in the next Parliament. Our aid will target the poorest and most excluded – spent transparently and evaluated independently. We will fight corruption, investing more to track, freeze, and recover assets stolen from developing countries. Further action will be taken to strengthen developing countries' tax systems, reduce tax evasion, improve reporting, and crack down on tax havens. To increase accountability, we will allocate at least five per cent of all funding developing country budgets for the purpose of strengthening the role of Parliaments and civil society.

Our leadership on debt cancellation has freed 28 countries from the shackles of debt. We will continue to drive this agenda, building on legislation to clampdown on vulture funds.

Access to health, education, food, water and sanitation are basic human rights. We will spend £8.5 billion over eight years to help more children go to school; maintain our pledge to spend £6 billion on health between 2008 and 2015 and £1 billion through the Global Fund to support the fight against HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria; fight for universal access to prevention, treatment and care for HIV/AIDS by 2010; and deliver at least 30 million additional anti-malarial bed-nets over the next three years.

We will provide £1 billion for water and sanitation by 2013, driving this issue up the international agenda, and over £1 billion on food security and agriculture. We will push for the establishment of a Global Council on Child Hunger. We will help save the lives of six million mothers and babies by 2015 and, because international focus on the needs of women and girls is vital, we will double core funding to the new UN Women's agency. While the Tories would favour private

schemes, we will work closely with NGOs and developing countries to eliminate user fees and promote healthcare and education free at the point of access. We will encourage other countries to ratify the ILO conventions on labour standards, as we have done.

Trade can lift millions out of poverty. We will work with the private sector, trade unions and co-operatives to promote sustainable development, quadruple our funding for fair and ethical trade, and press for a fair World Trade Organisation deal, with no enforced liberalisation for poor countries, and increased duty-free and quota-free access.

Reforming global institutions

In today's world, power is shifting, flowing downwards and outwards towards new non-state actors, networked by modern communications. Governments and global institutions must respond to this change – and reform to meet new challenges. They need to be more effective but also more inclusive. To secure global change, we will make the case for:

- The extension of the G8.
- A clearer mandate for the World Bank to focus on the

poorest countries and promote low-carbon development; and for the IMF to focus on financial stability, with both becoming more inclusive.

- Radical UN reform, including new membership of the Security Council, budgetary reform, and an overhaul of UN agencies.
- Continuing reform of NATO and stronger international co-operation to tackle security challenges, while building the capacity of regional security organisations including the African Union.
- The enduring role of the Commonwealth – a unique organisation for fostering understanding and trust, spanning a quarter of the world's population.

International commitments and a voice for Britain in global affairs are not an optional extra for Labour. They are central to our vision of a better Britain. We have strengthened our international alliances and will continue to do so in ways that speak to our deepest values as a nation.