

Nature security assessment debate briefing

Westminster Hall, 3 September, 15:00

What does the JIC report say?

- The UK's senior intelligence analysts are clear: the breakdown of ecosystems and destruction of nature is happening fast, and is a major threat to the UK's security and prosperity.
 - All the critical ecosystems the UK relies on are currently on a pathway to collapse, with a real possibility that some could begin to collapse as early as 2030.
 - As biodiversity loss and degradation continue, impacts become more severe and the likelihood of ecosystems collapsing increases.
 - The risks of ecosystem destruction will cascade, leading to geopolitical instability, economic insecurity, conflict, migration and increased competition between states for resources.
 - We are already experiencing crop failures, more severe natural disasters and infectious disease outbreaks. These impacts will increase as ecosystems degrade, and could intensify significantly if ecosystems are allowed to collapse.
 - Without significant increases in the resilience of our food system and supply chains, it is unlikely that we would be able to maintain food security if the breakdown of international ecosystems continues.
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Suggested interventions during the debate:

- Our security services are raising the alarm. Every critical ecosystem the UK relies on is on a pathway to collapse, posing a serious threat to our national security. The six ecosystems outlined in the report are all beyond our borders, so what action is the Government taking internationally in response? For example, will the Government now commit to financially supporting the Tropical Forests Forever Facility?
- This report outlines just how essential healthy, thriving ecosystems are for our security, yet Britain remains one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. The Government's flagship plan to restore nature, its 30by30 delivery plan, was heavily criticised by the environmental sector. How does the Government respond to this and will there be a review of the plans impact going forwards?

- NAP4 is due in 2028, but this report, a summer of extreme heat and ‘firewaves’, and the use of COBR to respond, show that we cannot wait until then to take urgent action on adaptation. Will the Minister commit to taking urgent action before 2028 to address the UK’s resilience gap?
- The JIC report is clear that this is a whole-of-government issue that risks greater conflict, resource competition, economic insecurity and will require departments to work together differently. What steps are being taken to better integrate decision making across departments, and would the government consider a resilience and adaptation minister at the cabinet table to drive action?
- The recently announced Climate and Nature Security Taskforce appears, at least in part, to be a response to the JIC report. Can the Minister set out clearly how the Taskforce’s recommendations will feed into Government policy, how transparent its work will be, and what the Government’s intended outcome is from establishing the group, given that it is only being convened for a year?
- The JIC report points to the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework as part of the solution, noting that meeting its targets could change the UK’s current trajectory. However, the JNCC has found that the UK is currently on track to meet only 3 of the 23 targets. What additional action is the Government taking to meet these targets, given that current plans are clearly not delivering the vital progress needed?
- Given the report’s strong focus on food security, will the Government commit to the CCC’s target of maintaining domestic food production at a minimum of 60% of food consumed in the UK?
- The UK’s nutritional security is underpinned by healthy soil, but it continues to be rapidly degraded. How will the Government transform our food system to be less reliant on fossil fuels, more resilient to climate-driven extreme weather, and underpinned by healthy soils?
- Given that nature and functioning ecosystems are the bedrock of our security and everyday life, does the Minister agree that it is time to recognise ecosystems as essential national infrastructure in decision making?
- A recent FOI exposed that only 20 people, out of 6,600, in DEFRA are working on climate adaptation. What assurance can the Minister give us that climate adaptation will be given the resources and priority it needs?