Resilience Imperative

Newsletter

The Threats You Need To Know About

The threats we exist to expose are intensifying. Hostile cyber attacks are rising sharply, and our national infrastructure is under sustained pressure. Drones have been spotted flying over our military sites; the RAF has had to scramble in response to Russian military aircraft. On Wednesday 12 August, Euronews published a video in which Vladimir Putin threatened to seize European ships in response to the interception and seizure of Russian vessels presumed to be part of Moscow's 'shadow fleet'.

Russian warships have been sighted hovering off our coast, monitoring and, at times threatening, the undersea cables our national life depends on. Cables serving the Shetlands were cut for a third time in October 2025, following similar attacks earlier that year and in 2022. Satellite warfare, too, is becoming a daily reality, with numerous examples of jamming and spoofing attacks on GPS systems, including on the RAF flight carrying former Defence Secretary John Healey in May 2026, and Grant Schapps in March 2024. Our critical national infrastructure continues to be probed, as our Threat Updates (below) attest.

We believe government must tell the public the truth. Privately, the refrain we hear is: 'We do not want to alarm the public.' Our response: 'So you'd rather they panic when the lights go out?' As Edward Lucas argued in *The Times*, it's time to stop dismissing hostile acts as 'accidents' or mere 'incidents' - language that lets us avoid facing what is actually happening.

This is not a UK problem alone. The grey-zone war being waged against mainland Europe is every bit as real as the one being waged here. And while Russia remains the principal author of these threats, we must stay alert to the risk of terrorism, arson and sabotage linked to Iranian state actors. We will continue to press, urgently, for increased defence spending.

Help us to create the public mandate and political momentum required to close the UK's security and resilience deficits.

Share this email, follow us on LinkedIn, support us via our website.

From our Founder, Lady Olga Maitland:

Since our launch in March, we have been busy consolidating and growing our core support, and taking the case for resiliency directly to the people who can act on it.

In April, we attended the launch of JPMorganChase's Security and Resilience Initiative in London, Dr Rebecca Harding's London Defence Conference at King's College, and briefings at the Global Strategy Forum.

We've made contact with all four main political parties (Labour, Conservative, Reform and the Liberal Democrats) and maintain regular government contact through the Ministry of Defence's Information Department and the Cabinet Office. I have also been meeting with police counter-terrorism officers.

I addressed opening keynotes on The Resilience Imperative in Edinburgh and Lisbon, hosted by Pulse Conferences; debated the former Chief of the Defence Staff, Admiral Tony Radakin, at an event hosted by Earendel Associates; shared a platform with former Defence Minister Penny Mordaunt, hosted by Delano Wheatley; and held a private dinner discussion with former Defence Minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan.

Our Young Leaders programme of international relations students researching and writing about hostile threats, led by our Chief of Staff, Sebastian Wigg, has proved both innovative and deeply engaged. The Resilience Imperative website has been revised and will continue to evolve.

Fundraising remains a priority. We've received valuable early support, but must build on it to fulfil our mandate on the national stage - work led by Brian Hensley, to whom we're grateful for his continued thought and attention.

Finally, thank you to General Sir Richard Barrons and Lord Robertson, both of whom continue to be a real inspiration to the whole team.

What's Next

We're building TRI's profile and programme through the autumn:

- We're in discussions with The Daily Telegraph about a live war-games event later this year, in partnership with defence correspondent Dominic Nicholls and General Sir Tom Copinger-Symes, former Deputy Head of Cyber Command.
- In October, the Government will launch its own Resilience programme, with a declared focus on civil defence - but, we believe, little explanation of why such preparation is now necessary. We will use the moment to spell out the daily incursions on our lives and safety caused by the undeclared hybrid war being waged against us.
- In November, we'll host an open Resilience Imperative meeting, organised by Noel Hadjmichael, founder of the Defence Security Circle.
- We'll also be sharing a platform with the Government-backed Resilience Academy as it sets out new guidance on defence.

With thanks for supporting us,

Lady Olga Maitland and The Resilience Imperative Team

Threat Update

Here's what we're tracking this month:

Royal Navy monitoring up 25%

The Royal Navy increased operations to monitor Russian naval activity by 25% during the first seven months of 2026 compared with the same period in 2025, and around 30% over the past two years. This has come amid heightened Russian naval activity in UK waters and the North Atlantic, specifically the monitoring of Russian warships and vessels associated with Moscow's "shadow fleet", which Russia uses to circumvent international sanctions and sustain oil revenues.

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Suspected Iranian-linked cyber campaign expands in the US

A suspected Iranian-linked cyber campaign targeting US water and wastewater systems has expanded this week, with incidents reported across at least 12 states. The attacks have targeted operational technology (OT), including programmable logic controllers (PLCs) used to monitor and control treatment and distribution processes.

US authorities have not formally attributed the wider campaign to Iran, but the activity follows a 2023 campaign by the Iranian-linked group CyberAv3ngers, which compromised an internet-connected PLC at a Pennsylvania water authority.

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Foreign information manipulation threatens AI integrity

A recent report warns that large language models (LLMs) will become a new target for foreign information warfare, identifying an emerging technique called Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) poisoning, the deliberate manipulation of information retrieved and used from the internet by LLMs in order to influence the responses they generate.

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Russian frigate conducts live-fire exercise off Plymouth

On 20 July, Russian frigate *Neustrashimy* conducted a 30-minute live-fire artillery exercise approximately 46 miles south of Plymouth.

This follows months of increased Russian naval activity around the UK, including the firing of warning shots near a British-flagged yacht by a Russian frigate in waters off the Isle of Wight and the Royal Marines' boarding of a Russian shadow fleet tanker in the English Channel.

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UK and EU sanction 24 individuals and entities

The UK and EU have sanctioned 24 individuals and entities linked to Russian cyber-attack and misinformation campaigns, including senior leaders of Russia's military intelligence agency, the GRU, and linked entities, whose operations have targeted military operations and critical infrastructure of the UK and EU members for many years.

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IISS: Russia 'highly likely' behind sustained UAV campaign

A report from IISS concludes that it is highly likely Russia conducted a sustained UAV campaign across Europe, documenting 144 incidents between August 2024 and February 2026 across 13 European countries, with sightings in Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK, and Denmark.

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From Chatham House and Carnegie Europe

CHATHAM HOUSE

Europe's defence: Building resilience against permanent threat

Video recording of a panel session at Chatham House's London Conference in July, exploring the key issues shaping European defence today in the face of hybrid threats from Russia.

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CARNEGIE EUROPE

Why Russia Could Escalate Hybrid Warfare Against Europe

This paper from Carnegie Europe discusses how mounting economic strain and battlefield losses will not necessarily make the Kremlin less dangerous. They could instead push Moscow toward a more aggressive hybrid campaign designed to test NATO's Eastern flank, exploit allied hesitation, and fracture European resolve.

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New blog post:

UK Seeks Extradition of Man Accused of Spying for Iran at RAF Akrotiri

By Freddie Chambers and Sebastian Wigg

Britain has requested the extradition from Cyprus of Rashad Sultanov, a 44-year-old dual British-Azerbaijani national from Islington, who is suspected of spying for Iran, Reuters reports. UK police allege that Sultanov conducted hostile surveillance at RAF Akrotiri between 11 May and 22 June 2025 and passed information to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. He remains in Cypriot custody while extradition proceedings continue. The allegations have not been proved in court.

The case raises serious counter-intelligence concerns for UK defence interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. RAF Akrotiri, located within a British Sovereign Base Area in Cyprus, supports regional air operations, logistics and contingency activity.

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