

A new approach to UK resilience needed

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Leading academics from across Cranfield University are calling for a new approach to UK resilience. Writing in today's Financial Times, the academics believe that as well as lessons learnt from the response to COVID-19 there is a much wider lesson to be learnt about how the UK identifies, prepares and responds to threats and risks, such as to our safety, our national security and from climate change.

They believe the UK must shift from simply classifying threats using a traditional risk-based probability versus consequence assessment, to a more detailed analysis including their interdependencies, [social impact](#), cascade and recoverability through a new connected approach to resilience.

Crucial to a new UK approach to quantifying risk, and our preparations and ability to recover from crises is the inclusion of all "Five Capitals": Natural, Human, Social, Built and Financial and their interdependencies and feedbacks, that make up the system in which we live.

Professor David Denyer, Professor of Leadership and Organisational Change at Cranfield University, said: "COVID-19 was not a 'black swan'. Similar events were widely predicted and listed as the nation's biggest risk so why were we not better prepared both to prevent it and recover from it?

"As we have seen with COVID-19, too often, investment in resilience measures are made during or after a crisis. If we are to build a more resilient nation, it is vital we embrace a new approach. You simply cannot continue to quantify risk on a basic X Y graph.

"We need to consider not just the immediate responses to these threats but what long-term plans can be put in place to secure the resilience of

our society and our natural system.

"As a nation, we must focus on building adaptive capacity in organisations and infrastructure, and business and Government must proactively invest in resilience to future crises where there isn't yet an immediate economic argument."

Dr. Simon Harwood, Director of Defence and Security at Cranfield University, said: "We need to think of [national security](#) in a wider context by looking at the interconnectedness of threats such as [climate change](#) and food security. Our preparedness needs to look across the whole of the resource spectrum at the nation's disposal. Too often the response to a crisis, is to call up the armed forces but what if they were deployed at scale in a future combat? A new approach is needed which identifies risks and resources across the board rather than in silos."

Professor Jim Harris, Professor of Environmental Technology at Cranfield University, added: "It's vital that a new approach to enhancing UK [resilience](#) includes all 'Five Capitals' - Natural, Human, Social, Built and Financial that make up our way of life. You can have the strongest [armed forces](#) in the world or the fastest growing economy but if you have failed to prepare for the [threat](#) of climate change and its associated risks such as famine, drought, flooding, fires and war, then you are failing your citizens and your natural environment."

Provided by Cranfield University

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