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**HOUSE OF COMMONS  
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PARLIAMENTARY  
DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**Monday 21 March 2011**

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# House of Commons

Monday 21 March 2011

*The House met at half-past Two o'clock*

## PRAYERS

[MR SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## Oral Answers to Questions

### EDUCATION

*The Secretary of State was asked—*

#### Primary Schools (Halifax)

1. **Mrs Linda Riordan** (Halifax) (Lab/Co-op): What plans he has to allocate funds for the modernisation of primary schools in Halifax. [47457]

**The Secretary of State for Education (Michael Gove):** On 13 December, we announced the 2011-12 capital allocations to cover a growing demand for pupil places, especially at primary school. We also announced a sum for maintenance. It is for local authorities to determine how capital is allocated for pupil places, and the James review on capital will report shortly, following which we can decide other allocations for schools, and for the years from 2012-13 to 2014-15.

**Mrs Riordan:** I thank the Secretary of State for his answer, but may I ask him about a specific school in Halifax? Moorside primary school has been promised a new build, but under Government cuts the local community fears that the plans will be shelved. Will he confirm to the House if and when that will happen, as the school desperately needs modernisation?

**Michael Gove:** I am grateful to the hon. Lady for making the case for that primary school. Sadly, the state of the school estate that we inherited from the previous Government was such that many schools, particularly primary schools, require investment. We will consider every case sympathetically, and I hope that I or a member of my ministerial team will have an opportunity to talk to her to see what we can do to help in that particular case.

#### Special Educational Needs

3. **Anne Marie Morris** (Newton Abbot) (Con): What proposals he has to improve the quality of teaching of children with special educational needs. [47459]

**The Minister of State, Department for Education (Sarah Teather):** Our Green Paper on special educational needs and disability set out proposals to improve initial teacher training and continuing professional development so that leaders and teachers in schools and colleges are well equipped and confident to identify and overcome a range of barriers to learning and to intervene early when problems arise.

We will encourage schools to share expertise and learn from best practice and ensure sharp accountability for pupils' outcomes.

**Anne Marie Morris:** Will the Minister look at how we can help young people with special educational needs make the transition into work, given that they are more than twice as likely as their peers to be not in education, employment or training?

**Sarah Teather:** Transition is at the heart of what we are trying to achieve with the Green Paper, and the reason for setting out an education, health and care plan from nought to 25. The focus is much more on outcomes, specifically to try to deal with transition, so that we start planning for independent life at a much earlier stage. The Green Paper sets out the direction of travel, and we hope to get input from across Government. I encourage people with a specific interest in the subject to respond to the Green Paper and give us their views on whether it meets young people's needs and whether we should do more.

**Bill Esterson** (Sefton Central) (Lab): Is the Minister aware of the concern in local authorities about the impact of the cuts to councils on their ability to provide central advisory teams for SEN? Does she realise the impact that that has in dramatically reducing SEN provision when schools do not buy back into those services?

**Sarah Teather:** We recognise that local authorities throughout the country are having to make difficult decisions, just as the Government are. However, money is not always well spent at the moment. For example, much money is wasted on the adversarial system, with parents unnecessarily going through tribunals. There is often a real push to get expensive independent provision that can be a drain on local authorities' resources when, if we could get some of the necessary health care delivered earlier, parents would not necessarily push to go all the way to the expense of independent provision. A lot more can be done to spend the money that we have better.

**Paul Maynard** (Blackpool North and Cleveleys) (Con): I thank the Minister for the Green Paper, which is a wonderful document. However, may I draw her attention to Tourette's, which appears to have been lumped in with many other developmental disorders, when it is specifically a neurological disorder? That perpetuates many of the concerns of people with Tourette's about how society treats them.

**Sarah Teather:** The issue of Tourette's and ensuring that we provide for children and young people with that condition is extremely important. If my hon. Friend has specific concerns about the way in which the Green Paper tackles it, I would be grateful if he wrote to me. I will ensure that that is taken into account as we move on.

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson** (Washington and Sunderland West) (Lab): While I very much welcome the Green Paper and many of its aims and principles, especially proposals to improve teacher training, there is real concern across the sector that Ministers perhaps forgot to look out of their Whitehall windows to see what is happening on the ground now. Councils are laying off key SEN professionals, children's centres are closing and disruptive reorganisations of our NHS and schools systems are making it harder, not easier, for local services

to work together. Given all that, how confident is the Minister that the promises in the Green Paper can be delivered?

**Sarah Teather:** I thank the hon. Lady for her kind words of welcome for the Green Paper and recognise that she has spoken positively about it before. I hope all parties can work together, because on the whole, I have had helpful input on the Green Paper from Labour Members, just as I have had from Government Members.

As I just said in response to the hon. Member for Sefton Central (Bill Esterson), we must recognise that, like the Government, all local authorities must make tough decisions, because of the state of the finances that were left by the previous Government. Notwithstanding, the whole point of the Green Paper is to raise the bar to ensure that we have good quality provision right across the country. The pilots process will test how we deliver working together better, and I hope we will ensure such provision and raise standards everywhere.

#### School Funding

4. **Mr Chuka Umunna** (Streatham) (Lab): What his policy is on the future of devolved formula capital grant funding for (a) primary and (b) secondary schools. [47460]

**The Secretary of State for Education (Michael Gove):** We announced on 13 December 2010 the 2011-12 allocation of devolved formula capital money for primary and secondary schools, including academies. After the conclusion of the James review into capital spending, which will report shortly, I will decide on allocations for this programme for 2012-13 to 2014-15.

**Mr Umunna:** Research by the House of Commons Library shows that that funding, which goes towards computers, building work and repairs, is due to fall by £26,000 per primary school and £86,000 per secondary school, which is on top of Building Schools for the Future cuts. That was first brought to my attention by heads of schools in my constituency. How does the Secretary of State expect to raise standards across the country when he is slashing funds to maintain the basic infrastructural fabric of our schools?

**Michael Gove:** I am grateful for the moderate way in which the hon. Gentleman couches his question. The sad truth is that the Government did not have the information available to know quite how dilapidated the schools estate that we inherited was, because in 2005 the previous Government abandoned any systematic collection of data about the state of schools. More than that, we inherited a situation in which the Office of Government Commerce had warned the previous Government that there was insufficient investment in additional pupil places. That is why we doubled the amount of capital spending on additional pupil places. As a result, we have had to make economies elsewhere, but we have prioritised where the previous Government failed to.

**Mr Rob Wilson** (Reading East) (Con): Many urban areas in the south-east, such as Reading, will shortly have enormous pressure on their primary and secondary school places. For planning purposes, it is important that they can look further ahead than 2012. What can

my right hon. Friend do to assist local education authorities that are struggling, and under the most pressure, with additional pupil places?

**Michael Gove:** We have doubled the amount of money that local authorities have to spend on additional pupil places this year. The James review will give all local authorities a greater degree of confidence that every penny that is spent on pupil places can be spent more effectively and efficiently.

#### Special Needs and Disabilities

5. **Dan Rogerson** (North Cornwall) (LD): What plans he has for single assessments and education, health and care plans for children with special educational needs and disabilities. [47461]

6. **Penny Mordaunt** (Portsmouth North) (Con): What support statemented children will receive under his proposals for the assessment of children with special educational needs; and if he will make a statement. [47462]

**The Minister of State, Department for Education (Sarah Teather):** The Green Paper announced that by 2014 we will replace special educational needs statements with a single assessment process and an education, health and care plan. The new plans will keep the same legal entitlements to provision as SEN statements and will build on statements with a commitment from all parties, including health and social care, to provide their services. We will be running pathfinders testing out the single assessment and plans from September.

**Dan Rogerson:** Families will welcome the progress towards a simpler, single assessment system. Will my hon. Friend reassure families and parents that their protection under the current statementing system will continue under a single process?

**Sarah Teather:** I can reassure my hon. Friend that that is indeed the case, but I hope that we will have an improved process, because all parties will come together to do the assessment, and then agree a plan and how to pay for it. I hope that that will improve the situation for families who have to move between one service and another to try to persuade someone to pay for something, such as speech and language therapy, which happens all too often.

**Penny Mordaunt:** The Green Paper promotes a more sparing use of statementing, which is broadly and widely welcomed, but does the Minister appreciate that a statement is sometimes the only clout a parent has in ensuring that their child's needs are met? In the future, how will we ensure that parents still have that clout?

**Sarah Teather:** Nothing in the Green Paper discourages local authorities from statementing. For example, we have tried to make it clearer that local authorities ought to be providing the same protection for under-fives. However, many children and young people will have a need below the level that we would expect to be provided for by a statement. Schools still have a requirement to do their best to serve those children, and I hope that our work on teacher training will improve that support.

There is also the work listed in the Green Paper through which we want to provide a local offer, so that it is much clearer for families what should normally be available, and so that the process is less combative for parents trying to get help. I hope that that will support families who have a child with a special educational need or disability, regardless of whether it reaches the level of a statement.

**Mr Tom Clarke** (Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill) (Lab): Does the Minister recall that a review of these issues just a few years ago identified the issue of transition and concluded that we should address the problem of people leaving school and the educational system? That can be a traumatic experience. Is it still a focus?

**Sarah Teather:** Indeed. There is a whole section in the Green Paper on transition. As I said, the whole reason for changing to the education, health and care plan that runs up to the age of 25 is to focus much more on outcomes and to begin that planning process at an earlier stage. To make things better for young people, we need all Departments to work together. This is not just a matter of providing better educational opportunities. However, there is a lot in the Green Paper about what we want to do to improve the quality of provision, including, for example, in the further education sector and the quality of skills training there. This requires a whole-Government response. That is what we want, and the Green Paper is the first step towards it, but transition is an essential part of planning and one of the things that frightens parents the most about having a child with a special educational need.

**Mr Jim Cunningham** (Coventry South) (Lab): About 18 months ago, I had discussions and introduced a ten-minute rule Bill on this very issue. Will the Minister say what happens beyond the statements she expects to be made in September?

**Sarah Teather:** I am most terribly sorry, but I could not catch the hon. Gentleman's question. Would it be in order for him to ask it again?

**Mr Cunningham:** Without going back over it all, will the Minister tell me what happens beyond the statements expected to be made in September from schools about what they are going to do about the medical situation of children?

**Sarah Teather:** I am most terribly sorry, but I wonder whether the hon. Gentleman could write to me. I did not follow his question. If he writes to me, I will respond straight away.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey** (Suffolk Coastal) (Con): Saxmundham primary school in my constituency has made remarkable adaptations in order to include the education of a child called Finlay. It might be useful for other schools to learn from that experience. I am particularly interested in his transition to secondary school.

**Sarah Teather:** While drawing up the Green Paper, we met people from schools with fantastic examples of good practice in working to help support young people moving from one stage to the next. We are grateful for all examples of good practice, and we want to encourage other schools to raise the bar. Some brilliant work has been done. For example, some schools have encouraged

young people to set up their own enterprises and companies and in doing so given them real employment opportunities. I would be interested to hear more detail about the school in the hon. Lady's constituency.

### Baccalaureate

7. **Fiona Mactaggart** (Slough) (Lab): What recent representations he has received on the English baccalaureate. [47463]

10. **Julian Smith** (Skipton and Ripon) (Con): What recent representations he has received on the English baccalaureate; and if he will make a statement. [47467]

**The Secretary of State for Education (Michael Gove):** We have received a number of representations on the English baccalaureate since it was announced. Public opinion surveys have shown that this new league table measure is widely welcomed, and on recent school visits, I have been encouraged by the vocal support that teachers and head teachers have shown for this new measure of achievement.

**Fiona Mactaggart:** Has the Secretary of State seen the survey of 100 school teachers by the National Association of Music Educators and the National Society for Education in Art and Design that suggests that in 60% of schools that responded there has been a narrowing of the curriculum as a result of the introduction of the English baccalaureate? Would he consider adding a further subject to the suite of subjects in the English baccalaureate, so that it is not all about writing and what other people do, and to ensure that there is an opportunity for young people to do something practical and create or make things themselves, so that we do not reinforce the division between practical and academic learning?

**Michael Gove:** That is a very well made argument from the hon. Lady, and I sympathise with the case that she makes. It is important to appreciate that the English baccalaureate does not and need not take up the entire teaching time in any school day or week. The reason why it is constructed as it is, with just the five areas that we are familiar with, is to ensure time in the school week for other activities, such as art and design, music, physical education—everything that helps to build a truly rounded young person. There is no need to alter the English baccalaureate for schools to offer a truly rounded and stretching curriculum, and I would love to be able to work with her to ensure that the schools in her constituency appreciate that.

**Julian Smith:** Schools across Skipton and Ripon are delighted about the E-bac, but there is concern about religious education. Are there any plans in the near or medium term to review the decision to exclude RE from the E-bac?

**Michael Gove:** I know that a number of schools and hon. Members have pressed for additional subjects in the English baccalaureate, but the reason why religious education is not included is that it is a compulsory subject at all stages in the national curriculum to the age of 16. The reason why it is not included in the humanities section of the English baccalaureate is specifically so that we can drive up the take-up of history and geography, which are currently not compulsory after the age of 14.

**Kevin Brennan** (Cardiff West) (Lab): Ofqual says that the Secretary of State has asked it to look at A-level and GCSE re-sits, including in the English bac subjects. We learnt this month that it took the accident-prone Secretary of State seven attempts to pass his driving test and that his car was badly damaged recently when he got it stuck in a car parking lift. If it is seven times for Gove, how many times will mere mortals get to pass the bac?

**Michael Gove:** I am grateful for the assiduous attention that the hon. Gentleman pays to the written work that my wife contributes to *The Times* every week. I will give him eight out of 10 for practical criticism and nine out of 10 for creative writing in that question. The truth, however, is that, witty as he is—and he always is—I note that there was no intellectual assault on the principle of the English baccalaureate. Just five weeks ago, the shadow Secretary of State, the right hon. Member for Leigh (Andy Burnham), was denouncing the English baccalaureate; just two weeks ago, he was wearing a badge celebrating failure in the English baccalaureate. Now the hon. Gentleman wants us to help everyone pass the English baccalaureate. *[Interruption.]* I am afraid that his interventions from a sedentary position cannot hide the fact that when it comes to driving, there are two manoeuvres for which the Secretary of State—

**Kevin Brennan:** Shadow.

**Michael Gove:** Thank you. The two manoeuvres for which the shadow Secretary of State is preparing are: a U-turn on his academy position, which he has already executed, and now another U-turn, which I can sense him undertaking on the English baccalaureate. I celebrate the fact that he is manoeuvring out of the way of the criticism of those of us on this side of the House who believe in higher standards.

**Mr Graham Stuart** (Beverly and Holderness) (Con): Can the Secretary of State confirm that the English baccalaureate is not compulsory, that schools retain the right—indeed, the duty—to offer an appropriate curriculum to their pupils, and that schools such as university technical colleges will not be obliged to ensure that at least 80% of pupils' time up to the age of 16 is spent on academic subjects?

**Michael Gove:** The Chairman of the Select Committee on Education has not only asked an excellent question but given a superb summary of the beneficial effects of the English baccalaureate and the flexibility inherent in the coalition's education proposals.

### School Funding

8. **Greg Mulholland** (Leeds North West) (LD): When he plans to announce his proposals for capital funding for schools. [47464]

**The Secretary of State for Education (Michael Gove):** I announced the capital allocations for schools for 2011-12 in December last year. The James review of capital funding is considering how we can get better value for money out of capital allocations in future years. When it reports shortly, we should be in a position to explain what capital allocations will be in place for all schools from 2012-13 onwards.

**Greg Mulholland:** The excellent Prince Henry's grammar school in my constituency was failed for many years by the wasteful Building Schools for the Future programme, so I warmly welcome that capital funding. How will the Secretary of State ensure that it targets schools such as Prince Henry's, which have a clear need to get their buildings up to scratch—that is, to a standard that he and I would wish for?

**Michael Gove:** My hon. Friend presents a very passionate and well-informed case on behalf of his constituents on this occasion, as he does in every case. The truth is, sadly, that the situation we inherited meant that money did not go to the schools that were most dilapidated but to those schools that were favoured for political reasons by the last Government. For that reason, we shall ensure that any system of capital allocation in the future focuses explicitly on need.

**Mr Geoffrey Robinson** (Coventry North West) (Lab): The Secretary of State will recall the correspondence and meetings that we have had about two schools in Coventry—President Kennedy and Woodlands—neither of which benefited politically in the way he suggests. Is there anything he can tell us today, or if not, could he write to me about those two well-deserving cases about which he and his Department are now so well briefed?

**Michael Gove:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman and to the right hon. Member for Coventry North East (Mr Ainsworth) and the hon. Member for Coventry South (Mr Cunningham) for making the case for their schools. We know that there are schools in Coventry that are, frankly, in a terrible state and deserve support, and one reason I know that is that I have seen the evidence with my own eyes. What I do not have, I am afraid, is a detailed survey of the state of school buildings across the country, because such an exercise was abandoned by the last Government after 2005. For that reason, I am afraid, the Department for Education does not have adequate data about the state of our school estate. I am afraid it is the Ministers who were responsible for education under the last Government who are responsible for that terrible omission.

**Mr Richard Bacon** (South Norfolk) (Con): What lessons does the Secretary of State think can be learned from Mrs Pauline McGowan, the head teacher of Woodton primary school in my constituency, who, told by county hall officials that she could not make the required changes to her building for less than £200,000, worked with local architects and builders and managed to achieve exactly what she wanted for the £70,000 of capital funding she had available—just 35% of what public procurement officials had said would be required?

**Michael Gove:** That is a very good point. The truth is that under the last Government the building regulations, the planning rules and the way in which capital was allocated under Building Schools for the Future was inherently wasteful. The people who lost out were those in constituencies—like that of my hon. Friend and that of the hon. Member for Coventry North West (Mr Robinson)—that were in desperate need of additional cash. Even though we have inherited a dreadful financial situation, we will ensure that every penny is spent more effectively in the same way as the admirable head teacher in my hon. Friend's constituency has succeeded in doing.

**Toby Perkins** (Chesterfield) (Lab): The Secretary of State's comments about the state of the school estate in comparison to what it was like after the Conservative Government in 1997 are nothing short of a disgrace. The reality is that this year the average secondary school has had its budget for maintenance and repairs cut from more than £105,000 to less than £20,000 this year. The Secretary of State has spectacularly failed to stand up for our schools and our schoolchildren. Does that not fatally expose how vacuous his claims are to have found more resources for schools this year?

**Michael Gove:** That question was beautifully written, almost as though it had been carved in marble by a master mason. The truth is that no one on that side of the House can afford to clamber on to their high horse when it comes to school buildings. It was that side of the House that inherited a golden economic legacy and squandered it. It was that side of the House that betrayed a generation of young people by giving us a record deficit and a record debt. It was that side of the House that presided over a schools building programme that was reckless, profligate and inefficient. It was that side of the House that put political convenience and partisanship ahead of our young people. Frankly, even though the hon. Gentleman was not in the last Parliament, every time he comes to that Dispatch Box to talk about the state of our education system or school buildings, there is only one word we need to hear from him, and that word is sorry.

### History

9. **Andrew Rosindell** (Romford) (Con): What plans he has for the future of history teaching in schools; and if he will make a statement. [47465]

**The Minister for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning (Mr John Hayes):** We believe that the teaching of British history is vital, and that is why we are reviewing the national curriculum in England. We will consider whether history should be a compulsory subject in the curriculum at each key stage, and if so, how the programmes of study should be revised.

**Andrew Rosindell:** Is the Minister aware that Ofsted has found a lack of chronological understanding of British history among many pupils? Will he tell us what the Government are doing to ensure that every child across the United Kingdom has a full understanding of the good and great traditions that have made our country what it is today?

**Mr Hayes:** There is no more robust or redoubtable advocate for our island story and the teaching of history than my hon. Friend. He is right that Ofsted has highlighted considerable weaknesses in how history is taught, and I can reassure him that, through the measures I have described, the Government will restore history to the heart of the school curriculum so that children learn that unless we can map the past we will not navigate the present or chart our way to the future.

### Free Schools

11. **Charlotte Leslie** (Bristol North West) (Con): Whether all those whose bid to open a free school in September 2011 was successful have been notified of the outcome of their bid. [47468]

**The Minister of State, Department for Education (Mr Nick Gibb):** We are delighted with the overwhelming response that have received from proposers wishing to set up free schools, and we are seeing no signs that the demand is subsiding. That is why we are introducing a new decision-making process for 2012. We have already notified all proposers who wish to open free schools in September 2011 of the outcome of their proposals, and the list of successful proposals is available on the Department's website.

**Charlotte Leslie:** Constituents of mine who are members of the Oasis parents action group have been subjected to considerable angst because they have not been notified by the key bidders of the success or otherwise of their free school bid. They have been left very confused about the choices available for their children in September 2011. Will the Minister consider measures to ensure that that never happens again, and can he confirm that the Department is now working as fast and as strongly as it can on the only successful free school bid, from Bristol city council and local parents, to ensure that there is a school on the St Ursula's site in September 2011?

**Mr Gibb:** I understand the concern felt by parents in my hon. Friend's constituency. Our policy is to inform the lead proposers of the outcome of their proposals, and we expect them to inform all those involved. I assure my hon. Friend that we are actively engaged in discussions with all the parties involved with the aim of finding a solution in relation to the Bristol free school project. Indeed, the project's lead official has been meeting and talking to officers from the city council.

**Lisa Nandy** (Wigan) (Lab): Given that the Secretary of State seems to be unable to find money for schools that desperately need rebuilding, will the Minister tell us how much money his Government have been promised or awarded to free schools?

**Mr Gibb:** We announced in December that the capital allocation for 2011-12 would be £800 million for basic need, £858 million for capital maintenance and £185 million for devolved capital, which amounts to £2 billion out of a £4.9 billion capital budget. The difference between those two figures covers the BSF commitments and an allocation for free schools.

**Mr David Ward** (Bradford East) (LD): The proposed King's Science Academy in Bradford—for which, miraculously, £10 million has been found—has described itself in its application as a “non-selective” school. Is the Secretary of State as surprised as I am that it has already started sifting applications for admission, and, according to its website, intends to use a “non-verbal reasoning test”?

**Mr Gibb:** I should be happy to take up that case. If my hon. Friend will write to me, I will respond immediately.

**Mr Iain Wright** (Hartlepool) (Lab): The Secretary of State's free schools policy seems to be shrouded in secrecy, rather like the whereabouts of 500 ministerial responses to Members' unanswered parliamentary questions. At a time when mainstream schools face severe cuts in their budgets, local areas must be able to

judge whether free schools offer the best use of public money. The Minister failed to answer the question posed by my hon. Friend the Member for Wigan (Lisa Nandy), so I shall give him another go. Will he tell us how much money has been promised to free schools for 2010-11 and 2011-12, and where that money is coming from?

**Mr Gibb:** I can tell the hon. Gentleman that £35 million has been allocated to free schools this year. We will be completely transparent about this. As soon as a free school opens, all the details of the funding agreement will be made public once all the figures relating to that school are known.

### Free School Meals

12. **Andrew Bridgen** (North West Leicestershire) (Con): Whether he plans to review the eligibility criteria for free school meals. [47469]

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education (Tim Loughton):** Under current arrangements, eligibility for free school meals is focused on children in non-working families to ensure that those who are most in need receive that valuable help. Universal credit will replace existing benefits, and the Department is working with the Department for Work and Pensions to develop new free school meal eligibility criteria. We will also consider free school meal eligibility in 2012, in the light of the evaluation of the current pilot schemes relating to extended eligibility.

**Andrew Bridgen:** When I have visited schools in the more deprived parts of my constituency, it has been apparent that many parents are currently too proud to claim free school meals, feeling that a stigma is attached to them. Can my hon. Friend assure me that the free school meal criteria will be reviewed regularly, and that efforts will be made to inform parents of the importance of registering for them, given that the pupil premium is allocated according to free school meal take-up rather than eligibility?

**Tim Loughton:** I believe that 7,490 pupils under 16 in maintained schools in my hon. Friend's area are eligible for free school meals. That is about half the national take-up. It is important for the pupil premium to be available to those in the most deprived areas, and we will of course monitor the situation to ensure that a perception of stigma does not prevent people from registering.

**Mr Ronnie Campbell** (Blyth Valley) (Lab): Is the Minister aware that the Liberal-led coalition at Northumberland county council is talking about taking hot meals away from all children in Northumberland? If he is, what is he going to do about it?

**Tim Loughton:** I am not aware of what Northumberland county council may be intending to do, but if the hon. Gentleman writes to the Department I am sure we can look into it. I hope he will acknowledge that the additional money that will come into his area for the most deprived children through the pupil premium will provide considerable help to those children who might not be getting a hot meal at home.

### School Curriculum

13. **Mr Douglas Carswell** (Clacton) (Con): What steps he is taking to enable schools to determine their own curriculum. [47470]

**The Secretary of State for Education (Michael Gove):** Academies have total freedom to determine their own curriculum and our review of the national curriculum will ensure that more schools have flexibility over how they teach.

**Mr Carswell:** I welcome the proposals to relax curriculum requirements. It is vital to allow schools to innovate, but is there not a danger of some unwelcome innovations, such as the thematic curriculum approach that did much to damage Bishops Park school in my constituency? Will Ministers therefore make certain that schools are downwardly accountable to local mums and dads for what and how they teach to ensure that we have a creative approach to curriculum innovation rather than a kooky one?

**Michael Gove:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for the case he makes. I know that the school he mentions had to be closed under the previous Government because it was not responding to what local parents wanted and was not providing a high enough quality of education. The coalition Government are ensuring that there are measures in place—floor standards—to ensure that if any school falls below a particular level at GCSE performance, we will not be afraid to intervene to ensure that all parents have a guarantee that standards are maintained. We will also publish more data in weeks to come on how schools perform so that there can be that accountability, direct to parents, for what their children are taught.

### Design

14. **Chris White** (Warwick and Leamington) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to support the teaching of design in schools. [47471]

**The Minister for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning (Mr John Hayes):** We have been funding the Design and Technology Association to provide continuing professional development for design and technology teachers to enhance their subject knowledge, and we intend to continue to provide this funding while we are reviewing the position of the subject in the national curriculum.

**Chris White:** I am grateful for the Minister's response. I am sure that everyone recognises the need to build a more creative and innovative economy and the important role that teaching design and technology must play in that. Will he assure the House that the Government will continue to promote the teaching of design and technology within schools and inform us of any steps being taken to meet that end?

**Mr Hayes:** The white heat of technology has never been more important. Britain's future chance of success lies in our being a high-tech, high-skilled nation, which is why the Government have agreed an unprecedented level of commitment and expenditure to apprenticeships,

which are being taught in many schools. We will continue to build that high-tech, high-skilled nation. I recommend our strategy to my hon. Friend—signed copies are available.

#### Academies (Chatham and Aylesford)

15. **Tracey Crouch** (Chatham and Aylesford) (Con): What recent progress has been made by schools in Chatham and Aylesford constituency which are converting to academy status. [47472]

**The Minister of State, Department for Education (Mr Nick Gibb):** The Department has received three applications to convert to academy status from schools in the Chatham and Aylesford constituency. Of the three schools that have applied to convert, two have received academy orders and the Secretary of State will consider the third application for an academy order very soon.

**Tracey Crouch:** The Minister will be aware that several schools across my constituency are keen to explore the possibility of becoming partnership academies. Will the Minister meet me and representatives of the schools to discuss the viability and future progress of these exciting proposals?

**Mr Gibb:** Yes, I would be delighted to meet my hon. Friend and a delegation. Officials met officers at Medway council on Thursday and discussed proposals made by five of the schools in Medway. Officials propose to hold follow-up discussions with the five schools either individually or as a group. I look forward to meeting my hon. Friend and discussing this matter.

#### Sports Facilities

16. **Mr Mark Spencer** (Sherwood) (Con): What his policy is on the provision of sporting facilities in schools. [47473]

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education (Tim Loughton):** It is for schools and their sponsors and maintaining authorities to determine the range of sporting facilities in each school, consistent with statutory requirements. Education premises regulations include a requirement for access to playing fields as well.

**Mr Spencer:** I am grateful for that answer. Will the Minister tell me how he will support schools and governing bodies when local authorities withdraw from joint-use agreements, putting pressure on sporting facilities and their availability to not only pupils but members of the public?

**Tim Loughton:** My hon. Friend is right to say that it is absolutely essential that we have as many school facilities available as possible to people beyond those in the school cohort. Local authorities should remember that they have responsibility for determining non-school provision at a school site. Given that PE will remain a compulsory part of the curriculum, they really should be reminded of their duties, and of the fact that it is good for everybody to do more sport.

#### Teaching Standards

17. **Mr Dominic Raab** (Esher and Walton) (Con): What steps he is taking to improve the quality of teaching in schools. [47475]

**The Minister of State, Department for Education (Mr Nick Gibb):** The single most important determinant of a good education for every child is having good teachers, which is why we have set out plans to raise the professional status and standards of the teaching profession in the White Paper, “The Importance of Teaching”. We will focus on recruiting the best candidates to become teachers. We will improve their training and give them more opportunities to learn from high performers in the profession.

**Mr Raab:** I thank the Minister for that answer. A YouGov survey found that for undergraduates the No. 1 deterrent to becoming a teacher is violence in the classroom; that is being compounded by fear of false and malicious allegations. What steps are the Government taking to protect the physical and reputational integrity of teachers, so that a career in the classroom attracts the best and the brightest talent?

**Mr Gibb:** Of course, my hon. Friend is right: violence in schools is completely unacceptable. The Education Bill, now in Committee, includes a wide range of reforms to increase teachers’ ability to challenge poor behaviour. It introduces reporting restrictions, giving anonymity to teachers when allegations are made by or on behalf of a pupil. The reforms are intended to shift the balance of authority back to the teachers and head teachers in our schools, to enable them to provide a safe environment in schools where children are free and able to learn.

**Ian Austin** (Dudley North) (Lab): I am sure that Ministers will agree that the quality of teaching in schools is enhanced by the work of Saltmine, a fantastic charity based in my constituency that puts on plays for secondary school children to educate them about issues such as alcohol, drugs, racism and bullying. Will the Minister ask the Secretary of State to come and see one of these fantastic plays, and does he agree that despite the difficult decisions that schools have to make, reducing expenditure in that area would be very short-sighted indeed?

**Mr Gibb:** I do not know why the hon. Gentleman wants me to ask the Secretary of State to come along, and does not ask me to come along instead. I would be delighted to visit a school to see that work in action. The issues that the hon. Gentleman mentions are very important, and unless we get them right children will not be in the right place to access the curriculum and learn successfully.

**Elizabeth Truss** (South West Norfolk) (Con): I am concerned that some schools in South West Norfolk are struggling to recruit teachers in short-supply subjects and head teachers. Will the Minister consider improving the quality of teaching in Norfolk by rolling out Teach First to the county, and by relaxing rules on national pay bargaining to allow us to recruit teachers in those short-supply schools?

**Mr Gibb:** I appreciate the recruitment difficulties experienced in west Norfolk, and I am encouraged by the work being undertaken by Norfolk county council, supported by the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services, to develop local solutions to meet the demand for head teachers. On pay, my hon. Friend will be interested to know that a further remit will be issued to the School Teachers Review Body later this year, asking for recommendations on how the pay and conditions system can be made less rigid. That work will build on the current extensive flexibilities, which will allow schools to pay, attract and retain teachers.

#### Student Information

18. **Mr Gordon Marsden** (Blackpool South) (Lab): What assessment he has made of the effects of reductions in local authority funding for education on the provision of information, advice and guidance for students at secondary level in Blackpool. [47476]

**The Minister for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning (Mr John Hayes):** We want to be helpful to local authorities and schools by giving them information on the changes taking place to careers guidance and the time scale for change. To that end, we will make an announcement shortly regarding the Government's approach to careers advice and guidance.

**Mr Marsden:** I thank the Minister for that reply, but does he not realise that as a result of the Government's cuts the Connexions service in Blackpool, and up and down the country, is already being shredded? Does he not realise that that needs to be addressed if he wishes to give emphasis to the policies he is proposing? Otherwise, when he has his new, all-age careers service, there will not be much of Connexions left for it to connect to.

**Mr Hayes:** The hon. Gentleman knows that local authorities will retain their statutory duty for all but careers, and the all-age service will make an immense difference in social mobility. It will give people a chance to fulfil their potential and be the best they can be. I do not want to be excessively critical, but I have to say that in many cases Connexions just did not do that adequately.

#### Education Maintenance Allowance

19. **David Wright** (Telford) (Lab): Whether children in care will automatically be eligible for funding through the scheme to replace education maintenance allowance. [47477]

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education (Tim Loughton):** We are considering the arrangements for the new funding and what assurances might be given to particular groups of young people who might be facing barriers to participation. We will announce details of the new scheme shortly.

**David Wright:** We as a community have a collective responsibility for children in care, and it is crucial that they should have access to funding as a replacement for EMA. Will the Minister assure the House that he will really focus on that important group for which we have a collective responsibility?

**Tim Loughton:** I think the hon. Gentleman knows that children in care have been a particular interest of mine and that we are doing an awful lot to try to improve on the scandal of the poor outcomes they have experienced for too long. They will be at the head of the queue when it comes to the alternative arrangements for EMA, recognising the disadvantaged position in which most of the children in the care system find themselves, and we need to do everything we can to help them to catch up.

#### Topical Questions

T1. [47482] **Diana Johnson** (Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab): If he will make a statement on his departmental responsibilities.

**The Secretary of State for Education (Michael Gove):** I am delighted to be able to tell the House that the number of academies in the state education system has now reached 465, which is more than double the 203 that we inherited from the previous Government. Since the scheme for schools to convert was opened in September last year, 195 schools have converted. In the first three years of the Conservative Government between 1979 and 1997 during which grant maintained status was available, only 50 schools converted, so the rate of academy conversion, and indeed the rate of school reform we are presiding over, is the fastest ever.

**Diana Johnson:** Hull's cut of £70 per child in children's services means that 13 of the 20 children's centres in Hull will effectively have to be mothballed and staffed only by a receptionist and a cleaner. I am sure that the Secretary of State will recall "Yes, Minister" and Jim Hacker's visit to a hospital that had no patients. Would he like to visit the children's centres in my constituency that have no children?

**Michael Gove:** I am grateful to the hon. Lady for her question, and I am always grateful for the opportunity to visit the East Riding—

**Diana Johnson:** Hull is not in the East Riding.

**Michael Gove:** Well, historically it is.

**Diana Johnson:** It is not now.

**Michael Gove:** Moving beyond history and geography, let me address this specific point. The amount of money available in the early intervention grant to ensure that children's centres can stay open is higher than she implies, and sufficient to ensure that all local authorities can discharge their statutory responsibility to ensure that there are sufficient places.

T4. [47485] **Annette Brooke** (Mid Dorset and North Poole) (LD): Montacute special school in my constituency is in desperate need of new facilities. It was quite reasonably removed from the Building Schools for the Future list as the plans for a rebuild were not satisfactory at that stage. Would the Secretary of State or his officials be prepared to meet me either at the school or here in London to discuss a way forward?

**Michael Gove:** I shall specifically ask whether an official from Partnerships for Schools can visit the hon. Lady's constituency, at a time that is convenient to her and to the staff of the school, in order to see what can be done.

**Andy Burnham (Leigh) (Lab):** We found out last week that Education Ministers were the worst in Whitehall at answering parliamentary questions, with 496 questions unanswered. Given some of the non-replies we have heard today, they might well have just hit the 500 mark, so let me give the Secretary of State an easy one. We read last week that the Government's advocate for access to education, the right hon. Member for Bermondsey and Old Southwark (Simon Hughes), is negotiating with the Chancellor ahead of the Budget to secure more money for the replacement for education maintenance allowance. Assuming that the Secretary of State has been kept informed of those discussions, would he care to give the House an update on progress?

**Michael Gove:** We are progressing very well in dealing with the problems that we were left by the previous Government, handling the deficit in our budget and the deficit in the number of students staying on after 16. I am pleased to say that we have already succeeded in securing more money for students after the age of 16, including £150 million more to help the most disadvantaged students who are staying on after 16. Participation is increasing, and we have managed to keep the number of 16 to 18-year-olds not in education, employment or training—NEETs—to an acceptably low level in this time of difficult economic news. We have done all this even though we were bequeathed a drastic fiscal situation by the Government of whom the right hon. Gentleman was a part.

**Andy Burnham:** After that reply, I make the running total 501. More money for students after the age of 16? I should be interested to know how the Secretary of State would back up that claim. The truth is that he is repeating tired old lines, which were blown apart last week by a letter from nine leading economists to *The Guardian*, in which they said that

“the EMA...is not a deadweight loss as the government claims...The argument that there is no alternative to scrapping EMA is false.”

With youth unemployment at record levels, with fear rising of a lost generation, will the Secretary of State admit that he was wrong on EMA? Will he perform another of his famous U-turns and keep his party's promises to young people?

**Michael Gove:** I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for his question, but he should pay attention. It was pointed out at the time of the comprehensive spending review that we were spending more money on post-16 education. It is interesting that he should mention letters to *The Guardian*, because the one to which he refers was concocted by nine Labour-supporting economists as part of the save the EMA campaign, which is fronted by a Labour researcher, and is nothing more than a party political exercise.

If we are talking about letters to *The Guardian*, I recently read one from Professor Alison Wolf, who conducted a review of vocational education. She pointed out two things: first, hundreds of thousands of children

were betrayed by the Government of whom the right hon. Gentleman was a member, because they were forced to take inadequate vocational qualifications. She also pointed out that the right hon. Gentleman was—

**Mr Speaker:** Order. The Secretary of State will resume his seat. This is not a debate—it is topical questions. I want brief questions and brief answers.

T5. [47486] **Mark Reckless (Rochester and Strood) (Con):** On Thursday, I saw the beginning of construction for Strood academy in my constituency. Does the Secretary of State appreciate the extent to which confirmation of that investment is appreciated in the local community, and would he visit my constituency to open the academy when construction is completed next year?

**Michael Gove:** My hon. Friend makes a good point, and I should be delighted to accept his generous invitation.

T2. [47483] **Tom Blenkinsop (Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland) (Lab):** Laurence Jackson school in Guisborough is in the top 100 schools for sustained improvement at GCSE level, but, like Kilton Thorpe special school, its Building Schools for the Future budget has been cut, as has its harnessing technology grant, its extended schools grant, its gaining ground grant, its sports specialism funding, and its devolved capital funding grant. Have not Laurence Jackson and Kilton Thorpe school funds been redistributed to ideological free schools?

**Michael Gove:** Once again, that was a beautifully scripted and delightfully read question from a Labour Back Bencher. There is only one word that we need to hear from Labour politicians about cuts, which is “sorry” for the economic mess they bequeathed us. It is monstrous hypocrisy and intellectually inadequate to prate about cuts when the Government they supported were responsible for them.

T7. [47488] **Dr Daniel Poulter (Central Suffolk and North Ipswich) (Con):** I am sure that the Secretary of State would agree that the cost of travel to and from a place of study may be a gating factor for disadvantaged students in accessing education. Will he take into account the cost of travel when formulating the enhanced discretionary learner support fund?

**Michael Gove:** Yes.

T3. [47484] **David Wright (Telford) (Lab):** There are many Members in the House, including me, who believe that religious education provides an important moral platform for life. There is a feeling, however, that the Secretary of State has downgraded religious education in our schools. Will he get up and confirm that he has not done so?

**Michael Gove:** I do not know where that feeling comes from. Speaking as someone who is happy to be a regular attendee at Church of England services, and whose own children attend a Church of England school, I recommend that the hon. Gentleman read the recent article that I penned for *The Catholic Herald*, a newspaper that is now required reading in the Department for Education. The article makes clear my commitment to faith schools of every stripe.

T8. [47490] **Andrew Selous** (South West Bedfordshire) (Con): Head teachers in my constituency have told me of their frustration at not being able to move teachers on who are not performing well enough, either to new responsibilities or, sadly, if necessary, out of the profession. What reassurance can the Secretary of State give me that he will take speedy action to ensure that pupils, parents and teachers get the best out of education?

**Michael Gove:** My hon. Friend makes an important point. Only two weeks ago, we introduced a new review of teaching standards to achieve a sharper focus on the quality of teaching in all our classrooms, and to ensure that teachers who fall below those standards are moved on. They should be helped to improve or, if necessary, helped to leave the profession.

T6. [47487] **Jonathan Reynolds** (Stalybridge and Hyde) (Lab/Co-op): Sixth form colleges currently receive entitlement funding through the Young People's Learning Agency. Colleges in my area face a 74% reduction in such funding, which they use to fund pastoral support, careers advice, sport, music, trips and visits—all the things that can fire aspiration and the imagination of young people. Will the Minister look at that again and meet me and someone from my local college, as I do not think Ministers quite realise the impact of their decision in this area?

**The Minister for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning (Mr John Hayes):** In short, I would be happy to meet the hon. Gentleman and his representatives. He knows, as does the whole House, that I am a champion for sixth form colleges and FE colleges, and I would be happy to make that clearer when we meet.

T9. [47491] **Nadhim Zahawi** (Stratford-on-Avon) (Con): Has my right hon. Friend read the OECD's latest report on the state of the UK education system? It says that

“educational performance remains static, uneven and strongly related to parents' income and background”

and:

“Despite sharply rising school spending per pupil during the last ten years, improvements in schooling outcomes have been limited in the United Kingdom.”

Is that not a sad indictment of the past 13 years of Labour?

**Michael Gove:** I read the OECD report with a mounting sense of sadness. It made the case forcefully by the deployment of facts and argument in a remorseless fashion that under the previous Government, for all the welcome additional spending on schools, standards had not risen to anything like the expected level. It was also striking that that report endorsed the case for the coalition's commitment to spending more on the disadvantaged, the coalition's commitment to creating free schools, and the coalition's commitment to overhauling the league table system. For a respected international institution to give such a resounding thumbs-down to the previous Government and thumbs-up to the coalition Government is—

**Mr Speaker:** Order. The Secretary of State has got to get used to providing much punchier replies.

**Stephen Twigg** (Liverpool, West Derby) (Lab/Co-op): Is the Secretary of State aware that there is widespread concern that his national curriculum review might result in the removal of citizenship education from the core curriculum? Will he reassure the House that the Government remain committed to citizenship education in schools?

**Michael Gove:** Citizenship runs through everything we do at the Department for Education.

**Andrea Leadsom** (South Northamptonshire) (Con): Is my right hon. Friend aware of the great concern of some parents about the inappropriate material being shown to their five-year-old and seven-year-old children under the guise of sex and relationship education? Will he take steps to start a licensing regime to ensure that the material being shown is age-appropriate?

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education (Tim Loughton):** I share some of my hon. Friend's concerns and I know that she has written to the Secretary of State on the matter. She will be aware that we are currently reviewing personal, social and health education, of which sex and relationship education is a key part. It is crucial that whatever we do should be age appropriate. I would welcome her further input into the review as it proceeds.

**Mrs Jenny Chapman** (Darlington) (Lab): Will the Secretary of State meet me to discuss the future of buildings at Mowden Hall in Darlington? The local council, residents and a property developer have an alternative site that will save money and create jobs. It will require quick decisions and innovative thinking. Is he up for it?

**Michael Gove:** I am always up for innovative thinking, and always up for a meeting with the hon. Lady. I take the point about Mowden Hall. I had the opportunity to visit it a few months ago—the first Secretary of State to do so, I think, since David Blunkett. I would be happy to discuss with her how we can help her constituents.

**Mr Edward Timpson** (Crewe and Nantwich) (Con): With my right hon. Friend's encyclopaedic knowledge of schools in this country, he is no doubt aware that Haslington primary school in my constituency, under the headship of Jenny Fitzhugh, has moved from special measures to a school with many outstanding features in just over one year. Will he join me in congratulating that school and reassure similar schools that the new inspection regime will ensure that those that progress such as Haslington are able to demonstrate that in the future?

**Michael Gove:** I absolutely will. I place on record my congratulations to Jenny Fitzhugh on her outstanding leadership of that school. Any new arrangements that Ofsted put in place, which we are consulting on at present, will provide an opportunity for her to demonstrate her excellent work once again to more schools.

**Luciana Berger** (Liverpool, Wavertree) (Lab/Co-op): Estimates from the House of Commons Library show that Liverpool council will receive a real per capita

decrease of £80 per child for services such as Sure Start from 2012-13. How can Ministers claim to have protected Sure Start funding?

**Michael Gove:** The reason we make that claim is that we have, as I mentioned in reply to the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North (Diana Johnson), ensured that the amount in the early intervention grant that goes to Sure Start children's centres is sufficient to guarantee every child a high-quality place. I look forward to discussing these issues in greater detail with the hon. Member for Liverpool, Wavertree (Luciana Berger), because we have a date this time next week.

**Amber Rudd (Hastings and Rye) (Con):** At a meeting last Friday at the Grove school in Hastings, I learnt that a whopping 48% of its new intake are on free school meals. Will the Secretary of State reassure me that sufficient funds will be available through the pupil premium to support disadvantaged students, such as those in my constituency, through their education?

**Michael Gove:** The number of students eligible for free school meals in that school is three times the national average, and I will ensure that the pupil premium provides them with the support they need to do just as well as students from more privileged backgrounds.

## Point of Order

3.30 pm

**Mr David Winnick** (Walsall North) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. We know that military intervention has started without the House being able to debate or vote on the issue. On 10 March the Leader of the House was asked during business questions by the hon. Member for Gainsborough (Mr Leigh) whether the House could definitely have a vote before any military action was taken if a no-fly zone was to be imposed. The Leader of the House said yes, that that is now the convention and that it was the Government's intention to

“observe that convention except when there is an emergency and such action would not be appropriate.”—[*Official Report*, 10 March 2011; Vol. 524, c. 1066.]

I say to you, Sir, that the vote on military action in Iraq was on 18 March 2003, and that action took place two days later. If the House could not meet to discuss this on Friday, was it not possible for us to meet on Saturday? The convention whereby the House debates military action before such action takes place has not been followed.

**Mr Speaker:** I thank the hon. Gentleman for his point of order. Having first entered the House in 1966, he will know that the arrangement of business is a matter for the Government, not the Chair. He has made an important point and it is on the record. If he catches the eye of the Chair, he will have an opportunity to develop that point among others later in the afternoon.

## United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973

**Mr Speaker:** I inform the House that I have not selected the amendment. The House might be interested to know that no fewer than 62 right hon. and hon. Members have applied to speak, as a result of which a six-minute limit on Back-Bench contributions has been imposed. I appeal to Members, today in particular, not to approach the Chair to inquire where they are on the list. The Chair will do his or her best to accommodate Members in the course of the afternoon, but it will not be assisted by people toddling up and making inquiries. Interventions are the stuff of debate, but Members should be aware that a lot of interventions will impact on debate and that those who make many will necessarily fall down the list.

3.32 pm

**The Prime Minister (Mr David Cameron):** I beg to move,

That this House welcomes United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1973; deplores the ongoing use of violence by the Libyan regime; acknowledges the demonstrable need, regional support and clear legal basis for urgent action to protect the people of Libya; accordingly supports Her Majesty's Government, working with others, in the taking of all necessary measures to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in Libya and to enforce the No Fly Zone, including the use of UK armed forces and military assets in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1973; and offers its wholehearted support to the men and women of Her Majesty's armed forces.

On Saturday, British forces went into action over Libya. The first British cruise missiles were fired from HMS *Triumph* at 7 pm. Subsequently, RAF *Tornados* were deployed in several missions. This marked the beginning of our involvement in an international operation, working with the US and others at the request of Arab nations to enforce the will of the United Nations.

In line with UN resolution 1973, there were two aims to these strikes. The first was to suppress the Libyan air defences and make possible the safe enforcement of a no-fly zone. The second was to protect civilians from attack by the Gaddafi regime. Good progress has been made on both fronts. I can announce to the House today that coalition forces have largely neutralised Libyan air defences and that, as a result, a no-fly zone has effectively been put in place over Libya. It is also clear that coalition forces have helped to avert what could have been a bloody massacre in Benghazi. In my view, they did so just in the nick of time.

Today, I can confirm that RAF *Typhoon* jets have been deployed to a military base in southern Italy within 25 minutes flying time of the Libyan coast, and two *Typhoons* will be helping to patrol the no-fly zone this afternoon.

I am sure the whole House will join me in paying tribute to our servicemen and women, who are performing with their usual professionalism and courage. Our thoughts must be with their families and their loved ones at this time, as they risk their lives to help save the lives of others.

Let me be clear why these actions have been taken. On Friday evening, President Obama, President Sarkozy and I spelt out the non-negotiable conditions that Colonel

Gaddafi had to meet under the requirements of international law set out by UN Security Council resolution 1973.

First, we said that a ceasefire had to be implemented immediately, and that all attacks against civilians must stop. Secondly, we said that Gaddafi had to stop his troops advancing on Benghazi. Thirdly, we said that Gaddafi had to pull his forces back from Ajdabiya, Misrata and Zawiyah. He had to establish water, electricity and gas supplies to all areas, and he had to allow humanitarian assistance to reach the people of Libya.

The removal of Gaddafi's forces from those towns would safeguard civilians, enable the aid agencies to operate there safely and guarantee the humanitarian assistance that the UN resolution demands. So, let me be clear: the Government's view is that those non-negotiable conditions are entirely consistent with implementing the UN resolution.

Gaddafi responded to the United Nations resolution by declaring a ceasefire, but straight away it was clear that he was breaking that promise. He continued to push his tanks towards Benghazi as quickly as possible, and to escalate his actions against Misrata. On Saturday alone, there were reports of dozens of people killed in Benghazi and dozens more in Misrata. Gaddafi lied to the international community, he continued to brutalise his own people and he was in flagrant breach of the UN resolution, so it was necessary, legal and right that he should be stopped, and that we should help stop him.

**Angus Robertson** (Moray) (SNP): I am grateful to the Prime Minister for allowing an intervention. A great many people in this House and in the country had difficulty supporting previous international operations, because they did not have the backing of the United Nations, but this case is different as it does have the backing of the United Nations. Will the Prime Minister acknowledge the importance of a broad consensus on this issue, and, in doing that, the need to stick to the terms of the UN resolution and to address concerns about an open-ended commitment and the potential for mission creep?

**The Prime Minister:** I certainly want to build and maintain, in this House, throughout this country and, indeed right across the world, the widest possible coalition for the action that we are taking. We must work hard to make sure that many, many countries, including many Arab countries, continue to back what we are doing.

The UN Security Council resolution is very clear about the fact that we are able to take action, including military action, to put in place a no-fly zone that prevents air attacks on Libyan people, and to take all necessary measures to stop the attacks on civilians. We must be clear what our role is, and our role is to enforce that UN Security Council resolution. Many people will ask questions—I am sure, today—about regime change, Gaddafi and the rest of it. I have been clear: I think Libya needs to get rid of Gaddafi. But, in the end, we are responsible for trying to enforce that Security Council resolution; the Libyans must choose their own future.

**Joan Ruddock** (Lewisham, Deptford) (Lab) *rose*—

**Mr Ronnie Campbell** (Blyth Valley) (Lab) *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** I give way to the right hon. Lady.

**Joan Ruddock:** I am very grateful to the Prime Minister. He will know that, at the moment, the military action is entirely by western states, and that interpretation of the resolution is everything. Will he ensure that, even if its forces are not deployed, the Arab League will be drawn properly into the strategic decision making?

**The Prime Minister:** I think the right hon. Lady makes an excellent point. I spoke to the secretary-general of the Arab League this morning. One of the things we want to do is to set up a coalition meeting, which happens regularly, for all parties to the mission to come together at a political level and help to give it leadership and guidance. She is right that Arab planes have not been involved in the mission so far, but, as I shall come on to later, the Qataris are producing a number of jets to help enforce the no-fly zone, and we will be doing everything we can to encourage others to come forward. As she knows and I am sure the House will appreciate, what happened on Friday and Saturday was a growing urgency, where action needed to be taken at once. It was vital that we did take that action at once, and, as a result, it was predominantly US, French and British forces that were involved in it.

**Tony Lloyd** (Manchester Central) (Lab) *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** I will give way to the hon. Gentleman and then make some progress.

**Tony Lloyd:** I think the Prime Minister carries the overwhelming majority on the urgent need to take action to prevent the massacre of people in Benghazi, but will he take the opportunity during his speech to spell out exactly what are the limitations of the actions that he and the coalition will pursue?

**The Prime Minister:** The action will be limited by what the UN Security Council resolution says. As far as I am concerned, there are two absolutely clear bases for action—one is necessary measures to put in place a no-fly zone, and the second is necessary measures to prevent the deaths of civilians. In everything we do, we must be guided by clear legal advice underneath that UN Security Council resolution. I urge all hon. Members to read the resolution in full, because it gives a pretty clear explanation of what we can do, and we must act both within the letter and the spirit of that.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** I will take a few more interventions—first, the hon. Member for Colchester (Bob Russell).

**Bob Russell** (Colchester) (LD): In view of the obviously barbaric attacks by Gaddafi on his own people, does the Prime Minister agree that those officials and military chiefs who are still standing firm with Gaddafi stand every chance of being hauled before the war crimes tribunal?

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Gentleman makes an excellent point. The first resolution we passed—1970—specifically referred to the International Criminal Court. The message we should give today, very clearly, to those people still working or fighting for Gaddafi is that if

[The Prime Minister]

you continue to do so, you could end up in front of the International Criminal Court, and now is the time to put down your weapons, walk away from your tanks, and stop obeying orders from this regime.

**Mr Ronnie Campbell:** The resolution says that all necessary measures will be taken. Can the Prime Minister guarantee that no land forces will ever be used; and if they are used, will he resign as Prime Minister?

**The Prime Minister:** What I can guarantee is that we will stick to the terms of the UN resolution, which absolutely and specifically rules out an occupying force. We have to be clear: we are not talking about an invasion; we are not talking about an occupying force; we are talking about taking action to protect civilian life, and I think that is the right thing to do.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** I am going to take two more interventions before making progress, first from my hon. Friend the Member for Stratford-on-Avon (Nadhim Zahawi) and then from the leader of Plaid Cymru.

**Nadhim Zahawi** (Stratford-on-Avon) (Con): Of course, no two campaigns are the same, but there are similarities between this campaign and that to protect the Kurdish people when Saddam Hussein turned on his own people and began to attack them. The motion before the House calls for all necessary measures to protect the people of Libya. Can the Prime Minister confirm that when we vote on the motion tonight, that does not mean regime change in Libya, because that is up to the Libyan people?

**The Prime Minister:** My hon. Friend is entirely right, and he is right to draw attention to the issue of the no-fly zone that covered the Kurds. Indeed, at the meeting in Paris on Saturday the Iraqi Foreign Minister gave a passionate speech about how the no-fly zone had saved thousands of lives, and probably his own as well, and that is why it was the right step to take.

**Mr Elfyn Llwyd** (Dwyfor Meirionnydd) (PC): May I say that I am very pleased that the Government have sought a UN resolution, thus making intervention lawful? From what the Prime Minister says, the no-fly zone is up and running. Can we therefore presume that there will be no aerial bombardment for the time being?

**The Prime Minister:** Certainly, the entire aim of the no-fly zone is to stop the attacks from the air by Gaddafi on his own people, but where the UN has had such a success here is that the resolution goes so much further than simply a no-fly zone because it talks about not only all necessary measures for a no-fly zone, but all necessary measures to protect the civilian population. That enables the international community to take quite tough, but absolutely necessary, steps—for instance, to stop those tanks going into Benghazi. We need to pay tribute to our military and what they are going to have to do over coming days to protect people—an absolutely vital part of what we are engaged in.

**Jeremy Corbyn** (Islington North) (Lab) *rose*—

**Mr Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover) (Lab) *rose*—

**Emily Thornberry** (Islington South and Finsbury) (Lab) *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** I am going to make some progress, and then I will take more interventions later.

This action was necessary because, with others, we should be trying to prevent this dictator from using military violence against his own people; it was legal because, as we have just discussed, it had the backing of the UN Security Council; and it was right, I believe, because we should not stand aside while he murders his own people—and the Arab League and many others agreed. In the summit in Paris on Saturday, the secretary-general of the Arab League and representatives of Arab states, including Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Jordan and Morocco, asserted their support for

“all necessary action, including military, consistent with UNSCR 1973, to ensure compliance with all its requirements.”

That is what was agreed in Paris.

As I have said, in terms of active participation, the Qataris are deploying a number of jets from their royal air force to help enforce the no-fly zone. I spoke to the secretary-general of the Arab League this morning, and he confirmed his clear support for all aspects of the UN resolution. We agree that it must be implemented.

Alongside America, France and Britain, a significant number of other countries are pledging their active support. I am sure that the House would want to hear some of the details. Spain has confirmed its active participation with four air defence fighters, a tanker aircraft, a surveillance aircraft and an F-100 frigate. Canada has committed six air defence fighters and a naval vessel. Norway and Denmark have committed a total of 10 air defence fighters. Belgium has offered air defence fighters. Italy has opened important bases in close reach of the Libyan coast, one of which we are using right now. Greece has excellent facilities and bases only minutes flying time from Benghazi.

The message in Paris was loud and clear: the international community had heeded the call of the Arab nations. Together, we assured the Libyan people of our

“determination to be at their side to help them realise their aspirations and build their future and institutions within a democratic framework.”

**Jeremy Corbyn:** The Prime Minister will be aware that the Chinese Government have called for a special meeting of the Security Council this evening, and that India has expressed deep reservations about the bombardments that are going on. Can he tell us something about the apparent continuing falling away of support for the actions that have been taken, and what the end game actually is?

**The Prime Minister:** The point that I would make is that this matter was discussed in the UN Security Council and the Chinese, Indians and Russians decided to abstain. Two of those countries have a veto and decided not to exercise it. Everyone was clear at the time about what was meant by enforcing a no-fly zone and taking all necessary measures to protect civilians. I will come on in my speech to describe how I believe what

has happened is in no way disproportionate or unreasonable. Indeed, I would argue that it is absolutely in line with what the UN has agreed.

I will address specifically the amendment tabled by the hon. Member for Islington North (Jeremy Corbyn). I know that it has not been selected, but I want to ensure that we address everything in this debate. There is much in the amendment that I welcome. I assure the House that we will do everything we can to avoid civilian casualties. Indeed, last night our RAF pilots aborted their mission when they determined that there were civilians close to the identified military targets. I also agree with the hon. Members who signed the amendment about the need to avoid the use of depleted uranium and cluster munitions. We do not use those munitions. I welcome their support for those struggling for democracy and freedom in the region, and back their call to restart the middle east peace process.

However, I take issue with two crucial parts of the amendment. The first is the suggestion that there was somehow time for further consultation before undertaking military action. The United Nations gave Gaddafi an ultimatum and he completely ignored it. To those who say that we should wait and see, I say that we have waited and we have seen more than enough. The House is aware that the Cabinet met and agreed our approach on Friday. On Saturday morning, as I was travelling to the Paris summit, the Deputy Prime Minister chaired a meeting of Cobra. He was presented with a final analysis of the state of play on the ground in Libya and the advice was very clear. We were in a race against time to avoid the slaughter of civilians in Benghazi. All of us would have hoped to avoid the use of force, and that could have been achieved if Gaddafi had complied immediately and fully with the requirements of the resolution. The fact is that he did not. That left us with a choice either to use force, strictly in line with the resolution, or to back down and send a message to Gaddafi that he could go on brutalising his people. We should remember that this is the man who told the world that he would show the people of Benghazi no mercy. I am convinced that to act with others was the right decision.

**John McDonnell** (Hayes and Harlington) (Lab) *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** I give way to the other author of the amendment.

**John McDonnell:** I almost thought that the Prime Minister was about to support our amendment in total, but I live in hope on other matters. He made the specific point about avoiding the use of depleted uranium ordnance. Will he give a more categorical assurance that we will not use those weapons?

**The Prime Minister:** I could not have been more clear that we do not use those weapons and are not going to use those weapons.

Let me be clear with the hon. Gentleman about why, specifically, I do not agree with the amendment. My second objection is that it says we should “acknowledge” rather than “support” UN Security Council resolution 1973. I think that is profoundly wrong. It is an important resolution that the UK helped to bring about, and I believe that the House should be frank and clear in welcoming it.

**Emily Thornberry:** What would be a successful outcome to this military action, and is it possible that it could take a number of years for us to get out of Libya now?

**The Prime Minister:** A successful outcome is the enforcement of the will of the UN, which is the ceasing of attacks on civilians. That is what we are aiming at. But let me be absolutely frank about this: it is a more difficult question, in many ways, than the question over Iraq, because in Iraq we had been prepared to go into a country, knock over its Government and put something else in place. That is not the approach we are taking here. We are saying that there is a UN Security Council resolution to stop violence against civilians and to put in a UN no-fly zone, and then the Libyan people must choose their own future. The point I would make is that they have far more chance of choosing their own future today than they did 24 or 48 hours ago.

**Mr John Baron** (Basildon and Billericay) (Con): My right hon. Friend is being very generous in giving way.

Given our poor record of intervention in the past, can my right hon. Friend explain to the sceptics among us why we do not allow the Arabs to take the lead on this, particularly the Arab League, which has called for intervention, and let them instigate a no-fly zone? After all, Egypt is well placed, and we have been selling these Arab nations the capability.

**The Prime Minister:** I would answer that question in two ways. First, if we had waited for that, Benghazi would have fallen, and from that Tobruk would probably have fallen, and Gaddafi would have rolled up the whole of his country in the next 24 to 48 hours. The fact is, it was the Arab League that asked us to come in and provide the no-fly zone. I am as keen as anyone to make sure that this coalition of the willing is as broad-based, and has as much Arab support, as possible, but we should be clear that in the early stages, in order to act quickly, it had to have very strong American, British and French participation.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** I give way to my hon. Friend the Member for Stone (Mr Cash), and then I will make some more progress.

**Mr William Cash** (Stone) (Con): My right hon. Friend knows that I am strongly supportive of the actions that he has taken, and he deserves great credit for them, but on Friday he indicated that we would see a summary of the legal advice from the Attorney-General. We know from what he said on Friday, and indeed from the note that has been supplied in the Library, that the Cabinet has consulted the Attorney-General and is satisfied with the legal advice, but it does not seem from what I have seen so far that we have been supplied with a summary of the Attorney-General's legal advice. Is that going to be forthcoming?

**The Prime Minister:** What we have provided, which I do not think any Government have done before, is a note on the legal advice. That is, I think, the right thing to do. One of the reasons why it is so short is, frankly, because the legal advice is so clear. Members can see that when they read the UN Security Council resolution.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** I will take as many interventions as I can, but before I give way any more, let me turn to some of the other questions that have been raised in recent days.

First, as some hon. Members have asked today, has the use of force been reasonable? As I have said, we have undertaken the use of force in two ways. The first is to suppress Libyan air defences, which I believe is absolutely essential. As Prime Minister, I would not have been prepared to sanction our participation in enforcing the no-fly zone without doing everything possible to reduce the risk to our servicemen and women beforehand. That seems to me absolutely vital. The second area of activity has been action designed explicitly to safeguard civilian populations under attack. As the resolution explicitly authorises, it was quite clear that the population of Benghazi was under heavy attack. Civilians were being killed in significant numbers and exodus from the town had begun, so there was an urgent need to take action to stop the slaughter. As I have said, I am absolutely convinced that what has been done is proportionate.

Targets must be fully consistent with the UN Security Council resolution. We therefore choose our targets to stop attacks on civilians and to implement the no-fly zone, but we should not give a running commentary on targeting and I do not propose to say any more on the subject than that.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** I give way to the leader of the Green party.

**Caroline Lucas** (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green): I am grateful to the Prime Minister. I am sure he would agree that any military action needs to be principled and consistent, but last year, the UK issued £231 million-worth of arms exports licences to Libya and £55 million of licences to Saudi Arabia, including the very personnel carriers that were rolling into Bahrain just last week. Does he not agree that our position would be a lot more consistent and a lot more principled if we stopped selling arms to repressive regimes anywhere in that region?

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Lady makes an important point, which we have discussed several times during statements and questions. We are having a proper review of not just arms exports, but training licences and other relations. Of the 118 single and open licences for Libya, we have revoked all licences that cover equipment of concern. However, I agree with the hon. Lady that there will be lessons to learn from the conflict for the future.

**Dan Byles** (North Warwickshire) (Con): The Prime Minister has been pressed to rule out putting any boots on the ground as part of the operation. May I ask him to reassure the House that, in the event of any British pilots being downed on operations over Libya, the UN resolution will not tie our hands and prevent us from putting in a robust search and rescue operation, should one be required to recover our pilots?

**The Prime Minister:** My hon. Friend makes an important point, but the UN resolution could not be clearer about no occupying army—it is not about an invasion. People need that reassurance not only in the House but in the country and throughout the Arab world.

**Toby Perkins** (Chesterfield) (Lab): The Prime Minister should know that he has the support of the vast majority of Members of all parties for the Government's actions and those of our troops, who are undertaking the work on our behalf. Does he agree that it is hard to see how the Libyan people will be safe from the threat of violence while Colonel Gaddafi remains in charge of that country?

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Gentleman puts it absolutely correctly. We know what our job is—to enforce the UN's will. It is for the people in Libya to decide who governs them, how they are governed and what their future is, but none of us has changed our opinion that there is no future for the people of Libya with Colonel Gaddafi in charge.

Obviously, there are those, including some in the House, who question whether Britain really needs to get involved. Some have argued that we should leave it to others because there is not sufficient British national interest at stake. I believe that argument is misplaced. If Gaddafi's attacks on his own people succeed, Libya will become once again a pariah state, festering on Europe's border, and a source of instability exporting terror beyond its borders. It will be a state from which literally hundreds of thousands of citizens could try to escape, putting huge pressure on us in Europe. We should also remember that Gaddafi is a dictator who has a track record of violence and support for terrorism against our country. The people of Lockerbie, for instance, know what that man is capable of. I am therefore clear that taking action in Libya with our partners is in our national interest.

**Andrew George** (St Ives) (LD): The legal note that accompanies the debate makes it clear that the Security Council resolution recognises that Libya

“constitutes a threat to international peace and security.”

Although I do not recommend that we take such action, from the point of view of consistency, why are we not taking action against Yemen?

**The Prime Minister:** We are obviously extremely disturbed by what is happening in Yemen, particularly recent events. We urge every country in that region to respond to the aspirations of its people with reform, not repression. We have a specific situation in Libya, whereby there was a dictator whose people were trying to get rid of him, who responded with armed violence in the streets. The UN has reached a conclusion and I think that we should back it. As I said the other day, just because we cannot do the right thing everywhere does not mean we should not do it when we have clear permission for and a national interest in doing so. One commentator put it rather well at the weekend: “Why should I tidy my bedroom when the rest of the world is such a mess?” That is an interesting way of putting it.

**Martin Horwood** (Cheltenham) (LD): May I express from the Liberal Democrat Benches our strong support for the resolution and the Government's action? Clearly, the position is different from Iraq. However, does the Prime Minister agree that there is an urgent need to internationalise the mission as far as possible to cement support across the international community should things not run entirely tidily and also so as not to over-extend our forces?

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Gentleman makes a good point. We want to internationalise the action to the maximum degree possible on the military front and in what must follow in humanitarian aid and assistance to the people in Libya.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned Iraq and I want to deal with the way in which we will ensure that this is not another Iraq. My answer is clear: the UN resolution, which we, with the Lebanese, the US and the French, helped draft, makes it clear that there will be no foreign occupation of Libya. The resolution authorises and sets the limit on our action. It excludes an occupation force in any form on any part of Libyan territory.

However, I would argue that the differences from Iraq go deeper. It is not just that this time, the action has the full, unambiguous legal authority of the United Nations nor that it is backed by Arab countries and a broad international coalition, but that millions in the Arab world want to know that the UN, the US, the UK, the French and the international community care about their suffering and their oppression. The Arab world has asked us to act with it to stop the slaughter, and that is why we should answer that call.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** I will give way to the hon. Gentleman.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Mr Speaker:** Order. We need to be clear who is intervening, I think it is the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr Havard).

**Mr Dai Havard** (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney) (Lab): The legal advice summary, which I have only just seen—we have not seen the whole thing—clearly excludes “a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory”

but also says that the resolution

“further authorises Member States to use all measures...to carry out inspections aimed at the enforcement of the arms embargo”.

Does that mean that on the one hand we cannot have troops on the ground, but on the other hand we might allow people to make inspections or go there for search and rescue purposes? Is there clarity about having no troops on the ground in Libya?

**The Prime Minister:** The point about the legal advice, which refers back to the UN Security Council resolution, is that it makes provision to put in place an arms embargo and to inspect ships going to Libya. A number of countries have volunteered their forces specifically for that purpose, which we should welcome.

That brings me to my next point. Some accept that Britain should play a part but worry that we might shoulder an unfair burden. I want to assure the House that that is not the case. Let me explain how the coalition will work. It is operating under US command, with the intention that that will transfer to NATO, which will mean that all the NATO allies—I read out a list earlier of who wants to contribute—will be able to contribute. Clearly, the mission would benefit from that and from using NATO’s tried-and-tested command and control machinery.

With the fourth largest defence budget in the world, Britain clearly has the means to play its part, but given that British troops are engaged in Afghanistan, that part must be in line with our resources, and so it will be. No resources have been diverted from the Afghanistan campaign to carry out the enforcement of resolution 1973, and I have the assurance of the Chief of the Defence Staff that both operations can take place concurrently. Crucially, the impact of what we are doing in Libya will not affect our mission in Afghanistan.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** I will give way to my parliamentary neighbour.

**Geoffrey Clifton-Brown** (The Cotswolds) (Con): May I congratulate the Prime Minister on obtaining the UN resolution to give us the legal cover that we require? The problem with Iraq was that there was no proper post-war reconstruction plan. Is he giving thought to what a post-war reconstruction plan ought to be, and will he encourage members of the Arab League to play their full part in that once the military phase is over?

**The Prime Minister:** My hon. Friend makes an extremely important point about humanitarian planning for afterwards, which I will come to later in my speech. My right hon. Friend the International Development Secretary is leading cross-Government work to ensure that that plan is robust. However, let me be frank about one difficulty that we have. Because we are saying that there will not be an invasion and that there will not be an occupation, we must have a different sort of plan—a much more international plan with a greater role for the UN, the EU and aid agencies, all of which we will support.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** I shall give way to the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr Skinner), but then make some progress.

**Mr Skinner:** It is easy to get into a war; it is much harder to end it. When will all those nations that are taking part know the circumstances for pulling out and ending the war? We know now that this is not about regime change—the Prime Minister has already said that—and we hope that there will be no forces on the ground, but what circumstances will enable those nations to say, “It’s all over”?

**The Prime Minister:** For once, I agree with the hon. Gentleman—I entirely agree with the first part of his question, because it is easier to start these things than to finish them, and we should always be cautious and careful before we go ahead. However, as I have tried to lay out for the House today, not acting would have led to a completely unacceptable situation. The answer to his question is that this will be over and finished when we have complied with and implemented the UN Security Council resolution. That is about protecting civilians and protecting life, and giving the Libyan people a chance to determine their own future. This is different from Iraq. This is not going into a country and knocking over its Government, and then owning and being responsible for everything that happens subsequently. This is about protecting people and giving the Libyan people a chance to shape their own destiny.

**Mr David Lammy** (Tottenham) (Lab): May I take the Prime Minister back to what he said about NATO? Is he confirming that when the US gives up command of this phase of the operation, he expects the UK, under the auspices of NATO, to take over?

**The Prime Minister:** No, I am not saying that. I am saying that at the moment there is basically American command and control, under which the French, British and others are operating. Over time, we want that to transition to NATO command and control, using NATO machinery, so that all the partners in NATO and all those who want to contribute from the outside can be properly co-ordinated. That might easily still be an American, French or British individual, but it would be under the auspices of NATO. It is tried and tested, it works, it co-ordinates and brings people together, it has operated no-fly zones before, and it is the right way of doing things. The international community is agreed on that.

Of course, there are those who ask whether the risks will outweigh the benefits. Clearly, as I have said, there is no action without risk, but alongside the risks of action, we have to weigh the risks of inaction: the sight of the international community condemning violence but doing nothing to stop it; the effect across north Africa and the middle east if Gaddafi succeeds in brutalising his own people; the humanitarian consequences for the city of Benghazi and beyond; and the consequences for Europe of a failed pariah state on its southern border. In my view, all these risks are simply too great to ignore. So yes there are dangers and difficulties, and there will always be unforeseen consequences, but it is better to take this action than to risk the consequences of inaction, which would be the slaughter of civilians and this dictator completely flouting the United Nations and its will.

**Mark Pritchard** (The Wrekin) (Con): In addition to brutalising his own people, is it not the case that the Gaddafi regime is daily harassing our brave British journalists, making it increasingly difficult for them to report from places such as Tripoli?

**The Prime Minister:** I am sure that everyone in the House would want to pay tribute to the risks taken by, and the bravery of, journalists, including British journalists. Everyone should remember that people reporting from Tripoli are doing so under very strong reporting restrictions. I hope that not only everyone in the House, but everyone in the country and broadcasting organisations will remember to repeat regularly the sort of restrictions the reporters are operating under.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** I will make some progress, and take a few more interventions before the end.

There are also some who say we are just stirring up trouble for the future. These people say that Arabs and Muslims cannot do democracy and that more freedoms in these countries will simply lead to extremism and intolerance. To me, this argument is not only deeply condescending and prejudiced, but is utterly wrong and has been shown to be wrong. Let us remember that people made this argument about Egypt only a short month ago. They said that the departure of Mubarak would lead to a dangerous vacuum in which extremists would flourish. Of course, I deplore—and the House

will deplore—the attack on Mohamed el-Baradei at a polling station, but the overwhelming picture from Saturday was one of millions of people queuing up patiently and proudly to exercise their democratic rights, many for the first time. As democrats in this House, we should applaud what they did.

Inevitably, information about the Libyan opposition is not complete, but the evidence suggests that it consists predominantly of ordinary Libyans from all walks of life who want freedom, justice and democracy—the things we take for granted.

**Daniel Kawczynski** (Shrewsbury and Atcham) (Con): Should the Gaddafi regime finally be toppled, will the Prime Minister assure us that his Government will do everything possible to help the Metropolitan police to conclude their investigations into who killed PC Yvonne Fletcher?

**The Prime Minister:** My hon. Friend, who has considerable expertise and has taken a great interest in this matter, makes an important point, which is that if the Libyan people choose a new future for themselves and their country, there might be huge opportunities to find out not only what really happened to PC Yvonne Fletcher, but about the support for Northern Irish terrorism that did so much damage in our country.

People will be rightly concerned that we should have a clear plan for what happens next in Libya—both in humanitarian terms, and also politically and diplomatically—following the successful conclusion of the no-fly zone. On humanitarian issues, the UK was one of the first to respond to the humanitarian needs arising from Gaddafi's actions. We provided tents and blankets from our stores in Dubai for the thousands of migrant workers crossing the borders to escape the regime's violence. We were the first country to provide flights to enable 12,000 migrant workers to return to their homes. This timely assistance prevented what was a logistical emergency from becoming a humanitarian crisis. The Development Secretary announced last week that we will now support the International Committee of the Red Cross to deploy three medical teams. They will help to provide both medical assistance to the 3,000 people affected by the fighting, and food and essential items for 100,000 of the most vulnerable. From the beginning, we urged the United Nations to lead international pressure for unfettered humanitarian access within Libya. We are now planning for new humanitarian needs that may emerge as a result of the conflict.

**Graham Stringer** (Blackley and Broughton) (Lab): I am sceptical about this country's involvement in air raids on another Muslim and Arab country. However, I accept that there has been a huge success in saving lives in Benghazi. It would make me feel more relaxed about the resolution this evening if the Prime Minister gave a commitment to report back regularly to the House and to ask for further authority to continue the operations.

**The Prime Minister:** Of course there should be regular statements in this House. I gave a statement on Friday and we are having a debate on a substantive motion today. There should be regular updates on the humanitarian situation, what our defence forces are doing, and political and diplomatic activity. I do not believe that right now

there is a need to go back to the UN for further permission, because the resolution could not be clearer. It combined three different elements: an immediate ceasefire, action for a no-fly zone, and action to protect civilians and stop the loss of life. It was an incredibly complete UN resolution, and that is why we should give it such strong support.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** Let me say one more word about the issue of planning for the humanitarian situation. It is important that in supporting the implementation of the resolution, the international system should plan now for stabilising the peace that we hope will follow. That could include rapidly restoring damaged infrastructure, keeping important services such as health and education running, reforming the security sector, and ensuring an open and transparent political process to elections. All that will take time and require an internationally led effort, but Britain is committed to playing its part.

**Robert Halfon** (Harlow) (Con): I thank my right hon. Friend for giving way and for the leadership that he has shown on this issue. Given what has been said about Kurdistan this afternoon and the reports that Gaddafi has mustard gas, what action will the allies take to stop him if he starts using it against his own people?

**The Prime Minister:** My hon. Friend raises an issue of real concern, on which we keep a very sharp focus. After Gaddafi supposedly came in from the cold, there was an agreement for him to give up weapons of mass destruction. He destroyed some of them, but he still has the supplies to which my hon. Friend refers. We have to make sure that there is absolutely no sign of their being used.

In terms of what happens politically and diplomatically, what is crucial is that the future of Libya is for the people of Libya to decide, aided by the international community. The Libyan opposition has made it clear that it does not want to see a division of its country, and neither do we. It has also expressed a clear and overwhelming wish for Gaddafi to go, and we agree with that too, but the UN resolution is limited in its scope. It explicitly does not provide legal authority for action to bring about Gaddafi's removal from power by military means. As I have said, we will help to fulfil the UN Security Council's resolution. It is for the Libyan people to determine their Government and their destiny, but our view is clear: there is no decent future for Libya with Colonel Gaddafi remaining in power.

**Mr Angus Brendan MacNeil** (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): On a wider point, it is a change in philosophy on the part of the UN and the international community not to tolerate those involved in the internal repression of their own populations. What is going to happen to leaders in other countries round the world who are indulging in Gaddafi-style behaviour?

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Gentleman makes an important point, and that is why UN Security Council resolution 1973 could be something of a breakthrough. The world has come together and said that what this dictator is doing to his people—within his own country, but totally in breach of international law and all sign of

human rights—is wrong and can be stopped by all necessary means. In the act of stopping him, let us hope that that sends a message to dictators the world over.

**Mr Sam Gyimah** (East Surrey) (Con): With a no-fly zone in operation, a tyrant as brutal and determined as Gaddafi could decide to move the conflict into urban areas. In that scenario, does the resolution as it stands give us the scope to act to stop any humanitarian disaster that could occur?

**The Prime Minister:** The resolution gives us the scope to act, but clearly we have to act at all times to minimise civilian casualties. We must bear that in mind very carefully when we think about the military operations that we are engaged in.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**The Prime Minister:** I will not give way any more.

Gaddafi has had every conceivable opportunity to stop massacring his own people. The time for red lines, threats and last chances is over. Tough action is needed now to ensure that people in Libya can lead their lives without fear and with access to the basic needs of life. That is what the Security Council requires and that is what we are seeking to deliver. There are rightly those who ask how and where this will end. Of course, there are difficulties and dangers ahead, but already we know, beyond any doubt, that we have succeeded in chasing Gaddafi's planes out of the sky. We have saved the lives of many Libyans and we have helped to prevent the destruction of a great and historic city.

Of course, no one can be certain of what the future can hold, but as we stand here today, the people of Libya have a much better chance of determining their destiny and, in taking this action, we should be proud that we are not only acting in British interests but being true to our values as a nation. I commend the motion to the House.

4.16 pm

**Edward Miliband** (Doncaster North) (Lab): I rise to support the Government motion. Let me first welcome the fact that the Government have decided to have a substantive motion and, indeed, vote in this House, because it is right that the decision to commit our forces is made in this House. Like my hon. Friend the Member for Blackley and Broughton (Graham Stringer), I urge the Prime Minister and his colleagues to ensure that the House has regular chances to debate this issue in the days and weeks ahead.

I want to pay tribute to our brave armed forces who are engaging in military action. I am sure that the thoughts of the whole House are with them. The issue at the heart of today's debate is this: on the one hand, we have the case for action outside our borders when we see people facing repression and butchery from others; yet, on the other hand, we have the caution that we must always show in the exercise of western and, indeed, British power for reasons of basic principle, imperial history and the consequences that might follow.

Today, I want to set out to this House the case why I believe that we should support the motion today and support our armed forces. I do so because I believe that the three key criteria for action exist: it is a just cause with a feasible mission and it has international support.

[Edward Miliband]

Secondly, I want to address the central issue, not least among those raised by my hon. Friends, of how we reconcile the decision to intervene in Libya and the hard cases elsewhere. Thirdly, I want to raise a number of issues that will require clarity if this mission is to succeed.

Today and in the coming weeks, our duty as the official Opposition is to support the UN resolution and at the same time to scrutinise the decisions that are made to maximise the chances of success of this mission. Let me start with the case for action. In the days and weeks ahead—the Prime Minister said this in his speech—we must always remember the background to the debate. We have seen with our own eyes what the Libyan regime is capable of. We have seen guns being turned on unarmed demonstrators, we have watched warplanes and artillery being used against civilian population centres, we have learned of militia violence and disappearances in areas held by Gaddafi's forces and we have heard the leader of the Libyan opposition say:

“We appeal to the international community, to all the free world, to stop this tyranny from exterminating civilians.”

And we have heard Colonel Gaddafi gloat that he would treat the people of Benghazi, a city of 700,000 people—the size of Leeds—with “no mercy or compassion”.

In 1936, a Spanish politician came to Britain to plead for support in the face of General Franco's violent fascism. He said:

“We are fighting with sticks and knives against tanks and aircraft and guns, and it revolts the conscience of the world that that should be true.”

As we saw the defenceless people of Libya attacked by their own Government, it would equally revolt the conscience of the world to know that we could have done something to help them yet chose not to.

**Mr Cash:** In the context of the important issue of arming those who are resisting Gaddafi, does the right hon. Gentleman agree that every effort must be made, within the terms of the resolution, to apply to the sanctions committee of the United Nations to enable paragraph 9(c) of resolution 1970 to be applied in such a way as to ensure that people in Benghazi and elsewhere are properly supplied with arms so that they can defend themselves? As the right hon. Gentleman has said, there is a parallel with what happened in 1936.

**Edward Miliband:** As the Prime Minister said when we discussed the issue a week or so ago, we need to be cautious and ensure that we always comply with the terms of the UN mandate, but as long as we stick to the UN mandate, that is the right thing to do.

**Robert Halfon:** Does the right hon. Gentleman not agree that, in part, we are where we are because of the actions of the last Government in appeasing and collaborating with Gaddafi, in selling him weapons, and in building business and academic links?

**Edward Miliband:** To be fair to the Prime Minister, he conducted this debate in the right terms. Let me say to the hon. Gentleman that today is not the day for party-political point-scoring. Let me say this also: in

2005, when Tony Blair made the decision that he made, voices were not raised against him, because there was no sign of a popular uprising in Libya. What people worried about was Colonel Gaddafi—and the Prime Minister eloquently described the problems and dangers posed by him—possessing nuclear weapons and threatening the rest of the world, and I think that Tony Blair was right to try to bring him into the international community.

A debate is often conducted about rights to intervene, but this debate is about not rights but responsibilities. The decade-long debate about the “responsibility to protect” speaks precisely to this question. As the House will know, the responsibility to protect was adopted in 2005 at the world summit and was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Security Council, and it should help to frame our debate today. It identifies a “responsibility to react” to “situations of compelling human need with appropriate measures...and in extreme cases military intervention”.

It identifies four cautionary tests which will help us in this debate as we consider intervention:

“right intention, last resort, proportional means and reasonable prospects”.

**Mr John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con):** The Leader of the Opposition is making a very thoughtful case. Can he tell us how much intervention he thinks it reasonable for the west to make in what is really a civil war in which the rebel side is experiencing considerable difficulties?

**Edward Miliband:** I have great respect for the right hon. Gentleman, but I do not agree that this is a civil war. There was a popular uprising against the Gaddafi regime that Gaddafi is cruelly and brutally trying to suppress. I think that we should bear that in mind as we implement the terms of the resolution.

The responsibility to protect identifies those four tests that we should apply, and I think that they will inform the debate today. The first is the test of “right intentions”. Our intentions are right: we are acting to protect the Libyan people, to save lives, and to prevent the Gaddafi regime from committing serious crimes against humanity. We do not seek commercial gain or geopolitical advantage, and we are not intending to occupy Libya or seize her natural resources. This is not a power play or an attempt to install a new Government by force. Colonel Gaddafi is the one who is trying to impose his political will with violence, and our role is to stop him.

This is the “last resort” to protect the Libyan people. Sanctions and other measures have been tried, including in resolution 1970, and they have not stopped Colonel Gaddafi. As the Prime Minister said, his ceasefire was simply a lie paraded to the international community before his forces once again attacked Benghazi. As for proportionality, the UN resolution makes it clear that the means must be proportional, and we should always follow that in what we do.

**Jeremy Corbyn:** My right hon. Friend will be aware that, although what he is saying is of great importance, there are also lessons to be learned. Does he not think that it is time for a wholesale review of our policy of military co-operation and arms sales in the case of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, and of what is happening in

Yemen and further afield in the Congo, the Ivory Coast and other places? At what point is he prepared to say that we should be involved or not involved, and at what point is he prepared to say that we will seriously scale down our arms export industry, which actually leads to much of the oppression in the first place?

**Edward Miliband:** Let me deal with those two very serious points. On the first point about arms exports, we have rightly said that there should be a comprehensive review of the implementation and nature of our policy on arms sales. When we see what has happened in parts of north Africa, we are worried about the use of British arms for internal repression. If my hon. Friend will allow me, I will come to his second point about double standards later in my speech. The Prime Minister has also talked about that very important issue.

**Mr Baron:** Compliance with the UN resolution might not equal an endgame. What does the right hon. Gentleman propose that we should do about the no-fly zone if we manage to comply with the resolution but at the same time Gaddafi is left in place because there is a stalemate on the ground?

**Edward Miliband:** I am going to talk about that in my speech as well, but I want to respond directly to the hon. Gentleman. We do not always know how things will end, so the question is whether, when we are faced with the choices we face, it is better to take action or to stand aside. This is a really important point and we will be scrutinising the Government and the Prime Minister in coming weeks, looking for a clear strategy. I have looked back at the debate about Kosovo in 1999, which was led by Robin Cook, and people were making the same arguments then. The truth is that we did not know where things were going to end, but by taking action in Kosovo we saved the lives of tens of thousands of people.

**Nadhim Zahawi (Stratford-on-Avon) (Con):** Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that one way in which we can help the Libyan people and the rebellion against Gaddafi is by recognising them as the legitimate Government. Would he support the Government in taking that position if it were put forward?

**Edward Miliband:** This is a very tricky issue, but let me respond to the hon. Gentleman. In a joint statement with President Sarkozy, the Prime Minister recognised the transitional council as one of the reasonable interlocutors—I think that was the phrase. The reason for that is that we need to scrutinise very carefully who the best interlocutors are and who the natural alternative to Colonel Gaddafi is. There is a history to this and jumping too early in that regard has its own dangers. I think it is right to recognise the transitional council as a reasonable interlocutor.

**Sir Menzies Campbell (North East Fife) (LD):** The right hon. Gentleman's reference to Kosovo is entirely apt because it was out of the frustrations of Kosovo, for which no United Nations Security Council resolution could be obtained, that the doctrine of the duty to protect arose. Its genesis was in a speech made by Tony Blair in Chicago in 1999. In this particular case, are we not on much stronger ground because the Security Council has said expressly in the provision that "all necessary measures" may be taken?

**Edward Miliband:** The right hon. and learned Gentleman has huge expertise in this area and he makes an important point. This is a very important moment for multilateralism because a UN resolution has been passed without opposition at the Security Council. This is a real test of the international community and its ability to carry through not just our intentions but the intentions and values of the United Nations. He is completely right about that.

I was talking about proportionality, which is the third test of the responsibility to protect. It is right to say that our targeting strategy and that of our allies—this is something that the Prime Minister and I have discussed—must be restricted to military targets that pose a threat to civilians. We should always exercise the utmost care in the nature of our targeting because we know how important that is both as a matter of principle and for the conduct of our campaign.

On the fourth criterion of reasonable success, there is every reason to believe, as we have already shown in the past few days, that we can stop the slaughter on which Colonel Gaddafi appears to have embarked.

**Mr Matthew Offord (Hendon) (Con):** The right hon. Gentleman talks about the important matter of targeting by the allies in the attacks against the regime, but is he aware that Colonel Gaddafi is putting civilians in the places where such targets are, thereby making the situation for the coalition Government ever more difficult?

**Edward Miliband:** The hon. Gentleman speaks eloquently to the evil of Colonel Gaddafi in doing that. The care taken by our armed forces, which the Prime Minister has talked about, is incredibly important because they are facing incredibly difficult decisions.

The responsibility to protect recognises that there need to be tests applied to intervention, but also, crucially, that interventions require international authority and consent. In this case, the Arab League endorses a no-fly zone, and the UN Security Council expressed a clear will, with the support of 10 countries. It is worth drawing attention to which countries those are, because they include Lebanon, Colombia and South Africa. A broad spectrum of countries from across the world gave their support to the UN resolution.

There is international consent, a just cause and a feasible mission, but we also need—this is very important—to maintain public support here at home, because this House is not just contemplating expressing its support for an international resolution; it is discussing its position on the use of armed forces. We are a generous and compassionate people, but there will no doubt be some people in the country—indeed, we have heard it in parts of this House—wondering whether it really needs to be us, now, at this time. It is a valid and important question, but in the end, as well as there being the geopolitical questions that the Prime Minister raised, we have to make a judgment about our role in the world and our duty to others. Where there is just cause, where feasible action can be taken, and where there is international consent, are we really saying that we should be a country that stands by and does nothing? In my view, that would be a dereliction of our duty, our history, and our values. Let us not forget that those who have risen up against Colonel Gaddafi are part of a

[*Edward Miliband*]

wider movement for reform and democracy that we are seeing across north Africa. We cannot and should not abandon them.

**Dr Julian Lewis** (New Forest East) (Con): I have supported humanitarian interventions in the past, and I am minded to do the same in this case, but the reason why we are expected to intervene, rather than others, is that we are stronger than others. The right hon. Gentleman knows that there has been a huge hole in the defence budget. Does he know from his conversations with the Government whether the funding for what could be a very long-term and expensive operation will be added to the core defence budget, or taken from it?

**Edward Miliband:** I have been given those reassurances by the Prime Minister. Today, as the House debates this question, I want to concentrate on the important issues before us, including the capability of our armed forces, but I have been given that reassurance by the Government.

**Keith Vaz** (Leicester East) (Lab): It is obviously right that we should focus on Libya today, but as my right hon. Friend knows, the situation in Yemen is deteriorating every hour. Is there not a duty on the Arab League and coalition partners to try to work to prevent further conflict in Yemen by promoting the need for dialogue?

**Edward Miliband:** I know that my right hon. Friend has been one of the leading voices on the question of Yemen, and he is absolutely right about that; I am coming to that now in my speech. I have set out the case for support for the resolution and our participation, but—this is the second part of my remarks—that will not be enough for everyone in the House, including my hon. Friend the Member for Islington North (Jeremy Corbyn).

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**Edward Miliband:** I will make a bit more progress. Many will ask one additional question: why are we intervening in Libya, but not in other countries around the world? It is a valid question, and it is right to say that there are many other hard cases. What is happening in Yemen is deeply troubling, and what is happening in Bahrain is equally troubling. Historically, the cases of Burma, Rwanda and other countries live on in our conscience, and yet here I do agree with the Prime Minister: the argument that because we cannot do everything we cannot do anything is a bad argument. In the world that we live in, the action that we take depends on a combination of principle and pragmatism—what is right, and what can be done. That is not perfect, but an imperfect world order is not an excuse for inaction.

**Graham Stringer** (Blackley and Broughton) (Lab): My right hon. Friend and the Prime Minister have both enunciated what is really the Blair doctrine “If you can’t do everything, it doesn’t stop you doing something.” I would be more supportive of that principle if there were clear criteria laid down in advance about when we should do something, rather than it looking as though it were an ad hoc decision on every occasion.

**Edward Miliband:** I am not sure that the Prime Minister and I are competing to call it the Blair doctrine. On the substantive question that my hon. Friend the Member for Blackley and Broughton raises, he is right to say that we need criteria. I think that the responsibility to protect is of great assistance to us there. I think that it has been overlooked at times during our debates. It is endorsed by the UN Security Council and General Assembly.

**Mr Angus Brendan MacNeil** (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that the passing of UN Security Council resolution 1973 represents a watershed moment, as the Prime Minister seemed to intimate, because of the way in which the international community now looks at the behaviour of Governments repressing the citizens of their own countries?

**Edward Miliband:** I think it is too early to declare it a watershed moment, but the hon. Gentleman is right to suggest that those who desire a world order based on principle as well as on power should support the resolution and the motion before us today. Whatever the flaws of multilateralism and the UN—and there are many—they are our best hope for the kind of world order based on principle that we want to see. If we can demonstrate that the international community has come together in the case of Libya to prevent Colonel Gaddafi’s action against his people, this will mark an important moment. We will have acted on the basis of a firm legal base.

**Mr David Winnick** (Walsall North) (Lab): That Gaddafi is a murderous tyrant has never been in doubt from the time he seized power in 1969. Like all hon. Members, however, I am concerned about the situation in many other countries, and the doubt in my mind stems from the fact that intervention by western powers is so selective. Last week, 45 people were slaughtered in Yemen, yet no one has suggested that we should intervene there. In Bahrain, there has been armed intervention by Saudi Arabia, but our Government have not suggested that we should intervene. It seems that, to a large extent, we intervene only in countries whose regimes are considered anti-west.

**Edward Miliband:** It is hard to calibrate the different regimes, but I believe that Colonel Gaddafi’s threat to hundreds of thousands of people in Benghazi and elsewhere puts him in a particular category. I also say to my hon. Friend that this is not a perfect world and, in the end, we have to make a judgment about what can be done. This is something that I think can be done.

**Angus Robertson:** Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

**Edward Miliband:** I want to make some more progress. I will try to give way before the end of my speech, but I am conscious that many people want to speak in the debate.

If we succeed, we will have sent a signal to many other regimes that, in the face of democratic protest and the demand for change, it is simply not acceptable to turn to methods of repression and violence. And yet, if this pragmatic case for action in Libya is to stand and win support, it is all the more important that we speak out firmly, without fear or favour, against repression wherever we find it. In Bahrain, where the regime has

apparently fired tear gas into a hospital, and in Yemen, where the murder of innocent civilians has taken place, we must be on the side of people and against the forces of repression wherever we find them.

We should address the longer-running issues affecting security and human rights in the middle east, particularly Israel-Palestine, where we must show that we can advance the peace process, and we must put pressure on our American allies to do so. We cannot be silent on these issues, either as a country or as an international community.

**Andrew George:** The hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr Skinner) and other hon. Members have mentioned the concept of a successful outcome. How would the right hon. Gentleman define success in this context, and how will we know when we have reached the point at which it is appropriate to implement an exit strategy?

**Edward Miliband:** That is a question that the Government will no doubt be seeking to answer in the days and weeks ahead. It is hard to define success at this point, except to say that we have a clear UN resolution before us on the protection of the Libyan people, and that we must seek to implement that resolution. That is the best criterion for success that we have, for now. No doubt the Government will want to build on that as the campaign unfolds.

**Fiona Mactaggart** (Slough) (Lab): My right hon. Friend is right to say that it will be hard to know when we should end this action. Will he therefore press the Government to ensure that the House is given constant opportunities to review the situation, so that we can be assured that mission creep is not taking place and that we are not going beyond what is necessary, and so that we can make the right decision at the appropriate time?

**Edward Miliband:** I think that my hon. Friend probably speaks for Members across the House, and Ministers will have heard what she and my hon. Friend the Member for Blackley and Broughton said. It is important that the House is not just kept up to date but has the chance to debate these issues. I see the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary nodding.

**Bill Esterson** (Sefton Central) (Lab): The point about regular scrutiny of what happens is incredibly important, not just to hon. Members but for the wider public. Talking to constituents over the weekend, I discovered that they had great concerns about our involvement, and about the length and level of that involvement. A great deal is needed from the Government to reassure the public about that involvement, not just now but over the coming weeks and months.

**Edward Miliband:** My hon. Friend probably speaks for many hon. Members from all parts of the House who went back to talk to their constituents. There is obvious concern, for a range of reasons, about our engaging in another military action, and it is a completely understandable concern.

That takes me on to the third part of my speech, which is about not just defining the mission but ensuring that there is clarity as it moves forward. There are a number of questions and challenges that the Government must seek to answer in the days ahead. In particular, there are four areas that require clarity: clarity about the forces and command structure involved; clarity

about the mandate; clarity about our role in it and the limits; and most difficult of all, clarity about the end game.

On broad participation in the mission and the forces involved, I want to impress again on the Prime Minister, as I did on Friday—and he himself noted this—the central importance of Arab participation, not just in the maintenance of the no-fly zone but in all the diplomatic work that is essential to keep the coalition together. I welcome what he said about a regular coalition meeting, because that is important. The Arab League's decision to support a no-fly zone was central to turning the tide of opinion, which is why there was concern in various quarters about the apparent comments of Amr Moussa, the secretary-general of the Arab League yesterday. He has since sought to correct the interpretation of those comments. I urge the Prime Minister—I am sure that this is being done, but it is important—to develop the fullest and most comprehensive diplomatic strategy to maintain the support of those countries and, indeed, the broadest possible coalition. That means not just keeping the countries in the region informed of our mission but ensuring that they are consulted on it.

We must be clear about the mandate of the UN resolution. We all want to see Colonel Gaddafi gone, and the Prime minister repeated that today. None of us, however, should be under any illusions or in any doubt about the terms of what was agreed. The resolution is about our responsibility to protect the Libyan people—no more, no less.

**Rehman Chishti** (Gillingham and Rainham) (Con): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

**Edward Miliband:** Not for the moment.

I say to the Government—and the Prime Minister will know this—it is incredibly important that the international community observe the terms of the resolution in its actions and in what it says. I shall not rehearse the arguments about past conflicts, but we all know that ambiguity about the case for intervention is often one of the biggest problems that a mission faces. The House should be clear about the degree of difficulty of what we are attempting in securing a coalition beyond western powers to support intervention in another north African state, so we cannot afford mission creep, and that includes in our public pronouncements.

**Clive Efford** (Eltham) (Lab): The point that my right hon. Friend is making is important. Gaddafi could prove to be very difficult indeed to remove, so we cannot impose limitations on the length of time that the action and the enforcement of the resolution will take. Civilians in Tripoli are as valuable as civilians in Benghazi, so the actions that we take will be measured by the people who support them, and will be a judgment on whether what we are doing is in line with the international agreement. Does my right hon. Friend agree that that is an important point we must always bear in mind?

**Edward Miliband:** My hon. Friend makes an important point. It is very important in all our public pronouncements that we are careful about what we say. As the Prime Minister said, in principle it must be for the Libyan people to determine the shape of their future.

Military action by the coalition can be accompanied by a wide range of non-military measures to continue

[Edward Miliband]

the pressure on the Libyan regime. Security Council resolution 1973, as well as resolution 1970, sets out all the measures that can be taken, including cutting off access to money, trade, weapons and international legitimacy for Colonel Gaddafi. And we need to remind Libyan leaders and commanders that they will be brought to justice for any crimes they commit against their people.

**Mr Graham Stuart** (Beverley and Holderness) (Con): I am grateful to the Leader of the Opposition who, like the Prime Minister, is giving a powerful and thoughtful speech. He spoke about the duty to protect, and looking to liberal interventionism as a possible breakthrough watershed in global politics. Does he believe that it requires UN resolutions in future for countries, including our own, to be involved in implementing a duty to protect?

**Edward Miliband:** In the end, we have to look at that on a case-by-case basis, and the responsibility to protect looks at that issue, but clearly the hon. Gentleman is right to say that international consent is incredibly important for any mission that we undertake.

**Joan Ruddock:** On the point about our public pronouncements, my right hon. Friend will have seen headlines such as “Blown to Brits” and “mad dog” and references to Gaddafi’s head on a spike. Does he agree that in this very serious circumstance, such language is completely inappropriate when our military forces and the people of Libya are in such grave danger?

**Edward Miliband:** My right hon. Friend is entirely right that we must exercise extreme care in all our public pronouncements. I will leave it at that.

The third point on which we must be clear is the role and limit of our forces. The resolution is clear that this is not about an army of occupation. The Prime Minister said on Friday that it was not about boots on the ground. There are obviously operational and strategic constraints on what the Prime Minister can say about our intentions, but we need as much clarity as possible, including to answer the issues of public consent and public opinion that were raised.

Finally, the Prime Minister is, I am sure, aware about people’s worries that this will end up being a mandate for stalemate. The argument that we do not know the precise sequence of events that will unfold is not a good argument for inaction. As I said earlier, in the Kosovo debate in 1999 Robin Cook was confronted by exactly the same arguments. Today it is hard to find anybody who thinks that action was wrong. We were right to proceed, but equally, the Government and their allies cannot be absolved of the responsibility of planning a clear strategy for what might happen under different eventualities and what our approach might be.

**Rehman Chishti** *rose*—

**Edward Miliband:** I shall finish, as others want to come in.

It is essential that both we and multilateral institutions prepare for the peace, whatever form that might take. Indeed, alongside the responsibility to protect is the

responsibility to rebuild. I am sure that is something that the Government will be urgently undertaking. It is imperative that they do.

Let me end on this point. Today’s debate is conducted in the shadow of history of past conflicts. For me, it is conducted in the shadow of my family’s history as well: two Jewish parents whose lives were changed forever by the darkness of the holocaust, yet who found security in Britain. This is a story of the hope offered by Britain to my family, but many of my parents’ relatives were out of the reach of the international community and perished as a result. In my maiden speech in the House, I said that I would reflect

“the humanity and solidarity shown to my family more than 60 years ago”.—[*Official Report*, 23 May 2005; Vol. 434, c. 489.]

These are the kind of things we say in maiden speeches, but if they are to be meaningful, we need to follow them through in deeds, not just words. That is why I will be voting for the motion tonight, and why I urge the whole House to vote for it.

4.49 pm

**Sir Malcolm Rifkind** (Kensington) (Con): Nothing could demonstrate more eloquently the difference between the ill-conceived Iraq war and this operation than the overwhelming agreement on both sides of the Chamber, including the very eloquent and moving speech by the Leader of the Opposition. We now have a no-fly zone, the effect of which has been to neutralise the Libyan air force and take it out of the conflict. There is a naval blockade on Libya, which means that none of the coastal towns can be subject to bombardment. However, Gaddafi’s army remains, and it is legitimate to ask how the objectives of the Security Council resolution can be met, given those circumstances.

As the Prime Minister and others have pointed out, the Security Council resolution allowed us to do that because “all necessary measures” is a very well-known term. I was puzzled when Mr Amr Moussa expressed confusion on behalf of the Arab League about the action being taken, given that Lebanon, a member of the league, was a sponsor of the resolution. He must have known what it was intended to lead to, and I am relieved that he has moved on from that.

What we have seen already is the use of military power—the UN is entitled to do this—to attack artillery, heavy weapons and tanks on the roads of Libya where they might threaten civilian populations, but that is also relevant to the difficult question asked by one of my hon. Friends: what about Libyan regime forces that might have penetrated the towns and cities, where direct attack might be very dangerous? The need to protect civilians is of course paramount, but I believe that that matter will be addressed, because even the regime troops that have penetrated the towns and cities will need to have supplies of fuel and food renewed and other equipment provided, and that can now be blocked because any attempt to provide such reinforcements from outside the towns and cities can now be subject to the most precise destruction by coalition forces. That aspect of the resolution is very welcome.

There is another aspect to consider. Although we talk about a no-fly zone, the areas where civilian lives might be endangered or threatened have in fact become a

no-combat zone. It is worth considering that the Security Council resolution stipulates not only “all necessary measures”, but

“all necessary measures, notwithstanding paragraph 9 of resolution 1970”,

which is the resolution that imposed the arms embargo. That must mean that it is now appropriate under the terms of the resolution to supply the insurgents in Libya with military supplies in order to protect the civilian populations in which those insurgents are to be found. I hope that the Foreign Secretary or whoever will be winding up the debate will confirm that.

**Mr David Burrowes** (Enfield, Southgate) (Con): Will my right hon. and learned Friend give way?

**Sir Malcolm Rifkind:** We have such limited time that my hon. Friend will have to forgive me for not giving way.

The third factor, which is very significant, is the statement made by President Obama on behalf of all members of the coalition in which he said that this is not simply a question of a ceasefire, but that the Gaddafi authorities are required to withdraw from the various towns and cities they have been threatening. If they do not do so, under the cover of darkness or at some future moment we could face the same problem again. Those are the components available to the coalition and authorised by the United Nations, and I believe that that cannot be seriously disputed.

The second part of my remarks relates to the end game. What will happen if Gaddafi not only announces a ceasefire, but is forced to respect it, as is likely in the next few days? Does that mean it is all over? I do not think that that would be an appropriate interpretation of the resolution. Even if he introduces a ceasefire that seems genuine for a few days or a couple of weeks, we would have to be satisfied that he was not going to break it as soon as a no-fly zone resolution is withdrawn, because it would be incredibly difficult to have it reinserted again. We would have to be satisfied that the Gaddafi regime, if it remained in power, would continue to be sincere about a ceasefire resolution. It might mean that bombing by coalition forces or raids that damage or destroy elements of the Libyan army are not required, but we would certainly be required to maintain the resolution in force so that it could be re-enacted with all severity, even if it appears that a real ceasefire has been conceded in a few days' time.

What does that mean for the future of Libya? Well, we just do not know. We cannot pretend to predict what will happen, because so much could and ought to depend on the actions of the Libyans themselves. There might be an uprising in Tripoli, and there might need to be civilian protection in that area—in the capital city—as well. Gaddafi's own cronies—his own generals and Ministers—might defect as they were doing just a few weeks ago when they realised the game was up, but the most important consideration, if we are to get rid of the Gaddafi regime, is for the Libyan people to liberate themselves.

If air power has now been removed from the Gaddafi regime, if the blockade prevents use of the Libyan navy, and if it is possible, as I have suggested, in certain circumstances for military supplies to be made available to some of the insurgents for the protection of civilians,

then that provides an opportunity whereby, if the Libyan people themselves overwhelmingly, as they seem to, want to get rid of that noxious regime, they will have the military means, the support of the international community and the well wishes of the Arab League to do so. In that way, we can all be satisfied that a job will be truly well done.

4.55 pm

**Mr Bob Ainsworth** (Coventry North East) (Lab): I am a late and very reluctant supporter of these operations, and that is not because I have become a pacifist overnight, I can assure people. It is because it is relatively easy to support things on day one and relatively difficult to support them in month three, or in month nine; and this is a situation that cannot be foreseen. I remind people that, over the past couple of years, I have been somewhat concerned about the degree of enthusiasm in parts of this country—particularly in the media, but in parts of this House and in parts of the population as well—for yet another operation abroad, and I would have thought that that enthusiasm had been somewhat tempered by our recent experiences.

The right hon. and learned Member for Kensington (Sir Malcolm Rifkind) says how different it is now, in the House today, from when we voted for the Iraq war, but may I remind him that it is not? There was a huge majority in favour of the Iraq war, and his own party was massively in favour of it.

**Martin Horwood:** Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr Ainsworth** *indicated dissent.*

One hundred and seventy-nine British lives and a lot of other consequences later, we can all see that there were some grave difficulties with getting involved, but many of those people who can see them now could not see them on the day.

On Afghanistan, 360 British lives and many consequences—

**Martin Horwood:** Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr Ainsworth:** I am not going to give way.

On Afghanistan, 360 British lives and many consequences later, but not so many of us could see the consequences on day one as can see them now. I was, and I am unashamedly happy to have been, reluctant and late in my support for the resolution.

I would not give my support tonight for the resolution if it were not for the fact that the United Nations had given its support, and that there was a breadth of support, including from the Arab League, for this intervention. That was because people worked at the issue, and worked at it pretty hard, so I commend the general positioning of the President of the United States of America, who flatly refused to lead on it until he could see that others were prepared to come with him. I think that his position was in part responsible for the breadth of support that there is.

I want people to agree that it is enormously important that we maintain that breadth of support, and I want to know from the Government that there will be a real

[*Mr Ainsworth*]

attempt to maintain it. The Prime Minister has told us that, after American leadership of the military operations, the plans are to hand the mission over to NATO, and he knows that it will be necessary to get Turkey on board in order for NATO to be prepared to take over the command structures of the operation. That will be an enormously positive thing, and we must put all effort into seeing to it that Arab countries—and Turkey, a Muslim country, is a really important country in that regard—are prepared to take a lead. Qatar being prepared to provide hardware is of huge significance.

Are we serious about allowing others to be seen to lead? The Prime Minister told the House that he, President Obama and President Sarkozy had agreed that there were certain non-negotiable conditions. Why can we not have more people involved in deciding what those non-negotiable conditions are? Let us make sure that we do not do anything other than strain every muscle to see to it that the coalition that supports this action is maintained and continues to be as broad as it can.

May I say to the Prime Minister that even if it were sensible that Colonel Gaddafi be targeted as part of this operation, it cannot possibly be sensible for the British Defence Secretary to give the impression that that is okay? I hope that that kind of loose talk does not continue.

There are other issues that we ought to come to—such as the strategic defence review and our own ability to conduct these kinds of operations in future—that it is not appropriate for us to go into at this time. Certain issues need to be talked about as a consequence of this operation's having become necessary and our ability to proceed. In these circumstances, and in so many others, there are a lot more legitimate questions as a result of what has needed to be said in the past couple of weeks, and we will have to have those conversations in the months to come.

5.2 pm

**Sir Menzies Campbell** (North East Fife) (LD): On 18 March 2003, just over eight years ago, I voted against military action against Saddam Hussein. If I thought that the present action was illegitimate, I should have no hesitation in voting against it, because if we ask our young men and women to put their lives at risk, as we do, then the cause must be just, not only in strict legality terms but in political and even social terms.

I thought that the action against Saddam Hussein was illegal—it is a view that I have never had occasion to alter—but this action is necessary, legal and legitimate. It is necessary because of the systematic brutality of Colonel Gaddafi towards his own people, whose only crime is to want the opportunity to have a more democratic form of government and to enjoy freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. The lives of his people have been threatened in recent times by an immediate and chilling promise to go from house to house, from room to room, and to show no mercy. I invite the House to consider this: supposing we had allowed a slaughterhouse to take place in Benghazi, then what would have been the nature and the terms of the debate today?

I believe this action to be legal because of the express authority of a United Nations Security Council resolution, buttressed, as the Leader of the Opposition and I have

just agreed, by the evolving doctrine of international law—namely, the duty to protect, which, as I pointed out, had its genesis in a speech made by Tony Blair in 1999 in Chicago, whereupon it was developed and adopted by the United Nations. There is legitimacy, yes, because this action springs from a universal repugnance of the international community against the brutal excesses of the Gaddafi regime, and it has the regional support of the Arab League and the Gulf Co-operation Council.

Be in no doubt, however, that Mr Gaddafi will be a dangerous opponent. Deceit, deception and defiance have kept him in power for many, many years. Be in no doubt, too, that to maintain the international coalition will require both skill and sensitivity. Be in no doubt that keeping public confidence at home will require resolve, determination and transparency.

Questions are already being asked in this House, as has been demonstrated by this debate, in an exercise of democratic scrutiny. I pause to observe that in Gaddafi's Libya, no such opportunities are available. The right hon. Member for Coventry North East (Mr Ainsworth) spoke about targeting. Neither the resolution nor international law would justify the specific targeting—or, in truth, the assassination—of Colonel Gaddafi. However, if he were engaged in direct control of military operations contrary to the resolution, and the command and control centre in which he was to be found was the subject of attack, he would be a legitimate target.

Questions have been asked about what success will look like and what are the terms of disengagement. It is not possible to be specific, but the answers to those questions and to the continuing questions that are thrown up by this debate will be found in the framework of the resolution and in the conduct of Colonel Gaddafi. The onus is now on him.

5.6 pm

**Jim Dowd** (Lewisham West and Penge) (Lab): Obviously we are all constrained by time, but these are grave matters not only for the people of Libya, but for the people of this country and for our allies, and indeed for the future of the United Nations.

In framing my remarks, I am minded to use the words of a wily old operator of recent years in this House, the late, great Eric Forth, who once said that when there is unanimity between the Front Benches, it is almost axiomatic that they are wrong. I do not believe that to be the case, but I believe that it is incumbent on us to examine most carefully those who do not agree with the proposition that is advanced by the Government and supported by the Opposition. I will vote with the Government tonight, but like my right hon. Friend the Member for Coventry North East (Mr Ainsworth) and any Member of this House who has any sense, I have a number of reservations about the nature of the path on which we are embarking, where it will take us, how it will end—which a number of Members have spoken about—how we can measure success, and what it presages for future international engagement and involvement.

International experience of recent times may lead us to different conclusions. The actions in Kosovo, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan and the complete inaction, for various reasons, in Rwanda and Zimbabwe have all had consequences for those involved. Otto von Bismarck, a

politician perhaps not as great as Eric Forth, described politics as the art of the possible. In such issues, what matters is what is politically possible; I do not think that there is an abiding principle that unites them. It is a case of whether the ingredients necessary for international action and the will to undertake international action can be marshalled in the right proportion and with the requisite enthusiasm.

I can well understand those in this country who say, "This is nothing to do with us. Why, again, is it British armed forces—British servicemen and women—who are being placed in harm's way when there is no direct British interest?" The Prime Minister referred to that point earlier. I agree that the interests of this nation and our people are not always directly connected to such matters. Sometimes there are dotted-line connections that have to be borne in mind. There are those who are asking, "Why should we get involved?" Somebody on the television last week, I think a former editor of *The Sun*, was saying that all the lives in Libya were not worth one ounce of British blood. I think that is a particularly brutal and unpleasant view of the world—that may be a prerequisite for being editor of *The Sun*—but I do not think many civilised people in this country share it.

The need to consider people's reservations is important, though. We cannot offer all the guarantees that people would want, but as the Prime Minister pointed out and my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition echoed, the fact that we cannot do everything does not mean we should do nothing. To those who want consistency and say, "You've made mistakes in the past", the only answer is that that doctrine would lead us to believe that, for consistency's sake, we must carry on making mistakes in the future, and that we should never do anything right if we have never done it before. More particularly, it would be to say, "Be a pioneer, by all means, but never do anything for the first time." Sometimes there are cases in which we just have to.

The situation will be difficult, including in considering what the end will look like. There can be no end under Gaddafi, I am convinced of that. As the right hon. and learned Member for Kensington (Sir Malcolm Rifkind) said, if Gaddafi were to scale down his operations and the UN were to say that resolution 1973 had been discharged and should be dispensed with, as soon as we were gone he would take up the struggle against his own people again.

I believe that the only previous no-fly zone was authorised against Iraq, and of course it was supplanted only by the invasion and the war. I am not clear what the end of the current situation will be. More particularly, I have grave concerns about how we will judge whether events are going well or badly. I assume that in the first instance it will be about whether the Libyan people are no longer being harassed by Gaddafi, at least not overtly. For as long as that is the case, we can claim some success. We can already, because the assault on Benghazi that was clearly intended did not materialise in the way that Gaddafi and his henchmen envisaged.

We have a difficult choice. I will support the Government in their motion to support resolution 1973, because I believe that is less bad than the alternative of doing nothing. It is also consistent with the type of nation that I believe the majority of the British people make up. We are not the kind of people who pass by on the

other side of the road. Sometimes we have to put up or shut up. On this occasion I shall certainly now shut up, but I believe we should put up.

5.12 pm

**Mr Ben Wallace** (Wyre and Preston North) (Con): I fully understand why we intervened in Libya. Because of our actions today, on Friday and over the weekend, thousands of civilians are now safer than they were when they were within reach of Gaddafi's butchering hand. We should reflect on the comments of the right hon. and learned Member for North East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell) about Colonel Gaddafi's statements that he would go from room to room, showing no mercy.

I pay tribute to the Prime Minister and his team for getting the resolution at the UN with considerable swiftness, and to our armed service personnel, who right now are risking life and limb to ensure that the civilians of Libya are protected from a regime that shows no appetite to stop.

Because of the military might of the west, we have to realise that the question of what comes next may arise quicker than we think. We have already seen the accuracy of our armed forces and their ability to degrade a foreign power's military, which means that we need to start thinking through the problems ahead. It is not enough just to implement and follow the spirit of resolution 1973. We have to show the world that we are doing so, and how. I believe that we need to be a little more transparent in that. We need to talk, perhaps, about the targets that we are hitting, because if we do not, Mr Gaddafi and the enemies of reform in the middle east may well fill the vacuum with their propaganda. We have already seen that today to some extent. It is important that, with the winds of change blowing through the middle east, we are very clear about what our red lines are and what we stand for. If we are not, we may be open to the charge of giving false hope to other countries, or to charges of hypocrisy.

We should remember that authority in the middle east has changed. It has moved away from the Ministers of Arab countries to whom we used to look for reassurances and towards the Arab street. Some Arab Ministers are not in as strong a position as they would like. We should not forget that the Arab street is becoming ever more emboldened throughout the region.

We should be consistent in our criticism. Bahrain is currently setting out on a course of sectarian violence and oppression against its 70% Shi'a majority. Indeed, a lady who worked for me recently and left Bahrain for Dubai was asked at every checkpoint whether she was Shi'a or Sunni. The Shi'as were taken out of the car and beaten and the Sunnis were allowed to progress.

**Jason McCartney** (Colne Valley) (Con): I thank my hon. Friend for giving way and the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition for answering many of the concerns, worries and fears that my constituents expressed to me over the weekend. I say that as someone who played a small part in the no-fly zone over northern Iraq that lasted the best part of a decade. Does my hon. Friend agree that those fears, worries and uncertainties about the future are the legacy of Iraq?

**Mr Wallace:** I agree with my hon. Friend. It is all about trust, and we therefore need an element of transparency, and to demonstrate in the region how we

[Mr Wallace]

are implementing the UN resolution as a way of keeping that trust and that broad support for the resolution. To lose that would be a backward step.

We need to bear in mind some questions in the next few days and weeks as we progress towards implementing the resolution. We need to ask ourselves and think through—perhaps in private but often in public—what happens if the rebels counter-attack. In wars, atrocities happen on both sides. What is our position? The resolution is about protecting civilians—that is our first and foremost duty. We must ask ourselves whether we are in danger of being manipulated by some groups. Are they using “one infidel against another”? Do people want democracy or a totalitarian state? What role can we play as a broad coalition to ensure that they follow the path of liberal democracy and tolerance?

Do we want regime change? Is that perhaps the inevitable end of the Gaddafi regime? Is Gaddafi himself a target? Speaking personally, I believe that Gaddafi is the same brutal mass murderer that he always was. He is the man who blew up Pan Am in the 1980s, armed the IRA in Northern Ireland and is responsible for the death of Yvonne Fletcher. We cannot teach old dogs new tricks, and some questions need to be answered about how we have got so far down the road as to allow an emboldened Gaddafi to be in his current position.

In the 13 years of the previous Government, there were some concerns about how the Foreign Office did its job. From time to time, we did not think through the problems. Let us remember that the Foreign Office recommended more deals with Gaddafi, and that some of us spoke out against that in the previous Parliament and before. Some of us said that Mr Gaddafi could not be trusted. Now we discover that the weapons of mass destruction deal—the deal that we were told in 2003 was the reason for bringing him in from the cold—was not honoured by Colonel Gaddafi. He kept some of his mustard gas, and the Foreign Office failed to inform us of that. If Mr Gaddafi is to go, he will not be missed by the House, but we should also ask ourselves whether he is the point of the exercise.

We should not forget the role that the modern age—the internet—has played in the revolution as it blows through the middle east. In 2009 in Iran, Twitter and Facebook empowered people on the streets. The movement will go from Libya to other places. However, let us not forget that every country is unique in the middle east. Factors such as Islam, sects, tribes, tradition and history should affect not only what happens on the ground but how we respond to the threat and to people who may be suppressed. We need to learn the lessons of history and remember that what we do today will have a ripple effect.

I do not envy the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary in the next stage of the challenge. Our action in Libya will ripple through the middle east. It may point in the right direction and lead the middle east into a more democratic, liberal environment. If we get it wrong—and it is a great gamble—we could end up with a middle east in the hands of Islamic fundamentalists and a less, not more, tolerant middle east. I wish the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary well in all that they do to try to ensure the right direction. It is

time again to play the great game that we used to play so well rather than settle for the tactical, short-term policies of the past 13 years.

5.19 pm

**Mr Jack Straw (Blackburn) (Lab):** Two weeks ago, I re-watched “Hotel Rwanda”, the chilling film portrayal of the massacres of the defenceless civilians who were hacked to pieces by the so-called forces of law and order because they had the misfortune to belong to the wrong ethnic group. In July 2005, when the UK had the EU presidency, I went to Srebrenica in Bosnia for the 10th anniversary commemoration of the day in 1995 when 10,000 unarmed civilians were brutally murdered by the forces of law and order because, in that case, they had had the misfortune to belong to the wrong religious group.

In Rwanda and Bosnia, the UN solemnly considered what it should do. In both theatres, there were already blue-hatted UN troops on the ground, but they stood by as the massacres took place in front of them. Those troops were there as peacekeepers, but there was no peace to keep—rather, peace urgently needed to be made.

Doing nothing in the face of evil is as much a decision with consequences as doing something. This resolution is historically significant not just on its own terms, but because, as we heard from my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition, this is first occasion on which the Security Council has acted decisively upon the words relating to the responsibility to protect, which were agreed in the UN General Assembly in 2005, and in Security Council resolution 1674 2006.

**Martin Horwood:** I worked for Oxfam at the time of the Rwanda crisis and I strongly remember the awful situation in which UN forces found themselves. I hope the right hon. Gentleman was not implying fault on the part of the blue hats themselves, because their rules of engagement constrained them. The progress that the international community has made leading to the responsibility to protect is of course very positive.

**Mr Straw:** I was implying no such criticism of the blue hats. The responsibility for what did not happen in Rwanda and Bosnia rested and rests with the Security Council and the international community, which failed to take action in the face of what amounted to genocide.

I am grateful to the right hon. and learned Member for North East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell) for twice mentioning that former Prime Minister Tony Blair, in his groundbreaking speech in Chicago in 1999, laid the foundation for what six years later became the agreement on the responsibility to protect.

**Richard Graham (Gloucester) (Con):** Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that the efforts and success of our diplomats in the UN Security Council in ensuring the correct wording of resolution 1973 should be well recommended?

**Mr Straw:** The hon. Gentleman anticipates what I was going to say, but I am happy to put that on the record, not least because as a former member of the Foreign Office diplomatic service, he served me and my predecessors and successors very well.

We all know what the consequences of doing nothing about Colonel Gaddafi would have been: industrial scale slaughter. The medium and longer-term consequences of the military enforcement of Security Council resolution 1973 will be more benign, but we must recognise that the situation is fraught with uncertainties. The progress towards democracy in Libya and elsewhere in the middle east, which all hon. Members and the peoples of the region seek, will be inherently more difficult than eastern Europe's progress towards democracy after the Berlin wall came down 20 years ago.

The middle east is a tough region, and its democrats will face two primary threats: the autocrats such as Gaddafi, Saddam Hussein, or Presidents Mubarak and Ben Ali; and alternatively, those who wish to misuse and misinterpret the great and noble religion of Islam to establish backward-looking autocracies no less terrible than those of Gaddafi or Saddam Hussein.

Ultimately, the solution has to lie in the hands of the people of Libya and these other countries, but the international community—the United Kingdom included—can profoundly influence the final outcome by taking the right action or by inaction. I welcome what the Prime Minister said about the plans on which Her Majesty's Government are already working. However, I hope that they will also draw together and publish a strategy setting out the UK's vision for the region and the assistance they will provide, as part of an international programme, for an economic and political reconstruction of Libya carried out by the Libyans for the Libyans. I hope that that will include not just traditional overseas aid, but the work of an enhanced Westminster Foundation for Democracy, to nurture and sustain the growth of democratic institutions.

As we have heard, there are those who are reluctant or unwilling to support our action in Libya, and who seek a rationalisation for that inaction by making the relativist argument that we should not intervene in Libya unless or until we also intervene in, for example, Yemen, Bahrain or Saudi Arabia. The immediate answer is that Libya is by far and away the most egregious case. I condemn the brutality elsewhere in the region as strongly as anybody else, but processes are under way in some parts—not all—of the region that might succeed, and in any event the democratic forces in those and other countries across the region will be greatly strengthened, not weakened, by the action we are taking in Libya. In my view, provided there is international pressure behind it, the revolution in attitudes sweeping the region will also increase the pressure on the Government of Israel properly to negotiate a settlement with the Palestinians. No longer can the Government of Israel rely on complacent and compliant countries on their borders within the Arab world.

There is a parallel with Iraq, and I understand—why would I not?—its controversy. However, there is not the least doubt—not least from the mouth of Colonel Gaddafi himself—that but for the military action in Iraq, Gaddafi would never have given up his well-advanced nuclear weapons programme and a significant part of his chemical weapons programme. In the end, he had to give them up. Gaddafi without nuclear weapons is dangerous enough, as we have seen; Gaddafi with such weapons would have been far more dangerous—perhaps so dangerous that the international community would have been prevented from dealing with him today.

I salute our military personnel, as they are placed, yet again, in harm's way on our behalf and that of the international community. I give my wholehearted support to the motion before the House, and I commend the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary for their indefatigable work in securing—against the odds—the resolution.

5.28 pm

**Kris Hopkins (Keighley) (Con):** Having watched these debates and diplomacy since the Falklands war, and having observed the battles on CNN and sanitised movie footage of jets taking off, troops returning fire and Union Jacks attached to aerals and advancing tanks, I find it a daunting thought to be in the House debating and contemplating our responsibility for the deployment of people whose principal purpose is to kill other people on our behalf. During my basic training in the Army, I realised that a sergeant shouting at me to stab and scream and stab again a bale of hay with a fixed bayonet was teaching me how to rip somebody apart. A few years later, I saw the remains of an IRA terrorist unit that had been ambushed by a Special Air Service unit. The remains had been shredded by the hundred of bullets that had gone through their bodies.

Following the first Gulf war, a friend of mine showed me some pictures that he had taken of the convoy attempting to escape back up to Iraq. One of the pictures was of the charred, black head and a desperate hand—black and maimed—of someone trying to leave their vehicle. There is nothing glorious or romantic about war. To those in the media who have portrayed what is happening now—or what has happened in previous wars—as some form of entertainment, I say that that is just not right. I am afraid that human beings need to commit brutal, savage attacks on each other to win wars.

I have spoken in the House before about our lack of political capital following the illegal war in Iraq and what I believe is a folly in Afghanistan. There may be moral reasons to fight again, but I will be honest: we are struggling to find the moral high ground from which to project that morality. As people have said, Gaddafi is the man who brought down the Pan Am plane over Lockerbie, the man who shipped the weapons that killed some of my colleagues and the man who killed WPC Fletcher. However, I feel uncomfortable about going to war. It is not a simple choice; it is a really difficult choice to contemplate.

This morning when I was coming to work, I listened to a phone-in from BBC television about whether we should kill Gaddafi. It was almost gladiatorial, as though people were phoning in so that we could see whether the populace was giving a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down. I have to say that I was fairly disgusted that the killing of another human being, however disgusting he is, could become a form of entertainment.

While we pontificate about morality and our obligations, brave men and women are putting their lives at risk at our request. This is not a debate about student fees, the Scotland Bill or the double summer time Bill; this is about the business of war. We do not take this decision lightly. While we wage war on our enemy, Muslim brothers and Arab leaders—with a few exceptions—remain silent. It is more convenient for the infidel to kill their Muslim brothers and gesture disapproval than it is to stand up to a tyrant. To the new leaders of the emerging democracies out there in the middle east, I say this:

[Kris Hopkins]

“The next time a murderer comes to the end of his reign, you gather in your House, like we are today, and think about how you’re going to take your share of the responsibility and what you’re going to contribute.”

**Mr Andy Slaughter** (Hammersmith) (Lab): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Kris Hopkins:** I am not going to give way.

I said that this was a decision that I do not take lightly, and I do not think this nation takes it lightly either, but I will support the Government. The Prime Minister was right to secure a UN mandate. His leadership stands in stark contrast to the leadership that has gone before in this nation. Let us hope that the positive responses from the United Nations are a sign of something to come because, fundamentally, it is the weakness of United Nations members that has created so many international disasters in the past.

5.33 pm

**Mr Dai Havard** (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney) (Lab): I would like to say something about the resolution and the immediate deployments, and then perhaps something about the exit strategy, the context in which all this is happening and its domestic effects over time.

Like everyone else, I have struggled with the question of moral relativism. Sometimes, the right statement comes out of the wrong mouth, which is difficult to deal with. However, there has been an ambivalence—certainly on the left—about revolutionary dictators in different parts of the world. My internationalism, which comes from my ethical socialism, has trumped all that, so on this occasion, because the proposal has UN support—something we claimed we needed for other things in the past—I will support the motion. However, I need to be clear: I will be supporting the Libyan people, the United Nations and Parliament, as opposed to the Government. There is a question about the Government keeping Parliament involved in the process, to which we will come back a number of times.

I had the privilege of meeting armed service personnel, some of whom are probably delivering some of the activity at the moment: people forget about the T-boats, but suddenly they are terribly important. There are questions about aircraft—it was a little ironic to see American Harriers hopping back to their carrier, whereas our jets had to go a long way. There are all sorts of ironies in these things.

The question of intelligence for targeting is hugely important. We know that we cannot alienate the people; we need to show them that we are there to support them, and to do so. The illustration yesterday of an intelligent targeting process was very welcome and will, I think, pay enormous dividends, but it must be maintained.

On the no-fly zone, the Americans say, “Well, we’ve done that now. It’s in place. Job done.” I hope it is not “Mission accomplished”, as the Americans claimed in the last exercise we saw. The truth is that it is not a done deal. There might be some form of no-fly zone and of a sea blockade in place, but I asked about the clarity of the mandates, from which comes the clarity—or not—of the missions that are undertaken, and there clearly is not just one mission.

I do not want to go into the dispute about whether a decapitation strategy is necessary for Gaddafi. We need to understand that Gaddafi is an Arab and an African—he does not think like I think. He will do all sorts of things; we know that and we need to respond. The hon. Member for Wyre and Preston North (Mr Wallace) made some interesting points that need to be pursued. We need clarity about the mandate.

It was suggested earlier that we could bend the arms embargo to arm certain groups of people. Let us be very clear: we cannot bend anything. If we start doing that, there will be moral relativism and we will lose the legitimacy we have just achieved through the endorsement of the United Nations and through the broader coalition of people coming to support us.

The point I am trying to make is that this is not just about Parliament talking to Arab leaders. It is not just about diplomacy among the leaderships—between the party leaders in this country or between Arab leaders—but about diplomacy and a conversation with, as everyone now calls it, the Arab street. Let us engage in that discussion and see some effort put in. We need people on the ground, not as an occupation force but to help conduct such activity. That is doubtless already happening, to some degree—men in black with beards are doing wonderful things, and they will need some more support. The burden of effort needs to shift to the diplomatic efforts, in their broader sense, to provide some sort of solution. There is no kinetic solution—there is an intelligence-led solution that needs to be—

**Mr Burrowes:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr Havard:** No, I am sorry but time will not allow me to do so.

Let me say something about the exit strategy. We need to do all the things I have mentioned and a lot of other things that I do not have time to itemise now, but it is important to ask who we do them with and where we do them. Will we train people? Where will we train them? Who will help with the training? The Arab states’ involvement in the process is key. We need to internationalise it and to do so much more than we have in the past.

There is also a question of sustainability. We are still in Afghanistan. We need to get real about what we can and cannot do and we then need a conversation about the domestic effects of all this. There are domestic effects on the strategic defence and security review and other matters. Will we have the capability to operate in the littoral in the future? Discuss. The Defence Committee will discuss these matters but Parliament needs to do so. We need to be very clear about the question of sustainability over time because this is not just about the military—it is about the Department for International Development and about foreign policy. We need a clearer foreign policy, as was stated earlier. Unless we have an idea of what we are trying to do, we will not equip ourselves to do it.

I support the Libyan people, our armed forces and their families and this deployment, but—

**Madam Deputy Speaker (Dawn Primarolo):** Order. I call James Arbuthnot.

5.39 pm

**Mr James Arbuthnot** (North East Hampshire) (Con): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr Havard), who is Vice-Chairman of the Defence Committee. I hope to return to one of his observations later in my speech.

On Friday, I described the Prime Minister's drive towards achieving the resolution as showing "courage and leadership", but today let me first pay tribute to the courage and leadership shown by our armed forces. As John Nichol found when he was enforcing the no-fly zone in Iraq, those who fly into hostile territory take extreme personal risks. As ever, we make decisions that they then carry out, and we owe them as much as they are prepared to sacrifice on our behalf, which is everything. In that context, it was an extreme honour to be in the Chamber to hear the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Keighley (Kris Hopkins). It was one of the most powerful and moving speeches that I have heard in the House, and I hope that others listen to it as well.

However, political actions, too, show moral courage or the lack of it. The safe thing to do would have been to leave the leadership to the United States or to countries nearer to Libya, probably in Africa. There was a large chance—and I have to say that it was my own expectation—that the resolution would fail. Demanding publicly something quite so controversial shows not only real clarity about what is right and wrong, but a willingness to risk rebuff and potential humiliation in order to do right. I am proud that we have a Prime Minister and a Foreign Secretary who are willing to take such risks.

All the arguments against the resolution were considered by the United Nations in exhaustive detail and, in the end, rejected. Britain's United Nations ambassador, Sir Mark Lyall Grant, is clearly a persuasive and respected man and is very, very good at what he does. We could have said that it was a matter for the Libyans; we could have left it to them, whatever the cost to civilians. But when the League of Arab States takes a different view, that suggests strongly that we ourselves should consider whether we should be so *laissez-faire*: our doing so would have had consequences elsewhere. Just as Arab countries were showing themselves ready to throw off tyranny, we would have been sending the message that the correct response for a tyrant is, in Gaddafi's words, to show no pity and no mercy, and that message would have been heeded throughout the world. I therefore entirely support the motion.

However, this is only the beginning. There are some serious questions that need answering, and they will trouble those who support the motion just as much as they will trouble those who do not. First, what is the end state that we want to achieve? Obviously we would like to see the back of Gaddafi, but that is not part of the United Nations resolution; so with what will we be satisfied? Secondly, in general terms, what is our strategy for reaching whatever end state we wish to be satisfied with, and how will we decide when we have done so?

**Mr Straw**: The right hon. Gentleman is, of course, correct to say that "getting rid of Gaddafi" is not part of resolution 1973, but the resolution that preceded it—resolution 1970, which provides for the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to investigate crimes against humanity in Libya—could easily bring about

the arrest and incarceration of Colonel Gaddafi under international law. Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that we need to factor that into our strategy?

**Mr Arbuthnot**: I entirely agree. On Friday I asked whether the aims of resolution 1973 were impossible to reach unless Gaddafi were gone. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, however, said that the resolution was about giving protection to the civilians, with which I entirely agree. He went on to say that it was about giving the Libyan people the chance to determine their own future. I do not see anything in the resolution that says that, but I think we need to be clear about it.

Thirdly, will further resolutions from the United Nations be needed or sought as a result of some of the questions that will arise during this debate?

The fourth question is about exactly how far the advice of the Attorney-General takes us. We must be absolutely clear about what is sanctioned by the resolution and what is not. The summary of the Attorney-General's advice is clear, because enforcing the no-fly zone is clearly allowed by the UN resolution. However, we need to know not only that what we are doing is legal but how far, legally, we are entitled to go. We must not leave a chink that will let people say, "The resolution allowed some things, true, but not this."

Fifthly, will the Treasury be generous? Will my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer allow the Ministry of Defence to concentrate, at least for the next few months, on these operations rather than on its desperate scramble to find the extra £1 billion, for this year alone, to which it was committed in the strategic defence and security review but which it still has not identified?

Sixthly, does my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary agree that ruling out the use of occupation forces does not rule out the use of ground forces? I am talking not just about search and rescue helicopters, which my hon. Friend the Member for North Warwickshire (Dan Byles) mentioned during the Prime Minister's speech, but about identifying targets that are free of civilians.

Seventhly, there is the difficult question of whether the ceasefire applies to the rebels. If the rebels try, in response to breaches of the ceasefire by Gaddafi, to retake areas that he has taken, should we use military force to stop them? That would seem a bit strange, but does the UN resolution permit the facilitation of arms supplies to the alternative Government, and if so should the United Kingdom be helping to provide that?

These are things that we do not know, as a result of the UN resolution, and we might need a further resolution to clarify things. Many more issues will arise, but I support this action. The House will not give a blank cheque to this action, so I welcome the Prime Minister's willingness to return to the House to keep us updated on something that is moving very fast.

5.47 pm

**Mr Jeffrey M. Donaldson** (Lagan Valley) (DUP): It is an honour to follow the Chairman of the Defence Committee, the right hon. Member for North East Hampshire (Mr Arbuthnot), and the Vice-Chairman, the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr Havard), both of whom I am pleased to serve with on the Committee. We support the Government on the

[Mr Jeffrey M. Donaldson]

actions they have taken in Libya, which are an appropriate response to the situation. It is often said that for evil to flourish all that is necessary is for good men to do nothing, but doing nothing was not an option for the Government and the international community in this case. In examining the decision that has been taken and the motion we are being asked to support this evening, I feel there are clear differences between the decision we are taking and previous decisions that we have been asked to take. I speak as someone who has consistently supported Governments in the past in the difficult decisions they have had to take about going to war.

**Mr Graham Allen** (Nottingham North) (Lab): May I correct the hon. Gentleman? This House is not taking any decisions: the Government have already taken a decision and have graciously allowed us a debate today. Does he agree that if we are to ensure that we stay properly informed, which the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition have both talked about, we need to resolve the question of the House's rights in respect of when this country goes to war? As we are the elected Chamber there ought to be something in our Standing Orders or in the Cabinet manual or some other place that gives the Chamber the right to be consulted before or after an action takes place.

**Mr Donaldson**: I was present on Friday when the Prime Minister made his statement to the House. We had a lengthy discussion at that stage and Members had an opportunity to put their views before we went into the conflict in Libya. I believe that the commitment of the Government in allowing us this debate takes us a further step along that road, and the Prime Minister has given a commitment to keep the House informed of further developments, so at least there are those indications that the Government are taking the House and the views expressed in it seriously.

I congratulate the Foreign Secretary and his colleagues in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office—the diplomatic service was mentioned earlier—on the excellent work done in building the international coalition. Again, that is a mark of the lessons that we have learned from the past. The Government have demonstrated a willingness to learn those lessons, and that is perhaps why there is broader consensus today, not just in this House, but in the nation, on the actions that the Government are taking, and we welcome that.

Right hon. and hon. Members have asked: what is the end game? What will we regard as success? I accept entirely the position, articulated by the Prime Minister, that we do not know what the outcome will be. At the weekend, I had the joy of watching that excellent film, “The King’s Speech”. When Chamberlain announced that Britain was at war with Germany, it struck me that it was a recognition that appeasement had not worked, but no one at that time knew the outcome of the decision to go to war. Very often, that is the case with war: one simply does not know what the outcome will be.

Leadership is about taking decisions that have an element of risk attached and where there is an element of uncertainty about the outcome, but at least in this instance, given the broad international support, there is a prospect of ensuring that we minimise the loss of life in Libya. We have seen ample evidence of that already

in Benghazi and other places, where people really were facing a very dangerous situation. We welcome the fact that intervention has already had success, in so far as it has halted Gaddafi in his tracks and preserved human life. What success will look like beyond that remains to be seen. It is for the people of Libya to determine their future, obviously with international assistance and support.

That brings me to my second point, which touches on the comments that the Vice-Chairman of the Defence Committee made about our capacity to do this kind of thing in future. In the strategic defence and security review and the national security strategy, we talk about the need to develop and strengthen our involvement in conflict prevention and resolution. If our armed forces are to be smaller in future, greater effort and resource needs to be put into preventing such conflicts in future, because our involvement in international affairs is often marked by the need to intervene to prevent human tragedy when conflict is well under way. It is right that we do that, but we also need to look to a future where conflict prevention is given greater priority in what the Government seek to do.

Forgive me if this sounds parochial—it is not—but the Prime Minister referred to the involvement of Colonel Gaddafi in supporting international terrorism. We know what Colonel Gaddafi is capable of; he has made it clear that if he remains in power—that is a possible outcome—he will seek retribution against those who acted against him. We in this country know what that can look like. We know what it looked like in Warrington, Manchester, Canary Wharf, Bishopsgate, Enniskillen and Warrenpoint, and on the Shankill road in Belfast, where the weaponry that Gaddafi supplied to terrorists was used to bring to an end the innocent lives of British citizens. We know what the man is capable of doing, not just to his people but to others.

Looking towards outcomes, I welcome the establishment of the dedicated team in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. I know that the Foreign Secretary has been supportive of its work. If there is regime change, and Gaddafi is removed by his people, I hope that we will pursue a settlement on behalf of victims in the United Kingdom who suffered as a result of Gaddafi's state-sponsored terrorism. If we are to send our armed forces halfway across the world to protect the lives of people in Libya, the least that we can expect is that any new Libyan Government will honour the obligations on the people of Libya to recognise the suffering of innocent civilians in this country as a result of what Gaddafi and his surrogates did here, and to support the efforts of the victims to secure a settlement that recognises their suffering.

5.54 pm

**Rory Stewart** (Penrith and The Border) (Con): This is not something that began in Libya, and it will not end in Libya. It came out of a regional situation. It is a response primarily to Egypt and Tunisia. We should be celebrating, but with immense caution, what both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition have supported because of that broader regional context. We are talking about not one country and one month, but a series of countries and 30 years. We have to keep our eyes on that, or we will find ourselves in a very dangerous and difficult situation.

The situation in Libya and the no-fly zone are driven, of course, as everybody in the House has said, by our humanitarian obligation to the Libyan people. It is driven by our concerns for national security and, probably most of all—this is not something that we should minimise—by the kind of message that we are trying to pass to people in Egypt or Tunisia. If we had stood back at this moment and done nothing—if we had allowed Gaddafi simply to hammer Benghazi—people in Egypt, Tunisia and Syria would have concluded that we were on the side of oil-rich regimes against their people. We would have no progressive narrative with which we could engage with that region over the next three decades.

**Stephen Lloyd** (Eastbourne) (LD): On that point, does my hon. Friend agree that it is incredibly significant that both the Arab League and countries in the area such as Qatar support the engagement and the UN resolution?

**Rory Stewart**: I agree very strongly. That is immensely significant, but the meaning of that needs to be clear. The limits that the Prime Minister has set are so important to all of us exactly because of that point. The reason we need the Arab League and the UN on side, the reason we need a limited resolution, and the reason all the comments from around the House warning that the situation should not become another Iraq are so important is that we are talking about 30 years, not just the next few months.

Respectfully, I disagree with the right hon. and learned Member for North East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell); the most important thing for us now is to be careful with our language and rhetoric, and careful about the kinds of expectations that we raise. I would respectfully say that phrases such as “This is necessary”, or even “This is legitimate”, are dangerous. All the things that the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition have done to hedge us in, limit us, and say, “This isn’t going to be an occupation” are fantastic, but they are only the beginning.

**Katy Clark** (North Ayrshire and Arran) (Lab): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that one of the risks is that it might be said on the Arab street that we would not be interested if it were not for the oil in Libya?

**Rory Stewart**: That is a very important danger. The fact that Libya is not just an Arab country, but a country with oil, has to be borne in mind. The kind of legitimacy that we may have had in Kosovo will be more difficult to come by in Libya for that reason.

The biggest dangers—the dangers that we take away from Afghanistan—are threefold. The Prime Minister will have to stick hard to his commitment, because it is easy for us to say today, “So far and no further,” but all the lessons of Afghanistan are that if we dip our toes in, we are very soon up to our neck. That is because of the structure of that kind of rhetoric, and the ways in which we develop four kinds of fear, two kinds of moral obligation, and an entire institutional pressure behind reinvestment. That is why the former Secretary of State for Defence, the right hon. Member for Coventry North East (Mr Ainsworth), is correct to sound his cautions.

What are the four fears? We can hear them already. First, people are saying, “We have to be terrified of Gaddafi. He is an existential threat to global security.”

That is the fear of the rogue state. The second fear is the fear of the failed state. Gaddafi is making that argument himself: “If I collapse, al-Qaeda will come roaring into Libya.” The third fear that people are beginning to express is a fear of neighbours. They are already beginning to say, “If this collapses, refugees will pour across the borders into other countries.” The fourth fear is fear for ourselves: fear for our credibility, and fear that we might look ridiculous if, in response to our imprecations or threats, Gaddafi remains. We have seen the same fears in Vietnam, where people talked about the domino theory. We have seen the same fears in Iraq when people talked about weapons of mass destruction. We have seen the same fears in Afghanistan, where people worried that, if Afghanistan were to topple, Pakistan would topple and mad mullahs would get their hands on nuclear weapons.

Those are all the same fears, and the same sense of moral obligation. We do not need to be able to name two cities in Libya to be able to talk about two kinds of moral obligation: our moral obligation to the Libyan people, and our moral obligation because we sold arms to the Libyans in the past. This is very dangerous, and we must get away from that kind of language and into the kind of language that is humble, that accepts our limits, and allows us to accept that we have a moral obligation to the Libyan people but that it is a limited one because we have a moral obligation to many other people in the world, particularly to our own people in this country.

Of course we have a national security interest in Libya, but we have such an interest in 40 or 50 countries around the world, and we must match our resources to our priorities. The real lesson from all these conflicts is not, as we imagine, that we must act. The real lesson is not just our failure, but our failure to acknowledge our failure, and our desire to dig ever deeper. It is our inability to acknowledge that, in the middle east, many people will put a very sinister interpretation on our actions. It is also our failure to acknowledge that “ought” implies “can”. We do not have a moral obligation to do what we cannot do. We have to consider our resources rather than our desires.

What does that mean? This is easy for someone on the Back Bench to say, and much more difficult for a Prime Minister or other leader to say. How do we set a passionately moderate rhetoric? How do we speak to people to support something that is important? How do we acknowledge the moral obligation and the national security questions, but set the limits so that we do not get in too deep? I suggest that we need to state this in the most realistic, limited terms. First, we need to say that our objective is primarily humanitarian: it is to decrease the likelihood of massacre, ethnic cleansing and civil war, and to increase the likelihood of a peaceful political settlement. Secondly, we will try, in so far as it is within our power to do so, to contain and manage any threat from Libya. Finally, we will deliver development and humanitarian assistance. In the end, however, the real message that we are passing on through limited rhetoric is not to the people of Britain but to the people of the middle east over the next 30 years.

6.3 pm

**Natascha Engel** (North East Derbyshire) (Lab): Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker, for calling me to speak after one of the best speeches that I have ever

[Natascha Engel]

heard in the House. The hon. Member for Penrith and The Border (Rory Stewart) speaks with a passion matched only by his personal experience and absolute expertise, so it is with slight trepidation that I follow him in the debate. I want to build on what he has said, however, because I agree with much of it.

I think that everyone here agrees that we must take on our responsibility to protect civilian lives in Libya, that the criteria for intervention has been met and that this is being done on a legal basis. We agree that Gaddafi has violated the conditions of sovereignty that would allow him to protect his own people. He has gone so far against them that it is now incumbent on us to take some kind of action. I also give my absolute support to the United Nations, and to the international community, in helping Libyan civilians. Having said all that, it is a very big leap from the question of whether we should act to that of how we should act. We must not conflate the two.

I believe that we are also clear about the outcomes that we want. We all agree that we want to stop Gaddafi slaughtering civilians in Libya, but how we should do that has not been adequately explored, and the consequences of our actions have not been well enough thought through. Being well motivated and well meaning is not enough to go to war. We must consider carefully all the options and all the possible consequences of our actions. We hope that the outcome will spell liberation, democracy, self-determination, stability and greater security in the world. We are all keeping our fingers crossed that that will happen.

However, north Africa and the middle east have complexities that none of us fully understands. The outcome of the unrest in the region is unknowable. We know one thing, however. I shall take the advice of the hon. Member for Penrith and The Border and be careful about the words I use; I shall not call Gaddafi "mad". He clearly has some mental health issues, however, and he is a terrifying human being, but he is not stupid. This weekend, he announced on television:

"We promise you a long drawn-out war with no limits".

He knows that a long war would suit him. We must consider the consequences if the no-fly zone fails. We must also consider the consequences if our own air attacks kill Libyan civilians. Importantly, we must consider the consequences of the Arab League withdrawing its support. It is already wobbling, and if it does not fully support our actions, the consequences could be devastating.

Most importantly of all, we must have an idea of what success looks like. On the "Today" programme this morning, the Foreign Secretary said:

"I think we will know a ceasefire when we see it".

I do not envy him his job, but those words did not fill me with complete confidence that we know what we are doing. Unless we have a clear idea of all the possible consequences of our actions, including the possibility that what we are doing might make things worse for Libyan civilians, we as a country and as part of the international community will open ourselves up to the accusation that we are acting in order to be seen to be doing something, rather than doing the right thing to protect Libyan civilians.

I will vote for the motion tonight because I see it as a vote of support for Libyan civilians and a vote of

support for taking on our responsibility to protect them, but I will do it nervously. I wish the Government well, and I know that there will be very difficult times ahead, but we, the international community, are starting a war. We are doing it for the right reasons, but I do not think that we are clear enough about where it will end.

6.7 pm

**Jo Swinson** (East Dunbartonshire) (LD): Eight years ago, this House discussed intervention in Iraq. I was not a Member of Parliament at the time. Instead, I was marching on the streets of Glasgow to protest against that war, along with more than 1 million other people across the United Kingdom. I deeply regret not only the UK's role in Iraq but the legacy that it has left for UK foreign policy. As the hon. Member for Keighley (Kris Hopkins) so eloquently pointed out, it has undoubtedly made the role of our diplomats much harder in their negotiations with other countries around the world. It has undermined much of what they do. It has also, understandably, made the Government and the British public more sensitive about any UK military action, even when it has United Nations support.

Libya is no Iraq, however. The two are worlds apart. Not only is international action in this case legally justified, but I believe that it is morally right to act to protect Libyan civilians. The situation is very different. In Libya, people are demanding action and the regional neighbours support them. Indeed, the Arab League's request for help is highly significant.

**Mr Burrowes:** Does my hon. Friend agree that it is important not to pigeonhole the support from the Council of the League of Arab States? Its decision of 12 March called not only for a no-fly zone to be imposed, but for the establishment of

"safe areas in places exposed to shelling as a precautionary measure that allows the protection of the Libyan people and foreign nationals residing in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya".

Does not that provide the important basis for United Nations resolution 1973 to take all necessary measures, including the bombardment, to protect civilians?

**Jo Swinson:** The hon. Gentleman is quite right, and the Arab League also made it clear that it did not want a foreign invasion force. It is important that that is explicitly outlined in UN Security Resolution 1973.

As has been discussed, a new principle has developed in the international community of the UN's responsibility to protect. That was not in place eight years ago, and would not have applied in any way to the situation in Iraq. It is hugely positive that the Security Council is prepared to take action under its responsibility to protect, to make it a meaningful concept, and not just warm words. Turning to the scope of the resolution, it is incredibly helpful that it is not just about a narrow no-fly zone, and represents the need to take all necessary measures to protect civilians and civilian-populated areas under threat of attack. Indeed, it explicitly excludes a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory.

This is the most serious type of decision that the House can ever be asked to make, and it is vital that we are well aware of the risks of the action, of which there are many, including the risks to our forces and those of

other countries when carrying out the action. We are taking action on Libya's air defences to try to minimise those risks, but they are always there. We, in the safety and security of the House, owe a huge amount to those troops whom we have asked to take action in the name of the United Kingdom and, indeed, of the United Nations, and we commend them for their bravery.

There may have been optimism in Libya as the news came through of the UN Security Council resolution, but a scenario in which Gaddafi concludes that the game is up, and the Libyan pro-democracy campaigners celebrate a smooth transition to a free society is just a welcome fantasy—it is hardly likely to be the outcome. Even if Gaddafi goes, the building of democracy will be far from easy and, as is more likely, if he does not do so, the end game is not necessarily clear and we may end up with stalemate. There is a further risk, if there is not a swift conclusion nor a clear path to a specific end point, that there will be increased pressure on the international coalition, and it will be difficult to hold the consensus together. Indeed, as has been pointed out, it is perhaps not as firm as it was initially.

There is the risk, too, that Gaddafi will use the implementation of the no-fly zone for propaganda, and will try to paint a picture of the west as imperialist and imposing something on the middle east. From the UK perspective, with our forces overstretched in Afghanistan, we may not be able to react easily with military might to developments that would require a further response. We need to have our eyes open when considering how we will vote on the motion.

Not acting is not a neutral position, as there are huge risks in inaction, too, not least the bloodbath in Benghazi. Indeed, in Gaddafi's own words, we have heard exactly what would happen. He said that he would show no mercy, and that he would track the fighters down "and search for them, alley by alley, road by road", And house by house. In making that broadcast on Libyan media, he made it clear that his aim was to terrorise his own people and make them cower in submission. As I said last week in Prime Minister's questions, we must consider the risk of the message that we would send other oppressive regimes around the world—that they could do whatever they liked, and that under no circumstances would the international community act. In what other circumstances would we act? In this situation, there is regional consensus, there is public demand for action, and there is a clear legal position. If we did not act in this circumstance, in what circumstance would we act?

What about the message to other oppressed populations? We have seen the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, and now in Libya, and I am sure people are watching around the world. If we did not act, we would send the message that if populations asserted themselves and demanded their rights, asking the international community for help when peaceful protest was met with murder, their request for help would fall on deaf ears and a lack of international response. What hope in that circumstance could any population have? We would run the risk, if we did not act, of turning Libya into an isolated pariah state, where Gaddafi would have nothing to lose, and would be even more dangerous than before, like a wounded animal. We would run the risk, a few months from now, that we would repeat the collective hand wringing by the international community that we saw after the massacres in Rwanda.

It is not an easy decision for the House to make, and it is not something that we should do lightly. Indeed, it is one of the gravest decisions that we will ever be asked to take as Members of Parliament. It is absolutely right that we scrutinise the detail, but I believe that the House will come to the right conclusion. Action to protect Libyan civilians struggling for democracy is internationally supported, legally justified and morally right.

6.15 pm

**Mr Elfyn Llwyd** (Dwyfor Meirionnydd) (PC): I am speaking on behalf of my own party and of the Scottish National party. Unlike the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr Donaldson), I have been known in the past for not supporting military action. The Government have taken the right course of action in seeking a mandate from the United Nations. They have secured that mandate, and what is happening is within that mandate, and therefore lawful. I am quite comfortable with that aspect of things, and I acknowledge that a lot of hard work has been done by the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister.

It would be easy to say that it would have been better to hold a debate before taking action but it was worth taking that action to avoid the slaughter of tens of thousands of people in Benghazi, so I have no problems with that either. Resolution 1973 authorises action to enforce the no-fly zone which, as we heard, is operational, so I take it that there will be a scaling back of aerial bombing by the allied forces for the time being unless and until it is necessary. If, for example, tanks move in against Benghazi, that is a different matter altogether. I am pleased that the no-fly zone is in place and, thus far, it appears to be working.

I would, however, pose the following questions about resolution 1973. Does full compliance with it inevitably require the removal of Colonel Gaddafi? If not, will the Government be satisfied with his remaining in power in some parts of Libya in future? We are concerned that the wording of the resolution, which appears to be quite clear, may become clouded, and we are concerned that the whole matter could be a smokescreen or shorthand for regime change, which would be unlawful under international law, but which became the main war aim of Messrs Blair and Bush, even publicly midway through the Iraq conflict.

This is a different scenario. No one wants to see a long, drawn-out engagement in Libya, so we need to hear from Ministers that there will not be mission creep, and that we are not sliding into another awful Iraq-style scenario. What are the Government's war aims? When will they be able to say that the job is done? How and when will we know that? I appreciate the fact that the Prime Minister will keep us updated, but we are concerned that the resolution might be deliberately interpreted to meet the aims of western allies, rather than being used for purely humanitarian aims. Questions have already been asked about the consistency of messages from the UK. Sir David Richards, the Chief of the Defence Staff said that Gaddafi is not a target, and that targeting him would be outside the remit of resolution 1973 and therefore unlawful. However, that directly contradicts what the Defence Secretary said at the weekend, so we need clarity.

What efforts have been made to marshal the humanitarian aid and assistance that will be required as

[Mr Elfyn Llwyd]

soon as the conflict subsides. One of the awful lessons of Iraq was the absence of forward planning on humanitarian aid and reconstruction, so I should like to press the Foreign Secretary on that. Will the Government confirm that full diplomatic efforts are being made in parallel with any other action, as that is vital? The Arab League has reconsidered its position after its statement a day or two ago in which it opined that the action taken was beyond the remit of resolution 1973. Given its reiteration of support today, it is vital that Arab League countries are at the forefront of these actions and decisions—[*Interruption.*] No, they are not, which is why I am making the point. If they are not, Gaddafi will claim a propaganda coup, and allege that the allied western powers are in it for their own gain once more.

**Mr Allen:** Is not the right hon. Gentleman deeply concerned that in this exercise western forces are deployed in Libya, yet other than a promise from Qatar, not a single Arab state is deploying troops on the ground, in the air or on the sea to support that action? Does that not lead him to have very deep concerns about the position that he has just expressed?

**Mr Llwyd:** The hon. Gentleman makes my point. I am trying to be fairly succinct as we have only a few minutes, but he is right. That is of great concern. One hopes the Arab League will shortly convert its support into something more tangible; otherwise it will be a propaganda coup for Gaddafi and his type. That is a vital point.

I hope that shortly we will be there merely as peacemakers. I do not want to see Colonel Gaddafi in any form of control, but if he is to be removed, it must be by his own people, not by western fire power and intervention. The Arab spring has so far shown peaceful success in Tunisia and Egypt. Egypt's new constitution received 77% support yesterday. However, other protests in Bahrain and Yemen have met with significant violence, including Saudi troops breaching Bahrain's sovereignty. I share the concerns of my hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Caroline Lucas), who made the point about arms sales, but I dare say that is a debate for another day.

Suffice it to say that within the strict remit of the resolution, we in Plaid Cymru and our friends in the Scottish National party are prepared to stand by and support today's motion. We hope there will be no mission creep and no striding beyond the strict wording of the resolution. I echo what has been said by others: it is not an easy task. It will be difficult for the Prime Minister and the Government, but in that task I wish him and the Government well.

6.22 pm

**Dr Phillip Lee** (Bracknell) (Con): I begin by congratulating Members on their contributions, in particular my hon. Friend the Member for Keighley (Kris Hopkins), who made a wonderful contribution, and my hon. Friend the Member for Penrith and The Border (Rory Stewart), who offered a characteristically informed contribution on the present situation in Libya.

I will support the motion this evening for humanitarian reasons. We have already seen the benefit of the action that has been taken on the ground in Benghazi. For that

reason alone, I will support the motion. I congratulate the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and everyone involved in securing United Nations support for this action. In the light of Iraq and other events, it is important that there is wide support throughout the Arab world and the wider world.

I would like to step back from talking about Libya and ask what our foreign policy should be. It strikes me that the men on the Front Bench who carry the burdens of the offices of state are in power at a time when foreign policy in the middle east, as dictated by previous Foreign Secretaries and previous officials at the Foreign Office, is crumbling. It was a foreign policy based on the realpolitik that we needed the gas, we needed the oil and, we needed to deal with whoever was in power, and we could forget the masses because they did not know what was going on. However, because of the creation of something called the internet—ironically, by the free west—the people on the Arab street, as we keep referring to them, know exactly what is going on. They can see it. That is why the movement has spread from Tunisia to Egypt to Libya to Yemen and now, I fear, also to Syria. Foreign policy needs to be rethought in the light of the fact that people now know what is going on. We cannot afford to be inconsistent or incoherent.

Our approach to Libya is dictated somewhat by what we think we are about as a country. We have a permanent seat on the Security Council, which gives us power, but it also gives us quite a heavy responsibility. We are a free nation. That raises the question of whether we should try to support others who want to be free. I realise the reality of our situation with regard to Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. We are oil dependent; we are still fossil fuel dependent in this country. In 1973, after the Yom Kippur war, how did we respond to the subsequent energy crisis? We started digging for stuff in the North sea. How did the French respond? They started building nuclear power stations.

I wonder whether our response should not just be a response to the humanitarian crisis that could have ensued in Libya. Perhaps we ought to ask what our energy policy should be in future so that we do not feel uncomfortable about sanctioning the present intervention in Libya, which I fully support, but possibly not sanctioning intervention in Syria or the wider Arabian peninsula. We are somewhat compromised, are we not, by our dependence on the black gold. Perhaps we should not be. In view of the fact that the technology exists for us not to be so dependent, the sooner we are not, the better.

In closing, I want to share with the House a short anecdote. I was in Syria two or three weeks ago as part of a delegation. I went to the British Council and met some students who had had the opportunity provided by the British Council to learn English. My colleagues and I asked a series of questions about Egypt and Libya. Initially cautious, the students began to open up. At the end of the meeting, one of the students said, in answer to how he viewed the British Council, "It is my bubble of oxygen. It is my opportunity to express myself." That stays with me. It is why I am happy to support the motion. But if we are to be consistent and coherent and to have the respect of the middle east, we need to start looking at our dependence upon oil and gas. Unless we do so, we will be having these debates over and over again.

6.28 pm

**Katy Clark** (North Ayrshire and Arran) (Lab): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Bracknell (Dr Lee), who correctly highlighted the importance of energy policy to all the issues that we are discussing.

I welcome the fact that debate is taking place today and that there is to be a vote. The traditions of the House have often meant that there have not been parliamentary votes on such matters. I would have preferred a vote to have taken place before troops were deployed, even if it meant the House convening on a Saturday. We need to consider that for the future. However, it is clear that there will be a full debate today, and there was a statement on Friday, when many aspects of the issue were discussed.

I have found the issues very difficult. I am disappointed that the amendment tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Islington North (Jeremy Corbyn) was not selected, as it highlights some of the matters that concern me. Yet again, arms that have been supplied by British companies are being used against people internally by tyrants, and weapons that British companies have sold to Libya will probably be used against our own troops. We need to review that again and look at our policy on the arms trade.

The Arab world is going through revolutionary change, with uprisings in country after country, and we must look at the issue in that context. I of course support all those struggling for democracy and against tyrants and have always been appalled by the actions of Gaddafi. I fully understand the unwillingness to stand aside while the innocent are being slaughtered and so have every sympathy with those who feel that we must intervene. However, I have concerns about what we will actually be supporting the Government to do if we vote in favour of the motion. That is partly because the conflict is taking place in north Africa and previous interventions in that part of the world, including the middle east, have been very difficult for the west and inspired huge amounts of hatred towards it. The debate might be quite different if the conflict was taking place in a different part of the world.

I am also concerned because I genuinely fear that we might be entering what could be a long war. The wording of the UN resolution is very wide, and the reference to "all necessary measures" in some ways gives a blank cheque to the powers taking action. In other ways, however, it probably does not give those taking action the ability to do what they really need to do in Libya. We could easily end up being involved in a very long conflict but with Gaddafi remaining in power.

Although I find the issue difficult and think that there are many potential difficulties, as has been highlighted by colleagues on both sides of the House, I think that the key to the decisions we take over the coming period must be our relationships not only with Arab states, but with Arab peoples. Like many colleagues, I am particularly interested in what the Muslim and Arab communities in this country are saying at the moment and what Arab states and peoples will be saying over the coming period. In my short contribution, I wish to encourage Members on the Treasury Bench to listen to the messages coming from the middle east and north Africa, which should be taken on board when key strategic decisions are made.

I have deep concerns about this action and particularly about how long this war might last. We must look at it in the context of the war on terror. My fear is that if we continue with military action, particularly if it is conducted over an extended period by western powers, we might be giving ammunition to the fundamentalists in the middle east and the Arab world whose values are very different from those held by us in this House.

**Daniel Kawczynski:** Immediately after the 1986 bombing of Tripoli there were an estimated 12 coups against Colonel Gaddafi. He is deeply despised by the Libyan armed forces. Does the hon. Lady not share my confidence that, given an equal footing and western intervention, he will soon be toppled by his own people?

**Katy Clark:** I welcome the hon. Gentleman's contribution and very much hope that he is correct. We must be very alert to the extent to which what we are seeing in Libya is a genuine uprising by all the people or a civil war. When we look at what has happened in Iraq in particular, and also in Afghanistan, we will see that many in the west do not understand the tribal loyalties, but we must be very alert to them.

I have deep concerns about what is happening and very much hope, as the hon. Member for Shrewsbury and Atcham (Daniel Kawczynski) has indicated, that it will lead quickly to the overthrow of Gaddafi. Like many people in this country, I am concerned that that might not be straightforward, because previous conflicts have not been. There will be serious political and financial implications if the House decides to endorse the Government's motion. Domestically, we are seeing huge cuts in public spending, including spending on military equipment. We need to think carefully about the extent to which our constituents will feel that a long and expensive war, which follows on from previous conflicts, is something that they will support Parliament in pursuing. It is important that we take all those factors into account. I welcome the fact that this debate is taking place and that the Government are putting resources into looking at what is happening in the region, but I have concerns that, even if those taking the decisions do so with the best intentions, there might be consequences that we will live to regret.

6.36 pm

**Mark Lancaster** (Milton Keynes North) (Con): It is a pleasure to contribute to this debate. I have yet to meet a soldier who has been to war who would rush to another one. It is difficult to experience the horrors of war first hand and ever be the same again. Having been to three on behalf of the previous Government, I am a firm believer that jaw-jaw is better than war-war, but I accept that the time for jaw-jaw sometimes comes to an end and we must act.

I join other Members in commending the Prime Minister for his speedy action to ensure that we have the United Nations resolution, but I am slightly concerned that there are many who breathe a sigh of relief and believe that, because we have the resolution and find ourselves in a very different position from that which the House was in when debating Iraq, Kosovo and Bosnia, somehow that is all we need to secure a successful resolution in Libya. I fear that it is not.

One of the best pieces of advice I was ever given was never to go into a room without knowing where the exit

[Mark Lancaster]

is. I fear that we have no clear exit at the moment in Libya. That is understandable; anyone who stood up in this House with a clear idea of exactly how we will exit the situation would be at best naive. That is no reason not to go into the room, but I fear that we will need further UN resolutions before we see the end to the situation. To be honest, I think that what we have before us will probably at best get us to a stalemate. We will achieve much by preventing conflict and unnecessary deaths in Libya, and the House should be proud of this country's contribution to securing the resolution, but it will not be enough. I would like the Government to continue to play their part in ensuring that we have the grounds on which we can ultimately get the appropriate resolution in the United Nations to secure that exit strategy. It is absolutely clear that we must have greater involvement from Arab nations, because without that we will lack the general support required. I know that the Prime Minister will continue to do his bit to ensure that that is the case.

We often talk about learning lessons from the past. It is of course easy to point to the Iraq conflict and say that one of the biggest mistakes we made was to have no great plan for reconstruction and stabilisation—I must declare an interest as a member of the military stabilisation and support group within our armed forces—but the problem we face now is very different from that which we faced in Iraq, because in Iraq we were able to deploy boots on the ground to assist that stabilisation. We cannot currently do that under the United Nations resolution. We can learn the lessons from the past, from Iraq, and say that we need to have greater reconstruction, but how are we going to deliver that on the ground in Libya?

The cross-departmental stabilisation unit, which the previous Government set up, involving the Department for International Development, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence, is fabulous but under-utilised. Rather like three strands of a rope, it does come together and the effect that the three Departments produce by working together is much greater, but I believe very strongly that the unit must plan now, working concurrently with existing military operations, to ensure that we have in place such reconstruction and stabilisation. Otherwise, the window of opportunity that we missed in Iraq could well be missed in Libya.

I also seek from the Foreign Secretary, when he winds up the debate, reassurances that we are working very closely with the United Nations to ensure that any work the Government can do after this period of military action, to help to reconstruct and stabilise Libya, is done under the United Nations umbrella. It cannot be delivered solely by Western powers; otherwise I fear that we will lose the consent we have, as we did in the past with Iraq.

Looking forward, I am delighted that we are where we are today. We have secured the UN resolution, with much thanks to the efforts of the Prime Minister, but we must not take our eye off the ball. We must look beyond our current operations to ensure that we have in place the bedrock on which we can deliver, far more effectively than we have in the past, the reconstruction and stabilisation of Libya after the event.

6.41 pm

**Mr David Winnick** (Walsall North) (Lab): I wish we could have had this debate before military action had been taken. I referred to that on a point of order and do not want to dwell on it because time is very short, but we must establish that, when military action is going to be taken, the House of Commons should debate the issue first. There is no doubt what the result of any vote tonight will be, and there would have been no difference if one had taken place on Saturday, but it would have been better if the House had so decided.

**Richard Drax** (South Dorset) (Con): Will the hon. Gentleman confirm that, if we had delayed such action any longer, which he wanted to do so that we could debate it in the House, people would have died?

**Mr Winnick:** The action started late on Saturday. We could have met on Saturday; we have done so on previous occasions. I have been present at Saturday sittings, and in my view that could have taken place, if not on Friday itself.

In view of the Security Council resolution, there is no doubt about the legality of the military operation. The Security Council has clearly carried the resolution, and the issue is not about whether the action is legal, because it clearly must be so, but about judgment and whether such intervention is justified. Much has been made about the Arab League and so on; incidentally, I do not know how many, if any, Arab League countries could be considered democracies. Be that as it may, I accept that none of them is quite in the same category as Gaddafi's Libya.

Interestingly, the secretary-general of the league, just two days after the heavy bombing, is reported to have said that

“what we want is the protection of the civilians and not a bombardment of more civilians.”

If he is saying that at this particular stage, what is he going to say in the following days if the bombing continues? Undoubtedly, there will be civilian casualties, and yes, Gaddafi will make much of it, make propaganda—one would not expect otherwise. But one does not need to be a military expert to accept that one cannot carry out such military operations without civilian casualties. So while we talk about protecting the people and the reason—the justification—for the operation, we have to recognise that many innocent people are going to be killed or slaughtered, whatever word we use, because the situation cannot be otherwise.

We have spoken and debated from a western point of view, but I ask the House to look at the situation from the Arab point of view—not that of the Arab League, or the Arab rulers, but that of the ordinary people in Arab countries. They want a decent life; that is why the protests grew out of the suicide in Tunisia. Of course they want a decent life; that is one reason why there is such an influx of, and motivation for, immigration. We want a decent life, so do our constituents and so do the people in countries of acute poverty and deprivation. Human beings are the same the whole world over.

Let us look at the situation from the Arab point of view. In Yemen, the regime slaughtered 45 people last week. They were protesting. In Bahrain and Saudi Arabia there is repression, and of course Saudi Arabia

actually took military action to intervene in Bahrain. Has anyone suggested that we should intervene against Saudi Arabia? Of course not. Even if repression grew in Saudi Arabia itself, or in Bahrain, one thing would be absolutely certain: the British Government would not draft a resolution with the United States to put before the Security Council of the United Nations. We know that.

It is interesting that every time we go to intervene somewhere there is a reference to the occupied territories: "We are going to do what we can for the Palestinians." Yet the position of the Palestinians remains the same: more than 40 years of occupation, humiliating conditions, the wall, the deprivation of liberty, and the rest. Has there been any change as far as the Israeli occupation of the occupied territories goes? Not at all, but Prime Ministers—not just this one—always refer to it. I do not doubt their sincerity, but it is interesting as far as the occupied territories and the United States' support for this current military action are concerned.

Only a few weeks ago, a resolution—

**The Prime Minister:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr Winnick:** Yes, indeed.

Only a few weeks ago, a resolution passed by the United Nations, including the British Government, was vetoed by the United States. A moderate resolution, protesting against the illegal settlements, was vetoed.

**The Prime Minister:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr Winnick:** Of course. The Prime Minister.

**The Prime Minister:** I am very grateful to the hon. Gentleman, whose speech I am listening to very carefully. He asks us to see the situation from an Arab point of view, but does he accept something that was put very forcefully to me at a public meeting in Qatar; namely, "You intervened in Iraq because it was about your security. Don't you see that in Libya this is about our aspiration, our democracy, our freedom? Isn't it time that actually you paid some attention to those things?" Was not that the Arab street speaking, and not just Arab Governments? Is not that something we should listen to?

**Mr Winnick:** Yes. I take the point the Prime Minister makes, but at the same time what about the lack of freedom—the repression—in the other countries that I have mentioned? It is not just Libya. Yes, I concede the point—I have said so—that Gaddafi's regime is so tyrannical, so bloody against its own people, and there was the arming of the IRA, Lockerbie and the rest of it. Gaddafi was up to his neck in Lockerbie, as well as in the murder of Yvonne Fletcher. I have no illusions on that score; all I am saying is that, from the Arab point of view, they do not quite see the situation as we and, to some extent, I do as a citizen of the United Kingdom.

I have many reservations. I must confess that I am debating with myself. I do not often do so, but I do not see any reason why I should not. *[Interruption.]* I do not recommend it. I may be somewhat introverted as a personality, but I do not recommend debating with oneself. The debate I am having is whether I should vote against the motion, because I cannot vote with the

Government. I will make up my mind, not because it is the Government's motion but because of the reservations I have expressed. Having expressed those reservations, it would be somewhat hypocritical of me to vote for the motion, if there is a vote tonight—there may not be. If there is a vote, I am debating whether I should abstain or vote against the motion, and I will make up my mind.

I simply say this in conclusion: the action has been taken and we are in, but I hope it is going to be very short. Reference was made to mission creep. I hope we are not going to get involved in the same way as we did in Iraq and in Afghanistan. We are out of Iraq, most people want to see the end of British military involvement in Afghanistan and they certainly do not want a new, long war. That is why I hope so very much that it will be very short indeed. The sooner it ends, the better, because I do not believe, at the end of the day, that it is in the interests of Libya or the United Kingdom.

6.49 pm

**Dan Byles** (North Warwickshire) (Con): I join other hon. Members in sending my thoughts and prayers to our servicemen and women who are in operations over Libya and those who will be shortly, and of course, to their families.

As a former soldier, I believe that British soldiers, sailors and airmen should be committed to military action only reluctantly and as a last resort—a point that was eloquently highlighted by my hon. Friend the Member for Keighley (Kris Hopkins) in a very moving speech. When they are so committed, that cannot happen in a half-hearted way. They must have the resources—and, perhaps equally importantly, a mandate and a set of rules of engagement—to allow them to do robustly and properly the job they are asked to do.

I believe that the House is broadly united, with the possible exception of the hon. Member for Walsall North (Mr Winnick), in believing that in the case of Libya, events had reached a stage where committing our military to enforcing the UN resolution is absolutely the right thing to do. Let us not forget where we were on Thursday afternoon. The momentum was with Gaddafi's forces, who were advancing on Benghazi, and there was every indication that the city would fall in a matter of hours. Time was pressing. The right hon. and learned Member for North East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell) has already read to the House the chilling words that Gaddafi himself read out over the radio about what might happen if the city did fall. Uncharacteristically, the United Nations Security Council not only passed a resolution swiftly but passed a robust one, and that robustness is very welcome. I congratulate the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary on the role that they played in securing that very important resolution.

It is vital that we ensure, at every stage of this operation, that we operate at all times within the legality of that UN mandate, and that we retain the broad support of the wider region. Like my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Kensington (Sir Malcolm Rifkind), I was concerned by the reports over the weekend that Amr Moussa, the secretary-general of the Arab League, had expressed some concerns about the UN mandate. Thankfully, he has now clarified his position, and the Arab League is firmly behind the action that is taking place. I am not surprised about that, given that its early call for international action was perhaps a key

[*Dan Byles*]

moment in allowing the UN to go forward with the mandate. However, this reflects the delicacy of the situation and the urgent need to include a broader alliance of regional forces in the operation that is taking place.

Like the right hon. Member for Coventry North East (Mr Ainsworth), who is not in his place at the moment, I was pleased to hear of the imminent involvement of Qatari assets. I believe that such involvement is essential for the wider legitimacy of the operation, but it demonstrates the need for continuing diplomacy alongside military action and the need for us to be nimble and fleet of foot regarding the diplomatic situation—the shifting sands on which we will be operating. We should not be afraid to pause or freeze military action, if necessary, should we lose the support of the wider region. We must not tip over from doing what we were invited to do into being seen to impose on the region our view of what the solution should be. If that happens, we should maintain our grip very firmly on the big stick while walking a little more softly until we can rebuild the regional coalition.

The right hon. Member for Coventry North East expressed his deep concern following the lessons from Iraq, and he was right to do so. However, the spectre of Iraq should not prevent us from doing what we believe is right and is ultimately in our national interests, as the Prime Minister made clear, provided that we maintain the legal legitimacy and broad regional support. My hon. Friend the Member for Milton Keynes North (Mark Lancaster) is absolutely right when he says that this is just the start of the process and that we do not yet know how it will finish, but if we are to stay the course, we must ensure that we stay within the legal framework and maintain the regional support for what we are doing.

It is with some regret that I will be voting for the motion, because committing military forces to action anywhere in the world is regrettable. It will lead to dead soldiers, if not British, then Libyan; we must not forget that whichever side wins, there are casualties on the other side. I trust, however, that the majority of hon. Members will also vote for the motion, because we need to send a clear message tonight that we are united in this—that we as a House support the United Nations resolution, recognise that this action is both legitimate and necessary, and support our servicemen and women in the difficult and dangerous tasks that lie ahead.

6.55 pm

**Mrs Madeleine Moon** (Bridgend) (Lab): I start, as have many others, by thanking the RAF ground crew and pilots and Royal Navy personnel who have seen action in Libya so far. In particular, I draw attention to the RAF crew who pulled back because of their concerns about potential civilian casualties. It is important that we recognise the professionalism of the RAF crews and naval personnel who are engaged out there.

I have had some concerns about this operation regarding civilians, the lack of a clear end game, and our capabilities, but I have also looked at the potential of this seminal moment. There is a wind of unrest across the middle east. Elsewhere, we have had rose revolutions and orange

revolutions, and now we seem to have a mobile phone revolution in which unrest across the middle east is generating a desire for change, openness, reform and greater freedom—a sharing of wealth and opportunity. It is important that we recognise and embrace this moment to take the opportunity of a new relationship with the Arab world. By backing the UN resolution and the no-fly zone, Arab leaders have shown a willingness to stand up and be counted, and to draw their own proverbial line in the sand. We must recognise that there will be a need for clear rules of engagement for all the participants in this endeavour—rules that everyone, including members of the Arab League, will have to sign up to.

The Chairman of the Defence Committee, of which I am a member, raised a valid point about the need to clarify all the circumstances. For example, what do we do if the rebels attack Gaddafi's troops and he retaliates? Do we attack Gaddafi? That has not been made clear, and this House needs to know. We need to know who is going to take command and control responsibilities, which the US has indicated that it wants to pass on to NATO. Turkey is a member of NATO, and it is concerned about that. What is the Arab League's role in embracing command and control responsibilities? Where do the enforcement of sanctions, the closing down of Gaddafi's means of communications and the sharing of intelligence sit in our rules of engagement and our command and control agreements? The big task is going to be one of foreign policy and diplomacy. The Arab League's continued engagement and movement into partnership with the west will not be easy to maintain, and it has to be one of our priorities. There will be tribal tensions between Shi'a and Sunni.

We have all heard the comments about Amr Moussa and civilian deaths. We must be up front and acknowledge that civilians will die. A recent report by Save the Children stated that 90% of casualties in war zones are civilians. In the past decade, 2 million children have died, and 6 million have been permanently disabled, directly as a result of conflict. Our rules of engagement attempt to mitigate such deaths, but the deaths will happen, and the allies must acknowledge that. We need to ensure that the International Committee of the Red Cross and all UN bodies have access to the war zone to monitor the situation so that we can have clear, neutral and impartial reporting.

It is not clear to me that we have an end game. We know that there cannot be a foreign occupation force, but there is no clear indication of whether regime change is an objective. The strategic defence and security review states that we will deploy forces on the basis of a number of tests, including whether it is in our national interests. One of tests is whether we have a "viable exit strategy". No one today has clarified that exit strategy.

It has been suggested that we should not mention the SDSR. However, over the weekend, I have received many phone calls from members of the armed forces who feel angry. They feel that there has been talk of cuts and of loss of platform. That platform is now being brought into use. There is a concern that we must be up front and acknowledge that we need our armed forces to take this matter forward for us. We in this House can agree to that, but it is our armed forces who are putting their lives on the line on behalf of the Libyan people and the people whom this House represents.

7.1 pm

**Geoffrey Clifton-Brown** (The Cotswolds) (Con): The more serious the situation, the better this House responds. That has been proved by some very fine speeches today. I wholeheartedly congratulate the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and their respective teams on their incredibly hard work over the past seven days. Many people were sceptical about the possibility of the UN agreeing to a no-fly zone. That agreement is therefore a great tribute to the diplomatic effort. The reasons for military intervention are clear and have been well rehearsed by Members from all parts of the House. I fully support the motion. I pay tribute to our armed forces for what they have achieved in such a short time.

I will turn to the future of Libya. On the BBC World Service earlier today, Rear-Admiral Chris Parry said:

“We really do have to get to grips with what happens afterwards. If we don’t, the military campaign will lose momentum, it will lack coherence and we’ll lose broader political support within the Islamic world.”

The pre-emptive action to establish a no-fly zone is almost complete. Colonel Gaddafi’s forces may well be starved of the necessary support and halted short of rebel strongholds. However, an impasse could follow. We must have a clear and coherent plan for how Libya can get to the next stage; for how the Libyan people, if it is their wish, can overthrow the Gaddafi regime; and for what might follow in its wake.

Before the invasion of Iraq, I criticised the then Government in this House for the lack of a post-conflict reconstruction plan. That was one of the most important reasons for the insurgency and violence following the fall of Saddam Hussein’s regime, and for the reconstruction of that country taking so long. It is vital that steps are taken now to ensure that that situation is not repeated in Libya.

Gaddafi still has significant capacity to defend himself and the so-called rebel force currently lacks the ability to overthrow him. It is unclear from UN resolution 1973 what more can be done in such a stalemate, as Members in all parts of the House have said. The resolution specifically excludes

“a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory”.

An amendment to that resolution or a new resolution that allowed occupying troops to be sent in would be unacceptable to this House and to this country. There is no appetite among the British public to be drawn into another potentially lengthy conflict. We have been in Afghanistan for almost 10 years and our armed forces, particularly the Army, need a break from conflict. Likewise, I do not think that arming the rebels would be wise. The west armed the mujaheddin in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq war, and the consequences of those decisions are being felt to this day. When we arm one side, it is never quite clear where those arms will end up.

It is up to the people of Libya to push through a change of governance, but how they will do so remains unclear. I hope that the talk of a partition Libya will be quashed at the earliest opportunity. To leave Gaddafi in the west and a new Government in the east would create far greater instability in the future, and would undoubtedly lead to further conflict.

Undoubtedly, the most important factor in planning for the future of Libya is support from its fellow Arab nations. The Arab League’s endorsement of the no-fly zone was clearly pivotal in securing it. We now need more countries to participate in it. I hope that this is the beginning of a process in which the UK, US, France and others work closely with the Arab League and Arab countries to consider the future of Libya. In the near future, Libya will need more assistance from its regional friends and neighbours. They can play a positive and constructive role in rebuilding the infrastructure of Libya and in helping to form a new nation. Ultimately, all members of the coalition need to speak with one voice to show their decisiveness and resolve to see this matter through. That extends in particular to the European Union and its officials.

I hope that this moment will represent a sea change in the Arab world, as the Prime Minister rightly said, and particularly among those leaders who oppress their peoples. After Iraq and Afghanistan, it was perhaps thought that the west would no longer intervene in the middle east under any circumstances. This action has shown dictators and tyrants everywhere in the world that they need to think twice before brutalising their own people and committing war crimes.

I end with a quotation that has been used by the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr Donaldson), but which is apposite. As a former Member of this House, Edmund Burke, said to his electors in Bristol, all that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing. It would be very wrong for us to do nothing in this case.

7.6 pm

**Mr Michael Meacher** (Oldham West and Royton) (Lab): It is clear that without UN resolution 1973, there would have been appalling blood-letting in Benghazi. It is also clear that this is not another Iraq because there is legitimate UN authority for action and there will be no occupying army. It is highly significant that the support has been gained, at least up to now, of the 23 members of the Arab League.

Having said that, and recognising that action of this kind invariably involves high risks, there are several issues on which this House and the British people want assurances. First, although the UN resolution is unquestionably strong, it focuses on the protection of civilians, as the Prime Minister declared repeatedly today. However desirable the end of Gaddafi may be, regime change is explicitly not covered by resolution 1973, contrary to the unfortunate impression that the Defence Secretary has given in a number of interviews that I have heard. There is always a risk of mission creep in matters of this kind, but if we are to retain the support of the wide coalition that has been assembled, it is vital that we are seen to keep strictly to the terms of the resolution and that we do not seek to put interpretations on it that suit our convenience.

A second concern is over the planning for the outcome of the conflict, which certainly did not happen in Iraq. As has been said, there could be a quick collapse if the Libyan military turns against Gaddafi, or there could be a long stalemate if the regime not only declares a ceasefire but observes it and holds on to what it retains in western and southern Libya. In either case, it is

[Mr Michael Meacher]

unclear at the moment—I wonder whether it is clear to the Government—how any intended outcome will be achieved. If Gaddafi is deposed or killed, given the strong tribal structure in Libya, what is to prevent the country from descending into civil war? How will law and order be imposed in such circumstances, particularly if the Libyan military retains its loyalty to the old regime—as some of it will—and refuses to do a deal with the rebels?

On the other hand, if Gaddafi is forced to end hostilities by the overwhelming force of allied air power, which is very likely, and opts to stay put in western Libya, what then? Will the words “all necessary measures” allow us to sidestep the arms embargo and channel arms to the rebels to enable them to carry on the fight, as the right hon. and learned Member for Kensington (Sir Malcolm Rifkind) suggested earlier? The Prime Minister said on Friday that the resolution’s

“very strong language...allows states to take a number of military steps to protect people and harm those who are intending to damage civilians.”—[*Official Report*, 18 March 2011; Vol. 525, c. 623.]

But that cannot possibly justify arming one side when the other is observing a ceasefire. Equally, using superior allied air power to knock out Libyan army strongpoints if the rebels were to advance on Tripoli would be way outside the essentially defensive context of the UN resolution. In those circumstances, how would the stalemate be broken?

The third problem, which others have mentioned, is that of maintaining the all-important support of the Arab League, and not only during the initial ferocity of the allied onslaught.

**Geraint Davies** (Swansea West) (Lab/Co-op): Would my right hon. Friend be sympathetic in theory to the idea of a future UN resolution giving authority to an Arab-led UN force, spearheaded by the Egyptians and the Turks, as a peacekeeping transition force to solve some of the problems that he has mentioned after the first episodes have concluded?

**Mr Meacher:** There is nothing to stop those countries joining a coalition now, and I am not at all sure that it requires a further UN resolution. I have to say, I think such a result is unlikely.

The continued support of Amr Moussa, the secretary-general of the Arab League, is critical to the allied claim that this is not just another western war against a Muslim country in the Arab world, but rather action against a tyrant who has lost all regional backing and whose people are rising up against him. There are already ominous signs that Mr Moussa’s support may be wobbling, on the ground that the Arab League saw the UN resolution as an essentially defensive concept. The Arab League must not only be continually consulted but actually listened to, and its needs and demands must be taken account of in allied action.

My last point concerns the precedent that is being set. Of course every case is different, but the western powers and the UN did not intervene when there were arguably much stronger cases for it in Rwanda, in the Shi’ite uprisings against Saddam in southern Iraq in 1991 or in the three-week war and extensive killing in

Gaza. As many Members have asked, where will the new doctrine this time around lead?

The argument about selectivity and the application of moral principles has been widely voiced in the middle east. If protecting civilians against a dictator who is seeking bloodily to suppress demand for democratic reform is the prevailing policy, how can that doctrine not be applied to interventions in Bahrain, Yemen, Algeria or elsewhere? That question has been asked repeatedly, but it has not received an answer.

Those are all difficult questions, but I submit that it is better that they be faced up to now, before the initial jingoism—an unpleasant sensation that is being pushed in some of the media—perhaps gives way to dismay and disarray in the weeks and months ahead.

7.14 pm

**Alun Cairns** (Vale of Glamorgan) (Con): Like all Members, I am worried and concerned about activities in and surrounding Libya. I am worried about the disregard for basic human rights shown by the Libyan army and the Gaddafi regime, and concerned about the potential longer-term commitment that we may have embarked upon.

I pay tribute to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Defence and the Foreign Secretary for their work and actions in securing and ensuring that the foundation on which the conflict has been drawn is very different from that on Iraq. It seems only a short time ago that many people were judging and criticising the so-called “loose talk” about the need for a no-fly zone. Some opponents even mocked the calls for one. Such judgments only show the risk of seeking to make short-term political points out of very difficult international situations, and I hope that Members of all parties will have learned a lesson from that.

Last Thursday night, the passing of UN Security Council 1973 changed the terms of the debate. The success in delivering the resolution is remarkable, particularly bearing in mind the statements and comments made by some allies beforehand. The support of the Arab League was critical, and the change of heart of the United States was essential in delivering the consequences of the resolution.

None the less, we need to recognise the concerns and doubts expressed by those who abstained, and the initial comments made by the Arab League subsequent to military action, which have since been clarified, because they indicate how things could develop. The resolution has secured the legality of the actions that have been taken, but their legitimacy and longer-term consequences depend on maintaining the broadest possible coalition.

The delay by the United States in clarifying its position was damaging, but diplomacy won it over. In spite of the abstentions of some nations, dialogues with those countries—Germany and India, and even Russia and China—need to be maintained. It is unlikely that they will ever U-turn on their positions, but as the Gaddafi regime resorts to the most inhumane tactics we can only hope to win their tolerance in private.

The reporting in the UK and elsewhere of the actions that have been taken has taken many different tacks. There have been some spectacular pictures showing how effective military actions have been in removing anti-aircraft capabilities and military hardware from

the Gaddafi regime, and showing the positive impact that our forces have had. None the less, we should never be seduced by such stunning and incredible images. Our defence technology is impressive and astonishing, but judgments about using it must be taken in the context of the wider difficulties that it can bring in the longer term.

Not only must we maintain the legal case, but the moral, political and public cases should always be at the forefront of our mind. Colonel Gaddafi is a master of propaganda and of using it to motivate some of his civilians. Many Arab nations will be sympathetic to his calls. Outgunning Colonel Gaddafi by moral, political and public means in the Arab nations is as important as outgunning him by military means. The UN resolution means that we do not need to defend the political or legal case for our military action, as was required in the Iraq conflict, but we do need to maintain our case and win over doubters in the Arab nations. Many of those nations have significant military resources, and it is essential that they should be used to help us achieve the UN objectives.

Finally, I wish to reflect on 9 April 2003, the day when many of us were fooled by our own propaganda. It was the day when the statue of Saddam Hussein was torn down by the US forces and hundreds of Iraqis were seen hitting the structure with the soles of their shoes in celebration. They were described as “elated”. That and similar images and reports led me, and I am sure many others, to believe that almost all the Iraqi people were relieved at our military intervention. History teaches us that such things are not always true.

The Government’s actions to date have been exemplary, as has been noted widely by Members of all parties. It is up to all of us to ensure that they remain so, with the broadest possible coalition of support and the acknowledgment of the doubters.

7.19 pm

**Jeremy Corbyn** (Islington North) (Lab): I welcome the debate today. It is important that Parliament plays a key role in deciding whether this country is involved in wars. I endorse the points that my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham North (Mr Allen) made in an intervention about war-making powers. The House has a right to ask the Government many questions about the enterprise on which we are embarked and where it will lead. We should not be fooled by newspapers telling us, in a gung-ho and frankly offensive way in the case of *The Sun* and the *News of the World*, that the public are behind this. I am far from convinced of that. The public are concerned about public expenditure and the money that has been spent on the armed forces for the enterprise, and they are very worried about where it leads because they have been through the miserable experience of Iraq and they also have deep concerns about Afghanistan. It is therefore appropriate in today’s debate to have a serious discussion about where the action will lead.

An opinion poll in *Metro* this morning—I do not know how scientific that is—suggested that 58% of those questioned were against British involvement in Libya. Although I do not know how accurate that is, many people are very worried about the action. We must ask questions about the troops that we have committed through the Air Force. How long will they be there? What command structure are they currently under?

That is far from clear. Several air forces are involved, and it is not clear who is co-ordinating them, who is in charge or who decides what targets to bomb at what stage. That is enormously worrying.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington (John McDonnell) asked several questions about cluster bombs and depleted uranium. Cluster bombs are illegal. Children are still dying in Iraq and Afghanistan because of the use of cluster bombs in the past. Depleted uranium was used in the Gulf war in 1991 and that has led to a high level of cancers in southern Iraq. I hope that no other forces are using depleted uranium weapons because of the long-term effects.

What is the mission all about? Only three weeks ago, we were training Libyan forces and selling arms to Libya. British companies were happily trading with Libya and British universities were happily accepting vast sums of money from Libya until a few weeks ago. It is an awfully short time in our relations with Libya in which to go from hero to zero. The rest of the world may be concerned about that.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr Skinner) intervened on the Prime Minister to ask about the end game. One hopes that there will be an urgent ceasefire and some kind of political settlement in Libya, and that Libya’s independence as a state will be preserved. However, there is another scenario: a client state in the east around Benghazi; and a pariah state in the west around Tripoli, led by Gaddafi, and a source of constant conflict, disturbance and danger in the region. That is eminently possible, with oil companies trying to get their hands on the huge resources that are there.

**Mr Allen:** Is my hon. Friend as concerned as I am about the composition of what is currently called “the rebel force”, which is a catch-all for anti-Gaddafi forces? Many of us could support that as a concept, but is my hon. Friend a little worried that we could end up with something even worse than the current regime? Libya is not a repressed democracy. We have not spent the past 30 years building up a democratic base there. It will not be Nick and Dave who take over, but unknown people. We are not sure about the end game and we should be careful what we wish for.

**Jeremy Corbyn:** My hon. Friend makes a valuable point. I do not know the politics, aims, ambitions or anything else of the people in Benghazi any more than I suspect he does. We should be cautious about going to war on behalf of a group of people whom we do not know or understand and of whose aims we are not aware. Many were Ministers in the Gaddafi Government, again, only three weeks ago. It is a very short time.

There is a danger that we do nothing about Bahrain because of close economic and military involvement, despite the US fifth fleet being there. There is a danger that we say nothing about Saudi Arabia because of the vast arms market there. The former Prime Minister, Tony Blair, felt that Saudi Arabia was so important that he stopped the Serious Fraud Office investigation into the al-Yamamah arms contract. In Yemen and Oman, people are dying. They thirst for exactly the same thing. I was at a conference this morning of Bahraini opposition groups who made strong points. They said that they were not campaigning about human rights in Bahrain yesterday, but last year, the year before, the year before

[Jeremy Corbyn]

that and so on. Indeed, I first met Bahraini opposition groups who were concerned about the overwhelming power of the king in 1986 at a UN human rights conference in Copenhagen.

**Mr MacNeil:** Does the hon. Gentleman believe that action in Libya now helps the case for action in the countries that he mentioned later?

**Jeremy Corbyn:** I do not believe that it does because the economic interests in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain far outweigh any humanitarian concerns. I simply do not believe that it will happen.

However, we must use the opportunity to reassess our foreign policy, our arms sales policy and the way in which we get into bed with dictator after dictator around the world. We should also think for a moment about the message that goes out on the streets throughout north Africa and the middle east.

When Israeli planes bombed Gaza during Operation Cast Lead in 2008-09, I did not hear any calls for a no-fly zone over Gaza. F-16 jets pounded Palestinians, killing 1,500 civilians. We have to understand the bitterness of that period and the experience of the Palestinian people because many Palestinian diaspora, living out their lives in refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt—all over the region—want the right to return home. They see the double standards of the west: interested in supporting Israel at the expense of the Palestinian people; currently intervening in Libya but doing nothing to support the Palestinian people.

We are in an interesting period in history. There was an Arab revolution in the 1950s, supporting the principle of pan-Arab unity. Nasser was one of its leading figures. That degenerated into a series of fairly corrupt dictatorships that still run the Arab League. None feels very secure when they attend Arab League meetings. Indeed, they go home as quickly as possible afterwards, lest there be a coup.

We are seeing a popular revolution for accountable government, peace and democracy on the streets throughout the region. We have been on the wrong side in selling arms and supporting dictators. We have not thought through the implications of what we are doing now in Libya. I suspect that we might end up in a Libyan civil war for a long time and that this is not the only occasion on which we will debate the subject in the House. This is the easy bit; the hard part is yet to come.

7.28 pm

**Stephen Gilbert** (St Austell and Newquay) (LD): We clearly live in interesting times. It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Islington North (Jeremy Corbyn) because I share his analysis.

From Morocco in west Africa to Bahrain in the Gulf, we are seeing people grasp for freedom—proud people, many of whom have lived for too long under a veil of oppression. They are willing to put their lives on the line for the simple rights that we in the House and in this country take for granted.

I believe that it is right that we as a country use our military capabilities to stand with those who seek freedom and reform in Libya. Our values demand our active

support for people who will no longer tolerate a corrupt regime that keeps them in ignorance, poverty and conformity. In the long term, as my hon. Friend the Member for Penrith and The Border (Rory Stewart) pointed out, our national interest will be best served by standing with those who share our values and against those who seek to suppress self-determination.

Let us be clear. Gaddafi is a brutal dictator, who has systematically murdered his own people simply because they dared to dream of freedom from his oppressive tyranny. He has murdered children and women and men and boys. He has shown that he is unfit to govern, and he should go.

My thoughts are today with the men and women of our armed forces who are in harm's way. I pay tribute to their bravery. They are fighting for peoples whose courage and bravery in standing up unarmed against oppression is an inspiration to many across the region and the world. I have no direct experience of war. In that respect, my generation has been luckier than most. I have studied international politics and visited parts of the world that have been torn by conflict, and spent hours listening to people who have served their country. I know that there is no glamour in war. If the House forgets that for a single moment, it should reflect on the powerful contributions of my hon. Friends the Members for North Warwickshire (Dan Byles), for Milton Keynes North (Mark Lancaster) and for Keighley (Kris Hopkins).

Many in our community think that we should not get involved in other countries' problems, but Libya is different from Iraq. We could not have stood by and watched Benghazi, a city the size of Glasgow, be wrecked by Gaddafi's henchmen. Unlike Iraq, the UN is clear that action must be taken to protect civilians, and the international community has the backing of many Arab countries.

**Mr Cash:** Does the hon. Gentleman agree that people in Benghazi could still be massacred unless they are allowed to be armed? Resolution 1973 provides a means for that to happen through the committee on sanctions. Does he think that that should be used?

**Stephen Gilbert:** To some extent, I share the hon. Gentleman's analysis that resolution 1973 could institutionalise stalemate. Although our short-term actions are tactically successful, we need a clear strategic plan. The Government must address that, and I am sure the Defence Secretary heard the hon. Gentleman's ideas on one such avenue.

There is no such thing as a good war, but there could be such a thing as a just war. My grandfather fought Nazism in the very desert over which our planes are now flying, and he was right to do so. In standing up to this brutal warlord using our capabilities to protect civilians, we are doing the right thing today.

There are, however, lessons to learn. For too long, it has been common to assume that people in north Africa and the middle east live under dictatorships and repressive regimes because they in some way choose to do so. Over the last few months, we have seen the end of the myth of Arab exceptionalism and an unprecedented grasp for freedom by people who no longer want to live under tyranny and in fear.

This is not the end of regimes in Libya and elsewhere that cling to power without the consent of their people, but it is doubtless the beginning of the end for them. Thousands of brave souls have been prepared to stand up and to lose their lives for things that we take for granted, such as the right to speak our minds, to meet with whom we choose and to vote for a political party of our choice. It is therefore right to stand with those people in their struggle.

I join hon. Members who have said that we need a full review of our foreign policy in the region and beyond to ensure that we use all our capabilities to stand with those who want the right to choose their own Government. We cannot act everywhere, but we must no longer condone regimes that suppress their people or supply them with the tools and training to do so.

I urge Ministers to make it perfectly clear to Gaddafi and his commanders that we are watching them, and that we will prosecute them to the fullest extent under international law for any crimes and atrocities they commit. Clearly, the action on which we are embarked needs to create more than a stalemate on the ground, as one of my hon. Friends said earlier. The steps we have taken have led to tactical success, but our long-term strategy needs to be clear. We also need to look beyond that to a concerted international effort to deliver to the region the benefits of pluralism. After the second world war, the Marshall plan lifted Europe out of poverty. We now need similar for north Africa and the middle east. I welcome the prominence that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister gave to that in his remarks.

There is no doubt that we place a burden on our armed forces, with their continuing obligations in Afghanistan and elsewhere. We ask a lot of them, but they always rise to the challenge. Clearly, they are doing a fantastic job in difficult circumstances, but it behoves the House to remember that their resources are not infinite. If we want them to take on more challenges, we need to ensure that they are correctly resourced. I therefore welcome the use of the NATO command structure, which is a tried and tested vehicle for the delivery of no-fly zones, but I would also welcome further clarity on the rules of engagement that will be employed. We need to give our forces the best chance of defending themselves and prosecuting the UN resolution.

As this Arab spring unfolds before us, it is vital that we put our shoulder to history and stand with those who want the most basic rights—the right to choose their own destinies and to live without fear. My hope is that in all they do, the Government help and not hinder the flourishing of this Arab spring.

7.35 pm

**John McDonnell** (Hayes and Harlington) (Lab): I found it touching that the hon. Member for Keighley (Kris Hopkins) and others expressed trepidation about entering a debate when we are sending troops into battle. I have been in the House for 14 years now, and I have done that on four occasions. I can tell them that it gets no easier. The more I have experience of conflicts and the more I understand the human suffering involved, the more I am committed to peace and conflict resolution, and the more I oppose such military interventions.

There comes a time in all such conflicts when the collateral damage—a disgraceful term—is reported to us, and evidence comes to light of families and children

who get killed and maimed as a result of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. When coffins draped in the Union flag come back, all hon. Members will ask, “Did we do enough to avoid the conflict? Did we do enough to ensure peace?” That is why my hon. Friend the Member for Islington North (Jeremy Corbyn) and I tabled an amendment today. I appreciate that it was not selected for debate, Mr Deputy Speaker, but because it has been referred to, I should like to do so as well.

The amendment sought to demonstrate that we are using every means possible—straining every sinew—to gain peace, and not, as the Prime Minister set out, just doing that before the conflict. Often, the most successful peace talks are those that take place when military action has already been undertaken.

**Mike Gapes** (Ilford South) (Lab/Co-op): My hon. Friend says that we should do everything we can to avoid conflict, but the conflict has already happened. The people of Benghazi are under attack, and the people of Tripoli are suffering from the Gaddafi regime’s repression. In that sense, standing out of the conflict is also taking a position.

**John McDonnell**: I am saying that we should secure peace now that the conflict has started. I oppose Britain’s involvement in the middle east because we have a century and a half of involvement—in pursuit of the region’s mineral wealth—that is steeped in blood, murder and maiming. We do not have the credibility to intervene constructively.

Nevertheless, the conflict has started, and our role is to secure peace as quickly as possible. That is why the amendment seeks to secure peace through negotiations. Already, there have been offers of mediation, in particular through the ALBA group of Latin American nations. We should take that offer. The amendment also states—

**Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans)**: Order. Passing reference to the amendment is allowed, but we must not have a detailed debate on it.

**John McDonnell**: May I refer to those points to which the Prime Minister referred? He said that he would support the sentiments of the amendment, particularly in respect of ensuring that we keep civilians out of harm’s way. When I asked him about depleted uranium, he assured me that we do not use it, but we have used it consistently over time, and it has caused all sorts of harm to people in the middle east. This country, along with France, objected to the international ban on the use of such weapons, but I hope that the Prime Minister’s statement today means that we will now support the ban.

The Prime Minister said that he supports what we say about the need for a middle east conference. We need to engage to try to secure peace and stability and to promote democracy in the region. My view is that we need to do all we can to demonstrate our commitment to peace. The military action has already caused deaths. We do not know whether they are civilians, but the reports from Tripoli are that they are not dividing people from Gaddafi, but actually consolidating his support. The sight of the same countries that invaded Iraq killing Arabs again is of immense value to Gaddafi in his argument that this is another crusader invasion.

[John McDonnell]

We have heard already that the Arab League is falling apart, with different statements coming out in different languages to hide the dissent. The UN is also dividing, with Russia and China, as we speak, urging that military action cease. They are not abstaining, but are convening the Security Council to try to end the action. NATO itself is displaying divisions as well. We have also heard statements from Turkey refusing to take on a longer term role. I have to say that statements in the House and by Ministers are increasingly confusing about the objectives of the military action. The UN resolution does not refer to regime change, but ministerial statement after ministerial statement clearly lead to that conclusion. Although the resolution states that there will not be a troop invasion or occupation, we now know that there is the potential for special forces and boots on the ground. That is all playing into Gaddafi's hands by calling up images of a foreign invasion.

The charges of hypocrisy cannot go away. There is the lack of action in Yemen, Bahrain and Oman. I am talking not about physical action, which I would oppose anyway, but about the mealy-mouthed ministerial statements. There has been no threat to use the international courts against these killer regimes or to seize their assets, and there has been no threat even of diplomatic isolation. Neither has it helped that the images are still fresh in people's minds in the middle east of our Prime Minister's recent tour of the region to sell arms to these barbaric regimes. Finally, of course, my hon. Friend the Member for Islington North has mentioned the hypocrisy of refusing a no-fly zone when Gaza was invaded. We now face the prospect of a long-haul engagement in military action in Libya.

We risk being dragged into on-the-ground bloody combat, followed by a counter-insurgency struggle and then vulnerability to a lengthy terrorist campaign. It will all threaten the peace and stability of the region and have consequences for our own people and the global economy. That is why the message today from the Chamber should be that we seek peace, that we want to ensure the safety of civilians and that our concern is for the peace of the region and the promotion of democracy overall. I urge the Government to take up the offer of mediation from the ALBA countries. I urge the Chamber to send the message that we strive in every way possible to bring all parties together to seek peace. In that way, we might yet have the opportunity to restore some credibility to the role of this country in the middle east. I do not believe that that will be done as a result of the bombs and missiles now hurtling down on the Libyan people and causing death and destruction.

**Mr Allen:** On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. Will you speak to Mr Speaker to ensure that the rights of the House are properly represented, so that in future, when a motion is put down by the Government, who are meant to be being held to account by the House, sufficient time is allowed for amendments to be organised and tabled by people in the House of a different view? We all have reservations. No one has spoken tonight and said that they are 100% certain about what we are doing. If we allow other voices and amendments, and if we allow colleagues to accumulate sufficient signatures, would it not be in order to have a debate with amendments

that could be voted on and which could present a different point of view in the House from the choice we are presented with tonight?

**Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans):** There was an amendment on the Order Paper, but it was not selected by Mr Speaker. However, the hon. Gentleman's comments will be made known to him.

7.44 pm

**Dr Julian Lewis (New Forest East) (Con):** If I am to follow the good example of those engaging in genuine debate, I should refer to previous comments made tonight. Two of the speeches that have been much praised so far—quite rightly, in my view—were those from the right hon. and learned Member for North East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell) and my hon. Friend the Member for Penrith and The Border (Rory Stewart). They were praised not only because of their excellent delivery, but—one would like to think—substantially because of their comment and analysis. If I try to marry those two speeches, I come out with two propositions: intervention should be for humanitarian purposes only, and strict limits should be imposed on how we become militarily involved.

As will emerge as I develop my argument, I believe that the most likely result of such an approach—if it is what hon. Members want—would be not dissimilar to what was set out by the hon. Members for Islington North (Jeremy Corbyn) and for Hayes and Harlington (John McDonnell). That might surprise some hon. Members. I shall come back to that point in a moment, but I wish people to think about it a little. It is one thing to praise a speech about having limited objectives in a war, but it is quite another to proceed as if there will not be consequences of limiting those objectives in the way that we should rightly limit them.

In the early 1990s, when I was not in the House, I looked on in horror at what was happening in Bosnia, and I was particularly ashamed of the fact that our Foreign Secretary of the day, when asked why we would not go to the help of the moderate Bosnian Muslims and would not even allow them to have the weapons with which to defend themselves, replied that we did not wish to create a "level killing field". I thought that that was a disgraceful statement.

**Mr Cash:** Yes, disgraceful.

**Dr Lewis:** My hon. Friend agrees that it was disgraceful.

I looked on with horror and impotence while the world and Britain stood by. Then, partly for that reason, in 1998, during my first term in the House, I was one of just three Conservative Members—if I remember correctly, the others were the now Lord Cormack and the late Michael Colvin—who actually called for military intervention against Milosevic in relation to Kosovo a year before the intervention actually happened. I therefore have a track record of supporting humanitarian intervention. I say that because I have grave reservations about what we are doing now. I will—very reluctantly—support the motion in the Lobby tonight, but I want hon. Members to realise the consequences that are likely to follow.

In such a situation, we need to ask ourselves four questions: who should intervene, how should the intervention be carried out, who should pay for it and

what will be the result? Who should intervene? The answer is: those who are willing and strong enough to do so. How should it be done? Here we get to the nub of the matter. We can intervene in such a conflict by using what has been called air power but is actually the use of precision weapons from the sea and the air. We can intervene using such power only, which is what we say we are doing, or by introducing troops. If we confine ourselves to using precision weapons from sea platforms or the air, we should not expect Colonel Gaddafi to disappear.

The question of who should pay is terribly important. Throughout our years of opposition, we said that Labour Governments had let defence fall too far down our list of priorities. However, I have not noticed us proposing to increase the proportion of GDP we spend on defence. I note that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence is here. I have asked the Foreign Secretary this question twice, and he has brushed me off twice. Will this campaign be paid for out of the existing core defence budget, or will it be met by additional funds from the Treasury reserve? We have to know.

Finally, what will be the outcome? It will be entirely dependent on whether ground troops get involved. We have ruled out ground troops. If the Arab League wishes to see Gaddafi removed, it may have to supply ground troops, but we will not do so. We are left with a situation in which we are making a limited intervention to stop people being massacred. However, let us not fool ourselves into thinking that this will result in the removal of Colonel Gaddafi. Unless there is a coup or ground troop involvement by Arab states, Colonel Gaddafi will probably survive. He will lose control of part of the area, and we will have a long-term commitment to look after the remainder of Libya. For that, payment must be found.

7.50 pm

**Mike Gapes** (Ilford South) (Lab/Co-op): I am glad to follow the hon. Member for New Forest East (Dr Lewis), because he gave what I thought was his version of Tony Blair's Chicago speech of 1999. Where Tony Blair had five criteria, the hon. Gentleman seems to have four, but the consequence would still be the interventionist view that I know he has held for many years.

I do not think that the hon. Gentleman should be so pessimistic about the consequences of what is happening in Libya. None of us can predict what will happen. He is quite right that the Gaddafi regime may persist for some time, in some form or other. He is also possibly right about the alternative outcome of partition, which other hon. Members have mentioned. Another view is that we could be moving towards what might be described as "Somalia with oil", which would be the worst possible outcome. Therefore, we in Europe should be particularly concerned about what is happening in Libya, because it is geographically on the borders of the European Union. Libya is not remote or a long way away; it is of vital, direct, national and European interest to us.

In that context, I want to praise the work of our diplomats in the UN, who have worked hand in glove with French diplomats in the UN to get the Security Council resolution. What has been done through co-operation between Britain and France, as the two European permanent members of the Security Council,

is vital. Unfortunately, the Defence Secretary has left his place, but at least the Foreign Secretary is here. *[Interruption.]* The Foreign Secretary will know that I gave him his correct designation today, unlike when he appeared before the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs last week.

I wanted to ask the Defence Secretary about co-operation between the UK and France on the defence front, because clearly there is a new understanding and agreement. If, as is expected, the lead of the operation is transferred from the United States, there will be interesting questions about where it should go. Turkey appears to be blocking any development of a NATO-based command. What will happen then? Is an alternative arrangement possible? Clearly the European Union is not capable of performing that role and, given Germany's position, would not be likely to do so. What will happen to control of the forces that are brought together? There will be a continuing US role, even though it wants to step back, and those forces will include other European states, the Qataris and others who will enter the coalition. Britain and France will be working at the core of that coalition, but we need to know how that will work in practice. Perhaps we could have an indication of that in the winding-up speeches.

In the time left to me, I want to concentrate on what the development of the Security Council resolution means for the future of international co-operation. There were four groups among the 15 members of the Security Council. There was Britain and France, which clearly saw early that an intervention had to be made to stop the massacres and the killing of hundreds of thousands of people in Libya. Then there was the United States, which clearly saw the same thing but, because of internal, institutional problems—and, I suspect, because the Obama Administration rightly want to take a multilateral approach to international politics, in contrast to the predecessor, Bush Administration—did not want to play the lead role.

**Thomas Docherty** (Dunfermline and West Fife) (Lab): Given the previous US regime's role, does my hon. Friend accept that if the US President had been involved, that might have hindered our ability to get a resolution?

**Mike Gapes:** I do accept that, but I think the US Administration left it pretty late before finally making up their mind to move. It would have been helpful if the prevarication had not gone on for quite so long, but in principle I agree with my hon. Friend.

Then there was a third group, made up of countries in the Security Council that supported the action, even though many of the countries in their region were unhappy. Three African member states—South Africa, Gabon and Nigeria—voted for action, despite the fact that the African Union collectively has not taken the same position. That is significant. There was also Lebanon, representing the only Arab voice in the Security Council.

Then we have the fourth group, made up of China and Russia—traditionally, one of them would have vetoed the resolution, but they chose not to—and Germany, which, as we all know, has its own national view and history. Germany does not wish to put its forces in harm's way and has always been reluctant to take a role in any international involvement. Indeed, I remember the angst in the SPD—the German Social Democratic

[Mike Gapes]

party—even when it debated sending people to peacekeeping missions outside Europe. Then there are Brazil and India, which take a more traditionalist view about non-intervention, which is similar to that of China and Russia.

My point is that, because of the responsibility to protect, which was agreed in 2005 and 2006, and because of the way this debate has been framed, the UN has passed a watershed. The interventions to defend the Kurds in Iraq in 1991 and 1992 were made without a Security Council resolution. The intervention in Kosovo was also made without one, as was the intervention in Iraq, but today we have a new approach, and I hope that it is a model for the future.

7.57 pm

**Mr Edward Leigh** (Gainsborough) (Con): I have some reservations about what we are doing. I am pleased to see the Foreign Secretary in his place; I hope that he will answer some of the reservations that have been voiced today.

My first point is a House of Commons point, because I received an absolute assurance from the Leader of the House two weeks ago on the Floor of the House that before we went to war in future, there would be a substantive vote in the House of Commons. When we went to war in the Falklands, the House of Commons sat on a Saturday. We have to establish the principle—this is not just a House of Commons point; it is a serious and important constitutional point—that in future when we go to war, the House of Commons should vote first.

Secondly, I have a number of questions about what we are doing in this operation. I voted against the Iraq war, because although it was ostensibly about dealing with weapons of mass destruction, in fact, as we know, it was about regime change. A lot of people have said that the current situation is very different, but is it? We are told that it is about humanitarian objectives, but is it not, in fact, about regime change, just as in Iraq? We need to ensure that our objectives are entirely and only humanitarian, and about protecting the people in Benghazi.

In one sense, the current situation is very different from the situation in Iraq, because at least there we were determined to go in and achieve regime change. Speaker after speaker has asked what we are going to achieve with the current operation. People say that we cannot always foretell the future and that that is not an excuse for doing nothing, but surely if we set off on a journey, it is generally a good idea to know the destination. Planes do not occupy ground. Missiles can destroy tanks, but they do not destroy regimes. Bombing Tripoli might bolster the regime's support among the population there—indeed, it already has.

I have already asked the Prime Minister on the Floor of the House—no answer can be given—what will happen if the current operation just produces a stalemate. What will we do then? Will we be able to resist the moral pressure to get more and more involved, and to send in troops? There is absolutely no enthusiasm in this country for getting involved in a third war in the Muslim world. Aircraft can stop things happening—they can stop tanks entering Benghazi and I will support the operation to that extent—but they cannot make things happen.

A lot of lazy thinking has gone on along the lines that the regime was so unpopular that simply imposing a no-fly zone would make it fade away. Will that happen? Where is our strategic interest in Libya, which after all is 1,500 miles away? What are Egypt and Tunisia doing? They are its neighbours. Why is there not a single Arab plane in action at this moment?

We know that the first casualty of war is truth. The second casualty may well be a UN resolution, so that we are sucked into something far beyond what we have voted for. What are Russia and China doing, or rather not doing? Why is Iran silent? Is it because it supports Islamist irregulars in the east and is already there? Why would Gaddafi need to contest a no-fly zone if he can simply infiltrate troops? Is this a humanitarian war or is it a military war to change the regime? Will our efforts simply make Libya into another long-term brutal Sudan-type war?

It is often assumed that there are good guys and bad guys, but in fact Cyrenaica, in the east and controlled by the rebels, has always been separated from Tripolitania in the west. The two parts only became one state in 1934 and there has been a long-term dispute or semi-civil war between them for a long time. Indeed, in the 18th century Tripolitania invaded Cyrenaica and there were many massacres. History is extremely complicated; this region is very complicated; and we need to understand what is going on.

I was pleased to see the Defence Secretary in his seat. The old adage from Theodore Roosevelt is:

“Speak softly and carry a big stick”,

but we have been in danger of speaking loudly and breaking our sticks in two in the strategic defence review. If one has read the British press, one would imagine that the whole world is hanging on to our words. They are not. I was reading the French press, and there was little mention of Britain. In Italy, no doubt, they believe that Berlusconi is taking the lead. There is only one capital that matters and that is Washington.

Oratory is not enough; we need air power. How many Tornados do we have? I believe that the strategic defence and security review was a disaster, as big a disaster as the Nott review, which was finally overtaken by the Falklands war. I hope that this operation overtakes the disastrous defence review. France has an aircraft carrier; Spain has an aircraft carrier; Russia has an aircraft carrier; the USA has 11 aircraft carriers; and we have to fly a round trip of 3,000 miles to impose our military force. By the way, all we have done is send three Tornados and two cruise missiles.

**Dr Julian Lewis:** I am glad that my hon. Friend raised that point, which I did not have time to raise. Although it is true that in this case we can get by from land bases, when it comes to the fuel costs of flying a single mission, a Harrier from a carrier would have cost £5,750, one from Sicily or southern Italy costs about £23,000 and one from the United Kingdom costs £200,000.

**Mr Leigh:** My hon. Friend makes the point. We could have had a carrier just 100 miles off the coast. The Prime Minister could have been sending our power. The Army is primarily a projectile of the Royal Navy and the defence review has been an attack on our traditional maritime and air power and I hope that we use this operation to learn lessons about that.

In conclusion, I believe that we should review the strategic defence review and that we should state firmly that our operation is simply and only an humanitarian exercise to save people in Benghazi and that there is absolutely no intention of our trying to achieve regime change.

**Zac Goldsmith** (Richmond Park) (Con): Would my hon. Friend welcome, as I would, an absolute assurance from the Government that if they feel compelled to escalate our involvement in Libya, this House will be given the opportunity to vote again on this matter?

**Mr Leigh:** I have already said that that is a very important constitutional point. I know that I am just a House of Commons man, but most of the time that is all I have been allowed to be. There is nothing wrong with that and we on the Back Benches have to say loudly and clearly to the Government that if there is any escalation, we must be consulted through a substantive resolution and that what we are talking about tonight is simply a very limited humanitarian operation using only war planes, with no question whatsoever of our being dragged into third war in a Muslim country. I hope that point will be made loud and clear by the House of Commons.

8.5 pm

**Richard Burden** (Birmingham, Northfield) (Lab): I apologise for my absence during the early part of the debate, but along with other hon. Members I had to attend a meeting of the Committees on Arms Export Controls. The House will probably understand that events in the middle east and beyond show pretty conclusively the importance of the work of that Committee, and others, in scrutinising UK policy on arms exports.

Many hon. Members have posed the very reasonable question of what we are getting into with the operation in Libya and Iraq has come up time and time again. Indeed, the spectre of Iraq haunts us all. I was opposed to the invasion of Iraq—I remain of that view—but I also hold the view that the issues we are dealing with today are very different. This action was not preceded by speeches about axes of evil. There have been no off-the-shelf neo-con theories in which the answer was clear in advance and all that remained was the question that allowed that answer to be put into effect—the answer being that we would end up going to war.

In this case, the entire middle east is going through a transformation that we have never seen before—a huge upsurge in popular protest calling for rights and democracy—and the response in Libya was not only violent repression by the Gaddafi regime but a chilling warning that there would be the wholesale slaughter of civilians in Benghazi not in weeks or months but in days. Parallels are always dangerous at such times, but the parallel I thought of at the time was not Iraq but something that I came across soon after I was elected in the early 1990s—the scenes in Srebrenica and elsewhere in Bosnia. It seemed to me that we could not allow that to happen again.

In 2005, the United Nations, as a result of the experience of Bosnia, Rwanda and other places, agreed that the international community did and does have a responsibility to protect. That is right and this is a test of our

willingness to do that. Our objectives must be clear. The UN framework established in the resolution passed on Thursday is open to interpretation, but it is more specific than many we have seen recently. We must also be aware that events are dynamic. We need a much clearer strategy of how to go forward and how to respond.

I hope that we will listen to the wise words of the hon. Member for Penrith and The Border (Rory Stewart) about the need to be humble as well as confident and to be limited in our rhetoric and in what we know we can achieve. We should listen to what the hon. Member for Milton Keynes North (Mark Lancaster) said about needing to think through the issues to do with stabilisation and our role in it.

We must be aware of the vital role of the Arab League and the Arab world. Without their support, the UN resolution simply would not have been possible, but now, after the events of the weekend, the comments that were made and the clarifications that were made on the back of those comments, we must have a much closer understanding with the Arab League about how we go forward. We need to recognise and put in place the liaison arrangements that will be necessary to enable and encourage the Arab League to play a much more active role in what transpires from now on rather than being cheerleaders for us. However, the Arab League must also accept that it has responsibilities so that not only Libya but Yemen, Bahrain and other countries in that part of the world can move forward.

We also need to understand, as my hon. Friend the Member for North Ayrshire and Arran (Katy Clark) said, that we need to address not just Arab Governments but the Arab people. When they express their objections to what is happening in this part of the world, the term “double standards” comes up time and again.

While it is right for people to speak of the importance of pursuing the middle east peace process at this time without soft-peddalling, it is also true that “process” is not enough. The former Palestinian ambassador to the United Kingdom, Afif Safieh, put it usefully some years ago when he said it was not enough to have an endless peace process, and that what was needed was an enduring peace. I think that what the people of the Arab world are looking for from us to counteract the impression of double standards that we have given is not just condemnation of, for example, Israeli settlement building, but a resolution to do something about it; not just condemnation of death and destruction in Gaza, but action to ensure that 1.5 million people are no longer forced to live in a kind of open prison.

We need to address those issues, not just for the sake of our credibility, but to establish an understanding with the peoples of the middle east that will allow them to transform their region in the way that they want and allow far more justice in the world—and that will allow far more stability in our world.

8.11 pm

**David Morris** (Morecambe and Lunesdale) (Con): Like my hon. Friend the Member for North Warwickshire (Dan Byles), I will vote very reluctantly. Every time a military conflict takes place, death is involved along with ramifications for future generations, and everything hinges in what we say in this Chamber. We all know that this Chamber is the nerve centre of the country.

[David Morris]

Although we are debating the motion, I really believe that the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary were right to take the actions that they have taken. We cannot stand by and watch people who are not that far away from us, geographically—on the shores of Europe—suffer as they are suffering. We are dealing with a man who, time and again, has violated human rights. Time and again he has killed his own people. He has killed people on our soil. People have been killed through his orders, indirectly, and by his regime, certainly.

Members on both sides of the argument have said that we should have had more time in which to discuss the motion, but cries for help have no time. Those cries for help are coming from 2,000 miles away, which is not very far, and we have to help people. We have to be part of this.

**Michael Connarty** (Linlithgow and East Falkirk) (Lab): I wonder whether the hon. Gentleman is listening to the cries for help from the people of Bahrain who have been murdered by Saudi Arabian troops, the people in the south of Syria who have been murdered by troops, or the people in Yemen who have been murdered by another dictator there. Why select these cries for help to listen to?

**David Morris:** Because it is the right thing to do; that is why.

**Michael Connarty:** Why select them?

**David Morris:** It is the right thing to do at this time and in this case.

Let me tell the House a story of which I have personal knowledge. A good friend of mine who was a radio officer on a ship jumped off it into the ocean when he saw a British destroyer come past. The military on the ship from which he jumped threw grenades at him, one of which hit him but bounced off and, thankfully, did not explode. He swam for his life, and our boys pulled him out of the sea. He came to this country, and was thankful for that. He has been here for nearly 30 years. Just think of that. Let me tell the House something else. When the students were bombing Manchester in the 1980s, that man lied to everyone that he was Italian, because he was in fear of his life. That is the kind of regime that we are discussing today, and the kind of regime that we want to sort out once and for all.

What else happened in the 1980s? Yvonne Fletcher was shot on our own soil in front of the television cameras. Some people have very short memories, but I do not have a short memory, and what worries me is that if we had not acted as we have so far, massacres would now be occurring in Libya.

This is not about the moral high ground. We pulled a mission yesterday—or over the weekend, or whenever it was—because civilians were involved. We do not attack human shields. We should think about what we are doing here. Yes, we are putting our troops into a theatre, but we are also saving people's lives, and we are sorting out a dictator who should have been sorted out years ago. This man was responsible for Lockerbie. Do Members remember that? I do. He was never brought to book. Dare I say it, but some Members wanted to appease that regime—and here we are today, having to take up the mantle to sort it out again.

I was outraged when Yvonne Fletcher was shot. What can we do about all this? We can do the right thing. When Members go through the Lobbies tonight, they should think about what has happened in the history of Libya and how it has affected this country and the middle east, and they should do the right thing.

8.16 pm

**Caroline Lucas** (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green): I welcome the opportunity to contribute to this crucial debate. I also welcome the opportunity to pay tribute to the men and women in our armed forces, whose courage and commitment are beyond question. However, I think we owe it to them, and indeed to all in the middle east and north African region, to ensure that the role that Britain plays is beyond reproach or misunderstanding. That means that it must be consistent, that it must be principled, and that it must be likely to do good rather than harm. Measuring the military intervention that has taken place so far against those benchmarks, I am not sure that they are being met.

Let take us consistency. I have heard no serious answers to the charge that we are being enormously selective in the battles that we are choosing to fight. The Prime Minister has been asked whether military intervention in Libya signals a new direction for British foreign policy, and whether we might expect similar action to be taken against other oppressive regimes. Libya, we are told, is special. We are also told that the fact that we cannot do good everywhere should not be an argument against doing whatever we can. I consider it critical that if we choose to move in this direction, we should do so with clear principles that are as independent of self-interest as we can possibly make them. The fact that we are operating in the same week as invading Saudi forces are executing unarmed democracy protesters on the streets of Bahrain raises serious questions.

In considering whether our action is truly principled, we surely have to say why we think it appropriate to continue to sell arms to the region. I do not apologise for returning to that issue, because the Colonel Gaddafi who has been rightly described today as a murderous dictator has not suddenly become one. He was already a murderous dictator a few months, or weeks, ago, when we were happy to sell him tear gas, crowd control equipment, ammunition for wall and door-breaching projectile launchers, and plenty of other military equipment as well. In the nine months leading up to September last year, the United Kingdom issued millions of pounds' worth of arms export licences for Libya, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

We cannot ignore our own complicity in arriving at this point. We cannot continue to arm regimes that abuse their own citizens, and try to claim the moral high ground when addressing the conflicts that those same arms have helped to perpetuate. As recently as last month, Ministers attended the IDEX—international defence exhibition—arms fairs in Abu Dhabi, and in less than six months the United Kingdom will host its own arms fair in London, where, no doubt, regimes that abuse their own people will once again seek to buy the tools of their repression. I hope very much that the commitment that we are hearing today—the commitment to upholding human rights in the middle east—will extend to our policies on arms exports, so that we can finally not just review but end the policy of selling arms to repressive regimes.

We need to ensure that intervention has a better chance of doing good than of doing harm. The motion asks the House to support the Government “in the taking of all necessary measures”.

Like United Nations Security Council resolution 1973, it commits us to a course of action that is dangerously open-ended. It does not define success, unless it is the over-simplistic success of removing Gaddafi, but if that is our measure we risk simply repeating the errors of our recent history. UN resolution 1973 does not appear to rule out the use of ground forces in support of the rebels or in helping to protect civilians. That is a fairly wide definition. Earlier in the debate, we heard an interpretation of the resolution that suggested it provided for the arming of rebels as well. It is extremely over-optimistic to expect an air campaign to be decisive; hence, presumably, the scope to escalate any campaign further. I believe that could be fatal to the chances of an early peace and I am deeply concerned about the falling away of support so early in this mission. I refer not only to the secretary-general of the Arab League, but to the fact that Egypt and Algeria do not want to be involved in this action, that the US does not want to lead on it and that France’s speed of action seems to suggest that President Sarkozy is motivated at least in part by his domestic concerns.

There is a real risk of our making matters worse. If there is a stalemate—if Gaddafi does not fall in the next few weeks—we could face a civil war, a partitioned Libya and even a potential breeding ground for al-Qaeda. Given the west’s colonial past, its history of adventurism and support for dictatorships in the region, its failure to enforce UN resolutions in Palestine and the legacy of the invasion of Iraq in 2003, I think its motives in Libya will always be in doubt. The Prime Minister himself said a few days ago that a no-fly zone was not a simple solution but one of a series of steps needed to make sure that we

“get rid of this regime.”—[*Official Report*, 16 March 2011; Vol. 525, c. 291.]

How can that be that be read as being anything other than, in effect, support for regime change, which falls well outside the terms of the UN resolution?

I hope that in the Government’s summing up there will be further clarification of the inconsistencies between what is in the UN resolution and what is in the Government’s motion. I hope that they will review their trade and foreign policy through the screen of a genuinely ethical foreign policy and I hope that we can support the urgent convening of a middle east peace conference.

8.21 pm

**Paul Uppal** (Wolverhampton South West) (Con): I thank all right hon. and hon. Members who have contributed to the debate this evening. It has been a substantial and broad debate and many issues have been thoughtfully covered. I congratulate the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, who is in his place, on the leadership they have demonstrated, especially in the embryonic formation and eventual birth of resolution 1973.

Just a few weeks ago, I was struck by the difficulty and pertinence of these issues when I examined a broadsheet newspaper. The front page showed a picture of an elderly Libyan gentleman with his arms outstretched,

appealing to the west and asking why it would not help. In the middle was a cartoon picture of the Prime Minister—a rather pejorative one, I am afraid—with a little representation of Muammar Gaddafi sitting on his nose in the form of a fly. The Prime Minister was pointing a loaded revolver at the fly. That illustrated how difficult this issue has been. The hon. Member for Ilford South (Mike Gapes) made a pertinent point when he said that much consensus has been built. I think that John Simpson has referred to the Arab League as a usually timid and, if truth be told, disparate body. It is not always easy to get resolve, but I am heartened by the fact that the Prime Minister and many other leaders have taken a lead on this.

**Mr Robert Buckland** (South Swindon) (Con): Is it not striking to note that the preamble to the lengthy and comprehensive resolution 1973 determines that the situation in Libya continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security? The notion that this is an intervention in a domestic war is therefore wholly wrong.

**Paul Uppal**: My hon. Friend makes the point very eloquently and I could not agree with him more wholeheartedly.

We all have a personal history and personal experiences that form our political opinions. Just last Wednesday, I came to the end of a very long political journey when I took a group of sixth formers from my constituency to Auschwitz-Birkenau. It was a cathartic day and a very personal experience, which I think will stay with me for the rest of my life. On reflection, there were many lessons to learn about that journey but one thing was more pertinent than anything else in my discussions with those sixth formers—they wondered how we had let that tyranny and oppression come to fruition.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to the holocaust in his speech, and I realise that some hon. Members might think it too much of a stretch to relate that situation to this one, so let me give another example. My maternal grandfather gave me many things, including a love of Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy, a mischievous sense of humour and a very personal story that strongly resonates with me to this day. At a time of partition in northern India, he stood against a mob who were determined to burn out their Muslim neighbours. They said, “We will go from house to house and there will be no mercy.” Those words have rung very loud in my ears over the past few days because they bring home what is right and what is wrong. To my pride, my maternal grandfather stood against the mob and said, “If anyone attacks this house, it will be an attack on my household,” and to this day that Muslim family is still in that village.

I have referred specifically to some personal issues and other right hon. and hon. Members have highlighted how difficult this issue is. I know that there might be charges of hypocrisy and that people are asking why we are choosing Libya and not Bahrain, why we are not addressing the situation in Yemen and why we are choosing to act in this specific situation, but we can only deal with the situation as it is presented to us. Colonel Gaddafi has shown that he is prepared to use his own people as human shields. He is prepared to go from door to door and show no mercy.

I appreciate that these are difficult issues, but it is absolutely necessary to do the right thing. The choice is simple and stark and has been laid out eloquently by

[Paul Uppal]

both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. The choice, as in the terms of this motion, is to do something or to do nothing and I for one think that we do the right thing by acting.

8.26 pm

**Geraint Davies** (Swansea West) (Lab/Co-op): I support the UN no-fly zone and the early intervention to take out Gaddafi's machinery for the mass slaughter of hundreds of thousands of near-defenceless civilians without apology. The world could not stand by as Gaddafi used air power, tanks and soldiers to inflict wholesale massacre on those fighting for a peaceful, democratic future for Libya. UN resolution 1973, which sanctions the use of "all necessary measures" to protect civilians, needs to destroy Gaddafi's military assets. We need to take out the tiger's teeth.

I appreciate that some members of the Arab League fear that this could turn into a western invasion—some sort of neo-colonial crusade—but they and we need to remember that the authorisation of this resolution is specific and does not include that sort of invasion. We should work hand in hand with the Arab League with sensitivity to recent history. I also appreciate that we need an end game in mind and a means to deliver that end game, but it is necessary to disarm that despot, who is intent on mass murder, even if we simply withdraw after that. If we did not have an end game, but stopped the mass murder and then withdrew—not something that I would advocate—that would be better than simply standing aside and doing nothing, saying, "We don't have an endgame, so let them die."

The ultimate end game would, of course, lead to a Libya at peace with itself, with a new constitutional settlement involving and embracing all its communities. However, that settlement must emerge over time from within, informed by Libyans at home and abroad. I certainly take the view that we parliamentarians should consult our Libyan constituents and communities, the Arab nations and the Arab League about our actions and about the shape of a Libyan future that embraces different communities—different ethnically, racially, and by gender—now, rather than later. Let us remember, however, that a United Nations resolution does not sanction ground forces delivering regime change, and certainly western ground troops would play into Gaddafi's hands; their use would be seen as a grab for oil and as neo-colonialism.

We have talked this evening about United Nations action leading to stalemate. What would happen then? I have consulted quite closely a large Libyan community in Swansea, and they—or some of them, at least—are calling for an Arab-led peacekeeping force, probably spearheaded by the Egyptian army and the Turkish under a United Nations flag, after the disarming process to maintain the peace and oversee a transition. Obviously, that would need a further United Nations resolution, but it is something that we need to bear in mind when looking to the future.

Members have asked how we can justify intervention in Libya but not Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and other places with repressive regimes. This is not a completely satisfactory answer, but the fact is that one has to do what one can. There are certain things beyond our

limitations. As has been said many times already, if we cannot do everything, it does not mean that we should not do anything. I believe that the action reflects the United Nations at its best, working together, gradually stepping forward in history. It is a step towards building a unified world based on a fundamental respect for humanity, and a future that we all share. I simply say: let us step forward together, with care, to share that future.

8.30 pm

**Christopher Pincher** (Tamworth) (Con): I begin by paying tribute to the air crews and other servicemen and women who, as we engage in jaw-jaw in the House, are engaged in war-war of a most dangerous kind. I also pay tribute to the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary for keeping up the pace and securing the United Nations Security Council resolution.

Just a week or so ago, no-fly zones were not particularly fashionable. They did not have many admirers in Washington, the capitals of Europe, or indeed some quarters of this House, but as Harold Wilson observed, a week is a long time in politics, and I suppose that means that in diplomacy a week is an eternity, because we have now secured this United Nations resolution, which can bring real, not abstract, hope to those thousands, possibly tens of thousands, of people in Libya who might otherwise be killed by Gaddafi.

We have already heard some voices in this House say tonight that perhaps we are going beyond the United Nations resolution, as if somehow it is just the no-fly zone that matters. It would be naive to suppose that we could impose safely and quickly a no-fly zone without first destroying targets on the ground—air bases, surface-to-air missile sites, and command and control installations. That will at the very least ensure that our air crews, who are trying to save the lives of others, are best protected. It is also naive to suppose that keeping the al-Quwwat al-Jawwiya—the Libyan air force—on the ground will do the job. In Benghazi, about 8,000 civilians alone have been killed by the heavy weaponry of Gaddafi's ground troops. Unless we can take out those tanks and heavy weapons, we cannot defend lives.

We are now in a conflict situation, and it is right that the House should ask questions about the Government's objectives. There are four key objectives. We should enforce the UN resolution—that may be obvious. We need to protect lives, and that is what we are doing, not simply through the actions that we have taken, but through the actions that we have not. As my hon. Friend the Member for Morecambe and Lunesdale (David Morris) said, the fact that we did not go through with the Tornado strike earlier today demonstrates clearly that we are keen to ensure that civilian lives are protected. Gaddafi knows that, and that is why he is using human shields, willingly or unwillingly, to protect his installations. That is why we must make sure that his armed columns do not get into Benghazi or other built-up areas, where it is much more difficult for our precision weapons to protect civilians while taking out his soldiers.

It is also important that we internationalise this operation as far as we can. The other day, thanks to my hon. Friend the Member for Shrewsbury and Atcham (Daniel Kawczynski), I had the pleasure of meeting members of the Shura Council of Saudi Arabia. They said that they

could not enforce a no-fly zone or deal with Gaddafi alone, and that they needed our help. We told them that we understood that, but that we, too, could not act alone and that they needed to be involved. I am pleased that Qatar is now becoming involved in the operation, but I hope that my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary will use all his undoubted eloquence to prevail on the Saudis and the Egyptians to play their military part in the operation, so that we can send a message to the Arab world that this is not some sort of NATO-inspired adventure but a serious international effort to protect the people of Libya from butchery by their President.

We must also ensure that the public here understand that our objectives are limited and temporary. I spoke to some of my constituents over the weekend and, as my hon. Friend the Member for The Cotswolds (Geoffrey Clifton-Brown) said, there is no appetite for a protracted ground war or even a protracted air operation over Libya. I was pleased, therefore, to hear the Prime Minister make it clear that we will stick to the terms of the UN resolution. We are now engaged in the conflict. We have made a decision. The price of action is the condemnation of some, but the price of inaction is the inevitable deaths of many. I think that we have, with regret, made the right choice. I hope that the House will support the Government tonight, and say that a few condemnatory remarks is a price worth paying.

8.36 pm

**Barry Gardiner** (Brent North) (Lab): I hope that, in a few weeks, the House will be able to rejoice that Gaddafi has gone. Few dictators have committed so many acts of psychopathic wickedness over such a long period of time. Many hon. Members will know of his atrocity at Abu Salim prison in Tripoli, where he marched 1,270 prisoners into a compound, locked the gate and instructed his soldiers to open fire from the courtyard rooftops. The gunfire and grenades rained down for more than two hours until all 1,270 people were dead. But that was in the dying days of John Major's Government in June 1996, and Britain took no action.

I welcome resolution 1973. To take action now is right, but it would be disingenuous to claim that action was not possible without Britain's military participation, involving just three planes. The question is not whether action against Gaddafi is right but whether it is we who have the primary duty and responsibility to take it. It is the families of many of those slain 15 years ago at Abu Salim who began this revolution in Libya, inspired by others across the region who had dared to rise up and demand justice and dignity from their leaders. I praise their courage, but I recognise that this is a civil war in Libya. In that respect, it is categorically different from other conflicts involving ethnic cleansing and religious domination by one faith over another. This is neither Bosnia nor Rwanda. UN resolution 1973 has authorised international interference in a civil war in which there has been no genocide and no ethnic cleansing: no Halabja there.

The resolution purports to allow no more than the humanitarian protection of civilians, but all acknowledge that the Libyan population will not be secure from harm until the country is rid of Gaddafi. Coalition leaders, when asked whether Gaddafi was a legitimate target, have been equivocal in their response. In such circumstances, the rose of humanitarian protection begins

to smell of regime change, and by that name it is not so sweet. This became apparent to Amr Moussa over the weekend when he said:

“What is happening in Libya differs from the aim of imposing a no-fly zone, and what we want is the protection of civilians and not the bombardment of more civilians”.

Perhaps the Arab League was too optimistic, because that is precisely what is likely to happen, if not by British and coalition missiles then by the rebels. It is naive to think that we can stop one side fighting in a civil war and not expect the other to take advantage. In a civil war, the tragedy is precisely that civilians are killed, if not by one side, then by the other. I do not believe that the international coalition will be even-handed in stopping rebel forces advancing in the same way.

The Prime Minister said in his statement on Friday that if we will the ends, we must also will the means. To will the means, however, does not entail the proposition that we must be the means. Many people in the UK are asking, “Why does Britain always have to get involved?” In two days, we will hear the Budget and the Chancellor will explain to the country why it is necessary to cut thousands of jobs to tackle the deficit. Those men and women who have been made redundant will no doubt sympathise with the Libyan people, but they will ask, “What has this got to do with Britain?” North Africa is not on our borders. It is not in our direct sphere of influence. Libya poses no direct threat to the UK, and we have no historical responsibility as the former colonial power, so why are we spending millions of pounds on cruise missiles, and endangering the lives of British soldiers to implement the resolution. It is ironic that many people asking these questions will be among the 17,000 military personnel who were judged to be surplus to requirements in last October's defence review, when the Government cut £4 billion from the defence budget.

There is no contradiction in welcoming the enabling authority given by UN resolution 1973, which allows those who have a direct interest or who have historical responsibilities as the former colonial power to act in Libya and, at the same time, to insist that we have no such direct interest or responsibility. Today, we are debating this after the event—we have taken that responsibility before a vote in the House, yet no one in government has sought to explain the policy of the rebels, on whose side we now find ourselves. We know that they are against Gaddafi, and that is a good start, but we certainly have no knowledge that they intend to replace him with an open, tolerant, liberal democracy. The whole of north Africa and the middle east are changing more rapidly than at any time since Suez. Shi'a minorities in Yemen and Bahrain have been shot or silenced by an invasion from Saudi Arabia. Iran is known to be eager to get involved. Egypt and Tunisia have effected home-grown revolutions and even Syria is experiencing serious internal tension.

In that extraordinary context, the Government have judged it right and in Britain's interest to involve our forces in military action. I pray that in a week's time Gaddafi is gone, and I pay tribute to the valour of our armed forces, but I believe that the Government were wrong to ask this—

**Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Lindsay Hoyle):** Order. I call James Morris.

8.42 pm

**James Morris** (Halesowen and Rowley Regis) (Con): I congratulate the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, and everyone who, with patience and painstaking fortitude, has brought the UN resolution to fruition. I pay tribute, as other hon. Members have, to our armed forces who are implementing that resolution. That type of work is what protecting British national interests is all about. As other hon. Members have said, every generation needs to define what is in Britain's national interest. In the modern world, our national interest encompasses security, humanitarian issues and commercial interests. It demands that, as a nation, we are prepared to build alliances, to contemplate military co-operation with other nations, and to deploy our unique soft and hard-power assets. We are doing so in relation to Libya. We were right to act, but we were right not to act alone.

It was right to agree a resolution with clear parameters for engagement and with broad-based support, which means that, in this context, the international community can act without the United States necessarily taking the lead. It is an example, too, of Anglo-French co-operation, with Britain and France being seen to be in the lead. It confirms that we do not live in a unipolar world. Britain, in the modern world, with a new definition of our national interests, must be as flexible and co-operative as possible to protect its national interest.

As other hon. Members have pointed out, recent experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan have given the British people good grounds for caution about our country taking military action and being involved in foreign intervention. When I speak to my constituents in Halesowen and Rowley Regis, they are concerned about our commitments in the world. They have become weary in relation to Iraq and Afghanistan because they saw no clarity about the missions or their end point. We must not make the same mistake again with Libya.

It is vital that we avoid the tendency that has characterised some of our military interventions in the recent past to use over-optimistic language and to engender inflated expectations about what we can achieve and, in some contexts, a downright delusion about the lengthy effort required to achieve a successful outcome when we make the grave decision to intervene in the affairs of other countries. That mindset and language characterised our initial involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Our new modern national interest demands that we are pragmatic, realistic and straight with the British people about what we are trying to achieve through the resolution. We must see the debate tonight, and the United Nations resolution, in the context of Britain adopting a broader strategy towards the middle east, a region which in recent times has been subject to turbulence and unpredictability, forcing on Britain a posture of ambiguity in foreign affairs, and obliging us to live with that ambiguity and make decisions within that context.

Although we are taking military action under the UN resolution, we must also be determined to use our influence through alliances and through our soft power assets to help build functioning civil societies and democracy in the countries of the middle east. It is in our national interest to utilise those soft power assets simultaneously with making a focused decision to take the action that we are taking in Libya.

The resolution that we are debating tonight is clear and pragmatic. It has broad-based support and I believe

it is in Britain's national interest to take action against Gaddafi now, but at the same time to be mindful that in doing so, we are making a grave decision that must be combined with Britain using its soft power assets throughout the middle east to promote democracy and build civic society.

**Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Lindsay Hoyle):** Order. Before I call the next speaker, I inform the House that I will take one more six-minute speech, then I will drop the time limit to four minutes to try and get in as many speakers as possible.

8.48 pm

**Mr David Lammy** (Tottenham) (Lab): Clearly, all war is evil, and we should remember that when we talk about the business of war. But some evil is necessary. In reflecting on the vote tonight, we should bear that in mind. Some of the language in our media over the past few days has left me cold. It is indicative of a country that has not experienced bombing for well over 60 years, but for those who are poor and who see bombs raining on their country from up above, with necessary supplies disrupted and real fear in their heart, the urgency and seriousness of what we are talking about is very great indeed.

In reflecting on how to vote, I think of how this all began on 17 December 2010 with one man, Mohammed Bouazizi, who burned himself to death because of the oppression he saw and experienced in Tunisia. That set off a wave of activity across the middle east. In supporting this, we line up with him and with the young people of the region—the 29% of the population aged between 15 and 29 who have had enough. They are educated, too often unemployed, and concerned about an ossifying political system that does not seem to relate to their experience. They want to do something about the dictators and the lack of democracy across the region. That is the test. Those are the people we support, despite the UN resolution that is the subject of today's motion. In doing so, we should recognise the changed circumstances in which we have such a debate and the kind of scrutiny that is expected of us.

Any action taken must clearly be proportionate. We must be mindful of the fact that the British public at large do not expect there to be large-scale civilian death as a result of our action. Any action must be proportionate and multilateral. This generation is mindful of the imperial past of our country and those countries that are part of the allied effort. That is important. That is why the multilateral approach is the right one. Against that backdrop, it is concerning that the Arab League, although it is prayed in aid, seems neither present, nor wholly behind what is happening. It is concerning that the African Union, too, clearly wants to disassociate itself from the bombing of Libya. How are we to present a multilateral force if those two major players are not part of it?

The generation of young people on the streets in the middle east, who are in communication with their generation in this country, ask two other major questions. First, what are the criteria by which we intervene? Why not Darfur or Zimbabwe? What is our position on Yemen and Bahrain? Is there consistency when we intervene? They are entitled to some answers on the new and changed circumstances, particularly in the context in

which we are talking not about being invaded ourselves, but about intervention that is perhaps necessary in this new age. Secondly, that generation also asks for some consistency, integrity and principles in the UK's position on arms. Just as we have taken noble positions on nuclear proliferation, the time has come not just for another review, but for statutory implementation on arms. We must ask ourselves why in the last year for which figures are available Europe spent €343 million arming Libya, involving companies from the UK, Italy, Germany and France. It was unacceptable when my party was in government, and it is unacceptable now.

8.54 pm

**Richard Drax** (South Dorset) (Con): It is a privilege to follow the right hon. Member for Tottenham (Mr Lammy).

First and foremost, my thoughts extend to our armed forces policing this no-fly zone and to their families. Our stated purpose is to save lives, and I am delighted that we have taken such a high moral and legal stand. I, like many here today, hope that we succeed in that worthy aim, and I commend the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary on their courage. All too often, leaders get it in the neck for failing to take the lead, but in this case they have, and I commend their courage, as other Members have.

I am, however, instinctively cautious, not least because there are so many deserving cases out there. We must remember that the resolution would not exist at all without the backing of the Arab League, therefore planes from those nations should be in action and soon. I welcome the news that Qatar is sending four warplanes, and I hope that Egypt and Saudi Arabia will follow suit. Should we lose the support of the Arab League for the resolution, it will put our Prime Minister and this country in a horrible predicament.

One of the burdens of the freedom we cherish is that we cannot idly stand by and watch while evil rides out, unleashing its vile intent. For that reason, I support any humanitarian relief that we can give to those fleeing Gaddafi's brutality, but I do wonder where we will be operating next. Hon. Members have mentioned Zimbabwe, Liberia, Rwanda, Bahrain and Yemen. What if Saudi Arabia goes? I will leave the House with that thought.

The duty of any Government is to protect the nation, her people and her interests. Libya is of strategic significance, I believe, but I am concerned that we are walking on a knife-edge. Yes, we should be concerned about a pariah state festering on Europe's southern boundary; wounded, Gaddafi's regime would be even more dangerous. We must not forget his recent statement to unite with al-Qaeda in a holy war against us. Let us not forget his support for the IRA and, of course, the murder of Police Constable Yvonne Fletcher and Lockerbie. The list goes on. But what if Gaddafi holds out in his western stronghold while menacing Benghazi? What happens then? Will that test the west's resolve? I suspect it will.

In those circumstances and out of frustration, could an unintended consequence mean boots on the ground? Lessons from the recent past cannot be ignored. This is potentially much more than a no-fly zone, and that is where many of us have concerns. Currently, we know almost nothing about the insurgents or who, if Gaddafi

were to fall, would take his place, but we have all learned to fear a vacuum in the Arab world. There is not going to be a brave new world in Libya where western democracy rules, and we would fool ourselves if we thought that.

I have such a short amount of time to speak, and I want other Members to come in, so I will put the spotlight back on defence. Our Secretary of State for Defence is not in his place, but the Foreign Secretary and a Defence Minister are. Owing to what is going on around the world, I call on our Front Benchers to reconsider the defence review. We have a duty to look after our armed personnel, and if we send them into harm's way we have to make sure they have the arms and equipments to do the job on our behalf. Defending freedom has never ever come cheap.

As a soldier, I did not see active service. Although I was in Northern Ireland three times, I did not have a bullet fired at me personally, but speaking to friends who have, and given that many Members have asked about clarity, I can assure the House that the first thing that disappears when one makes contact with the enemy, is clarity.

8.58 pm

**Thomas Docherty** (Dunfermline and West Fife) (Lab): It is sobering to think that, as we debate this motion tonight and allied aircraft are yet again deployed in action, there are inevitably men and women, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, who will not be going home tonight. They may, unfortunately, be allied air personnel; they will almost certainly be Libyan military personnel; and tragically they may very well be Libyan civilians who left home this morning to go to work but, for whatever reason, will not be returning.

I know that the Treasury Benchers and the Opposition Front Benchers take their responsibilities incredibly seriously: I know that the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and his colleagues do not relish, or seek jingoism in, their actions and the operations on which they must decide; and I know that the House recognises that my right hon. Friends the Members for Doncaster North (Edward Miliband) and for Paisley and Renfrewshire South (Mr Alexander) seek to carry out the duty of an Opposition, which is to cast a critical eye over the actions of the Government, and will not pursue political opportunism, because that is not in order in this debate.

Much has been said about why we are doing this, and Members on both sides of the House have questioned the wisdom of it. I came into politics because 20 years ago this summer the west stood by and took no action when Yugoslavia tore itself apart. We saw footage from Srebrenica, Sarajevo and other places of the massacre of men and boys, women and children, and the west did nothing to stop that. I cannot possibly imagine what it must have been like to live in that country during those times. I therefore very much welcome the fact that the Government have stepped up and provided some leadership in this action. The Secretary of State will know that Opposition Members stand willing to provide support to the Government in pursuing that course.

I was very lucky to make my maiden speech on the same day as the hon. Member for Beckenham (Bob Stewart), whom I have found inspiring over the past 10

[*Thomas Docherty*]

months, both as a colleague on the Defence Committee and as a speaker in the House. I hope, if he will pardon my saying so, that in 10, 15 or 20 years' time we do not have a situation where there are more Members like him who will have had to go in after the west did not take action to pick up the pieces of its indecisiveness. I will support the motion, with some reservations about casualties, but pleased that the west is taking action.

I will not speak about the defence review, which has already been covered, beyond saying that we will return to it in a future debate. However, I urge the Secretary of State to keep under review the issue of the warships and aircraft that we have. I pose two questions. First, will he give an absolute guarantee that the operational costs will be met from the Treasury reserve, not from departmental budgets? Secondly, will he give a guarantee that work is now under way between the Department for International Development, the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence on the reconstruction of Libya once the action has ceased?

9.2 pm

**Bob Stewart** (Beckenham) (Con): Colonel Gaddafi does not do peaceful. Benghazi may be relatively safe for the moment, but what about elsewhere in Libya? That really worries me.

As my—dare I say, with some trepidation?—hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline and West Fife (*Thomas Docherty*) suggests, I have had experience in this respect. I remember very well that when I was the military commander in Bosnia in 1993, a little girl of six years old was brought to my house by a delegate from the International Committee of the Red Cross. She had been in a prison camp for 10 days. The Red Cross delegate said to me, "This girl needs shelter." I said, "I'm the military commander." She said, "You've got plenty of room in your house, and you've got two soldiers who look after you." The soldiers turned to me and said, "We'll look after her, sir." They took her away, put her in a bath and washed her, and cared for her. They put a bed for her between their two cots. Three days later, that girl did not want to leave. I am worried that what happened to her might be happening to people in Tripoli tonight. She was dragged out of her bed at 5 o'clock in the morning, with her mother, father and brother, told to get downstairs and made to lie on the grass by brutes with rifles. As she told it, her mother, father and brother lay down and did not get up again. This weekend, I spoke to members of the opposition in Tripoli, and you can bet your bottom dollar that Mr Gaddafi will be sending his thugs searching around there tonight.

What can we do to help? We cannot invade, we cannot assassinate—it is up to the Libyans to decide what we do. I have seen people with pitchforks try to take out tanks. How are those people going to be protected? They need help. Perhaps the Arab League could help a little more in that respect. Perhaps it could go forward. We cannot do it.

Nobody knows the end game—we all realise that. If we were God, perhaps we would, but we do not. We live in hope. We do not have the end game plotted out carefully.

We acted morally on the highest authority in the world—the Security Council of the United Nations. Thank goodness we did, because last Friday Colonel Gaddafi suggested he was going to go through houses in Benghazi and butcher everyone who opposed him. That did not happen. We have, by our actions, saved life. Politics can sort things out hereafter, but one thing is quite clear: there will be a lot more people around to watch what happens from now on than there would have been if we had done nothing last Friday. Thank you very much, Prime Minister. Thank you very much, Foreign Secretary. Thank you very much, the Opposition, for your full support. It is deeply appreciated by all of us.

Let us hope that someone has the brains of Methuselah and that we find out what the end game is in due course. Perhaps the Foreign Secretary has the brains of Methuselah.

9.6 pm

**Yasmin Qureshi** (Bolton South East) (Lab): I have listened to all the Members who have spoken in this debate since 3.30 this afternoon. I rise to my feet with trepidation because I am in the minority of the few Members who do not think that this action is wise. I will explain why.

I believe that although the Prime Minister and the leader of my party are genuine and sincere in their desire for humanitarian intervention in Libya, many in this House and outside are not genuine in that desire but are itching to have a go at Colonel Gaddafi and Libya because of their support in the distant past for the IRA, the Lockerbie bombing, al-Megrahi and other reasons. I am afraid that many of those people are using this situation as a fig leaf for intervention.

Another reason, and I know that people do not like hearing this, is oil. Oil plays a massive role in this matter and in our economic and strategic interests in Libya. There are, of course, Members in this House who hold views like those of the hon. Member for Harlow (*Robert Halfon*), whom I heard last week say that he is proud to intervene in as many Muslim countries as we want to.

I urge caution because there is too little information about the real situation in Libya. Comparisons have been made with Iraq. Many people said that we did not know what the real situation was in Iraq; that the war would not be easy or straightforward; that we could not just go in, blast them and take over—end of story; and that everybody would run into the streets to welcome us. That is what we were told then, and we were told that we needed to do that war. The same drums are beating now for Libya.

There is the suggestion that the whole of the Arab League and everyone in Libya is saying, "Come and help us." They are not. The states of the Arab League have their own vested interests. They are not that concerned about humanitarian issues. We talk about the rebels in Libya. Who are these rebels, when did they come about and how many are there? How deep is the resistance and the rebellion? Why is this not just seen as a civil insurrection that is going on in a country? Do we know what we will get in place of the regime?

I know that everybody is saying that we cannot tell what will happen at the end of the war, because when one starts a military intervention one does not know what will be the end. However, we should know exactly

what we are going in for and exactly what we are trying to achieve. Everybody has a romantic notion of a no-fly zone, but, as Robert Gates said, it is a euphemism for war. If we want to maintain no-fly zones we have to send in many Scud missiles and bombs, and nobody can say that there will not be any civilian destruction as a result of all the bombing. It is wrong for everyone to pretend that the no-fly zone and strategic air drops will prevent civilian casualties. There will be massive civilian casualties, and we will have exactly the situation that we had in Iraq.

I always urge people to understand—even in the case of Iraq, although I was not in the House at the time—that we in this country and this House do not really understand the middle east and north Africa. We are meddling in things that we should not meddle in, because there are so many uncertainties. In the past 10 or 12 years, America, ourselves and others have spent trillions of dollars on being involved in conflicts in the middle east, and what have we left? We have not resolved any of the situations involved or made countries any better than when we went into them.

9.10 pm

**Bob Russell** (Colchester) (LD): Gaddafi will not lose any sleep over anything that is said in the House, but I hope that those around him, whether they be civilian or military leaders, will take note. I was grateful to the Prime Minister, when I intervened on him about five and a half hours ago, for agreeing that those who continue to stand by Gaddafi could face their day before the war crimes tribunal. They will be hunted down and found, and they will have to answer for their actions.

Last week, I was in Afghanistan visiting our brave members of the armed forces in Helmand province. I am concerned that, as with Iraq, we will take our eye off the ball in Afghanistan. The Foreign Secretary will recall that in opposition we constantly raised concerns about the fact that our armed forces were under strength and overstretched, and we are now having cuts in the defence budget. I say to our Government that if we are to have a major role on the world stage, we must ensure that we have the forces and resources to deliver. I repeat that we must be careful about what happens in Afghanistan if we get too heavily involved in Libya. However, I back the motion and will support it.

The armed forces covenant forms part of the Armed Forces Bill, which is still proceeding through the parliamentary process. The feedback that I bring from the front line, from Camp Bastion and Lashkar Gah, is grave concern not just about the freezing of armed forces pay, which was the subject of a written statement today, but about the cuts to allowances. If we wish morale to be maintained, the Government need to look again at that.

I shall read a brief excerpt from a letter handed to me in Camp Bastion. It states:

“I joined the Armed Forces in 1982 and have progressed through the ranks from a Private soldier to a present day Major...I have never in 28 years service, complained in private or public...I am one of the very large silent majority of Armed Forces personnel that choose to serve Queen and Country. We love every day at work and truly believed that those who employ us, deploy us, or represent us, would always do their very best to look after both mine, my colleagues’, and where possible my family’s short and

long-term interests...all my future financial plans that have been based on leaving the Army, with an immediate pension aged 55, are under attack.”

The letter goes on to spell out how that long-serving Army major, formerly a private, is now seeing his financial prospects under threat.

Time prevents me, unfortunately, from reading an excellent article by Lord Gnome in the wonderful organ *Private Eye*, but suffice it to say that it refers to the many occasions on which the Labour Government sold arms to Libya and Colonel Gaddafi.

9.14 pm

**Ms Diane Abbott** (Hackney North and Stoke Newington) (Lab): I am glad to have the opportunity to speak in this important debate. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton South East (Yasmin Qureshi) on her brave speech.

I will support the Government in the Lobby tonight, partly because I genuinely believe that only swift action at the weekend avoided a bloodbath in Benghazi, and partly because I am convinced that we have a solid legal basis for the military action. That has not always been the case.

However, the Government would be wrong to take this evening’s vote as some sort of blank cheque. I point to the unsettling lack of real Arab involvement in the deployment so far. We know that the Arab League countries have plenty of military kit because we sold them most of it. Why is it not being deployed? Why are not senior Arab military people involved in the deployment?

Western-led bombardment of a Muslim country plays to the Gaddafi narrative of crusader invasion. We can knock Gaddafi, but that has a genuine visceral impact on the countries involved. There will be civilian casualties—there always are in such deployments—and it will not take many for public opinion in Arab countries to turn against the deployment. We should bear that in mind.

Let me remind the House of Colin Powell, the American Secretary of State who tried to argue against Iraq with his colleagues Bush and Cheney. He reminded them of the Pottery Barn rule. Pottery Barn is a chain in America that sells china. The rule is, “You break it, you own it”. If we intervene with a massive military deployment in north Africa, we will inevitably own the development of the story from here.

I am not at all sure that civilians can be protected with Gaddafi in power. I do not know how Gaddafi can be removed through air bombardment alone. The British people are very humane and I think that they understand that we intervened swiftly to save lives in Benghazi. However, I do not believe that there is a will or a willingness among them for us to get dragged into a long-running civil war in north Africa because we follow the logic of our rhetoric.

I will vote for the letter of the resolution. It is not a blank cheque. It is not the will of my constituents or British people generally to give the Government a blank cheque. We have done the right thing so far, but, as other hon. Members have said, we want Front Benchers to return to the House for a full debate before we take any further steps, which could get us involved in a third war in a Muslim country in a decade.

9.17 pm

**Robert Halfon** (Harlow) (Con): I welcome the debate and want to make three points, given the time available. I want to consider why we got here today; the resolution, and the role of the United Nations.

I accept that it is not only the past 10 years of policy on Libya that has caused the current problems. Indeed, we can go back to the 1950s, when the British first installed King Idris on the throne. Although he was liked and popular, he was weak. Gaddafi emerged on the scene in the late 1950s. I mentioned last week in the middle east debate that my father shook Gaddafi's hand as he walked down the streets of Tripoli as a popular colonel. The coup against King Idris was bloodless; he was in Turkey at the time. Astonishingly, there was an American air base near Tripoli, but the Americans did nothing to stop the coup. The west has therefore been getting it wrong about Colonel Gaddafi for many years, and in the past few years, it got it even more wrong.

I welcome the United Nations resolution and the Prime Minister's leadership. The no-fly zone was essential to stop a massacre of the citizens of Benghazi in particular. However, we need to go further because there is a strong likelihood, which I mentioned earlier, that Gaddafi may use mustard gas. The policy to try to contain his weapons of mass destruction went wrong. If it happens, we do not want another Halabja, which I visited not long ago, on our hands.

I agree with my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Kensington (Sir Malcolm Rifkind) that we must supply weapons to the resistance fighters. We cannot just leave them to Gaddafi's troops, albeit under a no-fly zone. We must also ensure that all kinds of humanitarian aid reaches the citizens of Tripoli and Benghazi and the surrounding areas.

The Leader of the Opposition said earlier that he was unsure whether this is a watershed moment in our international affairs, but I think it is. The UN has so often failed us and not intervened when it should have done, but the Libyan situation is an example of the UN behaving differently and acting in an almost united way. That is why it is a watershed moment—it marks an important moment in our international affairs.

The hon. Member for Bolton South East (Yasmin Qureshi) said that I believe in intervention everywhere, and she is not wrong. I believe in muscular enlightenment, and that it is our duty to promote freedom around the world. That need not always happen militarily; we can also use soft power—hearts and minds. However, it must be our role in the world to promote freedom, human rights, the rule of law, tolerance and women's equality wherever we can.

9.21 pm

**Mr Andy Slaughter** (Hammersmith) (Lab): I returned last night from a visit to Egypt, where I had the privilege of seeing Egyptian democracy in action. On Saturday, that country voted in a referendum on the amendment to its constitution. From visiting polling stations, I can say that what the Prime Minister said in his opening speech is quite correct. It is a fine example of a new democracy, from the enthusiastic queues to the independent scrutiny by the judiciary of the polling process.

I also had the opportunity to talk to people at all levels about the wider implications of the Egyptian revolution for the middle east, including Palestine, Bahrain, Yemen and Libya. I talked not only to the interim Government and to Amr Moussa, but to the opposition forces, from the youth coalition to the Muslim Brotherhood. Not one person or group to whom I spoke was opposed to the letter of the UN resolution, which is perhaps unsurprising given the empathy of the people in Tahrir square for the people of Benghazi.

Before coming to the House today, I met Arab Muslim community leaders to take their views. They, too, were broadly in favour, but they expressed views that ranged from, "We should do anything necessary to get rid of Gaddafi"—one can understand why Libyans living in Britain take that view—to, "We are already exceeding the limits of the resolution," in the sentiments that Amr Moussa has expressed.

In the brief time available, I should like to develop those caveats. First, the basic picture shows western planes bombing a Muslim Arab country and killing people, including civilians. That is why it is so important to get the support of the wider Muslim and Arab community. I hope we have done that through the Arab League resolutions.

Secondly, the problem of double standards will not go away, whether in respect of Yemen or the atrocities that have been committed over the years in the middle east, including the massacre in Syria in 1982 by the late President Assad; the massacre at Sabra Shatila by the Maronite Christians with the support of the Israeli Government; or the massacres in Gaza two years ago or in Lebanon in 2006, when, to my Government's shame, we did not even call for a ceasefire. Those double standards need to be addressed if we are to have the confidence and support of the Arab people of the middle east.

Thirdly and finally, on the limits of our aims and actions, it is not good enough for the Government to say that they are not prepared to talk about targeting. I understand why they would not want to do it. However, on the same day the Defence Secretary said that assassinating Gaddafi might be a possibility, General Sir David Richards said, "Absolutely not!" They have to address this issue.

Amr Moussa made a perfectly reasonable point. We are there to protect the lives of civilians, so we must take every possible step to ensure that our military action does not kill civilians. That is not inconsistent with the resolution. I agree with the hon. Member for Beckenham (Bob Stewart) that we cannot know what the outcome will be. Nevertheless, we have to take this action. However, we have to be aware that it will be a very long haul, and we have to be there not just in the days ahead, but in the months ahead. That is what the people of Libya will expect from this country.

9.25 pm

**Mr Bernard Jenkin** (Harwich and North Essex) (Con): Brevity demands bluntness, for which I hope the Government will forgive me. I support the motion, but I think that we need to be honest about the consequences of what we are taking on. First, we have crossed a threshold, and by approving this motion, the House is crossing it with our political leaders. Hon. Members

should have no illusions: there is no such thing as limited war, in all its bloody terror and dirt. Secondly, I remind the House that

“no one starts a war—or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it.”

So wrote Karl von Clausewitz.

The Government must admit that on that there is some doubt and the potential for confusion and indecision. The Prime Minister set that out again today when he outlined the limited aims of the UN Security Council resolution alongside our aspiration to remove Gaddafi. The former Chief of the General Staff, General Lord Dannatt, wrote at the weekend:

“Unless the military planners are crystal clear about the strategic objective to be achieved then the focusing of effort is going to be misaligned from the outset.”

That is a danger we face today. He talked of how military planners are

“trained to work out the implied tasks as well, to ensure that the campaign plan fulfils entirely what the higher authority’s intentions are. In this case, the specified task is the protection of civilians, but the implied task – and the end-state to be achieved – must be the removal of Colonel Gaddafi and his regime”.

At times, the Prime Minister seemed to be talking as though we could just implement a no-fly zone and go home. Of course, we will have to maintain a no-fly zone until the political situation is resolved, otherwise how else is the stalemate to be resolved?

We have a duty to be clear. Either the removal of Gaddafi is the legitimate military aim, or I put it to the Foreign Secretary that we must drop it from our public statements and focus our words on the more limited task we are setting our military. We cannot do both. Clausewitz again:

“The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and the means can never be considered in isolation from their purposes.”

The UK has to balance the will to obtain a preferred outcome—Gaddafi’s removal—with the wider issue of security and stability.

This action derives its political credibility because of support from Libya’s fellow Arab nations. Can we afford to risk losing their support or that of the United States, which acts as underwriter for the military effort? I submit not. We can succeed in preventing the atrocity in Benghazi, but should the Arab League walk away from the confrontation with Gaddafi, why should it be our fight? We had better fix our goal and military strategy accordingly rather than invite mission creep by over-extending that rhetoric.

In the meantime we must settle the other vital questions that the Prime Minister started to address. Who is in command of this operation? I would like NATO to be in charge. Who is in command of the communications strategy? Where is the Jamie Shea—he was so effective in the Balkans—of this operation? Finally, how are these matters being considered by the Government? The Public Administration Committee, which I chair, conducted an inquiry into how Government strategy is decided. Strategy is not about setting certain policies in stone; it is about the ability to adapt plans to changing circumstances. To that extent, it is not about whether we reopen the strategic defence and security review; it is about how the SDSR should be adapted to changing circumstances. We have already had six strategic shocks since the SDSR.

9.29 pm

**Mr Douglas Alexander** (Paisley and Renfrewshire South) (Lab): I believe that this debate has done justice to the seriousness of the motion before the House this evening. The House has benefited from speeches reflecting the huge experience, knowledge and concern that hon. Members bring to this debate and this decision. We heard cogent cases made by former Defence Secretaries on both sides of the House. My right hon. Friend the Member for Coventry North East (Mr Ainsworth) spoke with wisdom and authority in expressing his reluctance to put British forces in harm’s way once again. The right hon. and learned Member for North East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell) spoke with his characteristic clarity and insight on the importance of the United Nations. His insight was matched by one of his old sparring partners, the former Foreign Secretary, my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr Straw), who rightly urged that consideration be given now to issues of reconstruction.

Given the time available, I hope that the House will forgive me if I do not acknowledge all the contributions that we have heard in this debate. As the Leader of the Opposition made clear, we will support the Government in the Lobby this evening. We do that not because we are eager for conflict or simply because we wish to show support for our forces; we do so because we believe that this action meets three criteria: it is a just cause, with a feasible mission and with international consent. We support United Nations Security Council resolution 1973, and we are determined to see it enforced.

That determination to offer our support is matched by our determination to scrutinise this Government and ask the questions that the public deserve to have answered. Support for the enforcement of the United Nations mandate; scrutiny of the Government’s conduct in its implementation—this is, and will remain, the approach of the Opposition. When military force is contemplated, Governments cannot expect—nor are they entitled to expect—unquestioning support. It is through serious and sustained scrutiny that, as the Opposition, we best serve the men and women of our armed forces. That is why, in the time ahead, the Government must ensure that this House is regularly updated. Voting for the deployment of our servicemen and women is and always should be a last resort. The personnel of our armed forces in action in Libya now and in the days ahead will be in our thoughts and prayers.

**Robert Halfon:** Would the right hon. Gentleman support at some stage giving arms to the opposition to Gaddafi?

**Mr Alexander:** That issue has already been the subject of some debate in the House today. The terms of the Security Council resolution are clear, and as I will seek to emphasise in my winding-up speech, we are under an obligation to adhere to the terms of that resolution.

I believe that it is the duty of the Government to act on what they judge to be the national interest, and that it is the duty of the Opposition to support them when they agree in that judgment. Concerned voices in this House—such as those of my hon. Friends the Members for Islington North (Jeremy Corbyn) and for Bolton South East (Yasmin Qureshi), and the hon. Members for Gainsborough (Mr Leigh) and for Brighton, Pavilion (Caroline Lucas)—are not only appropriate to this place;

[Mr Douglas Alexander]

they are appropriate to this debate. Let me therefore acknowledge from this Dispatch Box that the Opposition recognise the heavy responsibility that the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Government have to bear in these difficult days.

The terms of the motion before the House make it clear that the Government seek explicit approval for an explicit objective. That objective is to implement UN Security Council resolution 1973, through “all necessary measures” to protect civilians and civilian-populated areas under threat of attack in Libya, and to enforce the no-fly zone. The background to the approval of the resolution has been well documented and well rehearsed today. In the context of the broader Arab spring, and in the wake of popular protests in Tunisia and Egypt, people in both eastern and western Libya took to the streets to demand a better future. In response, popular protests were repressed and the protesters beaten, imprisoned or killed. Hospitals were attacked and patients disappeared.

On Thursday, Gaddafi’s troops arrived outside Benghazi, a city of roughly 700,000 people. Gaddafi promised to “cleanse the city of Benghazi”.

He told the people there:

“We will have no mercy and no pity.”

Leaders of the transitional national council in the city said there would be a “massacre” that would

“be on the international community’s conscience”.

Although Members will have real and legitimate questions about what happens next, let us be in no doubt what would have happened last weekend if there had been no action from the international community. Not to have acted would itself have been a choice and would have led to terrible consequences. That is why, even at such a late hour, it was vital that the international community came together to act and I pay generous tribute to the work of the Government in achieving the adoption of Security Council resolution 1973.

Let me turn next to the mission and its limits. The authorisation given in that resolution was for measures to implement a no-fly zone and to protect the civilian population. Following the passage of the resolution, the US President made very clear what was expected: a ceasefire must be implemented immediately; all attacks against civilians must stop; Gaddafi’s troops must be pulled back from Benghazi, Ajdabiya, Misrata and Zawiyah; and humanitarian assistance, electricity and water must be allowed through. Gaddafi has ignored that expectation and so the Government are asking today for the endorsement of a mission subject to very specific limits, which are laid down in resolution 1973. They do not ask for—and would not be entitled to—a mandate to pursue armed regime change.

Everyone in this House, including senior Ministers, must recognise the importance of the words they choose and speak with care and clarity. So given the earlier remarks of the Defence Secretary about the possible targeting of Gaddafi and the categorical rejection of this position by the Chief of the Defence Staff, I hope that the Foreign Secretary, when he winds up, will bring both clarity and coherence to the Government’s position. The House deserves it and our armed forces need it.

We should all be mindful that this conflict will be fought on the airwaves as well as in the air. To maintain pressure on Gaddafi and sustain international support, the House should be crystal clear that the mission is to protect Libya’s population, not to choose Libya’s leadership. That decision should rest only with Libya’s people.

Let me also raise the issue of ground forces. Security Council resolution 1973 is clear that although it authorises the protection of civilians, that authorisation excludes “a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory”.

The communiqué from the Paris summit concludes that “we recall that UN Security Council resolution 1973 does not allow for any occupation of, or attempt to occupy the Libyan territory”.

The US President went further in saying

“we will not—I repeat—we will not deploy any U.S. troops on the ground.”

Last week, the Prime Minister said

“no ground troops and no occupying force”.—[*Official Report*, 18 March 2011; Vol. 525, c. 621.]

No one asks for—and no one would be entitled to—a mandate for an occupation of Libya, but Members deserve clarity, which I hope the Foreign Secretary can provide, about in which circumstances, if any, UK personnel would be authorised to enter Libyan territory.

We will support the Government tonight not simply because it was vital to avoid what the right hon. and learned Member for North East Fife warned would be the “slaughterhouse of Benghazi”. The impact of that decision—the decision we take tonight—will be felt not only in Tripoli but in other capitals across the region and across the world. I believe that for the United Nations, this now represents a test of faith as well as of strength. In the face of the global challenges we face, we need strong and effective multilateral institutions, so the United Nations should be the focus both of diplomacy and of action.

The lasting shame of Rwanda, Somalia, Srebrenica and East Timor cannot, of course, be removed in one Security Council resolution, but this resolution can give new life to the doctrine that developed in response to those failures—the responsibility to protect. That should not hide the fact that military action almost always leads to the loss of life, but it should give us courage that the motion tabled today reflects the broadest consensus of international views, approved by the highest multilateral body. If we believe in a responsibility to protect, if we believe that multilateral institutions should be used for the protection of civilian life, discussion should be followed by decision and by action.

Many Members from both sides of the House have mentioned the situations in Bahrain and in Yemen, which are both deeply concerning and deteriorating. Notwithstanding its historical ties, Britain must be unequivocal in its condemnation of the violence, and must make it clear to both the Bahraini and the Yemeni Governments that a security response cannot be an alternative to political reform.

The commencement of military action should not be a signal that the time for diplomacy is over. This crisis will test not just our military strength, but our diplomatic skill and stamina. It is vital that the diplomatic work continues to hold together this precious coalition. I welcome the Prime Minister’s announcement

of regular political-level meetings of the coalition, and I would welcome a clear and continuing role for the Arab League.

I hope that the Foreign Secretary will be able to update the House on the work that is being done to sustain support in the region, to increase pressure on the countries that have allowed their citizens to become mercenaries in Libya, and to sustain non-military pressure on the regime. Our commitment to Libya's future, through our membership of the European Union, must be serious and long-term. The whole House will wish to know what work is under way on contingency planning for post-conflict reconstruction. What are the structures equal to this immense task, who will lead the work, and how will the House be assured that this vital work is being done? We should also bear in mind that Britain needs to be working, now, on a trade, aid and civil society response in case the Libyan people choose a new future.

The House has the privilege of discussion, but it also has the responsibility of decision. All of us who will support and stand with the Government tonight must have the humility to acknowledge that, at this moment of decision, we cannot say for certain what lies ahead. Intervention, even in support of humanitarian ends, brings with it unforeseen and uncertain consequences, but by our decision tonight we will be supporting action that has already prevented the foreseeable and certain killing of many Libyan citizens. We will also be supporting action that has broad support in the region and is underpinned by a Security Council resolution that authorises the necessary force required to protect the Libyan people.

We have a legal, political and moral mandate to act to protect civilian life. That is the international community's responsibility, that should be Britain's choice, and so that must be the House's decision. I urge all Members to support the motion.

9.42 pm

**The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr William Hague):** We have heard 50 speeches tonight, and I have listened to the vast majority of them. Every single one has raised proper questions and issues. It will, of course, be impossible to respond to all of them in the 16 minutes that remain, but I will do my best to respond to the general themes and to some of the specific questions.

The debate has naturally focused on UN Security Council resolution 1973 and the situation in Libya, but many Members have pointed out that there are wider conclusions to be drawn, and a need to address our policy on the entire region. The right hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr Straw), for instance, referred to the dramatic changes that have taken place throughout the region: changes that may already constitute the most important event of the early 21st century—even more important than 9/11 or the 2008 financial crisis—in terms of their possible consequences.

If many of the countries of the middle east turn into stable democracies and more open economies, the gains for our security and prosperity will be enormous. If they do not, the potential breeding grounds for terrorism and extremism will prosper. That is why it is so much in our national interest to address these issues, and why my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and I have

argued that the response of the whole of Europe must be as bold, as ambitious and as historic in its intentions as these events are in their nature. We should be holding out to the countries of the middle east the prospect of free trade, areas of customs union and a new economic area with the European Union. We should be providing it with incentives and acting as a magnet for positive change in that region.

We can be optimistic about the prospects for positive change in many of those countries. In Egypt, the Egyptian army's decision to protect the people kept the spotlight firmly where it was supposed to be—on a Government who had to listen to people's aspirations. In Tunisia, too, after deplorable violence against unarmed protestors, the Government crumbled, accepting the will of the people and beginning a transformation of the political system. The situation in Libya is completely different. In the past three weeks we have heard reports of soldiers being burned alive for refusing to obey orders to crush the protests. We have seen the use of mercenaries to slaughter civilians, the cutting off of food, electricity and medical supplies to population centres and the broadcast of televised threats to purge whole cities and to hunt down people in their homes. Just today, after the announcement of a second ceasefire by the Gaddafi regime, Reuters has reported that Gaddafi's forces fired on a crowd of unarmed people late today in the centre of the city of Misrata. In Ajdabiya, there have been reports of body thefts, with military casualties being made to look like civilian casualties. Al-Jazeera reports that Gaddafi's forces continue to shell the town of Zintan heavily and that they have given residents two hours to surrender or face total execution. That is what passes for a ceasefire according to the Gaddafi regime.

It is against that background that the House has today weighed carefully the arguments that we have presented for and against our military actions. There has been nothing gleeful or gung-ho about the atmosphere in the House and there is nothing gung-ho about the atmosphere in and decisions of the Government. The great majority of hon. Members who have spoken today have spoken in support of the Government's actions and the motion, and many explained that they did so with reluctance or regret. The Government have approached this issue with the same sense of gravity.

It was fascinating to listen to my hon. Friend the Member for Keighley (Kris Hopkins), who spoke of the horror of violence. My hon. Friend the Member for Milton Keynes North (Mark Lancaster), who has served in three wars in the past decade, pointed out that nobody who has served in them ever wants to be involved in one again. Hon. Members have wrestled with their consciences. The hon. Member for Walsall North (Mr Winnick) said that he was debating with himself and for a moment he did, indeed, debate with himself in front of the whole House, which was quite a spectacle. The fact that he should be wrestling with his conscience illustrates the difficulty of the choices we face and the general unity that the House has come to, which is not an automatic or unthinking unity but is because we think it right to act in this situation. We are conscious that any military action can involve loss of life, but we are clear that when our armed forces take action they take the greatest care to avoid civilian casualties. When our pilots were on their mission last night and thought that civilians were in danger, they turned back—what a

[*Mr William Hague*]

contrast with a regime that turns its guns on its own people and regards the lives of its citizens as mere shields.

We are clear that we are engaged in this action to protect the civilian population and we were clear, as last week went on, that we had to act with all possible speed. That is why we moved heaven and earth, diplomatically, to pass the UN resolution on Thursday night. Yes, we took a risk in doing that because nine positive votes are required in the Security Council and there can be no vetoes. To have been defeated on that resolution would have made it hard to take any subsequent action, but any later would have been too late. Once the resolution was passed, we had to move with all possible speed. As the House knows, the Cabinet met on Friday morning to consider the UN resolution at length, with the legal advice of the Attorney-General in front of us for all members to read, and the Prime Minister came to the House at the earliest possible moment to state our intention.

Some hon. Members have asked whether the House should have sat on Saturday to consider the motion; of course, in future instances, that can be considered, but they should be clear that to effect the situation, we had to give the orders for military action on Saturday afternoon. Other hon. Members have asked that there be no mission creep. I am happy to assure them that if the Government ever fundamentally change the nature of the mission that we have described to the House, we will return to the House for a further debate to consult it again. We will also enshrine in law for the future the necessity of consulting Parliament on military action.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for North East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell) quite rightly asked—the shadow Foreign Secretary echoed this—what debate we would be having today had we not taken action last week. How many people would now be wringing their hands? How many would be lamenting the fate of a proud city and the lives of people who live there?

**Jim Dowd:** Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr Hague:** I will mention the hon. Gentleman in a moment, so he can intervene then, but I am trying in a very short time to answer the questions that have been asked. How many extra tens of thousands of people would now be streaming to the borders? We should be proud that our forces were able to respond in time. One of the reasons—the main reason—why people have heard of forces from only the United States, France and the United Kingdom going into action is that they are among the few countries in the world with the capability to act so quickly. It is not necessarily that other countries are unwilling; their capability is not as great.

The reason why we were able to act in that way and win such support at the United Nations is that the support—the call—of the Arab League for a no-fly zone and the protection of the people of Libya was unprecedented. That has had an enormous impact. The hon. Member for Brent North (Barry Gardiner) gave the other side of the argument, and asked why Britain should get involved. Given the background—we are one of the five permanent members of the United

Nations Security Council, one of only three of those members who believed that it was necessary to take action, and one of the few countries with the military capability to do something about the situation—if we had not got involved in the resolution and the action, then such a resolution and such action would probably not have happened at all. That is our responsibility in the United Kingdom, as well as our clear national interest. As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has said, it is not in our national interest for a dangerous dictator with a record of violent acts beyond his own country to run a pariah state on the very edge of the European Union.

**Mr Allen:** Will the Foreign Secretary give way?

**Mr Hague:** I will not. I give way hundreds of times in other debates, but I am trying to answer the points made today.

It is not in our interests for Egypt and Tunisia to be destabilised. Of course, the action that we have taken is not without risks and dangers to our armed forces and the people we are trying to help, and many hon. Members have highlighted the risks involved, but as the Leader of the Opposition said in a powerful speech, the argument that we do not know the sequence of events to come is not an argument for inaction. As was said by the hon. Member for Lewisham West and Penge (Jim Dowd), who was trying to intervene, just because we have made mistakes in the past, it does not mean that we should not try to do something right; I absolutely agree with him.

My hon. Friend the Member for Penrith and The Border (Rory Stewart) made a memorable and powerful speech, and I would love to hear the 60-minute version, not the six-minute version. He reminded us that our mission is to protect human beings, and that the temptation to dig ever deeper in all such situations must be resisted. We are conscious of that in the Government. As my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Kensington (Sir Malcolm Rifkind) pointed out, we are seeking to implement the United Nations resolution so that the people of Libya can determine their own future. We will make every effort to maintain and consult our broad coalition, closely consulting the Arab League and working with our NATO partners, including Turkey, as several hon. Members have asked us to do.

Some Members asked what the Arab League intended to say. I spoke to Mr Amr Moussa yesterday afternoon—the Prime Minister spoke to him today—and he made it clear to me that he did not mean to criticise the mission, and he supports the UN resolution and its enforcement. Others have asked if our approach is part of a wider approach to the region and a commitment to the middle east peace process; it certainly is. They asked whether we will make conflict prevention central to our policy; yes, of course we do, as we have shown recently in Sudan. They asked whether we will plan for different scenarios, including humanitarian assistance when it is necessary; yes, we certainly are doing so.

Some of my hon. Friends have asked whether this decision showed that an aircraft carrier should have been retained, but I can tell them that the Tornado aircraft that are most suited of all to perform these missions could not have been flown from an aircraft carrier. Other hon. Members have asked whether the

costs will be met from the reserve, and I can tell them that they will. We have also been asked to look carefully at all legal advice on the meaning for the arms embargo of paragraph 4 of the resolution, and of course we are doing so.

In the case of Libya, the desire to be rid of a decaying dictatorship has run up against a regime that has shown itself to be one of the most ruthless, unprincipled and savage. The Arab world and the western world care about the civilians of Libya, but their Government do not. We are determined to stop violence, bloodshed and suffering—the very things that the Gaddafi regime is happy to unleash. When the Prime Minister said in the House three weeks ago that we should not just stand by if Colonel Gaddafi used military force against his own people, he was seen by many as being too bold. But he meant what he said, and we mean to stand by his words just as we are standing by the people of Libya.

With our allies and partners, we have carried through the United Nations Security Council a resolution that is clear, unequivocal and comprehensive, and that leaves the legality of what we are now doing not in the slightest doubt. We have acted at the behest of the Arab League, and are joined by Arab nations. We have taken every care to ensure that doubts about lawfulness and regional support, such as those that have dogged earlier decisions, do not apply in this case. As my hon. Friend the Member for Halesowen and Rowley Regis (James Morris) said, we are right to act but right not to act alone.

This is not the west imposing its views on Libya; it is the world saying that the people of Libya should be allowed to express their views without their Government setting out to slaughter them. We are not trying to choose the future Government of Libya. That is a matter for Libyans, who must find their own solution to the mis-government that they have been subjected to, but this resolution, and our enforcement of it, gives them their only chance of being allowed to do so. This is not a legal fudge or a questionable interpretation of international law; it is the rigorous application of international law. Our actions are all the stronger for the breadth and determination of the international coalition, but they are also stronger for the breadth and determination of this House, which we have seen today.

The brave members of our armed forces who have patrolled the skies above Benghazi today or flown through the night to destroy the air defences of a regime that used air power against its own citizens can know that they do so armed not only with the weaponry that they are so well trained to deploy but with every advantage of knowing that what they do is legally warranted, morally necessary, internationally supported and, I hope, democratically agreed through a vote of this House of Commons. They can have the satisfaction of knowing that, in precipitating the retreat of Gaddafi's forces from Benghazi, they have already averted a catastrophe and a new outpouring of human misery. In pressing our case at the United Nations, in insisting that what we do must be legal, in taking extreme care to protect civilians and in acting with a speed and precision that few armed forces on Earth can rival, this country is doing what it said it would do, doing what it absolutely right and joining in giving a lead to the world, and it should enjoy the united support of the House tonight.

*Question put.*

*The House divided: Ayes 557, Noes 13.*

**Division No. 235]**

**[9.58 pm**

**AYES**

Abbott, Ms Diane	Brown, Mr Russell
Abrahams, Debbie	Browne, Mr Jeremy
Adams, Nigel	Bruce, Fiona
Afriyie, Adam	Bruce, rh Malcolm
Ainsworth, rh Mr Bob	Buck, Ms Karen
Aldous, Peter	Buckland, Mr Robert
Alexander, rh Danny	Burden, Richard
Alexander, rh Mr Douglas	Burley, Mr Aidan
Alexander, Heidi	Burnham, rh Andy
Ali, Rushanara	Burns, rh Mr Simon
Amess, Mr David	Burrowes, Mr David
Anderson, Mr David	Burstow, Paul
Andrew, Stuart	Burt, Alistair
Arbuthnot, rh Mr James	Burt, Lorely
Austin, Ian	Byles, Dan
Bacon, Mr Richard	Byrne, rh Mr Liam
Bagshawe, Ms Louise	Cable, rh Vince
Bailey, Mr Adrian	Cairns, Alun
Bain, Mr William	Cameron, rh Mr David
Baker, Norman	Campbell, Mr Alan
Baker, Steve	Campbell, rh Sir Menzies
Baldry, Tony	Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Baldwin, Harriett	Carmichael, Neil
Balls, rh Ed	Cash, Mr William
Banks, Gordon	Caton, Martin
Barclay, Stephen	Chapman, Mrs Jenny
Barron, rh Mr Kevin	Chishti, Rehman
Barwell, Gavin	Chope, Mr Christopher
Bayley, Hugh	Clappison, Mr James
Bebb, Guto	Clark, rh Greg
Beckett, rh Margaret	Clarke, rh Mr Kenneth
Begg, Dame Anne	Clarke, rh Mr Tom
Beith, rh Sir Alan	Clegg, rh Mr Nick
Bell, Sir Stuart	Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey
Benn, rh Hilary	Clwyd, rh Ann
Benyon, Richard	Coaker, Vernon
Beresford, Sir Paul	Coffey, Ann
Berger, Luciana	Coffey, Dr Thérèse
Berry, Jake	Collins, Damian
Betts, Mr Clive	Cooper, rh Yvette
Bingham, Andrew	Cox, Mr Geoffrey
Binley, Mr Brian	Crabb, Stephen
Birtwistle, Gordon	Crausby, Mr David
Blackman, Bob	Creagh, Mary
Blackman-Woods, Roberta	Creasy, Stella
Blackwood, Nicola	Crockart, Mike
Blenkinsop, Tom	Crouch, Tracey
Blomfield, Paul	Cruddas, Jon
Blunkett, rh Mr David	Cryer, John
Blunt, Mr Crispin	Cunningham, Alex
Boles, Nick	Cunningham, Mr Jim
Bottomley, Sir Peter	Cunningham, Tony
Bradley, Karen	Curran, Margaret
Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben	Dakin, Nic
Brady, Mr Graham	Danczuk, Simon
Brake, Tom	Darling, rh Mr Alistair
Bray, Angie	Davey, Mr Edward
Brazier, Mr Julian	David, Mr Wayne
Brennan, Kevin	Davidson, Mr Ian
Bridgen, Andrew	Davies, David T. C.
Brine, Mr Steve	( <i>Monmouth</i> )
Brokenshire, James	Davies, Geraint
Brooke, Annette	Davies, Glyn
Brown, rh Mr Gordon	Davies, Philip
Brown, Lyn	Davis, rh Mr David
Brown, rh Mr Nicholas	de Bois, Nick

De Piero, Gloria	Grant, Mrs Helen	Johnson, Gareth	McKechin, Ann
Denham, rh Mr John	Gray, Mr James	Johnson, Joseph	McKinnell, Catherine
Dinenage, Caroline	Grayling, rh Chris	Jones, Andrew	McLoughlin, rh Mr Patrick
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan	Greatrex, Tom	Jones, Mr David	McVey, Esther
Dobbin, Jim	Green, Damian	Jones, Graham	Meacher, rh Mr Michael
Dobson, rh Frank	Green, Kate	Jones, Helen	Mearns, Ian
Docherty, Thomas	Greening, Justine	Jones, Mr Kevan	Menzies, Mark
Donaldson, rh Mr Jeffrey M.	Greenwood, Lillian	Jones, Mr Marcus	Mercer, Patrick
Donohoe, Mr Brian H.	Grieve, rh Mr Dominic	Jones, Susan Elan	Metcalfe, Stephen
Dorrell, rh Mr Stephen	Griffith, Nia	Jowell, rh Tessa	Michael, rh Alun
Dorries, Nadine	Griffiths, Andrew	Joyce, Eric	Miliband, rh David
Dowd, Jim	Gummer, Ben	Kaufman, rh Sir Gerald	Miliband, rh Edward
Doyle, Gemma	Gwynne, Andrew	Kawczynski, Daniel	Miller, Andrew
Doyle-Price, Jackie	Gyimah, Mr Sam	Keeley, Barbara	Miller, Maria
Drax, Richard	Hague, rh Mr William	Kelly, Chris	Mills, Nigel
Dromey, Jack	Hain, rh Mr Peter	Kendall, Liz	Milton, Anne
Duddridge, James	Halfon, Robert	Kennedy, rh Mr Charles	Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
Dugher, Michael	Hames, Duncan	Khan, rh Sadiq	Moon, Mrs Madeleine
Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain	Hamilton, Mr David	Kirby, Simon	Moore, rh Michael
Dunne, Mr Philip	Hammond, rh Mr Philip	Knight, rh Mr Greg	Mordaunt, Penny
Eagle, Maria	Hammond, Stephen	Kwarteng, Kwasi	Morden, Jessica
Edwards, Jonathan	Hancock, Matthew	Laing, Mrs Eleanor	Morgan, Nicky
Efford, Clive	Hands, Greg	Lamb, Norman	Morrice, Graeme ( <i>Livingston</i> )
Elliott, Julie	Hanson, rh Mr David	Lammy, rh Mr David	Morris, Anne Marie
Ellis, Michael	Harman, rh Ms Harriet	Lancaster, Mark	Morris, David
Ellison, Jane	Harper, Mr Mark	Lansley, rh Mr Andrew	Morris, Grahame M. ( <i>Easington</i> )
Ellman, Mrs Louise	Harrington, Richard	Latham, Pauline	Morris, James
Ellwood, Mr Tobias	Harris, Rebecca	Lavery, Ian	Mosley, Stephen
Elphicke, Charlie	Hart, Simon	Laws, rh Mr David	Mowat, David
Engel, Natascha	Harvey, Nick	Lazarowicz, Mark	Mulholland, Greg
Esterson, Bill	Haselhurst, rh Sir Alan	Leadsom, Andrea	Mundell, rh David
Eustice, George	Havard, Mr Dai	Lee, Jessica	Munn, Meg
Evans, Chris	Hayes, Mr John	Lee, Dr Phillip	Munt, Tessa
Evans, Graham	Heald, Mr Oliver	Leech, Mr John	Murphy, rh Mr Jim
Evans, Jonathan	Healey, rh John	Lefroy, Jeremy	Murphy, rh Paul
Evennett, Mr David	Heath, Mr David	Leslie, Chris	Murray, Ian
Fabricant, Michael	Heaton-Harris, Chris	Letwin, rh Mr Oliver	Murray, Sheryll
Fallon, Michael	Hemming, John	Lewis, Brandon	Murrison, Dr Andrew
Farrelly, Paul	Henderson, Gordon	Lewis, Mr Ivan	Nandy, Lisa
Farron, Tim	Hendrick, Mark	Lewis, Dr Julian	Nash, Pamela
Featherstone, Lynne	Hendry, Charles	Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian	Neill, Robert
Field, rh Mr Frank	Herbert, rh Nick	Lloyd, Stephen	Newmark, Mr Brooks
Field, Mr Mark	Heyes, David	Lloyd, Tony	Newton, Sarah
Fitzpatrick, Jim	Hillier, Meg	Llwyd, rh Mr Elfyn	Nokes, Caroline
Flelo, Robert	Hilling, Julie	Lord, Jonathan	Nuttall, Mr David
Foster, rh Mr Don	Hinds, Damian	Loughton, Tim	O'Brien, Mr Stephen
Fovargue, Yvonne	Hoban, Mr Mark	Love, Mr Andrew	Offord, Mr Matthew
Fox, rh Dr Liam	Hodge, rh Margaret	Lucas, Ian	Ollerenshaw, Eric
Francis, Dr Hywel	Hodgson, Mrs Sharon	Luff, Peter	Opperman, Guy
Francois, rh Mr Mark	Hoey, Kate	Lumley, Karen	Osborne, rh Mr George
Freeman, George	Hollingbery, George	Macleod, Mary	Osborne, Sandra
Freer, Mike	Hollobone, Mr Philip	MacNeil, Mr Angus Brendan	Ottaway, Richard
Fullbrook, Lorraine	Holloway, Mr Adam	Mactaggart, Fiona	Owen, Albert
Fuller, Richard	Hopkins, Kelvin	Mahmood, Mr Khalid	Paice, rh Mr James
Gale, Mr Roger	Hopkins, Kris	Mahmood, Shabana	Paisley, Ian
Gapes, Mike	Horwood, Martin	Main, Mrs Anne	Parish, Neil
Garnier, Mr Edward	Hosie, Stewart	Mann, John	Patel, Priti
Garnier, Mark	Howell, John	Marsden, Mr Gordon	Pawsey, Mark
Gauke, Mr David	Hughes, rh Simon	Maude, rh Mr Francis	Pearce, Teresa
Gibb, Mr Nick	Huhne, rh Chris	May, rh Mrs Theresa	Penning, Mike
Gilbert, Stephen	Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy	Maynard, Paul	Penrose, John
Gillan, rh Mrs Cheryl	Huppert, Dr Julian	McCabe, Steve	Percy, Andrew
Gilmore, Sheila	Hurd, Mr Nick	McCann, Mr Michael	Perkins, Toby
Glass, Pat	Irranca-Davies, Huw	McCarthy, Kerry	Perry, Claire
Glen, John	Jackson, Mr Stewart	McCartney, Jason	Phillips, Stephen
Glendon, Mrs Mary	James, Margot	McCartney, Karl	Phillipson, Bridget
Goggins, rh Paul	Jamieson, Cathy	McClymont, Gregg	Pickles, rh Mr Eric
Goldsmith, Zac	Jarvis, Dan	McCrea, Dr William	Pincher, Christopher
Goodman, Helen	Javid, Sajid	McFadden, rh Mr Pat	Poulter, Dr Daniel
Goodwill, Mr Robert	Jenkin, Mr Bernard	McGovern, Jim	Pound, Stephen
Gove, rh Michael	Johnson, rh Alan	McGuire, rh Mrs Anne	Prisk, Mr Mark
Graham, Richard	Johnson, Diana	McIntosh, Miss Anne	

Pritchard, Mark  
 Pugh, John  
 Raab, Mr Dominic  
 Randall, rh Mr John  
 Raynsford, rh Mr Nick  
 Reed, Mr Jamie  
 Rees-Mogg, Jacob  
 Reeve, Simon  
 Reeves, Rachel  
 Reid, Mr Alan  
 Reynolds, Emma  
 Reynolds, Jonathan  
 Rifkind, rh Sir Malcolm  
 Robathan, rh Mr Andrew  
 Robertson, Angus  
 Robertson, Hugh  
 Robertson, John  
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey  
 Rogerson, Dan  
 Rosindell, Andrew  
 Rotheram, Steve  
 Roy, Mr Frank  
 Roy, Lindsay  
 Ruane, Chris  
 Rudd, Amber  
 Ruddock, rh Joan  
 Ruffley, Mr David  
 Russell, Bob  
 Rutley, David  
 Sanders, Mr Adrian  
 Sandys, Laura  
 Sarwar, Anas  
 Scott, Mr Lee  
 Seabeck, Alison  
 Selous, Andrew  
 Shapps, rh Grant  
 Sharma, Alok  
 Sharma, Mr Virendra  
 Sheerman, Mr Barry  
 Shelbrooke, Alec  
 Shepherd, Mr Richard  
 Sheridan, Jim  
 Shuker, Gavin  
 Simmonds, Mark  
 Simpson, Mr Keith  
 Skidmore, Chris  
 Slaughter, Mr Andy  
 Smith, rh Mr Andrew  
 Smith, Angela  
 Smith, Miss Chloe  
 Smith, Henry  
 Smith, Julian  
 Smith, Nick  
 Smith, Owen  
 Smith, Sir Robert  
 Soames, Nicholas  
 Soubry, Anna  
 Spellar, rh Mr John  
 Spelman, rh Mrs Caroline  
 Spencer, Mr Mark  
 Stanley, rh Sir John  
 Stephenson, Andrew  
 Stevenson, John  
 Stewart, Bob  
 Stewart, Iain  
 Stewart, Rory  
 Straw, rh Mr Jack  
 Streeter, Mr Gary  
 Stuart, Ms Gisela  
 Stuart, Mr Graham  
 Stunell, Andrew  
 Sturdy, Julian  
 Sutcliffe, Mr Gerry  
 Swales, Ian  
 Swayne, Mr Desmond  
 Swinson, Jo  
 Syms, Mr Robert  
 Tami, Mark  
 Tapsell, Sir Peter  
 Teather, Sarah  
 Thomas, Mr Gareth  
 Thornberry, Emily  
 Thurso, John  
 Timms, rh Stephen  
 Timpson, Mr Edward  
 Tomlinson, Justin  
 Tredinnick, David  
 Trickett, Jon  
 Truss, Elizabeth  
 Turner, Mr Andrew  
 Turner, Karl  
 Twigg, Derek  
 Twigg, Stephen  
 Tyrie, Mr Andrew  
 Umunna, Mr Chuka  
 Uppal, Paul  
 Vaizey, Mr Edward  
 Vara, Mr Shailesh

Vaz, rh Keith  
 Vaz, Valerie  
 Villiers, rh Mrs Theresa  
 Walker, Mr Charles  
 Walker, Mr Robin  
 Wallace, Mr Ben  
 Walley, Joan  
 Walter, Mr Robert  
 Ward, Mr David  
 Watkinson, Angela  
 Weatherley, Mike  
 Webb, Steve  
 Weir, Mr Mike  
 Wharton, James  
 Wheeler, Heather  
 White, Chris  
 Whiteford, Dr Eilidh  
 Whitehead, Dr Alan  
 Whittaker, Craig  
 Whittingdale, Mr John  
 Wicks, rh Malcolm  
 Willetts, rh Mr David

Williams, Hywel  
 Williams, Mr Mark  
 Williams, Roger  
 Williams, Stephen  
 Williamson, Chris  
 Willott, Jenny  
 Wilson, Phil  
 Wilson, Mr Rob  
 Winterton, rh Ms Rosie  
 Wishart, Pete  
 Wollaston, Dr Sarah  
 Woodcock, John  
 Woodward, rh Mr Shaun  
 Wright, David  
 Wright, Mr Iain  
 Wright, Jeremy  
 Wright, Simon  
 Young, rh Sir George  
 Zahawi, Nadhim

**Tellers for the Ayes:**  
**Bill Wiggan and**  
**Mark Hunter**

#### NOES

Allen, Mr Graham  
 Baron, Mr John  
 Campbell, Mr Ronnie  
 Corbyn, Jeremy  
 Durkan, Mark  
 Gardiner, Barry  
 Godsiff, Mr Roger  
 Lucas, Caroline

McDonnell, John  
 Riordan, Mrs Linda  
 Ritchie, Ms Margaret  
 Skinner, Mr Dennis  
 Wood, Mike

**Tellers for the Noes:**  
**Katy Clark and**  
**Yasmin Qureshi**

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That this House welcomes United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1973; deplores the ongoing use of violence by the Libyan regime; acknowledges the demonstrable need, regional support and clear legal basis for urgent action to protect the people of Libya; accordingly supports Her Majesty's Government, working with others, in the taking of all necessary measures to protect civilians and civilian-populated areas under threat of attack in Libya and to enforce the No Fly Zone, including the use of UK armed forces and military assets in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1973; and offers its wholehearted support to the men and women of Her Majesty's armed forces.

## Members' Salaries

10.18 pm

**The Leader of the House of Commons (Sir George Young):** I beg to move,

That the following provision shall be made with respect to the salaries of Members of this House—

(1) For the period beginning with 1 April 2011 and ending with the relevant day, the rates of—

(a) Members' salaries, and

(b) additional salaries payable to Members under Resolutions of this House in respect of service as chairs of select or general committees, shall be the same as those salaries as at 31 March 2011.

(2) In paragraph (1) the "relevant day" means—

(a) the day before the day on which the first determination of Members' salaries by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority comes into effect, or

(b) 31 March 2013,

whichever is the earlier.

(3) Paragraphs (9), (10) and (12)(b) of the Resolution of 3 July 2008 (Members' Salaries (No. 2) (Money)) cease to have effect on the day this Resolution is passed.

(4) The remaining provisions of that Resolution cease to have effect on 1 April 2011.

We move now to MPs' pay. [*Interruption.*] Mr Speaker—

**Mr Speaker:** Order. I apologise for interrupting the right hon. Gentleman. I fully understand that right hon. and hon. Members are not that interested in hearing speeches about their own pay, but I hope that as a courtesy to the Leader of the House those Members who are disinterested and inclined to leave the Chamber will do so quickly and quietly, so that those who wish to hear the Leader of the House can do so.

**Sir George Young:** The whole House will be keenly aware of the country's difficult financial situation, and both sides of the House accept that we have a substantial structural deficit, which must be brought down. The Government have had to take difficult decisions throughout the public sector, including imposing a two-year pay freeze on public sector workers earning more than £21,000. Hon. Members must now decide whether their constituents would welcome Parliament exempting itself from that policy and thus insulating itself from decisions that are affecting households throughout the country, or whether, as I believe, the public expect their elected representatives to be in step with what is being required of other public servants. I believe that it is right for us, as Members of Parliament, to forgo the pay increase that the current formula would have produced.

**Mr Edward Leigh (Gainsborough) (Con):** I quite agree that Parliament should not exempt itself, but I was under the impression that we were never going to vote on our pay again.

**Sir George Young:** I will come in a moment to the point about whether we should overturn the decision that we took in July 2008. Let me briefly set out the background. On 3 July 2008, the House agreed a new formula for uprating Members' salaries, which is what I think my hon. Friend was referring to. The annual percentage increase would be the median of a basket of public sector comparators, and this percentage would

be calculated by the Senior Salaries Review Body and notified to you, Mr Speaker, in a letter from its chairman. That percentage increase would then take effect automatically from 1 April.

That system has considerable advantages. It provides a fixed uprating formula so that we do not determine our own salaries. It is transparent, as the formula and the SSRB's determination are there for everyone to see. It is also fair in that it provides a link between the salary of a Member of Parliament and the salaries of others in the public sector. Those are the virtues that the Government usually believe should underpin any system for determining our salaries—*independence, transparency and fairness.* We have therefore not taken lightly the decision to set aside the pay increase and thereby abandon the formula.

As I said, the Government's decision to invite the House to agree to a pay freeze is the product of the difficult fiscal situation in which we have to find significant cost savings across the public sector. As my predecessor as Leader of the House, the right hon. and learned Member for Camberwell and Peckham (Ms Harman), said in the previous debate:

"given that MPs are paid from the public purse, we should show the same discipline in our pay increases as we expect from the public sector."—[*Official Report*, 3 July 2008; Vol. 478, c. 1062.]

**Jim Dowd (Lewisham West and Penge) (Lab):** The right hon. Gentleman is a decent fellow, but this is not quite the full story. The full story is that no Government have ever resisted the temptation to poke their nose into this business. We have set up mechanisms, to which the hon. Member for Gainsborough (Mr Leigh) referred, and said that they should be independent and we should go along with them, and then when it suits the Government of the day—not just this Government but any Government—they change the rules. That completely undermines any claim they make to believe in independent mechanisms. Either we come forward with what the independent review mechanism says, or we do not. This Government, like their predecessors, are poking their nose in where it does not belong.

**Sir George Young:** I should like to address very directly the hon. Gentleman's point about the independence of the review that we are overturning. He rightly says that by bringing this motion before the House, a Government are once again asking Members to vote on their own remuneration—something that we believed we had put behind us. He asks the very good question as to why we are asking the House to reject the independent findings of the SSRB and whether the SSRB is unable to take on board issues of the kind that I have been talking about. The short answer is this: the system that was introduced in 2008 provided an objective mechanism for determining our pay, but it was a long way from being independent. The formula was devised by the previous Government and endorsed by the House, and in no sense could it be said to be independent.

For those, like the hon. Gentleman, who say that we are substituting our own judgment on this issue for that of the independent SSRB, I remind the House of what the chairman of the SSRB, Sir Bill Cockburn, said in his letter to you, Mr Speaker, on 19 January. He said:

"I should emphasise that the SSRB has no discretion in making this determination but simply applies the formula set out in the Resolution. We were not consulted when the Resolution

was drawn up. The resulting figure is not what the SSRB would have recommended had we been able to have regard to all the circumstances including, this year, the Government's pay freeze for public sector workers paid more than £21,000 a year."

In a nutshell, the SSRB is saying that if its hands had not been tied by the House, it would not have recommended the 1% pay increase that came before us in January. If the hon. Gentleman looks at the pay recommendations for other professions published today by the SSRB and the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration, he will see that no uplifts are recommended for those earning more than £21,000.

**Mr Graham Allen** (Nottingham North) (Lab): The Leader of the House is making a convincing argument that the SSRB, or whichever independent body we choose, should be more independent, not less. What he is doing tonight, of course, is renationalising the terms and conditions of MPs' salaries, which is going in exactly the wrong direction. Does he accept that this matter will go on and on, and that MPs will be undermined consistently by the media and the public until we have a wholly independent authority that does not come back to this House or to the Government for a final decision?

**Bob Russell** (Colchester) (LD): We do not want IPSA.

**Sir George Young:** I say to the hon. Member for Nottingham North (Mr Allen) that that is exactly the process that we are moving towards, although it will disappoint the hon. Member for Colchester (Bob Russell). I will now come to what happens next.

**Mr Peter Bone** (Wellingborough) (Con): What I do not understand from the Leader of the House is, if this increase is based on an average of public service salaries, are we not only getting what the rest of the public services are getting?

**Sir George Young:** If my hon. Friend looks at the comparator, he will see that it includes a number of people who earn less than £21,000 and that, crucially, it includes settlements that were made before the last election. To that extent, it lags behind the public sector pay freeze that we announced in the Budget.

To answer the point raised by the hon. Member for Nottingham North, the 2008 resolution also requires the SSRB to conduct a review of Members' salaries in the first year of each new Parliament. By rescinding the resolution in its entirety, the motion removes the requirement for the SSRB to conduct such a review this year. The review of Members' salaries will instead take place following the commencement of section 29 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010, which will transfer the determination of our salaries to IPSA on a statutory basis. As I said at business questions last week, the Government intend to commence that section shortly. If, in future, the House wants to overturn any recommendations, it will require primary legislation, not a 90-minute debate such as we are having this evening.

**Mr Mark Field** (Cities of London and Westminster) (Con): Given the self-denying ordinance that the Leader of the House is proposing today for salaries, will he give a commitment that he will bring in primary legislation to ensure that there will be no increase in allowances for the next two years under IPSA, or is this the same old

story that we have had in the past of holding the salary in a blaze of glory, and turning around and seeing allowances increased?

**Sir George Young:** There is no intention of doing that.

The Government's policy is to have a public sector pay freeze for those earning more than £21,000 a year. Members of Parliament clearly earn more than that. I think that it would be unacceptable for those earning just more than £21,000 to have no increase and for Members of Parliament earning three times that sum to get a salary increase of about £650. That is why I think it is right this evening to ask the House to freeze our salaries. I very much hope that the House will approve the motion in my name and that of the Deputy Leader of the House.

**Mr Speaker:** I have not selected the amendment, so the Question is as on the Order Paper.

10.28 pm

**Hilary Benn** (Leeds Central) (Lab): I think that the House recognises why the Leader of the House has tabled this motion, especially at a time when many in the public sector face a pay freeze, as he pointed out. To put it starkly, the public would find it hard to understand it if we got a pay rise when they are not getting a pay rise. That is why we will support the motion.

As the right hon. Gentleman pointed out, we face this decision because the Senior Salaries Review Body is currently responsible for determining MPs' pay, and it sets the salary in line with salaries in the civil service, using a fixed formula. He was right to point out that the chairman of the SSRB hinted in his letter that it would have done something different if it had not been bound by the formula. However, as the Leader of the House will be aware from the interventions that he took, there is no hiding the unease that Members throughout the House feel at being asked once again to vote on their pay, just when we thought we had got rid of the responsibility following the decision taken by the House in 2008. I therefore welcome what he said at business questions last week when I asked him about his intention to initiate IPSA taking responsibility for MPs' pay, as is required in the legislation that he mentioned. He said that he would do so "shortly", and that must be right, because the sooner responsibility is transferred the better, not least because we should not be taking decisions such as this.

Finally, although the motion is only about pay, we will in due course have to consider the question of deferred pay, in other words pensions. It would be very helpful if the Deputy Leader of the House, if it is he who winds up the debate, could say something about how the Government intend to handle the matter in the light of Lord Hutton's recent report, and about the likely timetable for pensions, too, being handed over to IPSA, subject of course to the House being fully satisfied about the protection of acquired rights.

10.31 pm

**Mr Charles Walker** (Broxbourne) (Con): It is absolute agony that we are having this debate this evening after we have had such a fantastic and informed debate on Libya. It goes to prove that there is never, ever a good time to talk about MPs' pay and conditions.

[Mr Charles Walker]

However, the debate comes under the heading “Boring but important”. Let us cast our minds back to May 2009, when this House and this democracy that we love so much went through a period of enormous upheaval. I remember that there were great protests outside Parliament—nothing to do with pay and expenses, but enormously voluminous protests. I used to stand in the yard listening to the protests and imagine what it must have been like at the Bastille 220 years earlier in 1789, with the hordes outside. I would close my eyes and think, “Will I get the piano wire or will I get the guillotine?” I think my constituents were rather wishing I would get both and they would both be very slow. It really was an appalling time for this country—this proud democracy brought low by something as innocuous as pay and expenses.

We all vowed in 2009 that we had learned our lessons. Indeed, in 2008 we had started the process of repair by, on 3 July, voting to remove responsibility for pay from our hands. The process of reform was in train. I took great relief, during the debates in 2008 and 2009, from the fact that at last we were not going to have these agonising evenings in the House, but here we are again, having another agonising evening.

We, as Members of Parliament, are brilliant at not only setting our own bear traps but then jumping into them. I feel that that is what we are doing tonight, because the motion has been introduced by the Executive. I know that MPs, both those who served from 2005 to 2010 and our new colleagues, are much chastened by what happened in 2009. We are reforming ourselves from within, and we are not actually as stupid as some people would have us believe. I have absolutely no desire or ambition to accept a 1% pay rise. All that I sincerely wish is that the Back Benchers of this place had been allowed to propose their own motion.

I understood that there was cross-party agreement between the Opposition, the party of government and our colleagues in government, the Liberal Democrats, and I thought there was a real desire and move for a Back-Bench motion that would allow us, as Back Benchers, to do the right thing by this country and our constituents by postponing the pay rise for two years. I am therefore saddened that the Executive have brought forward tonight's motion. Much play has been made of the new politics, which is not about expediency because expediency gets us into such trouble. The motion is expedient and it lays a future bear trap for us. I wish that we were not here, once again, discussing the tedious subject of our pay and conditions.

10.34 pm

**John Mann** (Bassetlaw) (Lab): Here we are again. On 3 July 2008, the Speaker did not select my amendment. Last year, the same thing happened. Today, again, the Speaker has not selected my amendment. Democracy has not been the better for it. My amendment in 2008 would have prevented the practice of flipping homes. My amendment tonight would have reaffirmed the principle that we should not determine our own pay.

I will not vote for or against my pay tonight, and I urge others to do the same—not to abstain, but to refuse to vote. The motion removes the principle of our not determining our pay. It is not simply a decision on

the SSRB proposals; it revokes the decision on independence without anything more than a vague promise that, at some stage, the Government will get around to tabling amendments to have IPSA set pay. The Government have had plenty of time in recent weeks to table such an amendment, and they have chosen not to do so.

**Tessa Munt** (Wells) (LD): If everything is to go to IPSA, so be it, but I am in the position, as a new Member, of not knowing what will happen to my staff pay 11 days hence, from 1 April. That is a disgraceful situation in which to be. None of us can work out what will happen to our staff. I have to renew contracts in 11 days, and I do not know what to do.

**John Mann:** That shows the muddle that the Government and Parliament have got into. Instead of resolving those problems, whether one or other of us likes it or not, in a way that is crystal clear, within which we can work and that the public can see, we go round in circles. Here we go again.

Having been through the pain, which is not yet over, of the expenses scandal, and eventually decided that we should not determine our own pay, and having all allegedly agreed the principle, we are suddenly back where we started—deciding our own pay. The issue tonight is not the amount of the pay—that is a small part of the matter. Of course, it will always be important to Members and even more important to the general public. However, to breach the principle so unnecessarily and cack-handedly lays us open to ridicule. The House should get its act together on pay and expenses and say that we will not break the principle of not setting our pay, conditions or expenses because that is precisely the problem that got us into the scandal in the first place. We must learn the lesson of putting it outside, keeping it there and not interfering with it. Whether it is comfortable or uncomfortable, whatever the level, whether we like it or the general public do not like, it should be determined independently, not by us.

I appeal to Members to refuse to vote either way on the pay, thereby not breaching the principle that it should be determined independently or agreeing that it should be brought back in-house because if we do that, we will rue the day, and pay and expenses will come back again and again to bite us. We should put that behind us.

10.39 pm

**Mr Mark Field** (Cities of London and Westminster) (Con): It is universally accepted by anthropologists that one sign of higher animal intelligence is the ability to learn from experience. As the Leader of the House moved the motion, one was inclined to ask, “Have we in the House of Commons learned nothing from the calamity of the expenses scandal?”

I agree with hon. Members who said that the general public must be dismayed at Parliament's continuing inability to put its house in order in relation to such matters, especially in view of the tumultuous events out there in the real world. How can we earn public respect and work in the national interest to solve this country's acute economic problems and to reform public services, let alone to assert Britain's place in the world, which we debated earlier, when we have so abjectly and continually failed to sort out our immensely damaging internal difficulties?

As the Leader of the House pointed out, after the expenses scandal, Parliament charged Sir John Baker, the then retiring SSRB chairman, to conduct a review. He was asked to make recommendations for a mechanism by which the pay and pensions of MPs could be independently determined—one that did not involve MPs voting on their own pay. His report, which was published in July 2008, recommended that MPs' pay should be uprated annually in line with the public sector average earnings index, with a more general review of MPs' salaries by the SSRB to take place in the first year of each Parliament.

That was supposed to be the end of the matter, with the embarrassing spectacle of MPs setting their salaries becoming a thing of the past—or so we thought. Of course, the unredacted receipts were published by *The Daily Telegraph* in May 2009, and suddenly the entire political class blissfully agreed on the root of the problem. Members and political commentators acknowledged that the widespread misuse by many MPs—I am afraid that it was many MPs—of second home and staff budgets, which as we all know helped to terminate several dozen parliamentary careers, came about largely as a result of Parliament voting down independently awarded salary increases.

For many years, the Executive have been overly concerned by the immediate public reaction to headline salary uplifts. As a result, subsequently, a blind eye was continually turned to the widespread misuse of the parliamentary expenses scheme, which became an income-enhancing allowance. Since the ground-breaking public revelations in *The Daily Telegraph*, the universal refrain from Parliament's great and good—the Speaker's Commission, the Members Estimate Committee and the Standards and the Privileges Committee—was that the expenses system had been rotten for decades, yet those same MPs did their utmost to block meaningful reform of the now much-maligned expenses system, almost until the very day when *The Daily Telegraph* first published those receipts. Indeed, all the systematically suspect claims were defended resolutely by those distinguished, senior parliamentarians as being within the rules—which parliamentarians had made.

Small wonder that those parliamentarians waged such a disastrous, protracted campaign in the High Court between 2006 and 2009—in all of our names, I am afraid—to prevent the publication of expense receipts. They knew full well the public reaction that would follow.

I am particularly sorry to say that the Leader of the House, in his previous role as Chairman of the Standards and Privileges Committee, was one such senior parliamentarian. That makes his attempt to drive through the motion tonight all the more regrettable. Of all people, he knows how we got here. On 30 April 2009, just two weeks before *The Daily Telegraph* balloon went up, the Leader of the House, in league with other politicians, put down a serious—

**Mr Speaker:** Order. I very gently say to the hon. Gentleman that I understand the issues that surround the motion, but we have a time-constrained debate, and it is incumbent on him to focus on the terms of the motion rather than ancillary matters.

**Mr Field:** I was coming to the end of this passage, Mr Speaker.

At that juncture, however, the Leader of the House allowed the glaring loophole in relation to second home allowances for MPs in suburban seats to be overlooked, on the basis that the independent review we await should report first. I only wish that today he was such a keen supporter of independent reviews. I believe that the independent salary review that the SSRB and IPSA were due to commence in the next few months would also have provided a long overdue opportunity to rebalance and aggregate MPs' remuneration away from the byzantine and almost corrupt allowances scheme, towards a more upfront and transparent salary, which is why it is particularly regrettable that the second part of the motion is being proposed tonight. I fear that that opportunity will now be lost.

For the sake of one day's good newspapers headlines, Parliament has unwisely insisted that we set our own salary again and impose this two-year freeze. As I mentioned earlier, the calamitous expenses system began in just such a way by rejecting independent salary reviews and then boosting allowances as some form of compensation. In my view, even the mere suspicion that this were happening again would be totally unacceptable and disastrous, as we try to build public trust. Such a process of rebuilding will be difficult enough in the years ahead, given the constant backdrop of high-profile criminal cases currently going to the courts. I do not wish to prejudge any of the other expenses conflicts, but I suspect that potentially there are several more former and sitting Members whose affairs will move from police investigation to the Crown Prosecution Service and then the Crown court in the months ahead.

**Mr Speaker:** Order. The difficulty here is that the hon. Gentleman has got a prepared text, to which he is sticking closely. However, I have already advised him that he must not dilate on matters that do not relate directly to the motion. I feel sure that being an experienced parliamentarian he will now turn to the matters within the motion. If he does not wish to do so, he can remain in his seat.

**Mr Field:** I shall take on board what you say, Mr Speaker, although—

**Mr Speaker:** Order. May I make it clear that it is not a question of taking on board what I say? I am saying to the hon. Gentleman, without fear of contradiction, that I have given a ruling, and to that ruling he will adhere.

**Mr Field:** I shall adhere to your ruling, Mr Speaker.

If we pass the motion on salaries tonight, amidst a self-satisfied blaze of glory, it will be essential that we also resolve that, whatever changes are made to the IPSA allowances scheme, none will come into effect until April 2013. In short, it must be a two-year freeze on both salaries and all allowances.

**Mr Bone:** My hon. Friend is making a powerful speech. Does he agree that the best thing that could happen tonight would be for the Deputy Leader of the House not to move the motion? We have been talking about a really important matter tonight, and it is absurd that we start talking about Members' salaries and expenses. It should be done on a different day.

**Mr Field:** I am inclined to agree, but I accept that business has to go through and that we are heading towards the end of the tax year. It is regrettable, however, and my hon. Friend is absolutely right. Given the importance of what was discussed tonight, this seems like very small beer indeed. It is regrettable that it has come to this pass.

**Richard Graham** (Gloucester) (Con): My hon. Friend feels that this is small beer. Some of us feel that we have asked public servants to take a cut in their salary and now we are offering to do the same. Can we not just vote on it as quickly as possible?

**Mr Field:** I suspect that it might not necessarily come to a Division, because we all feel this way. There are difficulties and concerns. I take on board the concern that we are telling many public servants that they should not have an increase. However, we have an independent review mechanism in place, and we should stick to it. I believe that the public need a guarantee from the Government that those strictures that apply to salaries will also apply to all other allowances. If the freeze over the next two years is to apply also to the level and nature of the allowances, we can at least look our electorate firmly in the eye and say, "We are all in this together".

**Mr Michael McCann** (East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow) (Lab): Has not the hon. Gentleman contradicted himself? He made the appropriate point earlier that in the past MPs supplemented their salaries with allowances, but now he is suggesting that we freeze allowances and salaries. That means that people working for MPs and being paid less than £21,000 per year will be punished as a result of a decision in a matter unrelated to the motion.

**Mr Field:** I was referring to the allowances that are directly relevant to Members of Parliament, as opposed to the salary allowances.

Let me conclude, because others wish to speak and the hour is late on what has been a busy and momentous day in the House. The collective damage that has been done to the reputation of politics in this country is such that it is our duty to ensure that Parliament is never again silenced on these matters. I fear that the motion before us tonight is the very opposite of the leadership that we require if public trust is to be fully restored.

10.50 pm

**Mr James Arbuthnot** (North East Hampshire) (Con): I have never before spoken in a Members' salary debate; I trust I will never have to again. Today we have been debating what the armed forces will be doing in Libya. As Chair of the Select Committee on Defence—albeit not speaking on behalf of that Committee—I have only one point to make. For the armed forces to receive no pay rise and for politicians to receive a pay rise would be just so unacceptable in the country that we could not possibly think of allowing it to happen tonight.

10.51 pm

**Michael Connarty** (Linlithgow and East Falkirk) (Lab): Like the last speaker, I have never spoken in a pay and conditions debate in this place, and I do not think that I

have voted in any of them either, on the basis that I did not think that it was ever correct that Parliament should set its own wages.

The problem I have is this. It may be a criticism of the Leader of the House—[*Interruption*—]—who may be more interested in talking to the Whip—but I want to say how disappointed I am that this proposal is what he and his deputy have had to come up with. If this proposal is the best that these two intelligent men—both of whom I respect—have had to come up with, they must have been wasting their time doing other things of lesser importance. It is an embarrassment, because it is taking away independence—my hon. Friend the Member for Bassetlaw (John Mann) is quite correct. The *raison d'être* is that the Senior Salaries Review Body was compelled to take into account a formula that led to this decision, when what was required was a motion to remove that condition on the Senior Salaries Review Body and then let it do its independent job without the constraints of that formula. That would still have resulted in an independent decision, but what all this has turned into is, sadly, an embarrassing decision.

I respect what was said on behalf of those who have taken a pay freeze, particularly those in the armed forces, who deserve to be paid much more, but really, this issue is about showing that a political decision has been taken to have a pay freeze, thereby garnering what I might assume would be some public applause, along with condemnation of those who might have wanted to take a pay rise. That is what this issue has turned into—a political decision—when it should have been about removing any constraints on an independent body to set the correct level. If that level was in line with a pay freeze for the public sector above £21,000, that would have been correct, but it would also have been independent.

However, to do what is proposed is to demean the House. If that means that the proposals have been drawn up in a short time scale, then what have the Leader of the House's office and his deputy been doing all this time, if they knew that it would come to this? It is an embarrassment; therefore, I am sorry to say that the Leader of the House and his deputy have been found at fault. If they had any sense, they would withdraw the motion and bring forward a correct motion before the end of the financial year.

10.53 pm

**Simon Hughes** (Bermondsey and Old Southwark) (LD): I would like to make a couple of comments entirely on my own behalf, not on behalf of my colleagues. I have sat through these debates for over 25 years. This House has never been served by Governments of any colour interfering in a process that we had already agreed should be resolved independently.

There are five written ministerial statements today dealing with pay reviews—for the armed forces, school teachers, NHS workers and prison officers, and for senior salaries. As it happens, the Government are accepting the independent pay review recommendations in each of those reviews. In the past, we have regularly asked people to advise on teachers' pay or prison officers' pay, but then the Government have interfered. They have asked for a review, but then asked us to vote against what an independent adjudicator has said a

certain group of public servants should receive. It really is not possible to justify having one rule for one group and one rule for another.

When the Government have asked me to interfere with an independent pay review body, I have never voted for the Government and against the independent pay review body. It seems to me that that would be entirely contradictory. I shall not support the Government tonight either, because I do not think it is possible to justify setting up an independent process and then not following it. The Leader and Deputy Leader of the House, whom I respect, know that in the last Parliament the Labour Leader of the House did not accept the independent Senior Salaries Review Body recommendation in its entirety but tweaked it, interfered with it, changed it, and came back with her own proposal. As a result, we have a half-independent recommendation. The independent body is not able to give its free and unfettered view—it chose a different basket of pay comparators—but even that tweaked version is now being interfered with by the Government.

I understand the politics. The politics are that tonight we would have been given a 1% pay increase when we are asking other people earning more than £21,000 a year not to have that pay increase. However, the problem would not have existed if the Government had always accepted that the independent pay review body should recommend salaries for us as public servants, as well as for ambulance workers, health workers and so on. In that respect I entirely agree with the hon. Member for Bassetlaw (John Mann) and others. It really is not acceptable for us to set a rule one year and break it the next.

When we debated this matter, in 2008, the then shadow Leader of the House—now the Home Secretary—made the position quite clear. She said that more than a year ago it was proposed that MPs should stop voting on their own pay and start looking into ways in which that could be undertaken. One of the important things that we shall be able to do today is take this whole issue away from the House, which is crucial. It is no good presenting one argument when in opposition and then changing it in government.

This is not in the same league as our earlier debate. It is not in the same league as issues of war and peace to do with Libya and so on, which are far more important. However, I hope that in future the Government will take independent advice, that they will apply—above all, for people on low pay—the principle that someone outside this place should advise on salaries and pay, and that we will then take that advice. If we do not, we will undermine our case, and I am afraid that we will not assist the public sector, many of whose employees look to us to set an example to them.

10.57 pm

**Dr Julian Lewis** (New Forest East) (Con): The right hon. Member for Bermondsey and Old Southwark (Simon Hughes) was doing so well until he reached his peroration.

This is a classic case of an immovable object meeting an irresistible force. If there is a vote tonight, I shall go with the irresistible force, namely what was said by my right hon. Friend the Member for North East Hampshire (Mr Arbuthnot), the Chairman of the Defence Committee. It is absolutely inconceivable that Members of Parliament

should be given a pay rise at a time when the pay of other public servants, particularly members of the armed forces, is being frozen. That will determine my vote tonight.

**Bob Russell:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Dr Lewis:** I will a little later, if the hon. Gentleman will be patient. I do not wish to be derailed from the other half of the equation, which is that the right hon. Member for Bermondsey and Old Southwark is also absolutely right. It is nonsensical to say that a process will become independent because interfering with it has led to desperately dire consequences in the past, and then to tear up that principle at the first opportunity.

I have only one positive suggestion to make, but I think that it is worth trying. I am not sure whether the Leader of the House will respond to suggestions, but if he does, I hope he will consider this one. I am sure that the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority consists of very capable people, but we have heard from no less an authority than the Prime Minister that it may not be there for ever, and we would not wish to give this very important task to a body that may not be with us indefinitely.

I have a rather simple suggestion. Why cannot the pay of hon. Members be linked once and for all to an agreed level of civil servant, whatever that level may be, so that if they get a pay freeze, we get a pay freeze? [*Interruption.*] I hear whispers around the Chamber that we have done that already, but we evidently have not done it efficiently enough if the result is, as the Leader of the House has explained, that their pay is being frozen while ours is not. I simply say that we should be linked once and for all to an agreed rate of civil service pay that cannot be interfered with so that when the Government impose a pay freeze on public employees for right and proper reasons, we will be affected by it, and when they do not we will not. It is as simple as that and I cannot see the problem.

11 pm

**Sir Peter Bottomley** (Worthing West) (Con): My hon. Friend the Member for New Forest East (Dr Lewis) was right to agree with what our right hon. Friend the Member for North East Hampshire (Mr Arbuthnot) said. It would be impossible for the House to accept a pay increase in these circumstances. The recommendation for people in the national health service who earn below £21,000 a year is that they should receive an extra £250 in a year. For us to take 1% on our pay would not work in these circumstances.

I do not know why people are afraid of setting their own pay, but that is not the system we have decided on. We have decided that it will be done through independent determination by IPSA as we had previously decided that it would be done through independent determination by the SSRB, but that is not the subject of the motion. As has rightly been said, we cannot run both organisations, so which should we drop? Clearly, we have to drop the one that we set up first, which was the SSRB. If it does not do this work, IPSA will, but I do not have confidence that IPSA will get it right. Let me briefly make a recommendation to it: why not set a rate of pay that comes into effect after the next election and have no increase during the Parliament? That would solve an

[*Sir Peter Bottomley*]

awful lot of problems. We would not have to compare ourselves with anyone else year on year and no one would get an increase during a Parliament.

On allowances, it is wrong that IPSA has left us waiting so long for the money that our staff are going to be earning in a month's time, but again that is not an issue for today. I do not agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Cities of London and Westminster (Mr Field) about freezing all allowances, but he will not mind that. When remarks were made about my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House and second homes, I did not recognise the factual basis of what was said. Perhaps it would be possible for the person who made that remark to communicate it to my right hon. Friend and to me and then we will know what that was all about.

Essentially, the way to solve the hon. Member for Bassetlaw (John Mann)'s problem about not wanting to vote for or against the motion is not to force a vote and to let the motion go through.

11.2 pm

**Mr Peter Bone** (Wellingborough) (Con): Following on from my hon. Friend the Member for Worthing West (Sir Peter Bottomley), I agree that we should not vote on this issue tonight, but from a different perspective. I do not think it is for the Executive to bring forward this motion. If such a motion is to be brought forward, it should be done by the Backbench Business Committee so that it is Parliament bringing it forward and deciding whether to accept the pay increase.

I have a second reason for thinking that the motion should not be proceeded with tonight and I hope that the Deputy Leader of the House will not force it to a vote and will instead come back with a different motion—or, better still, let the Backbench Business Committee bring forward a motion. We have had such an important debate today and I have been agonising over the weekend about which way to vote; in the end I did not vote at all. It seems absolutely absurd to the British public that we are wasting one and a half hours on this tonight when we could have continued with the main debate, which is what we should have done. I urge the Deputy Leader of the House to withdraw the motion.

11.4 pm

**Mr David Nuttall** (Bury North) (Con): I am conscious that, with the exception of my hon. Friend the Member for Gloucester (Richard Graham), all the speakers in the debate so far were Members of the House before the last election. I was not so I bring a slightly different perspective.

In the run-up to the election, partly, for obvious reasons, because of the constituency in which I was standing—Bury North—the expenses scandal and the issue of Members' pay were raised frequently. In light of the decision taken in 2008, I was able to say, "Well, Members voting on their pay is not an issue any more; I will not get involved in such matters." That is what I was saying to my would-be constituents in the run-up to the election, so I have a dilemma tonight.

I have resolved that dilemma in this way. On the one hand, an independent review body has suggested a 1% increase, and on the other, public sector employees

earning more than £21,000 are subject to a pay freeze. We should accept the motion for two reasons. First, it is common sense that the public would be amazed and astonished, no matter what excuses were given, if we somehow arranged—that is how they would see it; we would be arranging it—to be treated differently from the rest of the public sector. That is one reason why we should accept that we should be in the same position as the rest of the public sector and accept a pay freeze.

The other reason is that I believe in the sovereignty of Parliament, and constituents know that ultimately, whatever we may say about independence, we put those independent people in place, and he who gives can take away. Constituents will not be fooled if we accept the 1% increase and say, "It was all because of an independent body—nothing to do with us, gov." They will realise that we put that body in place.

The main reason for accepting the motion is common sense, which is always my touchstone. What do the people out there want us to do? There is no doubt that they would not accept it if we agreed to a pay rise. For that reason, I support the motion.

11.7 pm

**Mr John Baron** (Basildon and Billericay) (Con): Briefly, I believe that the motion is a retrograde step. Many of us in this place have believed for a long time that we should not decide our own salaries and pensions, and have abstained in debates on them. We thought in 2008 that we were ensuring that a third party would, in effect, decide; we are now yet again bringing the matter back in-house.

The Government's case has not been helped by the suggestion that the SSRB is in some way not really independent. It is linked to a range of salary increases, but those decisions are made outside this place. It is as independent as we are going to get, so I really do not think that that suggestion helps the Government's case at all.

For the avoidance of doubt, because there will be those outside this place who think that those of us who have spoken against the Government proposals speak from self-interest, let me make it clear that I for one would be happy to donate my increase to charity. The point is not the financial interest; the point is that a number of us fought long and hard to make sure that decisions on those subjects were made outside this place, yet we are once again bringing them into the Chamber. That is a retrograde step that we will regret. The idea of moving this forward through the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority is not very welcome at all, given IPSA's track record in certain areas.

We are losing the plot on this issue and have taken a retrograde step. Last year and the year before that we thought that we had solved the situation, but now we are bringing the matter back in-house. That will not serve the long-term interests of the Chamber or the reputation of this Parliament.

11.9 pm

**Helen Jones** (Warrington North) (Lab): I do not want to detain the House for long—[HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear!"] That is clearly the best reaction I am going to get this evening.

I detect throughout the House a real desire not to be having this debate at all. Having to debate our own pay is not good for the House at any time, and particularly not after the debate that we have just had. We are where we are, however. We are caught between a rock and a hard place. Last week, I went into my local hospital and members of staff there told me that they were genuinely worried about how they were going to pay their mortgages. A pay freeze for the armed forces has already been mentioned. I do not think that anyone here believes that MPs could take a pay rise in those circumstances.

Members have rightly said that the whole question of our pay needs to be taken away from this House and given to an independent body. If we are honest, we have to admit that Governments have always interfered in the recommendations of pay review bodies—that has certainly been the case in all the years that I have been in the House. We need finally to get away from that. The solution is not as simple as linking our pay to a grade in the civil service, as the hon. Member for New Forest East (Dr Lewis) suggested. We tried that, but the grade was abolished. That is how we got into many of the problems that we faced later.

We need to get this matter out of the House very quickly, and to establish an independent system for setting our pay. Having listened to the debate, I believe that that is overwhelmingly the view of Members. I hope that the Deputy Leader of the House will not simply tell us that that will happen “shortly”; I hope that he will tell us when it will be done, because no one wants to be in this position ever again.

11.12 pm

**The Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Leader of the House of Commons (Mr David Heath):** Hear, hear to what the hon. Member for Warrington North (Helen Jones) said at the end of her speech: I do not think that we want to be in this position again.

I want to pick up on something that my right hon. Friend the Member for Bermondsey and Old Southwark (Simon Hughes) said about pay review bodies. Yes, it is true that a succession of reports from such bodies has been accepted by the Government. They deal with teachers, the Prison Service and the health service. Every single one of them says that there should be no increase in pay this year for those who earn more than £21,000. Only one pay review body is proposing an increase for people who earn considerably more than £21,000, and that is the one that deals with Members of Parliament. Why is that happening? Because it is not an entirely independent review, as we have already heard from my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House of Commons, and because it was pre-emptively interfered with by the decision of the previous Government and the previous House in setting the parameters for our pay, which has resulted in the anomalous position of the proposal of a 1% pay increase for MPs while everyone else in the public service gets a pay freeze. That is why we have had to come back to the House today.

**Geoffrey Clifton-Brown (The Cotswolds) (Con):** On a point of clarification, there has been a lot of disquiet in the debate about Members of Parliament having to vote on their own pay. Can my hon. Friend confirm whether there will be an annual vote on our pay when IPSA takes over this matter?

**Mr Heath:** There certainly will not be—[*Interruption.*] My hon. Friend the Member for Wellingborough (Mr Bone) can scoff, but there will not be. It will be a genuinely independent process.

The hon. Member for Bassetlaw (John Mann) asked why we had not tabled an amendment. There is no need for an amendment in order to transfer the matter to IPSA, an entirely independent body, because the legislation is already in place. All that we need is a commencement order. He went on to say that he would refuse to vote this evening. Let me tell him, and anyone who is minded to do the same, that if the House refuses to vote for the motion this evening, we will have a 1% pay increase, and those hon. Members will have to justify that pay increase to their constituents at a time of national constraint. I do not believe that that would be easy to do.

**Adam Afriyie (Windsor) (Con):** If the Deputy Leader of the House is so keen for an independent body such as IPSA to control MPs' salaries, why does he not hand that over from 1 April this year?

**Mr Heath:** We shall do so when IPSA and the House are ready, and it will be done shortly. We have already received that reply, and I repeat it again. Incidentally, may I tell the right hon. Member for Leeds Central (Hilary Benn) that he will soon receive a reply on pensions, but we have made it clear that MPs' pensions will be informed by the Hutton review in exactly the same way as pensions in the rest of the public service? It is a matter that the House will soon have the opportunity to discuss.

I was extremely disappointed by part of the contribution from the hon. Member for Cities of London and Westminster (Mr Field) in which he appeared to impugn the integrity of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House. That is entirely regrettable and unjustifiable, given his record in opposition and in government, and I hope that the hon. Gentleman will take the opportunity to withdraw that suggestion.

**Mr Mark Field:** I was simply trying to inform the House of events that took place two years ago, and was in no way trying to impugn the integrity of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House. I was just pointing out that in his former guise he had made the case for independent reviews very strongly in amendments that he had tabled, and I hoped that he would do the same again.

May I briefly ask the deputy Leader of the House whether, if there is a salary freeze in the public sector from April 2013 to April 2014, will he do his best, once MPs' salaries are in IPSA's hands, to stop IPSA putting up those salaries, despite the fact that, by that stage, IPSA will be the entirely independent body that he believes the SSRB is not?

**Mr Heath:** I did not hear the hon. Gentleman say what he said that he had said about my right hon. Friend—I heard something quite different, but we shall have to look at the *Official Report* to be sure.

Once IPSA has control of Members' salaries, it will be entirely independent and it will not be for me or for anyone else to tell it how to do its job. Independent assessment is right—we all agree about that. In principle, Members of Parliament should not vote on their own

[Mr Heath]

pay. In a House that does not flinch from having an opinion on the remuneration of others, we cannot just ignore the perception or consequences of an increase of our own pay.

**Mr Charles Walker:** I do not think that a single Member of Parliament wants this wretched 1% pay rise. What we wanted was the chance as Members of Parliament to do the right thing and table our own motion to decline it. What we are getting, I am afraid, in a robust speech from the hon. Gentleman on the Front Bench is Executive posturing at our expense and it does him no favours at all.

**Mr Heath:** The hon. Gentleman is entitled to his opinion, but I think that the House has been given the opportunity to decide whether it wants that 1% pay increase, and it must make that decision.

**Michael Connarty:** I am sure that the hon. Gentleman is approaching a response to the point that I made. Has it not come to everyone's notice recently that there might be a problem with public sector expenditure—it has been parroted in every speech in the House since the election? Why did the Leader of the House and the Deputy Leader of the House not introduce something to free the SSRB from the formula in which it was trapped, enabling it to make an independent recommendation on our salaries and on which we would not have to vote? Where has the hon. Gentleman been sleeping?

**Mr Heath:** There are two answers to that. First, I am not a member of the SSRB, so I did not know what recommendation it was going to make. If we tried to adjust the so-called independent formula, would we not be having precisely the same debate about the Executive interfering with the will of the House, which had decided to give to that independent body the right to set our pay? It would be said that we were coming in with a formula of our own. I can just imagine the speeches that would be made, and they would be very similar to the ones that have been made this evening.

The hon. Member for Cities of London and Westminster talked about animal intelligence. It occurs to me that if there were a lemmings review body that independently came to the view that a headlong dash into a freezing fjord would be for the best, lemmings ought at least to have an opinion on the matter. What we are providing this evening is an opportunity for Members to consider the consequences before complying with the decision.

In this case, the review body has made it plain that it would not have made the recommendation that it did unless it was constrained to do so. It would have independently come to a view that there should be no increase in our pay this year. I find it difficult to believe that any Member of the House thinks we should be treated differently and significantly better than others working in the public sector.

**Nick de Bois** (Enfield North) (Con): I am staggered that I should have to make this comment—no one in the House is suggesting that we should take that 1%.

**Mr Heath:** In that case I am extremely pleased, as it means that we will quickly move to a conclusion of this difficult matter. The commitment to independent review is retained. The anomalous position this year is recognised. We do to ourselves what others have had done to them. It is not a decision for Government; it is a decision for the House. Members must make up their own minds, but in my view—and I do not think I am alone—it is a no-brainer. I hope all right hon. and hon. Members will support the motion.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That the following provision shall be made with respect to the salaries of Members of this House—

(1) For the period beginning with 1 April 2011 and ending with the relevant day, the rates of—

(a) Members' salaries, and

(b) additional salaries payable to Members under Resolutions of this House in respect of service as chairs of select or general committees, shall be the same as those salaries as at 31 March 2011.

(2) In paragraph (1) the "relevant day" means—

(a) the day before the day on which the first determination of Members' salaries by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority comes into effect, or

(b) 31 March 2013, whichever is the earlier.

(3) Paragraphs (9), (10) and (12)(b) of the Resolution of 3 July 2008 (Members' Salaries (No. 2) (Money)) cease to have effect on the day this Resolution is passed.

(4) The remaining provisions of that Resolution cease to have effect on 1 April 2011.

## Business without Debate

### SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE

*Ordered,*

That, at the sitting on Tuesday 22 March, the Speaker shall not adjourn the House until he has notified the Royal Assent to Acts agreed upon by both Houses.—(*Sir George Young.*)

### BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS

*Ordered,*

That Gregg McClymont be discharged from the Business, Innovation and Skills Committee and Dan Jarvis be added.—(*Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, on behalf of the Committee of Selection.*)

### PROCEDURE

*Ordered,*

That Angela Smith be discharged from the Procedure Committee and Thomas Docherty be added.—(*Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, on behalf of the Committee of Selection.*)

### TRANSPORT

*Ordered,*

That Kelvin Hopkins be discharged from the Transport Committee and Jim Dobbin be added.—(*Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, on behalf of the Committee of Selection.*)

## Cawston Park Hospital

*Motion made, and Question proposed.* That this House do now adjourn.—(*Miss Chloe Smith.*)

11.22 pm

**Steve Baker** (Wycombe) (Con): I am grateful to the Solicitor-General for responding to the debate and for being present at this late hour. My hon. Friend the Member for Norwich North (Miss Smith) and I would like to raise with the House and the Solicitor-General the experiences of Mr Andrew Breeze, a former NHS worker and founding clinician of an independent and innovative psychiatric hospital, Cawston Park.

Mr Breeze's experiences have been documented in both the regional and the national press, notably by my hon. Friend in an article in *The Mail on Sunday* on 21 November 2009. Although Mr Breeze is not one of my own constituents, his brother Paul is, and I have agreed to support this important matter, as it has wide-ranging consequences for independent health care and, indeed, many entrepreneurial projects requiring major capital investment.

In late 2003, Mr Breeze set up Cawston Park. He and the other founding clinicians had all previously worked within the NHS and had felt constrained in seeking to provide high-quality, effective care that was value for money. They therefore seized the opportunity to move into the independent sector to achieve their vision.

The purpose of Cawston Park hospital was to provide specialist psychiatric care and treatment to severely mentally ill patients, many of whom could not be properly treated within the existing NHS structures. In November 2006, the hospital was recognised as having achieved outstanding clinical successes owing to its unique approach to patient care and treatment. Patients who had previously been in other hospitals for lengthy periods of time were being successfully discharged from Cawston Park hospital and it had become apparent that it was saving the NHS hundreds of thousands of pounds annually. Feedback from NHS primary care trusts was extremely positive and referrals extended across the whole of the UK.

However, that period of great accomplishment and acclaim quickly turned sour because of internal difficulties with a senior member of staff. I do not wish to inform the House of every sordid detail I have been shown, but the allegations range from theft to an extra-marital affair with another staff member, together with a range of other grievous matters. As a result there was an internal investigation, followed by disciplinary proceedings, which took place on 16 November 2005.

During this time, the staff member in question had decided to leave Chancellor Care to set up a rival facility to Cawston Park hospital. He had been found to be removing hospital property and recruiting Cawston Park staff to his new venture. A disciplinary hearing was duly set up by Mr Breeze, but the gentleman telephoned one hour before the hearing was due to take place to inform Mr Breeze that he was resigning without notice as he did not want a dismissal on his record when he applied to the Healthcare Commission for a licence to operate a rival facility.

Six weeks later, the Nursing and Midwifery Council wrote to the ex-employee to notify him that it was going to investigate the reasons surrounding his departure from Cawston Park. However, by not re-registering as a psychiatric nurse, which I understand he still has not

done, he was able to prevent the NMC investigating further. Later that day he contacted the NHS Counter Fraud Service through its hotline to make what turned out to be malicious allegations.

A subsequent statement was made to NHS Counter Fraud by the female nurse who purportedly had personal relations with the ex-employee, which was considered to be an independent corroboration of the initial allegations. Contemporaneously, a patient had reported the ex-employee to the protection of vulnerable adults scheme, which is now under the auspices of the Independent Safeguarding Authority, for abusive behaviour towards patients. This might have served to illustrate further the character of the accuser.

What followed was a three-year investigation primarily involving three Government agencies and one private company, Lloyds Development Capital. More than 50 police officers were involved in a high-profile dawn raid, which I have learned today was leaked to the press. Some of them were drafted in from outside Norfolk. The defendants were interviewed three times for more than 20 hours. More than 80 witnesses were interviewed, some more than once, concluding in the commissioning of four expert witnesses and the production of four lengthy reports, most notably the Badcock report, whose author admitted that he was not an expert in the field.

NHS Counter Fraud worked on the case for six months before handing it over to the local police in July 2006. During that time, NHS Counter Fraud had concluded that fraud had occurred and Mr Breeze was subsequently charged with conspiracy to defraud the NHS of £2.3 million. The case alleged that the directors had charged the NHS for additional care that had never been provided.

Mr Breeze's contention is that the police were misled by NHS Counter Fraud convincing them that a fraud had in fact taken place. His argument was as follows. First, in his meeting with NHS Counter Fraud on 16 November 2010 he was informed that it had come to the conclusion that fraud was occurring. My hon. Friend the Member for Norwich North was in attendance. Secondly, in an interview under caution the police made it obvious that they believed that that fraud had occurred. Thirdly, Norfolk police did not have a fraud squad so the case was handed to its major investigation team, which was more accustomed to dealing with murders. No one in that team was a fraud specialist. Fourthly, the police assumed that NHS Counter Fraud knew how a private sector psychiatric hospital operated clinically. That may seem reasonable, but it turned out to be incorrect. Fifthly and finally, NHS Counter Fraud did not advise the police which type of psychiatric expert they should go to, so they went to the wrong type and received factually incorrect and misleading information.

As a result of those events, Mr Breeze and his solicitor, Richard Smyth, came to the conclusion that the police were constructing a case from poor evidence rather than trying to detect whether a crime had been committed. I must ask the Solicitor-General if that is how the system should function.

When Andrew Breeze met NHS Counter Fraud on 16 November 2010, the only documentation that could be produced supporting the fraud allegations were several witness statements taken by the Counter Fraud team, which it had previously refused to disclose to Mr Breeze despite repeated requests to do so. One of those statements was from the original accuser; another was from the

[Steve Baker]

female nurse with whom he was in a relationship and setting up the rival project; and another was from a member of staff who had worked at Cawston Park hospital and been recruited for that new venture. Additionally, that individual had invested £10,000 in the new enterprise. There were three other statements taken from ex-staff who had left Cawston Park disgruntled in the past. One does not need a legal education to question the quality of those witnesses and the numerous vested interests that will have been at play.

In the light of those connections, perhaps the police investigations might have discerned something amiss in the accusations at an early stage. When asked by Andrew Breeze why the NHS Counter Fraud team had not carried out basic and obvious lines of inquiry that would have clearly showed fraud was not taking place, its response was that it did not have the resources in place to do that. Mr Breeze had that meeting taped and is having it transcribed.

The police then investigated from July 2006 to February 2008, at which point Andrew Breeze was charged with conspiracy to defraud the NHS. The police now refuse to disclose their case summary, which was sent to the Crown Prosecution Service prior to the decision to charge Mr Breeze. His freedom of information request has been rejected.

What is of significant interest is the 22 April 2009 computer forensic review prepared by James Coulthard from Stroz Friedberg. A summary of his conclusions are as follows:

“Computers relating to”

Mr. Breeze’s accuser

“appear not to have been examined... Norfolk Constabulary Computer Crime Unit have lost digital evidence from exhibits, which cannot be replaced. Norfolk Constabulary Computer Crime Unit supplied defective and incomplete digital evidence to the defence without verifying the integrity of the evidence on more than one occasion. The lack of key exhibits in this case makes it impossible for the defence to effectively investigate the claims of document falsification by BREEZE and WILSON.”

Does the Solicitor-General share my concern about the implications of those events?

The result was that Cawston Park’s financial backers, Lloyds Development Capital, exercised its increased rights under the terms of the management buy-out, which stated that, if allegations of fraud were brought to its attention, it then had the power to dismiss Andrew Breeze from his post of chief executive. It subsequently did so and brought in Lesley Reardon-Denton, someone who had no clinical experience in psychiatry, to run the business in Mr Breeze’s absence.

On the instructions of Lloyds Development Capital, Ms Reardon-Denton instigated an internal inquiry by bringing in what she described as an “independent” expert, Christopher Hird, to produce a report, which heavily criticised Mr Breeze’s management of Cawston Park and was used to dismiss him. It later transpired that Mr Hird was not independent, having been a long-standing employee of Lesley Reardon-Denton in a business of which she was chief executive in London. The prosecution subsequently ditched the report, when its independence was questioned, during the trial.

Lloyds’ resulting decision meant that Mr Breeze went on to lose his entire investment, which the police valued

at £9.4m. That seems to me a grotesque injustice which is bound to deter other entrepreneurs.

A further point of note is the conduct of Zurich Insurance. Cawston Park had directors’ and officers’ liability insurance when it carried out the management buy-out. This was meant to cover all the legal costs if any member was accused of fraud. However, in a letter dated 9 October 2007, Zurich informed Mr Breeze that it was reneging and refused to pay. It deemed the policy null and void on the slightly odd grounds that Cawston Park did not inform it that the directors were involved in criminal activity when the policy was taken out some time previously. We should note that, at this point, Mr Breeze had not been charged. Zurich went on to say:

“Given that the criminal wrong doing appears on any view to pre-date the retro date in the policy, our clients do not feel able to continue indemnifying defence costs.”

Mr Breeze was unable to fight this decision privately, as the police had frozen all his assets, thus not allowing him to pay for legal advice. Legal aid eventually took over, but at an estimated cost of £2 million. Should not legal aid be persuading Zurich to honour its policy and pay what is due? Should the taxpayer even be liable?

Trial proceedings began in April 2009, but before the prosecution could complete outlining their case, the judge brought the trial to a close because they could not offer sufficient evidence. In his closing speech, the judge made complimentary comments about Mr Breeze, including:

“You entered this courtroom on the 20th April as a clinician of exemplary character. You leave it vindicated with your good name intact and your head held high”,

and:

“I hope that no professional or other obstacle will remain to hinder your early return to work in the field of psychiatric healthcare, should you wish to do so. You are a talented man with much still to offer your peers and patients.”

Regrettably, Cawston Park hospital never recovered from the investigations by NHS Counter Fraud and Norfolk constabulary. It finally went into administration, with the investigation process being cited as the reason for its closure. Despite the judge’s comments, Andrew Breeze has had obstacles put in his way that have prevented him returning to the field of psychiatric health care.

This tragic story touches on numerous legal, social and political issues that need to be addressed. They have potentially far-reaching implications for entrepreneurs, particularly with respect to the Government’s programme of health reform. The first issue is the role of the three organisations, which, although independent of each other, failed to carry out basic lines of inquiry. Although the CPS clearly stated that there was no evidence to support the allegations and that the case should never have reached the stage that it did, it continued to assert that there were five indications of dishonesty. A letter from the CPS to Mr Breeze concluded:

“1. There are some factors that indicate dishonesty, which include a body of witness evidence to show a lack of understanding or knowledge of extra care by staff that one would expect to be involved in administering that type of care;

2. Evidence of low staffing levels to give enhanced care;

3. No clear audit trail to show what a patient received to justify the extra charges made;

4. There doesn’t appear to be file notes on the patients’ files to cover the extra care aspect of their treatment;

5. In addition, some patients were charged extra care premiums whilst away from Cawston Park.”

Mr Breeze argues that those assertions are based on inaccurate and incomplete information that was provided to the CPS by NHS Counter Fraud and subsequently to the police. The CPS refused to meet Mr Breeze to discuss the matter any further, and Keir Starmer QC, the Director of Public Prosecutions, stated that any further debate will not progress the matter, having written:

“Further correspondence from you which fails to raise fresh issues will be filed without response.”

Because of these rebuffs, regrettably, Mr Breeze’s reputation remains tarnished.

Furthermore, Norfolk constabulary and the Independent Police Complaints Commission have denied any wrongdoing, even though the judge ruled that the allegations against Mr Breeze and his hospital’s finance director were unfounded, and even though the judge said that they left court

“exonerated and as innocent men”.

Both public bodies appear to have failed to take into account the very significant losses, both financial and reputational, suffered by Mr Breeze. Contrary to the judgment, the two men have not been exonerated and remain condemned in the eyes of the bureaucracy.

The next organisation is NHS Counter Fraud. A Parliamentary question tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for North Norfolk (Norman Lamb) revealed that over the previous three-year period, NHS Counter Fraud cost £32.4 million to operate and uncovered £10.1 million of fraud. The operation of NHS Counter Fraud had cost the NHS £22.3 million net over three years, which seems ridiculous.

NHS Counter Fraud has met Andrew Breeze and my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich North, but has not satisfied either of them that it carried out a competent and comprehensive investigation into the allegations of fraud. Additionally, the NHS Counter Fraud investigation has placed another burden on the taxpayer indirectly, due to the savings that Cawston Park hospital was providing to the NHS year by year. Considering that NHS Counter Fraud was set up in 1998 to save the NHS money, it is ironic that its actions through the course of this case have cost the NHS millions of pounds.

I dread to hear the total amount that this debacle has cost the taxpayer. It is clear that the cost to Mr Breeze, his family and the other individuals arrested or brought to trial goes far beyond quantitative description. What should be noted is that Mr Breeze does not want taxpayer-funded compensation. Despite losing a fortune, he wishes simply to see his name restored and to prevent future travesties of justice. The only reason Mr Breeze would contemplate legal action is to obtain the documents he has consistently been refused in his attempt to clear his name.

The second key issue is that a disgruntled ex-employee, masquerading as a whistleblower, was able to destroy a business and a facility for severely mentally ill patients that had become recognised as a flagship hospital for their treatment. He did so with a financial interest in that outcome. Such episodes are likely to discourage and inhibit entrepreneurial individuals, partnerships, and businesses from embarking on new ventures. This is critical at a time of NHS reform and increasing need. Good entrepreneurs should be encouraged by the state, not permanently condemned and ruined on false charges.

I am deeply concerned that there is still the possibility that exactly the same thing could occur to other

entrepreneurs. There have been no external reviews across the organisations concerned, so no lessons have been learned. The state has ruined a thriving business, along with the lives of several committed individuals who have been financially encumbered. There seems to be no mechanism to hold any of the relevant public bodies to account. Each organisation has held its own internal review. The police and NHS Counter Fraud stated that all protocol was followed correctly. The CPS admitted that mistakes were made and that this should never have happened.

For Andrew Breeze to clear his name, it must be acknowledged that the allegations against him were based on inaccurate and incomplete information. The court judgment that fraudulent behaviour was not occurring within Cawston Park must be affirmed. Indeed, it should be stated that dishonesty was never a factor in any of the business dealings within the organisation. My hon. Friends the Members for North Norfolk and for Norwich North and I wholeheartedly want Mr Breeze’s name to be cleared by the relevant public bodies. That is the bare minimum he deserves after this pantomime. It would perhaps at least enable him to start again.

I finish with some questions for the Solicitor-General. Will he establish an independent inquiry into the actions in concert of the CPS, NHS Counter Fraud and Norfolk constabulary? Will he further investigate the questionable actions of Lloyds Development Capital, which was directly responsible for the sacking of the Mr Breeze and the demise of Cawston Park’s outstanding service to the community? Such an inquiry could create far safer conditions for the entrepreneurs we so desperately need today.

Will the Solicitor-General give an assurance that, after nearly four years, Mr Breeze will receive clarification, along with the documentation he has requested, from NHS Counter Fraud on its role in the fiasco? Will he convene with the CPS to establish Mr Breeze’s innocence in the matter? Will he ensure that any independent inquiry that is set up allows access to all the documentation that Mr Breeze has been requesting for the past two years, particularly the police case summary? Mr Breeze is still waiting for a report from the senior fraud lawyer at the CPS who carried out a review of its decision to charge him initially. He is concerned that, like the recently rejected police case summary, the CPS report will not be made available.

Finally, will the Solicitor-General work to eliminate this Kafkaesque tangle of bungling bureaucracy? The state has ruined a great business, along with its founder, and that should be remedied. More broadly, the state continues to threaten honest entrepreneurs. The instruments of the state should not be allowed to do that in future.

11.45 pm

**The Solicitor-General (Mr Edward Garnier):** I will speak quickly, to get as much on the record as I possibly can in the short time available to me.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe (Steve Baker) on securing the debate and thank him for making it possible for my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich North (Miss Smith), who is with me here on the Treasury Bench but who, as a Government Whip, is prevented from speaking, to bring before the House a matter that directly affects one of her constituents, Mr Andrew Breeze.

[*The Solicitor-General*]

The debate allows me to answer some important questions on behalf of the Crown Prosecution Service, for which the Attorney-General and I are accountable to this House. I should also confirm that the interest of my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe in this matter is not just altruistic, although it is that as well. Mr Breeze's brother lives in his constituency, so he has a family interest in the debate.

Andrew Breeze was one of two defendants charged in February 2008 with conspiracy to defraud NHS primary care trusts by charging them for what was called "extra care" for mental health patients at a private hospital, Cawston Park hospital in Norfolk, which was owned by a company in which the defendants had a significant interest. Those activities were said to have taken place in the two years before August 2006. It was alleged by the prosecution that the charges for extra care were criminally dishonest, because that extra care was not in fact provided.

The trial began in April 2009 but was halted in June 2009 when the judge at Ipswich Crown court intervened, resulting in the prosecution bringing the case to a halt by offering no evidence. Mr Breeze was then acquitted of all charges. At the conclusion of the case the judge said to Mr Breeze and his co-accused:

"You leave vindicated with your good name intact and your heads held high."

I wish to make it clear beyond doubt that that acquittal means that Mr Breeze was, and remains, not guilty of the criminal charges brought against him. On behalf of the CPS, and as Solicitor-General, I associate myself without reservation with the words of the judge, but I go further and say that in so far as Mr Breeze was prosecuted as a consequence of what the CPS did or did not do, I want to place on record for all to see my apologies to him. It has become clear that regardless of whether it was proper to investigate the affairs of Cawston Park in the first place, the prosecution should never have got as far as it did.

I am accountable for the CPS, which was responsible for deciding whether to institute and continue the prosecution in this matter. The police were responsible for investigating the case on the basis of a complaint from NHS Counter Fraud, but not for deciding whether to prosecute. The prosecution in this case should never have reached the stage that it did, and I repeat, without restating verbatim, the judge's words and my apology.

I should also like to apologise to Mr Breeze for the failure to respond to his letters of complaint sent to the CPS after the trial finished. Mr Breeze eventually felt that he had no option but to present himself in person at the CPS offices, because of the repeated failures to reply to him.

In response to his complaint, the CPS did—very late—conduct a thorough review. It was conducted by a senior lawyer at the CPS, Elizabeth Bailey, who had no prior involvement in the case. She concluded that, in her view, the case should not have resulted in criminal charges. I endorse her conclusions. She found that there was material available in the evidence that could be seen as pointing towards dishonesty, but equally that there were issues, which were known about at the point of charge, that undermined the strength of the case. I will

come to those in a moment. Different lawyers can quite properly take different views on the merits of any given case. Elizabeth Bailey in this case believed that, even if the charging decision could be seen as appropriate at the outset, the case should none the less not have been allowed to proceed to trial. She apologised to Mr Breeze by letter dated 26 July 2010 on behalf of the CPS both for the prosecution and for the lack of response to Mr Breeze's complaint.

My hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe complains that that letter leaves Mr Breeze's reputation tarnished, whereas the judge in the case told Mr Breeze that he left the court with his reputation intact and his head held high. With respect, since it was a private letter, it cannot be said to have had any public effect and the judge's words at the end of the trial in 2009 are what will have been publicly remembered. However, in so far as there is any doubt about Mr Breeze's reputation, I trust that what I have said tonight will make the position abundantly clear.

I gather that Mr Breeze has been in touch separately with Norfolk constabulary, the Information Commissioner's Office and NHS Counter Fraud. I understand that Norfolk constabulary undertook a systematic review of its investigation under terms of reference agreed by the Independent Police Complaints Commission. NHS Counter Fraud has also undertaken its own internal review.

My hon. Friend asked for an independent inquiry. From what I have said, it must follow that I accept that this case raises several concerns. It has, however, been examined both inside and outside the CPS, and I do not believe that another inquiry would reach any new conclusions. The CPS has accepted responsibility for its failings in this case and they are now publicly acknowledged.

The case was not straightforward. There were some 84 witnesses and around 23,000 pages of evidence. The charging decision was approved by the then director of the fraud prosecution service. Both the barristers acting for the prosecution endorsed the decision to proceed. Miss Bailey was asked to consider the case in accordance with the code for Crown prosecutors which is issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions under section 10 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985. Her review of the evidence and the information that was available at the point of charge led to the following five conclusions.

First, there was in the hospital a lack of clarity about what the "extra care" charges were for. A better description might have been a "surcharge" for difficult-to-manage patients, but she commented, and I agree, that a lack of clarity is not necessarily indicative of fraud.

Secondly, several people, including Mr Breeze, his co-accused and other officers of the company were being sued by the board of the hospital. The other defendants in the civil action all later gave evidence for the prosecution. They had an interest in the outcome of the criminal case and, as Elizabeth Bailey found, that conflict should have been considered as a significant risk in the criminal case, but it was not. There should have been regular reviews as the case progressed.

Thirdly, in 2005 a due diligence report was prepared by PricewaterhouseCoopers on behalf of Lloyds TSB Development Capital Ltd, which was due to invest—

11.52 pm

*House adjourned without Question put (Standing Order No. 9(7)).*

# Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 21 March 2011

## CABINET OFFICE

### Big Society Bank

**The Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office (Mr Nick Hurd):** On 14 February, the Minister for the Cabinet Office and I published a strategy to grow the social investment market, giving charities and social enterprises access to new capital to help them to increase their impact. The strategy explained the central role of the big society bank as a cornerstone of the market, acting as both a champion and wholesale provider of capital.

In February we also announced that we would work with leading social investment experts to develop a proposal for the establishment of the big society bank as an independent private sector organisation. Since then, we have been engaging with the social investment sector, and we are pleased with the ideas coming forward. Today I would like to update the House on the next steps.

As we announced in February, Sir Ronald Cohen, former chair of the social investment taskforce, and Nick O'Donohoe, former global head of research at JP Morgan, are taking the lead on developing a proposal for a big society bank. They are engaging with the sector, and we expect that they will present their proposal to Government within the next few weeks. At that point, we expect to make an in-principle decision about whether the organisation they are proposing to establish could be the recipient of unclaimed assets from dormant accounts, subject to further development work and state aid approval. If the decision is made to go ahead, detailed set up work for the big society bank would then be able to commence, including recruitment of its chair and board.

By making this statement today we want to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to feed in comments on the development of the proposal, or on our approach more generally. Separately, we are currently working to secure the state aid approvals from the European Commission that would be needed in order to capitalise an independent big society bank with money from dormant accounts and to provide it with the flexibility it needs to grow the market. We are also working with the big lottery fund on interim arrangements that will enable investments to be made as soon as dormant accounts money becomes available in the summer, using existing state aid exemptions. We will make further announcements in due course.

## DEFENCE

### Armed Forces' Pay Review Body

**The Secretary of State for Defence (Dr Liam Fox):** The 2011 report of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body (AFPRB) has now been published. I wish to express my

thanks to the chairman and members of the review body for their report. I am pleased to confirm that the AFPRB's recommendations are to be accepted in full, with implementation effective from 1 April 2011.

In line with the Government's 2010 emergency Budget, which announced a two-year pay freeze for all public sector employees, the AFPRB basic military salary recommendations are only for those personnel earning £21,000 or less where the recommendation is for an increase of £250. The AFPRB also recommended a number of targeted measures, including the introduction of financial retention incentives to retain personnel essential to delivering key operational capability. The Government have also accepted the AFPRB recommendations to increase food and some accommodation charges.

Copies of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body report will be available in the Vote Office.

## EDUCATION

### School Teachers' Review Body

**The Secretary of State for Education (Michael Gove):** The School Teachers' Review Body's (STRB's) recommendations on pay for those unqualified teachers who earn a full-time equivalent salary of £21,000 or less are being published today. The recommendations cover the first of two matters which were referred to the STRB in October 2010. I am grateful for the careful consideration which the STRB has given to this matter. Copies of the STRB's analysis and recommendations are available in the Vote Office, the Printed Paper Office and the Libraries of both Houses, and online at: <http://www.education.gov.uk> and <http://www.ome.uk.com/>.

The STRB has recommended that a non-consolidated payment of £250 should be made to those unqualified teachers who earn £21,000 or less; that the £250 is pro-rated for part-time unqualified teachers; and that consultation should seek to identify a simple and cost-effective method of payment.

I am grateful to the STRB for these recommendations which will apply to those unqualified teachers on scale points 1 to 3 and subject to consultees' views, I intend to accept these recommendations.

My detailed response contains further information on these issues.

#### Annex

School Teachers' Review Body's (STRB's) recommendations on pay for those unqualified teachers who earn a full-time equivalent salary of £21,000 or less and response from the Secretary of State for Education.

[The following sets out the STRB's recommendations which were published on 21 March 2011, together with the response from the Secretary of State for Education. The STRB's recommendations below are in italics.]

*The Secretary of State for Education:* The STRB's analysis and recommendations on pay for those unqualified teachers who earn a full-time equivalent salary of £21,000 or less are being published today. The recommendations cover the first matter which was referred to the STRB in October 2010. Copies of the analysis and recommendations

are available in the Vote Office, the Printed Paper Office and in the Libraries of both Houses and online at: <http://www.education.gov.uk> and <http://www.ome.uk.com/>.

In making its recommendations, the STRB was required to have regard to items (a-e) set out in the remit letter of 27 October 2010. The recommendations apply to those unqualified teachers earning £21,000 or less in the context of the two-year public sector pay freeze that will affect teachers from September 2011; and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury's instruction that there should be a minimum award of £250 in each of these two years. I am grateful for the careful attention the STRB has given to this matter.

The STRB is due to submit its 20th report, which will include the recommendations set out below as well as recommendations on whether there should be a limit on the value of discretions that can be applied to head teachers' pay, by 30 March. I propose, therefore, that the statutory consultation on the STRB's recommendations (below) should wait until the 20th report and my response to that report are published in due course. I will, however, accept comments in the meantime on the pay recommendations for unqualified teachers earning £21,000 or less.

*Recommendations on pay for unqualified teachers earning £21,000 or less*

The STRB has recommended that:

*A non-consolidated payment of £250 be made in both years to all full-time teachers on spine points 1 to 3 of the unqualified teachers' scale;*

*The £250 payment be pro-rated according to their working hours for part-time teachers on points 1 to 3 of the unqualified teachers' scale;*

*The Department consult, with a view to identifying a simple and cost-effective method of payment, and issue guidance as appropriate.*

I am grateful to the STRB for its consideration of this issue and, subject to consultees' views, I intend to implement the payment from September 2011. I also intend, subject to consultees' views, for the school's relevant body to decide how the £250 payment should be implemented.

## ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

### Energy Council

**The Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Chris Huhne):** I will be attending the extraordinary Energy Council on 21 March, which has been called by the Hungarian presidency in order to take stock of the events in north Africa and Japan and to discuss their effect on energy markets. The Council will focus on two discussion points:

To review the state of play in the energy sectors of the countries linked to these international developments as well as their consequences on energy markets (e.g. supply from north Africa, evolution of demand in Japan);

To exchange views on the response, already underway or to be undertaken, at EU (e.g. crisis information and monitoring, various gas and oil co-ordination mechanisms) and member states' level (e.g. national plans, redeployment of national supplies, review of safety measures), over various time horizons (from short-term to medium/long-term).

I intend to emphasise that member states and the Commission need carefully to establish what lessons can be learned from Japan to see how they can be applied in the EU. The Government take the incident in Japan extremely seriously and I have already called on the Chief Nuclear Inspector, Dr Mike Weightman, for a thorough report on the implications of the situation in Japan and the lessons to be learned. I will also emphasise that the EU should wait until the facts of the Japanese accident are clearer before taking any decisions about changes to the safety framework.

As regards the events in north Africa, we will continue to emphasise the importance of close engagement with other states in the IEA and the IEF to ensure that proper consideration is given to any measure that would calm the market.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

### International Criminal Court (Victims Fund)

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr Henry Bellingham):** The United Kingdom has made a donation of £500,000 to the International Criminal Court's (ICC) Trust Fund for Victims.

The Trust Fund for Victims (TFV) was established by the states parties of the ICC in 2002 to benefit the victims of crimes within the Court's jurisdiction. It is entirely funded by voluntary donations, and the British Government are now the second largest contributor to the fund. The focus of its work so far has been in northern Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, where its project work provides assistance to the victims of the most serious crimes, including torture and sexual violence.

The ICC is now established as a cornerstone of the international justice system, and the recent referral to the Court by the United Nations Security Council of the situation in Libya was a clear example of the core role that the Court is now playing on the international stage. In all of its work, the ICC has placed a special focus on the rights and needs of victims. The TFV, anticipating that its mandate on reparations will be activated in the foreseeable future, will continue to play an increasingly important role in support of these victims, as they seek to re-establish their dignity and livelihood.

## HEALTH

### NHS Pay Review Body

**The Secretary of State for Health (Mr Andrew Lansley):** I am responding on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the 25th report of the NHS Pay Review Body (NHSPRB). The report has been laid before Parliament today (Cm 8029). Copies of the report are available to hon. Members from the Vote

Office and to noble Lords from the Printed Paper Office. I am grateful to the chair and members of the NHSPRB for their report.

We welcome the NHSPRB's 25th report and accept its conclusions in full. We will take forward the suggested actions, which will help us continue to improve our support for the NHSPRB's important work.

## JUSTICE

### Prison Service Pay Review

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice (Mr Crispin Blunt):** The 10th report of the Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB) (Cm 8021) has been laid before Parliament today. The report makes recommendations for staff within the remit group who earn the full-time equivalent of £21,000 and below, and who are eligible for an increase in 2011-12 under the Government's announced pay policy for public sector workforces. Copies of the report are available at: [http://www.ome.uk.com/PSPRB\\_Annual\\_Reports.aspx](http://www.ome.uk.com/PSPRB_Annual_Reports.aspx). I am grateful to the chair and members of the PSPRB for their hard work in producing these recommendations.

The PSPRB key recommendations for 2011 are as follows:

- a consolidated increase of £250 to all pay points at or below £21,000, including the first two points on the closed prison officer scale;

- a requirement for the service and the POA to engage promptly in constructive dialogue with a view to agreeing the pay scales to apply for prison officer 2, prison officer 1 and the new operational support grade (OSG).

The PSPRB's recommendations, which are consistent with our proposals for 2011-12, will be implemented. The cost of the award will be met from within the delegated budget allocation for the National Offender Management Service.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Review Body on Senior Salaries

**The Prime Minister (Mr David Cameron):** Since coming to power the Government have taken a number of steps to control public sector pay. At the first meeting of the Cabinet, Ministers announced that they would take a 5% pay cut—and that their pay would be frozen for the rest of the Parliament; vital savings have been achieved by freezing the pay of those earning over £21,000 and placing restrictions on bonuses for senior managers; transparency has been increased by publishing the salaries of senior Whitehall officials; and requirements for ministerial scrutiny of the highest public sector wages have been extended and strengthened.

In the civil service in particular significant savings have been made. Departmental spending envelopes set at the spending review mean that administration costs will fall by £5.899 million by 2014-15, a reduction of 34%. In addition, Departments have taken forward

recruitment freezes which, alongside reforms to the civil service compensation scheme will deliver further savings over the spending review period.

It is in this context that the 33rd report of the Review Body on Senior Salaries (SSRB) is being published today. The report covers the remuneration of the judiciary, senior civil servants, senior officers in the armed forces and certain senior NHS managers. Copies have been laid in the Vote Office, the Printed Paper Office and the Libraries of both Houses. I thank the SSRB for their work in preparing this report.

#### *The Judiciary*

Given in particular the two-year pay freeze that will be in place for public servants earning over £21,000 from April 2011, the Government are not announcing any immediate changes to judicial salaries, but are considering the detail of the report overall and will respond at an appropriate time.

#### *Senior Civil Service*

The Government confirm that they will continue to work on reforms to the current SCS reward model that are consistent with the Government's wider policy on restraint in public sector pay, and senior pay in particular, and the need to ensure that the civil service can continue to recruit, retain and motivate sufficient people of the necessary quality to fulfil the important roles undertaken by the SCS. The Government are grateful for the constructive engagement from the trade unions on SCS pay reform and will continue to consult and engage with them going forwards.

#### *Senior Officers in the Armed Forces*

The Government have accepted the review body's recommendation that the Ministry of Defence review the performance management and pay system and consider whether improvements can be made.

#### *Senior NHS Managers*

The Government thank the review body for its work in this area and for continuing to monitor recruitment and retention over the pay freeze period.

#### *Other Review Body reports for 2011-12*

My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Defence, Justice, Education and Health are making statements today on the reports of the Armed Forces Pay Review Body, the Prison Service Pay Body, the School Teachers Review Body, and the NHS Pay Review Body in respect of pay for the relevant workforces.

## TRANSPORT

### Drink and Drug-driving

**The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr Philip Hammond):** I have today placed in the Library of the House the Government's response to a report by Sir Peter North on drink and drug-driving which was published in June 2010. This response also covers a report by the Transport Select Committee which was published in December 2010. The Government's response is available on the Department's website: [www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk).

The Government are committed to improving road safety. It is a priority to deter driving when unfit through drugs or alcohol, and to ensure that those who persist in this dangerous behaviour are detected and punished effectively. We must protect law-abiding road users with measures that are effective and proportionate, concentrating

on those who are a danger to themselves and other road users, while avoiding unnecessary social and economic impacts.

We are convinced that our first priority must be to give the police the means to identify drug-drivers and compel them to give evidential samples for testing. It is just as dangerous for people to drive impaired by alcohol or drugs, and it is quite wrong that it is easier at present to get away with one than the other. There needs to be a clear message that drug-drivers are as likely to be caught and punished as drink-drivers and that drug-driving is as socially unacceptable as drink-driving.

We have taken the first steps to address this with a specification for drug testing equipment for the police. We aim to have this available for use later this year. We will—as Sir Peter suggested—examine the case for a new specific offence which would remove the need for the police to prove impairment on a case-by-case basis where a specified drug has been detected. The introduction of fixed thresholds for blood-alcohol as the test for drink-driving has delivered benefits to road safety that are clear for all to see.

Our strategy is to focus resources and any legislative changes on measures which will have the most impact in reducing dangerous behaviours. There are therefore two main priorities—

- to continue the successful abatement of drink-driving and achieve similar success against drug-driving by giving the police effective tools to identify and proceed against drink and drug-drivers;

- to streamline the enforcement process for drink and drug-driving to remove pressure on police and other enforcement resources.

A staggering proportion of drink-drivers are well over the current limit—40% of those caught by the police are 2.5 times the limit. The proportion of drivers over the limit who are killed is the same. Their behaviour is entrenched and displays a flagrant disregard for the law and the safety of other road users. We have concluded that improving enforcement is likely to have most impact on these dangerous people, and will therefore be the most effective use of scarce resources, rather than lowering the prescribed alcohol limit for driving.

We will implement the following measures, bringing forward legislation where necessary at the earliest opportunity—

- revoke the right to opt for a blood test when the evidential breath test result is less than

- 40% over the limit (the “statutory option”) as this causes delay which results in some

- offenders avoiding prosecution;

- streamline the procedure for testing drink-drivers in hospital;
- close a loophole used by high risk offenders to delay their medical examinations;

- require drink-drivers who are substantially in excess of the limit to take remedial training and a linked driving assessment—as well as a medical examination—before recovering their licence;

- re-launch the drink-drive rehabilitation scheme under which drink-drivers can get the period of their driving disqualification reduced if they complete an approved training course;

- approve portable evidential breath testing equipment for the police—and provide for preliminary testing not to be required where evidential testing can be undertaken away from the police station;

- approve preliminary drug-testing equipment, initially for use in police stations—and at the roadside as soon as possible;

delegate to custody nurses the assessment police doctors are now required to make of suspected drug-drivers.

Full impact assessments, including among other things the potential impacts on enforcement and the judicial system, will be prepared in the usual way when legislation is brought forward.

## Regional Cycling Projects

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Norman Baker):** Today, I am announcing £836,000 of additional funding in this financial year to implement a number of small sustainable projects in the cycle towns and, separately, for three train operating companies to enhance their bike and rail schemes. This exceptional decision has been made possible due to prudent management of departmental expenditure, including additional efficiencies made this year.

The chosen cycle town projects—Blackpool, Bristol, Cambridge, Colchester, Darlington, Derby, Exeter, Leighton Linlade, South Gloucestershire, Southend, Shrewsbury and Woking—have been assessed as capable of being delivered within the current financial year while offering value-for-money. I believe this additional funding will assist in meeting the overall aims of the project to get more people cycling safely. All the recommended projects fit well with the strategic objectives of the towns concerned and will increase the effectiveness of their existing programmes in generating additional cyclists.

The three train operating companies, Merseyrail, South West Trains and Northern Rail, have worked hard, in partnership with local authorities and other organisations, including Sustrans and Network Rail, to deliver high-quality infrastructure improvements accompanied by promotional activities. This is with the aim of encouraging more cycling to railway stations and to deliver improved integration of bike and rail journeys. This money will enable further enhancements to these schemes.

Today’s announcement complements, and is in addition to, our recently launched local sustainable transport fund which allows local authorities to bid for a share of £560 million over four years, aimed at encouraging sustainable transport solutions, including cycling initiatives, that will create economic growth and cut carbon.

This additional funding demonstrates the Government’s continued commitment to cycling, recognising their potential contribution to reducing carbon emissions, improving health and creating economic growth.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Health and Safety System

**The Minister of State, Department for Work and Pensions (Chris Grayling):** The Government are committed to a health and safety regime that is fair, balanced and proportionate. Sensible health and safety at work helps to maintain a healthy and productive work force and contributes to economic prosperity. The burden of health and safety red tape has, however, become too great, with too many inspections of relatively low risk and

good performing work places, frequently poor health and safety advice to businesses from badly qualified consultants, and a complex structure for regulation. To address these issues, the Government are today publishing their plans for the reform of the health and safety system.

We will clamp down on the rogue health and safety advisers who cost industry so much money by providing advice which often bears little relation to the actual requirements of legislation. To achieve this we have launched an official occupational safety and health consultants register for those health and safety practitioners who are properly accredited to one of the professional bodies in the industry. Those who do not have the requisite expertise and experience will be excluded from the register, making it easier for employers to access reliable, reputable advice. I am pleased to announce that the register will be open for the use of employers from today.

We will shift the focus of health and safety activity away from businesses that do the right thing, and instead concentrate efforts on higher risk areas and on dealing with serious breaches of health and safety regulation. Those organisations which pose a lesser risk and which meet their legal responsibilities will be left free of unwarranted scrutiny. This will mean a very substantial drop in the number of health and safety inspections

carried out in Britain. We will also shift the cost burden of health and safety away from the taxpayer, and instead make those organisations that fail to meet their obligations pay to put things right.

We will seek to clarify and simplify health and safety legislation, and in doing so ease the burden on business. We are today launching new “Health and Safety Made Simple” guidance to provide lower-risk small and medium-sized businesses with the essential information they need to achieve a basic level of health and safety management in their work place in a single, easy-to-use, package. We are also launching an immediate review of health and safety regulation overseen by an independent advisory panel chaired by Professor Ragnar Löfstedt, director of the King’s centre for risk management at King’s college London. The review will be asked to make recommendations by autumn 2011 for simplifying the current rules. We will also ask the review to consider whether changes to legislation are needed to clarify the position of employers in cases where employees act in a grossly irresponsible manner.

Further details are available on the Department for Work and Pensions website at [www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/health-and-safety](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/health-and-safety). The latest progress on the implementation of the recommendations of Lord Young’s report “Common Sense, Common Safety” can be found on the same website.



# Written Answers to Questions

Monday 21 March 2011

## WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

### Civil Partnerships

**Mr Hollobone:** To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities whether the Government's legislative proposals for the registration of civil partnerships in religious settings will include protection in law against suits brought against a minister of religion under human rights legislation for refusing to conduct a civil partnership ceremony in a place of worship. [45667]

**Lynne Featherstone** [*holding answer 10 March 2011*]: Civil partnerships are conducted by civil registrars designated by local authorities.

When commenced, section 202 of the Equality Act 2010 would insert a sub-section in the Civil Partnership Act 2004 which states:

"For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in this Act places an obligation on religious organisations to host civil partnership registrations if they do not wish to do so."

We have been very clear that we will not force religious organisations to host registrations on their premises and that ministers of religion could lawfully refuse to if they do not wish to do so.

### Equal Opportunities: Nationality

**Priti Patel:** To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities what guidance (*a*) the Government Equalities Office and (*b*) the Equality and Human Rights Commission issues on the practice of businesses offering discounts to persons based on their nationality. [47854]

**Lynne Featherstone:** The Government Equalities Office has not issued any specific guidance relevant to the practice of business offering discounts to persons based on their nationality. The European Court of Human Rights has published non-statutory guidance on the Equality Act 2010 for service providers.

It would not normally be lawful for a business to offer discounts based on the protected characteristic of race, which includes nationality and ethnic or national origins.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### Audio Equipment: Regulation

**Rosie Cooper:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport which private sector organisations (*a*) his Department and (*b*) Ofcom consulted to determine the areas which contain critical levels of wireless microphone usage; and if he will make a statement. [48127]

**Mr Vaizey:** The matter raised is an operational one for the independent regulator, the Office of Communications (Ofcom), which is accountable to Parliament rather than Ministers. Accordingly, my officials spoke to Ofcom, who advised that Ofcom holds a regularly updated database which shows all licensed PMSE spectrum use since 2000. This enables them to identify which locations in the UK have significant historic peak PMSE spectrum demand. Furthermore, Ofcom consults regularly with its contracted PMSE spectrum licensing body, JFMG, to understand which future events are likely to require significant quantities of spectrum for PMSE.

### BBC: Radio

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport what recent representations he has received on the proposed changes to the structure of local BBC radio stations; and if he will make a statement. [47295]

**Mr Vaizey:** We have received no formal representations on the proposed changes to the structure of local BBC radio stations. However, we understand the proposals to be part of a wider review of BBC activities and that no decisions have been made at this time.

### Communications Bill

**Mr Ivan Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport if he will bring forward his proposed Communications Bill in the next Parliamentary session. [47577]

**Mr Jeremy Hunt** [*holding answer 18 March 2011*]: We will publish a Green Paper by the end of 2011. The public consultation that follows will inform a draft Communications Bill to be produced by mid-2013. Our aim is to complete the legislative process by the end of this Parliament. The timetable is designed to ensure that there is sufficient time to have a full and open dialogue about the complex issues involved and reflects the importance of this sector to the UK.

### Departmental Public Appointments

**Fiona Mactaggart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport which public bodies sponsored by his Department (*a*) have been and (*b*) are to be closed, merged or reorganised following his appointment; and how many (i) women and (ii) men who are public appointees at each body will no longer hold such an appointment in consequence. [47109]

**John Penrose:** The coalition Government are committed to increasing the accountability of public bodies, and this involves reducing their number and their cost to the taxpayer. The proposals for the majority of bodies across all Departments was announced and published on 14 October 2010. An updated list reflecting changes since October 2010 has been published on the Cabinet Office website and can be found at the following link:

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/public-bodies-reform-proposals-change>

Summary information on public appointments is published annually by the Cabinet Office. This includes data on gender. Copies of the most recent report can be downloaded from:

[www.civilservice.gov.uk/ndpb](http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/ndpb)

and

<http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/ndpb>

### National Lottery: Young People

**Philip Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport what estimate he has made of (a) the number of people aged 16 and 17 who played National Lottery games and (b) the amount they spent in the 12 months for which figures are available. [47317]

**John Penrose:** The National Lottery Commission has advised that it does not hold this information. The age of national lottery players and their expenditure is not recorded at the point of purchase.

The British Gambling Prevalence Survey 2010 contains data on the percentage of 16 to 24-year-olds who have participated in national lottery draws and scratchcards in the past year. It shows that 42% have played national lottery draw games in the past year, and 34% have purchased scratchcards:

Page 38

<http://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/PDF/British%20Gambling%20Prevalence%20Survey%202010.pdf>

### Ofcom: Finance

**Stephen Barclay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer on 9 March 2011, *Official Report*, column 1087W, on Ofcom: finance, with reference to note 30 to the accounts on page 103 of the Ofcom Annual Report for 2009-10, for what reasons Ofcom owes £29.3 million to central Government bodies; what plans there are to recover those funds; and for what reasons such liabilities arose. [47658]

**Mr Vaizey [holding answer 18 March 2011]:** As I said in my answer to the hon. Member's previous question about this on 9 March 2011, *Official Report*, column 1087W, this is grant in aid paid in line with agreed procedures with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and is appropriately classified within Ofcom's statutory accounts under International Financial Reporting Standards conventions.

In addition, BIS has provided a loan of £2,036,000 to Ofcom to enable them to undertake work to meet their obligations under the Digital Economy Act 2010. Those costs will fall to industry, but will not be recouped until the code of practice comes into force, at which time Ofcom will repay the loan to BIS.

Ofcom's 2009-10 Annual Report lists £29.238 million grant in aid paid by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) in respect of the following Ofcom activities for the months of April, May, June and July 2010:

	£ million
Spectrum Management	22.5
Spectrum Awards	1.8

	£ million
Spectrum Clearance	41
Ex-Post Competition	0.7
Other—online copyright infringement, local media, digital participation and postal integration	0.1

### Rugby

**Mary Macleod:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport if he will meet representatives of the Rugby Football Union, Network Rail and the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames to consider changes to Twickenham railway station ahead of the 2015 Rugby World Cup. [47669]

**Hugh Robertson:** I regularly meet representatives of the Rugby Football Union and have discussed the matter with them. I am content to meet representatives of Network Rail, Richmond council and the Rugby Football Union. However, changes to Twickenham rail station are a matter for the Department for Transport.

### Sky News

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport if he will put in place arrangements for guarantees in respect of the independent ownership of Sky News beyond the current proposed 10 year period. [47624]

**Mr Jeremy Hunt:** I am currently consulting on the undertakings offered by News Corporation, which includes the 10-year arrangements for Sky News, and will consider this issue in the light of the responses.

### Video Games: Age

**Mr Slaughter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport what research his Department has carried out on levels of use of 18-rated computer games among children. [47232]

**Mr Vaizey:** My Department has carried out no research into the use of 18 rated computer games among children. However, 18+ rated games make up only 5% of all games made and account for between 6% and 8% of all games sold in the UK. It is an offence punishable by up to six months in prison to supply any British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) rated game to someone who does not meet the age requirement. All 18 rated games are currently classified by the BBFC.

### Video Games: Violence

**Mr Slaughter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport what his policy is on measures to restrict the (a) promotion of and (b) condoning of violence and misogyny in (i) computer games and (ii) marketing of computer games. [47234]

**Mr Vaizey:** Games are classified according to guidelines set out by either the British Board of Film Classification or the Pan European Games Information (PEGI) system. These take into account the content, and games that contain violence or misogyny would be classified

accordingly. We are working with the video game industry to ensure it does all it can to increase parents' understanding of age ratings and of improved parental controls on equipment.

The advertising of computer games is controlled through the UK Advertising Codes, which are robustly administered by the independent Advertising Standards Authority (ASA). The codes require that all video games advertising should be socially responsible and that ads for games carrying a PEGI rating of 15+ are not targeted at audiences below the age of 16. Should the ASA find that an advertiser has breached the advertising codes, they will not hesitate to take action.

### White Space Devices

**Rosie Cooper:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport (1) what assessment he has made of the potential effects of white space devices on the programme making and special events sector; and if he will make a statement; [48128]

(2) whether he has made an assessment of the provisional parameters set by (a) Ofcom and (b) the programme making and special events spectrum band manager to prevent spectrum interference from white space devices; and if he will make a statement. [48129]

**Mr Vaizey:** The matter raised is an operational one for the independent regulator, the Office of Communications (Ofcom), which is accountable to Parliament rather than Ministers. Accordingly, my officials spoke to Ofcom, who said that Ofcom has made clear it will only authorise licence-exempt use of spectrum by white-space devices if they protect licensed users, including programme-making and special events, against harmful interference.

**John Thurso:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport (1) what advice his Department has received from Ofcom on the testing of white space devices before they are granted licence-exempt access to the spectrum; and if he will make a statement; [48130]

(2) what recent discussions he has had with representatives of Ofcom on the testing of the recommended operational parameters for unlicensed white space devices set out in Ofcom's Implementing Geolocation consultation; and if he will make a statement. [48133]

**Mr Vaizey:** The matter raised is an operational one for the independent regulator, the Office of Communications (Ofcom), which is accountable to Parliament rather than Ministers. Accordingly, my officials spoke to Ofcom, who said that Ofcom is still considering responses to its consultation and will refine its plans for future work in the coming months.

## HEALTH

### Caffeine: Young People

**Christopher Pincher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has any plans to introduce an age limit for the purchase of energy drinks containing high levels of caffeine. [47554]

**Anne Milton:** The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has no plans to recommend the introduction of an age limit for the purchase of energy drinks containing high levels of caffeine. FSA is not aware of any evidence of a direct, long term link between caffeine consumption and altered behaviour to support legislation in this area.

FSA will continue to monitor any new emerging scientific evidence in this area.

In the United Kingdom many high caffeine drink manufacturers already voluntarily include advice about their unsuitability for children and pregnant women because of their high caffeine content. Additionally, new European legislation under negotiation on food labelling may require such statements as mandatory.

### Contraceptives

**Jim Dobbin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health in which areas his Department is undertaking pilot studies on the distribution through pharmacies of the morning after pill to girls aged 13 and over. [47974]

**Anne Milton:** The Department is not undertaking any pilot studies on the distribution through pharmacies of emergency hormonal contraception (EHC), also known as the morning after pill to girls aged 13 and over.

Health professionals such as pharmacists can legally provide EHC to under-16s, under local national health service arrangements, if they are satisfied that the young person is competent to understand fully the implications of any treatment and after encouraging them to talk to a parent. The decision to develop arrangements for pharmacists to supply emergency contraception is taken by the local NHS.

### Departmental Assets

**Chi Onwurah:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether receipts from the sale of assets owned by regional development agencies are reflected in the spending plans of his Department for (a) 2012-13 and (b) 2013-14. [47413]

**Mr Simon Burns:** The Department has no funding link to the regional development agencies and hence cannot use receipts from the sales of any of their assets in its spending plans.

### Departmental Procurement

**Grahame M. Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what contracts with private sector organisations his Department has entered into in each month since May 2010; and what the (a) monetary value of the contract, (b) contracted company, (c) scope of the contract, (d) date of the contract, (e) length of the contract and (f) name of the previous contract holder is in each case. [44427]

**Mr Simon Burns:** The Department's business management system contracts database comprises centrally held information on contracts, and this information has been placed in the Library. Until 7 March 2011, however, procurement in the Department was primarily devolved to individual directorates and as such, a comprehensive record of all contracts entered into by the Department for the dates requested is not held centrally.

### Departmental Public Bodies

**Jon Trickett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 16 March 2011, *Official Report*, columns 9-10W, on the public bodies reform programme, what estimate he has made of the savings to his Department net of costs incurred in the assumption of additional departmental responsibilities to accrue from (a) the abolition of 30 public bodies within his Department's area of responsibility and (b) the change in function of one such body.

[48140]

**Mr Simon Burns:** The Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General, (Mr Maude) issued a written ministerial statement on 16 March 2011, *Official Report*, columns 9-10WS, updating Parliament on progress with the public bodies reform. That statement announced that Departments' estimate that cumulative administrative savings of at least £2.6 billion will flow from public bodies over the spending review period.

The 40 health bodies listed in the Public Bodies Reform—Proposals for Change document are a mixture of advisory non-departmental public bodies (31, of which, 23 will be abolished or be reconstituted as a Department of Health or Public Health Service expert committee) and executive non-departmental public bodies (nine, of which, seven are to be abolished).

In terms of the Department's advisory non-departmental public bodies, the current costs are small and the opportunities for savings are corresponding in size.

For the group of executive non-departmental public bodies, savings will accrue not just from the seven bodies that are leaving the sector, but also through efficiency savings from those remaining. An analysis of all nine executive organisations listed in the Cabinet Office document (Alcohol Education and Research Council, Appointments Commission, Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence, General Social Care Council, Health Protection Agency, Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), Human Tissue Authority (HTA), Care Quality Commission and Monitor—for HFEA and HTA the plan is for them to leave the sector at the end of the parliamentary session) indicates that £67 million could be saved in grant in aid in 2011-12.

### Epilepsy: Drugs

**Jacob Rees-Mogg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions he has had with the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) on the availability of stiripentol; whether he has received the draft guidance from (NICE) on the availability of stiripentol for the treatment of epilepsy; if he will direct (NICE) to develop separate guidelines on the availability of stiripentol; and if he will make a statement. [48014]

**Paul Burstow:** The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is currently reviewing its clinical guideline on epilepsy in children and adults and issued a draft for consultation in January 2011. The draft guideline includes a recommendation on the use of stiripentol for the treatment of Dravet syndrome in children and young people in whom first-line treatment has proved ineffective or has not been tolerated.

We have had no discussions with NICE on stiripentol, and have no plans to ask NICE to develop specific guidance on this drug. There are no national restrictions on the availability of stiripentol on the national health service within its licensed indication and advice to clinicians on its use is included in the British National Formulary for Children which is made available free of charge to NHS prescribers.

### Flu: Vaccination

**Tom Greatrex:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what discussions he had with the Scottish Government in relation to the availability of flu vaccine in 2010-11; and what discussions he has had with the Scottish Government on the availability of the vaccine in 2011-12; [47571]

(2) what assessment he made of the potential to obtain supplies of influenza vaccine from the Scottish Government in 2010-11. [47593]

**Anne Milton:** Departmental officials approached Government officials in Scotland about whether they had any surplus vaccine for use in England. Officials in Scotland said that they may be able to provide some vaccine once they have met local needs but this would only be a nominal amount and wouldn't be available straight away.

Officials have also had an initial exchange of views on planning for the seasonal flu vaccination programme for 2011-12.

### General Practitioners: Certificate of Completion of Training

**Dan Byles:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many specialty registrars (a) failed to achieve a Certificate of Completion of Training and (b) left the medical profession as a result in each of the last three years. [47672]

**Anne Milton:** This information is not held by the Department.

**Dan Byles:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practice registrars (a) failed to achieve a Certificate of Completion of Training and (b) left the medical profession as a result in each of the last three years. [47673]

**Anne Milton:** This information is not held by the Department

### Health Services: West Midlands

**Mr Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent steps his Department has taken to improve the provision of (a) cancer services and (b) mental health services in the West Midlands. [47287]

**Paul Burstow:** 'Improving Outcomes—A Strategy for Cancer', published on 12 January 2011, sets out a range of measures to improve the quality and efficiency of cancer services in England. Backed by more than £750 million over the next four years, the strategy sets out the Department's plans to improve earlier diagnosis,

access to screening and treatment and improve patients' experience of care, putting patients and the public at the heart of cancer services.

The strategy sets out actions to tackle preventable cancer incidence, improve the quality and efficiency of cancer services; improve patients' experience of care; improve quality of life for cancer survivors; and deliver outcomes that are comparable with the best in Europe.

The impact assessment published alongside the strategy shows how we can save an additional 5,000 lives every year by 2014-15 through early diagnosis and improved access to screening and radiotherapy.

To support the national health service to achieve earlier diagnosis of cancer alongside efficiency savings, the strategy is backed by over £450 million investment over the spending review period. The earlier diagnosis money will:

give general practitioners (GPs) increased access to key diagnostic tests;

allow for the increased testing and treatment costs in secondary care associated with more people being diagnosed;

support campaigns aimed at raising awareness of the signs and symptoms of cancer and getting symptomatic patients to present earlier; and

support GPs to diagnose cancer earlier, including support on when to commission and how to interpret diagnostic tests.

This funding is part of over £750 million additional funding for cancer over the spending review period to support delivery of 'Improving Outcomes: A Strategy for Cancer'. This includes funding for screening (flexible sigmoidoscopy) and radiotherapy (proton beam therapy) announced earlier in the autumn.

The Department published the national 'No Health Without Mental Health' strategy on 2 February 2011. It has the twin aims of promoting and sustaining good mental health and well-being in the wider population, and improving the quality of existing services for people across the full range of mental health problems. It looks at prevalence of problems and effective approaches at different stages in life, stressing the importance of prevention and early intervention.

Although a national strategy, it illustrates how local health organisations could make real improvements in quality of life for people with mental health problems.

The Department's work with partners, including the Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, has made it clear that the context for this strategy is one of great financial pressure; so it has focused on priority areas of improvement while leaving plans and actions to local decision making. So this strategy should inform local planning, but not constrain it.

The approach to quality and outcomes is about shifting responsibility to the local level; there are no national performance management and no targets. Our focus will be on ensuring local areas have access to information that supports their individual approaches and enables individuals, neighbourhoods and communities to make appropriate change happen in a reformed system. This is not about central Government enacting change from the centre.

The Government expect clinicians in all areas to follow the guidance in both documents.

## NHS: Disciplinary Proceedings

**Stephen Barclay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many clinical staff in (a) NHS foundation trusts and (b) each such trust were suspended on the most recent date for which figures are available. [47906]

**Mr Simon Burns:** This information is not held by Monitor (the statutory name of which is the Independent Regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts) or the Department.

The National Clinical Assessment Service collects data relating to the suspension of doctors and dentists. This does not specifically identify exclusions from foundation trusts.

## NHS: Manpower

**Simon Hart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many (a) consultants and (b) other medical staff the NHS employed in each year since 2008. [47813]

**Mr Simon Burns:** The following table gives the number of consultants and other medical staff employed by the national health service in 2008 and 2009. Details of staff employed in 2010 will be available after publication of the annual NHS Workforce Census on the 22 March 2011.

*Hospital and community health services: medical and dental staff as at 30 September each year*

	numbers (headcount)	
	2008	2009
All medical and dental staff	98,703	102,961
Consultants	34,910	36,950
Other staff	63,793	66,011

*Note: Data quality*

The NHS Information Centre for health and social care seeks to minimise inaccuracies and the effect of missing and invalid data but responsibility for data accuracy lies with the organisations providing the data. Methods are continually being updated to improve data quality. Where changes impact on figures already published this is assessed but unless it is significant at national level figures are not changed. Impact at detailed or local level is footnoted in relevant analyses.

*Source:*

The NHS Information Centre for health and social care Medical and Dental Workforce Census.

## Nurses: Sick Leave

**Simon Hart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of (a) nurses and (b) doctors in the NHS were on (i) sick leave for a period of seven days or more and (ii) maternity or paternity leave in the latest period for which figures are available. [47811]

**Mr Simon Burns:** The NHS Information Centre currently only provides sickness absence rates for the English national health service.

Work is under way to develop additional statistics to cover other causes of absence and to provide figures in terms of days lost. However, currently no figures are published in the format requested.

The published sickness absence statistics for the English NHS are available at:

[www.ic.nhs.uk/statistics-and-data-collections/workforce/sickness-absence](http://www.ic.nhs.uk/statistics-and-data-collections/workforce/sickness-absence)

### Potassium Iodide

**Steve Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what stocks of potassium iodide tablets his Department holds for the purposes of protection of the public in the event of a nuclear accident. [47379]

**Anne Milton:** The United Kingdom Government have established an extensive stockpile of medical countermeasures to be used to protect and treat the public in the event of a wide range of possible incidents or attacks—one of which might be a nuclear incident. Potassium iodate tablets are included in the stockpile, but for obvious reasons of security, it would be inappropriate to specify further what particular countermeasures are held, the quantity in which they are held and where they are located.

The UK Government constantly review their requirements in line with the assessed threat of a particular incident occurring.

### Queen's Hospital Romford

**Andrew Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent reports he has received on the adequacy of staffing at Queen's Hospital, Romford; and if he will make a statement. [47443]

**Mr Simon Burns:** The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and adult social care services in England. Providers of regulated activities must be registered with CQC, and comply with registration requirements regulations that set out essential levels of safety and quality. CQC assesses how trusts comply with these legal requirements and it has the power to impose a range of sanctions where breaches are found. CQC issued warning notices to Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust on 3 March 2011 highlighting concerns about staffing in the maternity unit at Queen's hospital.

Previously, on 21 December 2010, the CQC published compliance reports on both King George hospital and Queen's hospital. There was a compliance action relating to staffing.

**Andrew Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the potential effect on Queen's Hospital, Romford of the closure of the maternity ward at King George Hospital; what provision has been made to receive maternity patients at Queen's Hospital; and if he will make a statement. [47444]

**Mr Simon Burns:** It is for the local national health service to assess and provide adequate services to meet the needs of its local population.

### Screening: Babies

**Michael Connarty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what consideration was given to including lungs in the NHS newborn and infant physical screening programme. [47540]

**Anne Milton:** All parents of newborn babies are offered the opportunity to have their child examined shortly after birth and between six and eight weeks of age. The screening component includes an examination of the baby's eyes, heart, hips and testes in boys. This is

part of a general physical examination, which would include an examination of the lungs. The lungs were not considered for specific inclusion in the screening component because of the variable symptoms and the lack of evidence to meet the criteria of a safe and effective screening programme.

### Surgery

**Simon Hart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many surgical procedures were cancelled or postponed on the day that they were scheduled to take place in the latest period for which figures are available. [47818]

**Mr Simon Burns:** 16,785 elective operations were cancelled on or after the day of admission for non-clinical reasons between October and December 2010. As a percentage of total elective activity, cancelled operations remain low, at 1%.

These data are published on a quarterly basis on the Department's website at:

[www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Statistics/Perfomancedataandstatistics/Cancelledoperations/index.htm](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Statistics/Perfomancedataandstatistics/Cancelledoperations/index.htm)

### Surgery: Admissions

**Simon Hart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of same day admissions for surgical treatment were treated on the day of admission in the latest period for which figures are available. [47810]

**Mr Simon Burns:** The proportion of same day admissions for surgical treatment treated on the day of admission, in 2009-10, are shown in the following table:

	All elective surgeries	Elective surgeries with main operation on the day of admission	Percentage treated on same day
2009-10	6,691,947	6,267,724	93.7

#### Notes:

1. These figures represent a count of episodes and not the number of patients, as a patient may have been admitted on more than one occasion.
2. Activity in English NHS hospitals and English national health service commissioned activity in the independent sector.
3. These data include admissions for all elective surgery, including day case admissions.

#### Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics, The NHS Information Centre for health and social care.

### Tobacco: Sales

**Mr Sanders:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions he had with the Reducing Regulation Committee prior to announcing his decision to implement the tobacco display ban; and what steps he has taken to ensure the arrangements for implementing the ban comply with the Government's one-in, one-out policy on regulation. [47264]

**Anne Milton:** The Government's decision to implement the legislation ending the display of tobacco products in shops in England was reached after due consideration by the appropriate Government Ministers. The arrangements for implementing the legislation will comply with the Government's one-in, one-out policy on regulation.

**Mr Sanders:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health which authorities will be responsible for (a) supporting and (b) enforcing compliance by small businesses with the proposed tobacco display ban. [47265]

**Anne Milton:** Local authority trading standards officers will be responsible for the monitoring and enforcement of the legislation ending the display of tobacco products in shops in England.

Departmental officials will work with the Local Government Group and with representatives of retailers to develop guidance for retailers and local trading standards officers. The guidance will aim to build compliance by making sure all parties have clear information about the regulations.

**Mr Sanders:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will bring forward proposals to make the proxy purchasing of tobacco products for minors a criminal offence. [47266]

**Anne Milton:** We have no proposals to bring this forward at present. The Department has however commissioned a review of the evidence about the sources of tobacco for children, which will report back later this year. In addition, the Department has in recent months been working closely with local government regulation and local council trading standards officers who have been collecting information on the level of proxy purchase of tobacco products in a number of local authority areas. Future policy options will be considered in the light of the evidence gained from these sources and in line with the Tobacco Control Plan for England, published on 9 March 2011.

A copy of the plan has already been placed in the Library.

**Mr Sanders:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he plans to lay before the House regulations for the implementation of the proposed tobacco display ban. [47268]

**Anne Milton:** We will bring forward amending regulations as soon as practicable, after they have been considered under the European technical standards directive. The regulations need to be submitted in draft to the European Commission, followed by a three-month "standstill" period. Should any party lodge a detailed opinion on the regulations, the "standstill" period will be extended by a further three months. Regulations cannot be made and laid in Parliament during this period.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Alcoholic Drinks: Prices

**Karen Lumley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what legal advice she has received on the introduction of (a) a voluntary and (b) a mandatory minimum price for alcohol. [46924]

**James Brokenshire:** The Secretary of State for the Home Department has received legal advice on alternative forms of alcohol pricing. This included advice about the risk of minimum unit pricing being found to be

unlawful under EU Law and advice on a prohibition on below cost sales including if the floor price is set at duty plus VAT. However, the content of legal advice is subject to legal professional privilege and it is not appropriate to set it out at this stage other than in terms of the areas to which it relates.

### Antisocial Behaviour: Fixed Penalties

**Mr Ruffley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices have been issued by (a) police forces and (b) local authorities for offences of (i) fly-tipping, (ii) graffiti, (iii) dog fouling, (iv) dropping of litter and (v) parking in each year since 2006. [46938]

**James Brokenshire:** Offences of dog fouling, the dropping of litter and parking offences are summary offences and do not feature in the police recorded crime statistics collected by the Home Office. The Home Office does collect penalty notice for disorder (PND) data on recorded offences of criminal damage, which includes graffiti-related offences, although these are part of an aggregate count and therefore cannot be separately identified.

Within the Home Office classification of "Public Health offences", there are two sub-classifications which would cover the offence of fly-tipping although the actual term 'fly-tipping' is not specified. These sub-classifications cannot be separately identified from the police recorded crime statistics and in practice, it is more likely that offences of fly-tipping would be reported to and recorded by the relevant local authority.

Information on fixed penalties for motoring offences (FPNs) reported to the Home Office shows that there were 496,000 FPNs issued for 'obstruction, waiting and parking offences' in 2006, 447,000 in 2007 and 332,000 in 2008. Data for 2009 are scheduled to be published in April 2011.

In addition to the FPNs for motoring offences as collected by the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) collects data on fixed penalty notices for disorder offences such as 'depositing and leaving litter', which can be accessed via the following link to the MoJ website:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/docs/chapter2-penalty-notices-for-disorder.xls>

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) publishes data on fixed penalty notices for environmental offences. The most recent published information can be found on the DEFRA website which can be viewed at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/local/legislation/fpn/>

### Criminal Records

**Anas Sarwar:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps her Department is taking to increase sharing of criminal records files with other EU member states. [48089]

**Lynne Featherstone:** Criminal record exchange within the European Union takes place within the framework of Council Decision 2005/876/JHA on the exchange of

information extracted from the criminal record. Between 2007-08 and 2009-10 the amount of criminal convictions exchanged has increased:

Notifications received of UK nationals convicted in the EU increased from 3,120 to 6,298.

The number of notifications from the UK to other member states about the convictions of one of their nationals here has increased from 12,736 in 2007-08 (when only the first conviction of an EU national was sent) to 33,583 in 2009-10 (when all convictions were sent).

The number of requests received for the criminal record of UK citizens subject to criminal proceedings in other member states has increased from 190 to 341 in the same time period.

The number of requests made by the UK police and law enforcement agencies in relation to EU nationals subject to criminal proceedings here increased from 2,372 to 6,513.

As a result we now know a significant amount about the offending of UK nationals abroad and the previous offending history of EU nationals being prosecuted here. A new Framework Decision (2009/315/JHA) will make exchange mandatory from April 2012 and so we expect to see further increases in exchange.

The UK Central Authority for the Exchange of Criminal Records is leading a project to look at how the exchange of fingerprints can confirm the identity of individuals being prosecuted in the UK so that the correct previous convictions can be obtained from the country of nationality. Significant results have already been obtained through finding out the true identity of individuals being prosecuted here.

The UK Central Authority for the Exchange of Criminal Records has also begun to exchange criminal convictions electronically with other member states through the Network of Judicial Registers Project. Electronic exchange is quicker and cheaper than existing methods and should ensure that there is a continued increase in the number of criminal record files exchanged with other EU countries.

#### Departmental Public Appointments

**Fiona Mactaggart:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which public bodies sponsored by her Department (*a*) have been and (*b*) are to be closed, merged or reorganised following her appointment; and how many (i) women and (ii) men who are public appointees at each body will no longer hold such an appointment in consequence. [47113]

**Damian Green:** The coalition Government are committed to increasing the accountability of public bodies, and this involves reducing their number and their cost to the taxpayer. The proposals for the majority of bodies across all Departments, including the Home Office, were announced and published on 14 October 2010. An updated list reflecting changes since October 2010 was published on the Cabinet Office website on 16 March 2011.

Summary information on public appointments is published annually by the Cabinet Office. This includes data on gender. Copies of the most recent report can be downloaded from:

[www.civilservice.gov.uk/ndpb](http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/ndpb)

#### Departmental Rail Travel

**Mr Godsiff:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what proportion of civil servants in her Department are entitled to travel first class by rail within the UK. [47067]

**Damian Green:** Staff at senior executive officer (SEO) grade and above are entitled, as part of their terms and conditions of employment, to travel first class for business. The need to travel and ticket cost must be given due consideration.

In spring 2010 the Permanent Secretary issued austerity instructions to senior managers to reduce all travel by using alternatives such as video and/or telephone conferencing and to avoid first class travel as far as possible. The Department has significantly reduced first class travel by removing this option completely from the online travel booking service.

In principle, we have 4,015 staff (14.5% of total staff employed), across the Home Office and its agencies (UK Border Agency, Identity and Passport Service and Criminal Records Bureau) with a contractual entitlement to travel first class; however, with booking accessibility severely restricted, first class travel is significantly reduced. For example, first class rail ticket costs accounted for less than 0.7% of total rail costs in January 2011 compared to 37.8% of total rail cost in January 2010.

Policy on all business travel is currently under review.

#### Detention Centres: Children

**Chris Heaton-Harris:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether travel documentation has been obtained for all the families who have participated in the family return conferences to date, including the pilots. [47788]

**Damian Green:** Families will be invited to a family returns conference when they have exhausted all legal avenues open to them and where they either hold a valid travel document or where any documentation barriers can be resolved in parallel with the returns process.

The UK Border Agency will not need to obtain travel documentation for all families in the returns process. This could be because all family members are already in possession of genuine travel documents or where a family has submitted further submissions or legal applications which are being considered.

Information is not centrally held on whether travel documentation has been obtained for all the families who have participated in family returns conferences. This information could be supplied by examining each individual case record only at disproportionate cost.

#### Entry Clearances: Overseas Students

**Andrew Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria are used for awarding highly-trusted status to language schools; and what guidance her Department has provided to such schools on (*a*) highly-trusted status and (*b*) liaison with the UK Border Agency. [47300]

**Damian Green:** Full guidance on the criteria for awarding highly trusted sponsor (HTS) status to language schools is available on the UK Border Agency website.

In summary sponsors applying to be a highly trusted sponsor need to have held an A rated sponsor licence for at least six consecutive months prior to the date of application. They must also be able to demonstrate a good record of compliance with sponsor duties. These duties are outlined in the published guidance.

### Foreign Nationals

**Andrew Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what schemes her Department operates to assist foreign nationals who wish to cease to be resident in the UK to leave voluntarily. [47439]

**Damian Green:** Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) programmes are available to assist those in the UK asylum system and those who are in the UK illegally who wish to return voluntarily and permanently to their country of origin (or, where permanently admissible, to a third country). There are currently three general AVR programmes which are co-funded with the European Return Fund:

Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme (VARRP) is for those who have sought asylum and those with certain forms of related temporary status in the UK. Returnees receive support in acquiring travel documentation, flight to country of origin and onward domestic transport, airport assistance at departure and arrival airports and up to £1,500 worth of reintegration assistance per person including a £500 relocation grant on departure for immediate resettlement needs, additional luggage allowance and, once home, a range of reintegration options. The majority of returnees use their reintegration assistance in income generation activities.

Assisted Voluntary Return for Families and Children (AVRFC) is for families comprising of a maximum of two adult parents or legal guardians and at least one child (under 18) and from unaccompanied children (under 18) who have either sought asylum or who are in the UK illegally and wish to return home. Returnees receive support in acquiring travel documentation, flight to country of origin and onward domestic transport, airport assistance at departure and arrival airports and up to £2,000 worth of reintegration assistance per person, including a £500 relocation grant on departure for immediate resettlement needs, additional luggage allowance and, once home, a range of reintegration options. The scheme offers flexibility of reintegration for the whole family and increased emphasis is placed on the use of reintegration assistance for educational needs as well as income generation.

Assisted Voluntary Return for Irregular Migrants (AVRIM) is for those migrants who have not sought asylum, but who are in the UK illegally and wish to return home. Returnees receive support in acquiring travel documentation, flight to country of origin and onward domestic transport, and airport assistance at departure and arrival airports. There is generally no reintegration assistance for AVRIM applicants; however, there is discretionary reintegration assistance of up to £1,000, considered on a case by case basis, available for vulnerable applicants. In addition to the general AVR programmes, the Facilitated Return Scheme is designed to help non-EEA foreign national prisoners return and reintegrate back into their home country. The main aim of the scheme is to promote and assist the process of early removals by encouraging full compliance and cooperation of foreign national prisoners wishing to return voluntarily.

Applications for the scheme are accepted from non-EEA nationals who have been convicted and are serving or have served a custodial sentence in a UK prison. Those who apply for and are accepted for the Facilitated

Return Scheme will receive a cash payment of between £750 and £1,500 to help them build a new life on return to their home country.

### Foreign Workers: EU Nationals

**Mike Weatherley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many migrant workers entered the UK from the EU Accession countries in each year since 2004. [47258]

**Damian Green:** Nationals of countries that acceded to the EU in 2004 and 2007 are no longer subject to immigration control, so their entry to the UK is not recorded.

The following tables provide the number of nationals from the EU Accession countries who applied for permission to work under the restrictions imposed on the access of Accession state nationals to the labour market.

*Nationals of Czech republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia (A8 nationals)*

	<i>Total</i>
2004	144,068
2005	276,491
2006	341,020
2007	359,498
2008	315,452
2009	239,383
2010	261,588
2011	40,632
Total	1,978,132

*Bulgaria and Romania (A2 nationals)*

	<i>Total</i>
2007	11,482
2008	8,624
2009	8,008
2010	9,074
2011	1,810
Total	38,998

These figures are based on management information and are not subject to the detailed checks that apply for National Statistics. They are provisional and may be subject to change.

### Human Trafficking

**Lisa Nandy:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans she has to publish the scoping study on human trafficking for forced labour. [47128]

**Damian Green:** We are investigating the feasibility of publishing an executive summary of the scoping study on human trafficking for forced labour.

**Lisa Nandy:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans she has to publish the scoping study on human trafficking for domestic servitude. [47129]

**Damian Green:** We are investigating the feasibility of publishing an executive summary of the scoping study on human trafficking for domestic servitude.

### Illegal Immigrants

**Philip Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many notifications the UK Border Agency received relating to individuals detained by police who were found to be in the UK illegally in the last 12 months for which figures are available; how many such notifications were acted upon; and how many such notifications resulted in the UK Border Agency taking into custody the individual in question for deportation or other enforcement action. [47422]

**Damian Green:** Where necessary, UK Border Agency officers will attend police stations with a view to establishing the identity and circumstances of the individual and serving them with the appropriate paperwork, such as a form notifying them that they have entered the UK unlawfully. Subsequent actions vary depending on the nature of the case, but can include the individual being transported to and detained in an immigration removal centre pending their removal, or being transported to the asylum screening unit if they advise that they wish to make an asylum application (this also may result in their detention as part of the asylum determination process).

For the period April 2010 to February 2011, the UK Border Agency received a total of 22,522 inquiries from the police about suspected immigration offenders. All inquiries received were considered for appropriate action but many were cleared by checking UK Border Agency records. 7,239 of these inquiries received from the police resulted in a visit by an immigration officer. The outcome from these visits was that in 3,497 instances at least one individual was arrested for an immigration offence.

It is not possible to provide the number of individuals who were taken into custody or to provide the number who were subsequently removed from the United Kingdom as this information is not recorded centrally. To establish these figures would require a manual examination of individual case records at a disproportionate cost.

The figures provided are sourced from management information tools and are not quality assured under National Statistics protocols. Figures provided do not constitute part of National Statistics and should be treated as provisional.

### Immigration

**Andrew Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on immigration to the UK. [47441]

**Damian Green:** Officials in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are routinely consulted on immigration policy proposals and changes both in London and overseas. Discussions between the Secretary of State for the Home Department, the right hon. Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) and the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the right hon. Member for Richmond (Yorks) (Mr Hague), take place regularly, as and when appropriate.

### Immigration Control

**Andrew Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations she has received on the Government's policy on (a) immigration and (b) border control; and if she will make a statement. [47445]

**Damian Green:** The Government are committed to reducing net migration and eliminating abuse of the immigration system, both in country and at the border. From July to September 2010 we consulted on how a limit on non-EU economic migration should work, while recognising the need to attract the brightest and the best migrants to the UK. Further details of representations received for the limits consultation can be found on the UK Border Agency website. We announced our response to this consultation in November 2010. In addition we held a public consultation on the student visa system, the results of which will be published in due course. Representations from a wide variety of organisations, other Government Departments and individuals have been received in response to both consultations.

### Liberal Democrats: Conferences

**Mr Blunkett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost to the public purse was of the provision of policing and security for the 2011 Liberal Democrat Spring Conference. [47374]

**Nick Herbert [holding answer 18 March 2011]:** The Home Office does not hold information on the costs of the security and policing operation for the 2011 Liberal Democrat spring conference.

Special grant funding is available to help meet costs where necessary additional expenditure incurred would otherwise create a serious threat to a police authority's financial stability and their capacity to deliver normal policing. We have not received an application from South Yorkshire police.

### Police: Pensions

**Jonathan Reynolds:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if she will take steps to ensure that the duties and responsibilities of police officers are taken into account in the review of public sector pensions by Lord Hutton. [44547]

**Nick Herbert:** The police pension schemes are included in the scope of the Independent Public Service Pensions Commission, led by Lord Hutton. The commission's final report, which was published on 10 March, makes recommendations on how public service pensions can be made sustainable and affordable in the long-term and fair to both the public service work force and the taxpayer. The Government will consider the commission's findings, taking into account the duties and responsibilities of police officers, before proposing any changes to the police pension schemes. Any changes will be subject to the normal consultation processes with the Police Negotiating Board in line with statutory requirements.

### Police: Retirement

**Mr Spellar:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 7 February 2011, *Official Report*, column 44W, on police: retirement, if she will review the operation of Rule A19 following the report of Lord Hutton on public sector pensions. [46890]

**Nick Herbert:** The Government are considering the recommendations published by Lord Hutton in the final report of the Independent Public Service Pensions Commission on 10 March and will respond in due course.

The Government are also considering the recommendations published by Tom Winsor in the Part 1 Report of the Independent Review of Police Officer and Staff Remuneration and Conditions on 8 March 2011 (Cm 8024). He has recommended that the criteria for the use of the powers in Regulation A19 should be amended, with service-critical skills and performance being explicit considerations.

### Serious Organised Crime Agency

**Mr Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how much money the Serious Organised Crime Agency has recovered in (a) Northern Ireland, (b) England, (c) Scotland and (d) Wales in each year since its inception; [47251]

(2) what the estimated monetary value is of assets recovered by the Serious Organised Crime Agency in each year since its inception. [47252]

**James Brokenshire:** The Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) does not break down recovery of assets by country as SOCA is a UK-wide organisation. The figures for the whole of the UK for each year are available in their annual reports on their website:

<http://www.soca.gov.uk/>

### Squatting

**Mike Weatherley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many buildings on her Department's estate were occupied by squatters in each year between 2006 and 2010; and on how many occasions her Department sought interim possession orders to remove squatters from such buildings in each of those years. [47613]

**Damian Green:** The Department obtained an interim possession order on one property briefly occupied by squatters in December 2009 prior to its sale in April 2010.

### Visas

**Andrew Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many visas to enter and remain in the UK have been revoked in each of the last five years; [47448]

(2) how many people who had their visas revoked and were scheduled for removal in each of the last five years were not subsequently deported. [47449]

**Damian Green:** The UK Border Agency does not keep a central record of the number of individuals whose leave was curtailed or revoked for breaching their visa conditions. This information could be obtained by the detailed examination of individual case records only at disproportionate cost.

### TRANSPORT

#### Cycling England: Finance

**Maria Eagle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the budget for Cycling England (a) was in (i) 2009-10 and (ii) 2010-11 and (b) will be for (A) 2011-12, (B) 2012-13, (C) 2013-14 and (D) 2014-15. [46649]

**Norman Baker:** The information requested is as follows:

(a) Cycling England's budget in:

(i) 2009-10 was £60 million;

(ii) 2010-11 was £58 million.

(b) Cycling England will cease to exist on 31 March 2011 and therefore has no budget beyond this date.

#### Driving Tests

**Tom Greatrex:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent assessment he has made of trends in driving test pass rates since the introduction of the approved driving instructor test. [48071]

**Mike Penning:** No assessment of trends in driving test pass rates has been made since the introduction of qualifying examinations for approved driving instructors over 40 years ago.

**Tom Greatrex:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent assessment he has made of the pass rates for (a) Part 1, (b) Part 2 and (c) Part 3 of the approved driving instructor test. [48072]

**Mike Penning:** No such assessment of pass rates for approved driving instructor tests has been made.

#### HM Coastguard

**Mr Sanders:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department has assessed the merits of a five-year transition period between the current and proposed operating models of HM Coastguard. [47004]

**Mike Penning:** In developing the proposal outlined in the consultation document 'Protecting our Seas and Shores in the 21st Century' the Maritime and Coastguard Agency made a strategic assessment of what time might be required to achieve a transition from the current HM Coastguard structure to the proposed new operating model. This process concluded that a transition plan of five years or over was not necessary.

**Mr Sanders:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department has conducted a risk assessment in respect of the transition period for the re-configuration of HM Coastguard. [47022]

**Mike Penning:** No final decision has yet been taken regarding the re-configuration of HM Coastguard.

An assessment of the risks presented by any transition from the current structure to that which is agreed following the public consultation will be undertaken once this decision has been made. This will involve assessing the impacts and risks to public safety and HM Coastguard's international obligations and provide appropriate risk management strategies when implementing potentially significant change to staff, infrastructure and concept of operations.

**Mr Sanders:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps are being taken in respect of (a) staff and (b) administration of on-going operations in Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centres that are due to be closed after the reconfiguration of HM Coastguard.

[47040]

**Mike Penning:** No final decision has been undertaken on the reconfiguration of HM Coastguard. Any decision on whether a Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centres (MRCC) remains open or closes will only be taken following the completion of the current public consultation.

As part of this consultation the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has asked for comments and supporting evidence on any factors relevant to such decisions. I have extended the period for written submissions to the consultation by six weeks until 5 May 2011 to ensure these factors are fully considered.

Therefore the ongoing administration of all MRCCs remains subject to the normal operational procedures of HM Coastguard. Since the consultation was launched on 16 December 2011 the senior management of the MCA has fully engaged with the staff covered by these proposals. This has involved staff meetings attended by senior managers to respond to questions. The MCA's chief executive will have visited all MRCCs to both talk to, and take questions from staff, by the end of the consultation period.

#### London and Southeastern Railway: Passengers

**Andrew Gwynne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the rate of (a) punctuality and (b) cancellation of passenger rail services operated on routes on the Southeastern franchise other than over High Speed One was in the latest period for which figures are available.

[43455]

**Mr Philip Hammond** [holding answer 2 March 2011]: The Department for Transport does not hold performance data for southeastern at the level of detail requested. Network Rail is responsible for performance data for the rail industry. The hon. Gentleman may wish to contact Network Rail's chief executive at the following address for such information:

David Higgins  
Chief Executive  
Network Rail  
Kings Place  
90 York Way  
London N1 9AG

#### Maritime and Coastguard Agency

**Mr Sanders:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he considered operating models in other countries when developing the proposed operating model for the Maritime and Coastguard Agency; and whether he had discussions with corresponding agencies in other countries.

[46999]

**Mike Penning:** The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) maintains close contact with international coastguard organisations both within the European Union and North Atlantic rim. It should be noted that these countries organise their coastguard functions very differently making it difficult to directly compare them to Her Majesty's Coastguard.

However, when considering the proposals the MCA did assess whether any element would be in contradiction to operational practice elsewhere in the world; no such contradiction was found. The Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) manual published by the International Maritime Organisation states:

"Every SRR [Search and Rescue Region] has unique transportation, climate, topography and physical characteristics. These factors create a different set of problems for SAR operation in each SRR. Such factors influence the choice and composition of the services, facilities, equipment and staffing required by each SAR service."

#### Motor Vehicles: Insurance

**Mr Nuttall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to reduce the costs of motor insurance premiums for drivers who are between 17 and 25 years of age.

[44468]

**Mike Penning** [holding answer 7 March 2011]: The setting of premiums is a commercial decision for individual insurers and younger drivers pay more because they pose a higher risk to insurers. The Government are, however, taking a number of measures to help mitigate insurance costs, including steps to tackle uninsured driving and insurance fraud and to reduce the costs of litigation.

Continuous insurance enforcement will come into effect in the next few months to identify uninsured vehicles, which will make it harder to evade detection and penalties if vehicles are driven without the driver being insured. We are working with insurers to allow them access to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency drivers' database in order to tackle insurance fraud at the underwriting stage. The Ministry of Justice has consulted on measures for reducing litigation costs and working with enforcement agencies and insurers to tackle fraud. These steps will all help to reduce insurance premiums, including for young drivers.

We are also considering how the driver testing and training process can be improved to better prepare new drivers for the roads, and therefore reduce their risks and hence insurance premiums.

#### Rolling Stock

**Andrew Gwynne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the saving to the public purse of not introducing an all-electric fleet of trains under the Intercity Express Programme. [45246]

**Mrs Villiers:** Introducing the bi-mode option for the Intercity Express Programme is estimated to save around £200 million (net present value) as compared to introducing a fleet of all-electric trains to be coupled to a diesel locomotive beyond the electrified sections of the railway.

#### Sea Rescue: Falmouth

**Mr Sanders:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria were applied by his Department when taking the decision to place an HM Coastguard sub-centre at Falmouth rather than Brixham. [47062]

**Mike Penning:** The proposed locations of sub-centres are based on a range of operational and value for money factors. These are outlined on pages 22 and 23 of the consultation document 'Protecting our Seas and Shores in the 21st Century', which was published on 16 December 2010. Further detail is available in the supporting document 'Location Impact Assessment and Sub-Centre Rationale', which was published on the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's (MCA) website:

www.mcga.gov.uk

on 11 February 2011.

As part of this consultation the MCA has asked for comments and supporting evidence on any factors relevant to these choices. I have extended the period for written submissions to the consultation by six weeks until 5 May 2011 to ensure these factors are fully considered.

#### Tolls: EC Action

**Priti Patel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of (a) the Eurovignette directive and (b) whether it will entail any cost to (i) the public purse and (ii) motorists; whether he has considered proposals for the introduction of further road tolls; and if he will make a statement. [46856]

**Mike Penning:** The Eurovignette directive sets out common rules for levying charges or tolls on heavy goods vehicles. It does not require such charging. As such the directive does not entail any cost to the public purse or to motorists.

The Government plan to introduce a charging scheme for heavy goods vehicles, compatible with the directive and compensating UK hauliers as far as possible for the new charge.

There will be no national road pricing scheme for cars in this Parliament, nor any preparation for one. Tolling new roads will be considered on a case by case basis.

#### Transport for London: Finance

**Maria Eagle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the revenue budget was for the general Transport for London grant as allocated (a) for 2010-11 by the previous administration and (b) in the March 2010 budget. [46643]

**Norman Baker:** The Department for Transport's 2010-11 general Transport for London grant was £2,872 million. This figure was agreed as part of the Spring Supplementary Estimate process under the previous Administration and was not revised in the March 2010 budget.

#### Transport: Free Schools

**Teresa Pearce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance his Department plans to issue to free schools on the safety of children travelling to and from free schools. [44528]

**Mike Penning:** The Department for Transport has developed educational resources covering the safety of children on all journeys. These are available to all schools, and to children and their parents.

#### Trust Ports

**Ms Ritchie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what responsibilities he has for trust ports. [47720]

**Mike Penning:** Each trust port is an independent statutory body, governed by its own local legislation without shareholders and controlled by an independent board. The Secretary of State for Transport is responsible for policy towards trust ports in England and Wales. Ports policy is a devolved matter in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

#### Wrexham Shropshire and Marylebone Railway Company

**Ian Lucas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when his Department first received notice that the Wrexham and Shropshire Railway was to cease operations. [44904]

**Mrs Villiers [holding answer 8 March 2011]:** The Department for Transport was made aware that the company was about to cease operations on 25 January 2011.

## JUSTICE

#### Alcoholic Drinks: Convictions

**Mr Ruffley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many offenders were found guilty of (a) drunk and disorderly behaviour and (b) drunk and aggravated behaviour in each police force area in England and Wales in the latest period for which figures are available. [47675]

**Mr Blunt:** The number of defendants found guilty at all courts for selected offences under the Licensing Act 1872 and Criminal Justice Act 1967, by police force area, England and Wales in 2009 (latest available) can be viewed in the table.

Data for 2010 are planned for publication in the spring of 2011.

*Number of defendants found guilty at all courts for selected offences under the Licensing Act 1872<sup>1</sup> and Criminal Justice Act 1967<sup>2</sup>, by police force area, England and Wales, 2009<sup>3,4</sup>*

Police force area	Found guilty	
	Licensing Act 1872	Criminal Justice Act 1967
Avon and Somerset	46	189
Bedfordshire	6	35
Cambridgeshire	51	107
Cheshire	5	428
City of London	1	40
Cleveland	—	313

Number of defendants found guilty at all courts for selected offences under the Licensing Act 1872<sup>1</sup> and Criminal Justice Act 1967<sup>2</sup>, by police force area, England and Wales, 2009<sup>3,4</sup>

Police force area	Found guilty	
	Licensing Act 1872	Criminal Justice Act 1967
Cumbria	24	323
Derbyshire	3	221
Devon and Cornwall	148	688
Dorset	10	226
Durham	4	101
Essex	9	293
Gloucestershire	1	50
Greater Manchester	1	711
Hampshire	36	481
Hertfordshire	2	80
Humberside	4	158
Kent	23	314
Lancashire	5	1,199
Leicestershire	—	59
Lincolnshire	—	127
Merseyside	7	1,839
Metropolitan police	28	1,111
Norfolk	1	232
North Yorkshire	49	307
Northamptonshire	2	57
Northumbria	38	3,118
Nottinghamshire	2	283
South Yorkshire	2	837
Staffordshire	83	230
Suffolk	3	25
Surrey	29	115
Sussex	91	413
Thames Valley	34	233
Warwickshire	1	91
West Mercia	5	370
West Midlands	6	1,098
West Yorkshire	26	1,067
Wiltshire	4	90
Dyfed-Powys	27	106
Gwent	—	241
North Wales	6	139
South Wales	11	175
England and Wales	834	18,320

<sup>1</sup> Licensing Act 1872 S.12—Drunkenness, simple  
Being found drunk in a highway or other public place, whether a building or not, or on licensed premises

<sup>2</sup> Criminal Justice Act 1967 S.9—Drunkenness, with aggravations  
Being guilty while drunk of disorderly behaviour

<sup>3</sup> These statistics relate to persons for whom these offences were the principal offence for which they were dealt with. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences the principal offence is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe.

<sup>4</sup> Every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented are accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that these data have been extracted from large administrative data systems generated by the courts, and police forces. As a consequence, care should be taken to ensure data collection processes and their inevitable limitations are taken into account when those data are used.

Source:

Justice Statistics Analytical Services—Ministry of Justice

## Bail

**Philip Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what guidance his Department issues to magistrates on granting bail to a convicted defendant in circumstances where the case has been sent to the Crown Court for sentence. [47316]

**Mr Blunt:** The Ministry of Justice does not issue guidance on the grant of bail in these matters, which is at the discretion of the court.

## Chief Coroner

**Jon Trickett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what estimate he has made of the potential savings to his Department of removing the posts of (a) chief coroner, (b) deputy chief coroner, (c) medical adviser to the chief coroner and (d) deputy medical adviser to the chief coroner. [47725]

**Mr Djanogly:** None of the posts have yet been brought into operation, so abolition would not give rise to any savings for current expenditure. The financial impact of full implementation of Part One of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, which provides for each of these posts, has been estimated at £10.9 million in set-up costs, and £6.6 million in running costs.

## Crime

**Philip Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many people were arrested for an offence but then either charged with or prosecuted for a lesser offence (a) before and (b) after the matter reached court in the latest period for which figures are available. [47394]

**Mr Blunt:** It is not possible to derive how many people arrested for an offence were prosecuted for a lesser offence as arrests data collated by the Home Office are not linked to court proceedings data collated by the Ministry of Justice.

Charging data are not collected centrally.

## Criminal Injuries Compensation

**Mr Nuttall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Hammersmith of 10 November 2010, *Official Report*, column 394W, on criminal injuries compensation, when he plans to complete the review of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. [47299]

**Mr Blunt:** The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme is currently subject to review. We intend to bring forward proposals in due course.

**Mr Slaughter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice whether he plans to bring forward proposals to change the categories of people eligible for compensation under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme; whether he plans to change the monetary value of awards made under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme; whether the Government has commissioned research into options for the reform of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme; and what plans he has for the funding of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme in each of the next four years. [47236]

**Mr Blunt:** The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme is currently subject to review. We intend to bring forward proposals in due course.

The budget for compensation payments for England and Wales will remain at its current level for the next financial year. The budget for future years has not yet been decided.

### Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority

**Mr Slaughter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice in respect of how many cases under consideration by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority the claimant had not been notified of a resolution on the latest date for which figures are available; how many of those cases had been filed more than (a) six, (b) 12, (c) 18 and (d) 24 months prior to that date; how many compensation awards to victims of crime are outstanding; and how many such people have been waiting for such awards for more than (i) three months, (ii) six months, (iii) nine months and (iv) one year. [47237]

**Mr Djanogly:** The information requested is as follows:

	<i>Number</i>
Outstanding cases as at 11 March 2011	47,505
Cases less than six months	22,727
Greater than six but less than 12 months	11,349
Greater than 12 but less than 18 months	4,919
Greater than 18 but less than 24 months	2,664
Greater than 24 months	5,846

**Mr Slaughter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many award decisions made by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority in the last (a) six and (b) 12 months have been referred to a Criminal Injuries Compensation tribunal; and how many such tribunals have (i) overturned and (ii) amended the award. [47341]

**Mr Djanogly:** The information requested is as follows:

	<i>In last six months</i>	<i>In last 12 months</i>
Cases appealed	1,408	2,844
Decisions overturned	302	443
Awards amended	328	490

### Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority: Terrorism

**Mr Slaughter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many individual payments the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority made in respect of (a) terrorism-related and (b) non terrorism-related cases in each of the last five years; and what the mean average payment was in each category in each such year. [47235]

**Mr Djanogly:** The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) pays awards based on the injuries people receive, not the crime they were a victim of, and therefore do not hold that information.

### Domestic Violence

**Philip Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what targets his Department has set for the progression of court cases related to domestic violence offences; and how his Department collects information to assist in monitoring progress towards such targets. [47318]

**Mr Djanogly:** There is no separate target for the progression of domestic violence offences. There is a target for the progression of all adult charged cases in the magistrates courts to reduce the average time from charge to disposal to six weeks or less. Latest data from the Time Intervals Survey collected in December 2010 shows that there has been a significant national improvement from 8.8 weeks (baseline set in March 2007) to 6.4 weeks.

### Family Breakdown

**Andrew Selous:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what steps he has taken to reduce the incidence of family breakdown since his appointment. [48123]

**Mr Djanogly:** The Ministry of Justice does not have a direct role to play in reducing the incidence of family breakdown. However, we are committed to encouraging the public to resolve their issues out of court without recourse to public funds, using simpler, more informal remedies where they are appropriate. Therefore, we want to ensure that everyone involved in family proceedings, whether publicly funded or not, is aware of family mediation as an alternative means of resolving disputes to going to court.

On 23 February I announced that we will be increasing awareness and understanding of family mediation through a new Pre-Application Protocol for Family Mediation Information and Assessment meetings.

My Department is also working closely with the Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions with the aim of joining up support to separating and separated parents so they receive the help they need to work together and make post-separation arrangements that are in their children's best interests.

### Interim Possession Orders

**Mike Weatherley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many prosecutions for breaching interim possession orders there were in each year since 2007. [47718]

**Mr Blunt:** The number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts for offences of failing to comply with requirements of an interim possession order from 2007-09 (latest available) can be viewed in the table.

Court proceedings data for 2010 are planned for publication in spring 2011.

*Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts for offences under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, England and Wales, 2007 to 2009<sup>1,2,3</sup>*

<i>Description</i>	<i>Statute</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>
Failure to leave land within 24 hours of interim possession order or returning within one year of it	Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, s.76.	1	1	1

<sup>1</sup> The figures given in the table on court proceedings relate to persons for whom these offences were the principal offences for which they were dealt with. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences it is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe. <sup>2</sup> Every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented are accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that these data have been extracted from large administrative data systems generated by the courts and police forces. As a consequence, care should be taken to ensure data collection processes and their inevitable limitations are taken into account when those data are used. <sup>3</sup> Excludes data for Cardiff magistrates court for April, July and August 2008. Source: Justice Statistics Analytical Services—Ministry of Justice.

### Juries

**Philip Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what estimate has been made of the number of defendants who elect for jury trial at the Crown court each year for either way offences where magistrates have accepted jurisdiction and deem the cases to be suitable for summary trial in the latest period for which figures are available. [47392]

**Mr Blunt:** The following table contains the latest available data for the first three quarters of 2010, showing the breakdown between the number of either-way cases that went to the Crown court:

- (i) on the direction of the magistrates court, and
- (ii) by the defendant's election.

*Number of triable either-way cases committed to the Crown court for trial, by reason for committal, England and Wales, 2010 Q1 to 2010 Q3<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>*

	Quarter	Total	Reason for committal		
			Unrecorded	Defendant election <sup>4</sup>	Magistrate direction <sup>5</sup>
2010	Q1	16,072	4,454	2,636	8,982
	Q2	15,447	2,395	2,913	10,139
	Q3	15,298	4,647	1,881	8,770

<sup>1</sup> The reporting period is based on the date the case was committed to the Crown court.

<sup>2</sup> Only includes committals direct from the magistrates court. Excludes bench warrants executed and transferred cases.

<sup>3</sup> Excludes voluntary bills and transfer certificates.

<sup>4</sup> Includes defendants that elect for trial in the Crown court.

<sup>5</sup> Includes defendants who are committed for trial to the Crown court 'on direction of the magistrates' and 'on direction of the magistrates after a request from the prosecution'.

Source:

HM Courts Service CREST System.

### Olympic Games 2012

**Robert Flello:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what specific guidance his Department plans to issue to (a) businesses and (b) ticketing agents on the sale of London 2012 Olympics hospitality packages. [47874]

**Mr Blunt:** We have no plans to issue guidance specifically in relation to corporate hospitality packages at the London 2012 Olympics.

The issue of corporate hospitality will be covered in the guidance I will be publishing under section 9 of the Bribery Act about commercial organisations preventing bribery. This will make clear that corporate hospitality which seeks to improve the image of a commercial organisation, better to present products and services, or establish cordial relations, is recognised as an established and important part of doing business, and it is not the intention of the Act to criminalise such behaviour.

### Police: Sentencing

**Philip Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice pursuant to the answer of 10 March 2011,

*Official Report*, column 1271W, on assaults on police: sentencing, for what types of indictable-only offence a caution was issued between 2007 and 2009. [47423]

**Mr Blunt:** The number of offenders cautioned for indictable only offences, by offence group and offence class, England and Wales 2007 to 2009 (latest available) are shown in the table.

The answer of 10 March 2011, *Official Report*, column 1271W, presented 5,371 cautions for indictable only offences in 2007. Further investigation has revealed that cautions for two offences included in this figure had been incorrectly recorded on Ministry of Justice systems as indictable only. Once these offences are removed the number of cautions for indictable only offences in 2007 is 2,676. The table as follows includes a full offence breakdown.

Data for 2010 are planned for publication in the spring of 2011.

*Number of offenders cautioned<sup>1, 2</sup> for indictable only offences, by offence group and offence class, England and Wales, 2007-09<sup>3</sup>*

Offence group/offence class	2007	2008	2009
<i>Violence against the person</i>			
Threat or conspiracy to murder	6	3	4
Wounding or other act endangering life	142	109	129
Endangering railway passenger	—	6	1
Malicious wounding	401	192	91
Procuring illegal abortion	1	1	2
<i>Sexual offences</i>			
Buggery	4	—	—
Indecent assault on a male	2	1	7
Rape	34	35	22
Indecent assault on a female	51	31	31
Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 13	10	9	4
Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 16	154	154	140
Incest	11	7	7
Procuration	1	2	—

Number of offenders cautioned<sup>1,2</sup> for indictable only offences, by offence group and offence class, England and Wales, 2007-09<sup>3</sup>

Offence group/offence class	2007	2008	2009
Abduction	—	—	2
Sexual activity with a person with a mental disorder	5	2	1
Child prostitution and pornography	—	—	1
<i>Burglary</i>			
Burglary in a dwelling	141	106	74
Aggravated burglary in a dwelling (including attempts)	4	5	2
Burglary in a building other than a dwelling	149	121	68
Aggravated burglary in a building other than a dwelling	4	3	3
Robbery	614	382	205
Theft and handling stolen goods	1	—	—
<i>Fraud and forgery</i>			
Conspiracy to defraud	34	31	13
Offences relating to ID documents	232	259	161
<i>Criminal damage</i>			
Arson	47	32	24
Threat or possession with intent to commit criminal damage	29	19	7
<i>Drug offences</i>			
Misuse of drugs	4	0	0
<i>Other indictable only</i>			
Blackmail	23	16	16
Kidnapping	41	26	26
Perjury	13	10	11
Libel	—	1	—
Offender Management offences	—	4	23
Perverting the course of justice	286	217	224
Absconding from lawful custody	50	28	21
Firearms offences	169	129	79
Failing to surrender to bail	2	—	—
Other indictable offences	11	4	6
Indictable only offences	2,676	1,945	1,405
<i>Offences incorrectly recorded as indictable only</i>			
Drunkenness, with aggravation	43	n/a	n/a
Assaults occasioning actual bodily harm	2,652	n/a	n/a
Total	5,371	1,945	1,405

n/a = Not applicable.

<sup>1</sup> The cautions statistics relate to persons for whom these offences were the principal offences for which they were dealt with. When an offender has been cautioned for two or more offences at the same time the principal offence is the more serious offence.

<sup>2</sup> From 1 June 2000 the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 came into force nationally and removed the use of cautions for persons under 18 and replaced them with reprimands and warnings. These figures have been included in the totals.

<sup>3</sup> Every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented are accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that these data have been extracted from large administrative data systems generated by police forces. As a consequence, care should be taken to ensure data collection processes and their inevitable limitations are taken into account when those data are used.

Source:

Justice Statistics Analytical Services—Ministry of Justice

### Prerogative Power of Mercy

**Charlie Elphicke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what criteria are in place in relation to the advice he offers on the use of the prerogative power of mercy. [47320]

**Mr Blunt:** Anyone convicted of a criminal offence can seek to appeal their conviction and/or sentence. If

an appeal is unsuccessful, or in exceptional cases where there has been no appeal, the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) can review the case. If the CCRC think there is a real possibility that the conviction and/or sentence would not be upheld, they can refer the case back to the appeal court.

By long-standing convention, the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, my right hon. and

learned Friend the Member for Rushcliffe (Mr Clarke), would only recommend exercise of the Royal Prerogative of Mercy in relation to a criminal conviction if new evidence had come to light which had not been considered by the court and it was impractical to refer the case to an appellate court to hear the new evidence. This policy reflects the constitutional position that it is the courts, not the Government, which decide whether a person is guilty of a criminal offence and, if they are, the appropriate sentence.

### Prison and Probation Ombudsman: Personnel

**Karl Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many former Prison Service staff worked for the Prison and Probation Ombudsman in (a) 2005, (b) 2006, (c) 2007, (d) 2008, (e) 2009 and (f) 2010. [45347]

**Mr Blunt:** As the head of an independent organisation, it is a matter for the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman to determine their staff. Staff have been recruited from a wide variety of employment backgrounds, including some having previously worked for HM Prison Service and probation. Detailed information on the precise numbers of staff, who have been employed by the prisons and probation ombudsman and previously employed by HM Prison Service, could be obtained only by access to the complete career history of all staff working for the PPO in these years. This is not held centrally by the PPO or MoJ and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Karl Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many Prison Service staff were seconded from the Prison Service to the Prison and Probation Ombudsman in (a) 2005, (b) 2006, (c) 2007, (d) 2008, (e) 2009 and (f) 2010. [45348]

**Mr Blunt:** As the head of an independent organisation, it is a matter for the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) to determine their staff. Staff are recruited or seconded from a wide variety of employment backgrounds, including some who have previously worked for HM Prison Service and probation. The following table gives numbers, as supplied by the PPO, of staff seconded from the prison service.

<i>Staff seconded by the PPO from the prison service by year</i>	
	<i>Number of staff<sup>1</sup></i>
2005	7
2006	6
2007	8
2008	7
2009	4
2010	2

<sup>1</sup> Number seconded in December of that year.

### Probation: Expenditure

**Helen Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what the outturn expenditure was for each probation trust in 2009-10. [47731]

**Mr Blunt:** The following table provides outturn expenditure for each probation trust and board in 2009-10.

<i>Area</i>	<i>Probation Trust/(Board)</i>	<i>£ million 2009-10</i>	
North East	Durham Tees Valley	11	
	Teesside	14	
	Northumbria	31	
Wales	Wales	26	
	Dyfed Powys	9	
	Gwent	12	
	North Wales	12	
Yorkshire and Humber	Humberside	19	
	York and North Yorkshire	10	
	South Yorkshire	26	
	West Yorkshire	44	
North West	Cheshire	15	
	Cumbria	9	
	Greater Manchester	53	
	Lancashire	24	
	Merseyside	33	
West Midlands	Warwickshire	7	
	West Mercia	15	
	Staffordshire and West Midlands	59	
	Staffordshire	17	
East of England	Bedfordshire	10	
	Cambridgeshire	10	
	Essex	21	
	Hertfordshire	12	
	Norfolk and Suffolk	12	
Suffolk	Suffolk	11	
	East Midlands	Derbyshire	15
		Leicestershire	15
		Lincolnshire	9
		Northamptonshire	9
Nottinghamshire		20	
South West	Avon and Somerset	20	
	Devon and Cornwall	21	
	Dorset	10	
	Gloucestershire	8	
Wiltshire	Wiltshire	9	
	London	152	
South East	London	152	
	Hampshire	25	
	Kent	22	
	Sussex	19	
	Surrey and Sussex	10	
Thames Valley	26		
Total		911	



Table 2: Serious injuries following the use of control and restraint procedures

	2009										2010		2009-10
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Brinsford	0	0	0	0	0	0	—	—	—	—	—	—	0
Castington	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cookham Wood	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
Downview	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eastwood Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feltham	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Foston Hall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hindley	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Huntercombe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Hall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parc	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stoke Heath	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warren Hill	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warren Hill— Carlford Unit	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0	0	0	0	0	0
Werrington	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Wetherby—Keppel Unit	—	—	—	—	—	—	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Wetherby <sup>4</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

<sup>1</sup> Data are not collected separately for Phoenix Unit (a specialist unit) within Ashfield YOI.

<sup>2</sup> and <sup>3</sup> The spike in May-June 2009 has been explained by the decommissioning of Lancaster Farms YOI site which led to a sudden influx to Hindley YOI of young men from outside the traditional catchment area for the YOI. This, combined with the increasing overall numbers, contributed to a short period of instability, including increased assaults amongst the young people. The YOI introduced a new 'rewards and sanctions' system for the inmates which helped bring stability from July 2009. However, it should also be noted that the information collected on injuries after restraint may include pre-restraint injuries (such as injuries from a fight or assault).

<sup>4</sup> Data are not collected separately for Anson Unit (a specialist unit) within Wetherby YOI.

### Sentencing

**Philip Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice pursuant to the answer of 10 March 2011, *Official Report*, column 1283W, on sentencing, what assessment has been made of the potential effects on (a) the police, (b) businesses, (c) individuals and (d) the probation service of increasing the maximum discount available for an early guilty plea. [47393]

**Mr Blunt:** If an increased discount for an early guilty plea had the desired effect of encouraging defendants to plead guilty at an earlier stage in the proceedings, it would potentially reduce burdens on the police (and the Crown Prosecution Service) to the extent that less effort would need to be devoted to assembling evidence, and on the probation service to the extent that where shorter sentences were imposed, a smaller percentage of offenders would be subject to post release supervision and these periods of supervision would also be shorter resulting in a reduction in probation workload, although it would also be possible for there to be greater demand on the service through a long community order rather than a short prison sentence. Victims and witnesses would benefit from a prompt resolution of the case, as they would no longer need to worry about having to go to court to give evidence. We would not anticipate that there would be any effect on businesses.

### Sentencing: Appeals

**Philip Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice pursuant to the answer of 10 March 2011, *Official Report*, column 1284W, on sentencing: appeals, what power a Crown court appeal tribunal has to send a case to the Crown court for sentence where it believes that the magistrates court's powers are insufficient in all circumstances. [47391]

**Mr Blunt:** When the Crown court determines an appeal against conviction or sentence in a magistrates court, its sentencing powers are limited to those that were available to the magistrates court.

### Social Security Benefits: Appeals

**Dame Anne Begg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice (1) what the (a) median and (b) longest waiting time was for appeals to be heard in respect of (i) disability living allowance and (ii) employment and support allowance in the latest period for which figures are available; [47347]

(2) what estimate he has made of the (a) median and (b) longest time period between (i) application for appeal and (ii) determination of that appeal in respect of (A) disability living allowance and (B) employment and support allowance in the latest period for which figures are available; [47348]

(3) what estimate he has made of the (a) median and (b) longest waiting time for an appeal to be heard in respect of (i) disability living allowance and (ii) employment and support allowance in each region in the latest period for which figures are available. [47349]

**Mr Djanogly:** The Tribunals Service is collating this information. I will write to the hon. Member shortly and put a copy of the answer in the Library of the House.

### Theft: Dogs

**Charlie Elphicke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice whether theft of a dog is a crime; and what the sentencing guidelines are in connection with such an offence. [47519]

**Mr Blunt:** A person is guilty of theft if he dishonestly appropriates property belonging to another with the intention of permanently depriving the other of it. The maximum penalty is seven years' imprisonment. The Sentencing Guidelines Council, the predecessor body to the Sentencing Council, issued guidelines on theft and these can be accessed on the council's website.

#### Victims: Compensation

**Mr Slaughter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what the monetary value is of outstanding compensation payments to victims of crime. [47231]

**Mr Djanogly:** There is currently an estimated outstanding liability of around £660 million. This estimate includes all cases in the system, so most of these cases are still under investigation.

#### Youth Justice Board

**Jon Trickett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what estimate he has made of the potential savings to his Department arising from the abolition of the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. [47740]

**Mr Blunt:** Abolition of the Youth Justice Board is estimated to achieve savings in order of £6 million across the four years of the spending review period. Further savings may be identified during the detailed consideration of the transition although there may be transition costs to absorb from these savings.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Agriculture

**Dr Wollaston:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures she is taking to promote sustainable farming; and what assessment she has made on the effect this will have on (a) Totnes constituency, (b) South Devon and (c) England. [47526]

**Mr Paice:** The first priority in DEFRA's business plan is to support British farming and encourage sustainable food production. Sustainable farming is essential to protect the natural resources on which future food production depends, and to protect biodiversity and the countryside. We are working closely with industry partners to achieve this: by backing the industry led Campaign for the Farmed Environment and Greenhouse Gas Action Plan. Specific support that DEFRA provides to farmers to help them undertake sustainable farming is funding via the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) in the form of agri-environment schemes such as Entry Level Stewardship, Higher Level Stewardship and Uplands Entry Level Stewardship. We also provide advice and guidance on effective nutrient management of land to maximise efficiency whilst minimising environmental impacts.

The Department uses a number of complementary approaches to assess the economic, environmental and social impacts of sustainable farming policies, including on the wider rural economy, but measured principally at a national level. These include specific evaluation

projects, such as that of the RDPE, monitoring the uptake of relevant schemes, such as Entry Level Stewardship and the Campaign for the Farmed Environment, and developing comprehensive indicator sets to monitor progress along the economic, environmental and social vectors. Among these a small number of high level impact indicators will be used to track progress with respect to the DEFRA business plan but a much wider range of information is available, in particular, from the Agricultural Change and Environment Observatory indicator set, published at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/evidence/statistics/foodfarm/enviro/observatory/indicators/index.htm>

### Anaerobic Digestion

**Mr Bain:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will set limits on the use of energy crops in anaerobic digestion programmes; [46728]

(2) what her policy is on the use of energy crops in anaerobic digestion programmes; [46729]

(3) if she will estimate the quantity of crops used in anaerobic digestion programmes in each of the last three years. [46730]

**Richard Benyon:** As indicated in the 'Renewable Heat Incentive' report published by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) on 10 March, the Government recognise that at farm scale some energy crops may be required in combination with slurries and that such crops can be grown as part of the normal agricultural rotation. Furthermore, there is land available which is not suitable for the production of food crops but which may, therefore, be used to supply energy-crop only anaerobic digestion (AD) plants. However, it is not our policy to encourage energy crop-based AD, particularly where these crops are grown to the exclusion of food producing crops.

If evidence shows that there is a large scale use of crops in AD, and a resulting land use change to support this, then measures will be considered to address the issue. DECC and DEFRA will discuss how such a mechanism could work in practice, including possible measures to exclude the large scale use of energy crops in AD from renewable heat incentive support.

### Animal Welfare

**Mr Bain:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent representations she has received on issuing a strategy on standards of welfare of domestic animals. [45417]

**Mr Paice:** I am not aware of DEFRA having received any recent representations on this subject.

### Cotton: Subsidies

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has held with (a) her EU counterparts and (b) the European Commission on EU cotton subsidies. [47849]

**Mr Paice:** The UK has consistently argued within the EU in favour of decoupling and against harmful export subsidies, although the specific subject of cotton subsidies has not been raised at the Agriculture Council itself since May 2010.

The forthcoming common agricultural policy reform negotiations will provide a major opportunity for the UK to raise this issue and seek an end to all coupled payments, including those to the cotton sector.

### Dairy Farming

**Dan Byles:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the number of dairy farmers who have left the industry in each of the last 10 years. [47630]

**Mr Paice:** The following table gives the number of registered UK dairy production holdings recorded each June for the last 10 years for which figures are available, together with the change from the previous year.

	Holdings	Change from previous year
2000	28,422	-1,799
2001	26,556	-1,866
2002	24,930	-1,626
2003	22,992	-1,938
2004	21,616	-1,376
2005	20,313	-1,303
2006	19,011	-1,302
2007	17,915	-1,096
2008	17,060	-855
2009	16,404	-656

**Dan Byles:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the (a) number and (b) average income of (i) farmers and (ii) dairy farmers in the latest period for which figures are available. [47631]

**Mr Paice:** The June Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture shows that there were 20,000 dairy farmers<sup>1</sup> and 165,000 farmers in total in England at June 2009. We estimate that there were 170,000 farmers in total at June 2010; estimates are not yet available by farm type.

The latest results from the Farm Business Survey estimate average Farm Business Income at £56,000 for dairy farms and at £43,400 for all farm types in England for the year ending February 2010. Forecasts for the main farm types have recently been published for the year ending February 2011. For dairy farms in England average Farm Business Income is forecast to be approximately £42,500.

<sup>1</sup> Farmers are defined as principal farmers, partners, directors and spouses. Farm type is classified by the activity which contributes more than two thirds of the total standard gross margin for the holding. These figures relate to commercial holdings only which are those above the thresholds for the 2010 census.

### Departmental Billing

**Stewart Hosie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of invoices from suppliers her Department paid within

10 days of receipt in January and February 2011. [45091]

**Richard Benyon:** The following table shows the 10-day payment performance to suppliers for the core Department and Executive agencies.

	January 2011	Percentage February 2011
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	100.0	100.0
Animal Health	100.0	100.0
Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science	73.0	92.0
Rural Payments Agency	100.0	98.7
Veterinary Laboratories Agency	86.3	89.6
Veterinary Medicines Directorate	99.0	98.0
Food and Environment Research Agency	88.4	94.1

### Departmental Food

**Mr Bain:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) when she expects her Department to meet the Government's commitment to source food that meets British or equivalent standards of production; [43297]

(2) what her policy is on placing agencies of Government Departments under a commitment to source food that meets British or equivalent standards of production subject to no overall increase in costs. [43305]

**Mr Paice:** It is a Government commitment to ensure that food procured by Government Departments, and eventually the whole public sector, meets British standards of production wherever this can be achieved without increasing overall costs.

We are introducing Government Buying Standards (GBS) for food and catering, which will be mandatory for central Government Departments and executive agencies and promoted to the wider public sector. The external review of our proposed GBS criteria ended on 24 January and we are taking account of all the responses before we finalise the standards this month.

We also published new guidance in January to help ensure that Government Departments and executive agencies source food meeting British or equivalent standards of production, subject to no overall increase in costs. We will report on departmental progress against this commitment in June.

### Departmental Procurement

**Stephen Barclay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many procurement projects with a monetary value greater than (a) £10 million, (b) £50 million and (c) £100 million (i) her Department and (ii) each non-departmental public body and agency for which she is responsible was engaged upon in the latest period for which figures are available. [45559]

**Richard Benyon:** The following table shows how many procurement projects with a monetary value greater than (a) £10 million, (b) £50 million and (c) £100

million (i) the Department and (ii) each non-departmental public body and agencies engaged upon for the periods 2009-10 and 2010-11.

	Fiscal year 2009-10			Fiscal year 2010-11		
	>£10 million	>£50 million	>£100 million	>£10 million	>£50 million	>£100 million
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	0	0	1	0	0	0
Animal Health	0	0	0	0	0	0
Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science	0	1	0	0	0	0
Rural Payments Agency	0	0	0	0	0	0
Veterinary Laboratories Agency	0	0	0	0	0	0
Veterinary Medicines Directorate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Food and Environment Research Agency	0	0	0	0	0	0
Marine Management Organisation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Environment Agency	7	0	1	0	0	0
Gangmasters Licensing Authority	0	0	0	0	0	0
Joint Nature Conservation Committee	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Forestry Company	0	0	0	0	0	0
Natural England	0	0	0	1	0	0
Royal Botanical Gardens—Kew	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sustainable Development Commission	0	0	0	0	0	0
Commission for Rural Communities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Consumer Council for Water	0	0	0	0	0	0

### Departmental Public Appointments

**Fiona Mactaggart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which public bodies sponsored by her Department (a) have been and (b) are to be closed, merged or reorganised following her appointment; and how many (i) women and (ii) men who are public appointees at each body will no longer hold such an appointment in consequence. [47114]

**Richard Benyon:** The coalition Government are committed to increasing the accountability of public bodies, and this involves reducing their number and their cost to the taxpayer. The proposals for the majority of bodies across all departments were announced and published on 14 October 2010. An updated list reflecting changes since October 2010 has been published on the Cabinet Office website this month.

Summary information on public appointments is published annually by the Cabinet Office. This includes data on gender. Copies of the most recent report can be downloaded from:

[www.civilservice.gov.uk/ndpb](http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/ndpb)

### Departmental Regulation

**Nicholas Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on how many occasions her Department has consulted representatives of small businesses on the effects of proposed new regulations since 6 May 2010. [46143]

**Richard Benyon:** A total of 15 formal written consultations have been launched by my Department since May 2010. Two of these consultations explored new regulations. The others were about updating existing regulations.

All these consultations have included small businesses or the Federation of Small Businesses.

### Departmental Security

**Jon Trickett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reasons persons not employed by Government Departments or agencies are issued with passes entitling them to enter her Department's premises. [43210]

**Richard Benyon:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 8 February 2011, *Official Report*, column 136W. For security reasons it would be inappropriate to provide information on why individuals not employed by DEFRA are issued with passes that permit access to the Department's premises.

### Dutch Elm Disease

**Michael Fallon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what information her Department holds on the number of elm trees that were killed by Dutch elm disease on land owned or managed by the Forestry Commission in each year since 2000. [43806]

**Mr Paice** [holding answer 3 March 2011]: The Forestry Commission does not record information about the mortality of trees due to Dutch elm disease on the public forest estate.

### Farms: Sky Lanterns

**Mr Hollobone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent representations she has received on the effects on farmers and rural communities of the use of sky lanterns. [47313]

**Mr Paice** [*holding answer 17 March 2011*]: I have received a number of representations expressing concerns, which I share, on the risks to livestock of releasing sky lanterns. There are concerns of fire, damage to property, littering, and harm to livestock when a lantern lands nearby or on crops for feed.

DEFRA is working with other Government Departments and the farming unions to see what action can be taken to reduce the risks. We are urging consumers to think twice about releasing lanterns and recommending farmers remain alert to the dangers posed especially when they land near livestock or in fields of standing crop.

### Fisheries

**Mel Stride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment the Environment Agency made of the recommendations and conclusions of the 2008 report by the University of Hull International Fisheries Institute on the condition assessment of Atlantic salmon in Dartmoor rivers.

[47380]

**Richard Benyon:** The Environment Agency commissioned the report under the Habitats Directive Review of Consents, and it formed part of the assessment.

The Environment Agency has since implemented a number of recommendations from the report. The monitoring programme has been extended and the Environment Agency have either amended or agreed to amend 13 abstraction licences on Dartmoor. This has resulted in a significant reduction in the amount of water abstracted, which benefits the river environment and Atlantic salmon.

### Food: Labelling

**Henry Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on labelling of retail products containing monosodium glutamate.

[46412]

**Mr Paice:** The Food Labelling Regulations 1996 (as amended) require additives used as ingredients in foods to be declared in the ingredients list on food labels. Monosodium glutamate (MSG) is one such additive and when labelled must be identified by the term “flavour enhancer” followed by either “Monosodium Glutamate” or “E621”.

### Forestry Commission

**Roger Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she plans to take to ensure that the Forestry Commission retains and develops its reserved research capability.

[44542]

**Mr Paice:** We remain committed to research that will benefit the forestry industry as part of the GB activities of the Forestry Commission, and to maintaining our front-line science capacity, especially in high priority areas like plant health research. However, all activity areas have been asked to make reductions to meet the requirements of the spending review. Delivery of the Science and Innovation Strategy will remain a key

element. Reducing transaction and back office costs will allow funding to be concentrated on evidence and science. High priority areas such as tree health and climate change will receive increased funding and we will work with other funders to ensure continued access to appropriate research capacity and capability, and to explore partnership opportunities to ensure best value for money.

Forest Research, which is a GB agency of the Forestry Commission, will restructure, and reprioritise its work as a result of the spending review settlement. The devolved Administrations in Scotland and Wales are being kept informed of developments. Forest Research will shortly be consulting staff on a proposed restructuring programme; no decisions will be made until the results of the consultation with staff and trade unions are known.

Tree health and plant biosecurity is a high priority and therefore I have asked my chief scientific adviser, Professor Bob Watson, to advise on the issues, opportunities and priorities for new research, and to ensure research outputs can have maximum impact on management solutions. Professor Bob Watson is jointly leading a project with the Forestry Commission director general, Tim Rollinson, to develop an “action plan” for tree health and plant biosecurity. One strand of the action plan will consider the issues, priorities and research opportunities. Professor Watson is already taking this forward with the Forestry Commission, Forest Research and the Food and Environment Research Agency, along with other interested parties such as the research councils and experts in academia. As well as identifying priorities for research, we are keen to explore all possible avenues for partnerships and co-funding to deliver this new work.

### Forests

**Hugh Bayley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many hectares of land were (a) bought from and (b) sold to (i) private owners, (ii) community or charitable bodies and (iii) other public bodies by the Forestry Commission in each year since 1981.

[39045]

**Mr Paice** [*holding answer 8 February 2011*]: Land acquired and added to the public forest estate between January 1997 and 10 February 2011, including where the freehold of an existing leasehold wood was purchased, amounted to 5,432 hectares. Of this area, 3,986 hectares was classified as being from private owners, 242 hectares from community or charitable bodies and 1,204 hectares from other public bodies.

Disposals from January 2003 to 10 February 2011 amounted to 7,292 hectares, of this, 6,355 hectares was classified as being to private owners, 353 hectares to community or charitable bodies and 584 hectares to other public bodies.

Information before the dates specified above could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr Bain:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent representations she received from the Confederation of Forest Industries on her policy on the disposal of land owned and managed by the Forestry Commission.

[43374]

**Mr Paice:** In the period since the end of the consultation on the future of the public forest estate in England, we have not received any written representations from the Confederation of Forest Industries (ConFor) on this matter. However, I did meet the chief executive of ConFor in February to discuss the public forest estate and since the consultation has ended, ConFor has written to request a further meeting. He has since been invited to serve on the panel that will review the future of the public forest estate in England.

#### Gangmasters Licensing Authority

**Mr Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many people worked on the enforcement of employment rights and related protections in the Gangmasters

Officer	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Licensing	4	5	5	10	8	9	9	8
Intelligence	4	2	6	8	11	9	9	9
Compliance <sup>1</sup>	10	11	10	—	—	—	—	—
Enforcement	12	20	16	42	51	43	38	36
Total	30	38	37	60	70	61	56	53

<sup>1</sup> The compliance officer and enforcement officer roles were combined in 2009-10.

#### Genetically Modified Organisms: Somerset

**Tessa Munt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many parties were involved in the contamination of a winter oilseed rape crop with the GM trait GT73 at a location in Somerton and Frome constituency in 2008; who owned (a) the land involved, (b) the seed varieties contaminated and (c) the GM trait; and whether the seed variety involved (i) has been placed on or (ii) is under assessment for inclusion on the National List of Varieties. [32840]

**Mr Paice:** Two parties were directly involved in the seed contamination incident in the Somerton and Frome constituency in 2008. They were the farmer who grew some of the affected seed in part of a field on his holding, and the company who owned the seed. The latter was a subsidiary of Aardvark Investments SA. The GT73 trait is owned by the company Monsanto. The conventional seed variety is not being considered for inclusion on the UK National List.

The question of whether the name of the farmer involved in this incident should be disclosed has in effect just been reviewed in a relevant case before an Information Tribunal. In this, the GM Freeze organisation appealed against a decision by the Information Commissioner that DEFRA was justified in not disclosing the precise location of the Somerset incident, in part because it would serve to reveal the identity of the farmer and could unfairly prejudice his interests. After considering the matter in detail, the tribunal has recently decided to dismiss the GM Freeze appeal, upholding the stance taken by the Information Commissioner and DEFRA.

#### Horse Racing: Animal Welfare

**Mrs Moon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will meet representatives of the British Horseracing Authority to

Licensing Authority in each of the last five years; how many people she expects to work on such matters in that body in each of the next three years; and if she will make a statement. [47437]

**Mr Paice:** The Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA) employs a number of staff in frontline roles which support its compliance and enforcement activities. These staff are involved in processing gangmasters licence applications, analysing intelligence reports and carrying out compliance and enforcement inspections.

The number of frontline staff employed by the GLA in each of the last five financial years is set out in the following table. The table also includes a forecast of the number of licensing, enforcement and intelligence staff the GLA expects to employ in each of the next three financial years.

discuss the use of the whip in horseracing; and if she will make a statement. [47976]

**Mr Paice:** There are no plans for the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to meet the British Horseracing Authority (BHA).

We consider that the guidelines laid down by the BHA, in conjunction with the Animal Welfare Act, provide protection for horses against misuse of the whip.

#### Labelling

**Mr Bain:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of her policy on the labelling of products to indicate whether they contain material from the offspring of cloned animals since December 2010. [43998]

**Mr Paice:** The Food Standards Agency and the European Food Safety Authority have advised that, for cattle and pigs, current evidence suggests that meat and milk from healthy descendants of clones is as safe as that from traditionally bred animals. The Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes reached the same conclusion on 25 November 2010.

There is no suggestion currently that food from clones themselves would be sold for human consumption. The agency concluded on 7 December that, for food safety purposes, mandatory labelling of meat and milk from the descendants of cloned cattle and pigs would be unnecessary and disproportionate, providing no significant food safety benefit to consumers.

It is not possible to establish whether meat or milk derive from an animal with a clone in its ancestry. Any mandatory labelling imposes costs and needs to be enforceable. Labelling to the effect that a product may be derived from an animal with a clone in its ancestry is unlikely to be helpful to consumers.

If some parts of industry wish to set up their own system of labelling for the offspring of clones, they are of course free to do so, providing that they carry out the necessary checks to justify any claims that they make.

#### Milk: Prices

**David Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with representatives of supermarkets on the proportion of the retail price of milk paid to dairy farmers; and if she will make a statement. [46832]

**Mr Paice:** On 20 January I chaired the Dairy Supply Chain Forum, which included representatives of supermarket retailers. We had productive discussions on the health and future of the dairy sector, the trade balance, the EU Commission's legislative proposals and industry sustainability. We did not explicitly discuss the issue of milk prices because this would not be appropriate under competition law.

#### Peat

**Mr Brine:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what steps she plans to take to ensure that future peat replacement targets are met by the gardening and horticulture industry; [47767]

(2) what consideration she has given to the regulation of the use of peat in horticultural compost. [47768]

**Richard Benyon:** A public consultation on future policy to further reduce and eventually phase out the horticultural use of peat in England recently closed, on 11 March. The consultation proposed that a voluntary, partnership approach is followed to deliver phase out targets, including for the amateur gardener market and professional horticulture, and sets out the rationale for doing so. Consultation responses are now being analysed, and will inform the development of a future policy framework.

#### Phytophthora Ramorum

**Zac Goldsmith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether her Department has commissioned any research on measures to combat phytophthora ramorum; and whether she has made an assessment of its likely effects in the next 10 years. [45219]

**Mr Paice:** DEFRA has invested £1.5 million of research on *Phytophthora ramorum* and *Phytophthora kernoviae* since April 2009 as part of its five-year £25 million *Phytophthora* Disease Management Programme. The Food and Environment Research Agency and Forest Research are the lead partners in carrying out the research, which supports disease management in woodlands, heathland and heritage gardens and parks. It builds on a substantial body of research funded by DEFRA, the Forestry Commission, the EU, the industry and other bodies since 2002. Progress with the research and the wider programme was reported to an open meeting in Cornwall on 11 March.

Assessments of the likely impacts of *Phytophthora ramorum* have been carried out through specific UK and EU pest risk analyses and through an impact assessment which supported the business case for the DEFRA *Phytophthora* Disease Management Programme. Additional economic research aims to refine economic impact assessments by better determining the values of the habitats at risk (woodlands, heathland, heritage gardens).

**Zac Goldsmith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she is taking steps to counter the spread of sudden oak death in trees in Richmond Park. [45220]

**Mr Paice:** We are taking the spread of sudden oak death (*Phytophthora ramorum*) very seriously with a five-year, £25 million *Phytophthora* Disease Management Programme. Notwithstanding this the disease has not been found in Richmond park. Research and findings to date show that the areas most at risk are in the south-west and west of the country.

#### Plastics: Recycling

**Yasmin Qureshi:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will estimate the amount of plastic waste which was recycled in 2009-10. [47052]

**Richard Benyon:** DEFRA does not hold a figure for the overall plastic recycled in 2009-10. However, a report from the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) "Realising the value of recovered plastic—an update" (spring 2010) estimates that around 4.5 million tonnes of plastics enters the UK waste stream each year. In 2009, it is estimated that around 900,000 tonnes of this material was recovered for recycling.

#### Refrigerators: Waste Disposal

**Tristram Hunt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will take steps to reduce the number of supermarket refrigeration display cabinets disposed of in landfill sites. [46140]

**Richard Benyon:** The disposal of refrigerating display cabinets in the UK is controlled by the following regulations:

The EC regulations on substances that deplete the ozone layer require ozone-depleting substances to be removed from commercial refrigeration equipment before it is disposed of.

The UK waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) regulations encourage the separate collection of WEEE, including refrigerating display cabinets, establish minimum treatment standards and set minimum recovery and recycling targets.

The UK Government are also promoting the reuse of WEEE by providing financial and other support for the development of a publicly available specification on the "Reuse of used and waste electrical and electronic equipment—process management specification" (PAS 141).

#### Veterinary Services: Finance

**Mary Creagh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what the budget of the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (a) was in each of the last five years and (b) will be in each of the next four years; [46769]

(2) what the budget of the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (*a*) was in each of the last five years and (*b*) will be in each of the next four years. [46770]

**Mr Paice:** The budgets of the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) and the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) for the years requested are set out in the following table.

	<i>£ million</i>	
	<i>VMD</i>	<i>VLA</i>
2006-07 actual	3.3	100.3
2007-08 actual	3.3	101.0
2008-09 actual	3.5	96.2
2009-10 actual	3.7	95.7
2011-11 forecast outturn	3.4	74.5
2011-12 budget	3.2	72.4

Figures for the four subsequent years are not yet finalised and will be allocated on an annual basis.

### Water Abstraction

**Caroline Lucas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which rivers are being investigated under the Environment Agency's Restoring Sustainable Abstraction Scheme; and in respect of which rivers (*a*) preliminary investigations have been completed and restoration solutions have been recommended and (*b*) preliminary investigations are ongoing. [46352]

**Richard Benyon:** The Environment Agency has 226 ongoing investigations under the Restoring Sustainable Abstraction Programme, covering rivers and wetlands. Investigations have been completed and restoration solutions recommended for 85 schemes.

Since 2008, 321 schemes have been completed, and action has been taken to deliver environmental improvements for 143 of these. The remaining 178 schemes required no further action.

Details of the number of investigations by river are not collated by the Environment Agency and to source the information would involve disproportionate cost. The Environment Agency is also unable to release into the public domain information that could identify individual abstractions or licence holders for reasons of confidentiality.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

### Bahrain: Politics and Government

**Mr Douglas Alexander:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his Bahraini counterpart; and if he will make a statement. [45324]

**Mr Hague:** I spoke to the Bahraini Foreign Minister on 16 March to express serious concern at the deteriorating situation on the ground and to call for restraint from all sides following the declaration of a state of emergency in Bahrain.

I stressed that it was vital that all security forces in the country exercised restraint, used minimum force and worked to create the conditions for dialogue.

I encouraged him to return to the process of political dialogue as, even at this stage, it presented the way out of the current crisis.

In addition to this the Prime Minister spoke to the King of Bahrain on 15 March warning against the use of force and encouraging dialogue.

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has discussed with his counterpart in Bahrain the implications of the deployment in that country of military forces under the auspices of the Gulf Co-operation Council. [47909]

**Alistair Burt:** The intervention by Gulf countries must be consistent with a response through reform, not through repression, and help create an environment in which dialogue can take place. We call on all security forces in the country to exercise the utmost restraint and to avoid using unnecessary force. The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Richmond (Yorks) (Mr Hague) stressed this point when he spoke to the Bahraini Foreign Minister, H. E. Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed on 16 March. He also urged the need for genuine political reform.

### BBC World Service

**John McDonnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the 648 kHz medium radio wave frequency has been allocated to a body other than the BBC. [46826]

**Mr Jeremy Browne:** The BBC World Service is still operating the 648 kHz frequency. They have said that they will be relinquishing the frequency at the end of March.

Frequency allocation is the responsibility of Ofcom. They have said that there will be a public consultation exercise before re-allocation of the frequency.

**John McDonnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate has been made of the financial saving to be achieved by the BBC World Service ceasing transmission on the 648 kHz medium radio wave frequency; and what proportion of the total planned budget reduction for the BBC World Service this amount represents. [46827]

**Mr Jeremy Browne:** The BBC World Service estimates that the cessation of broadcasts on the 648 kHz MW frequency at the end of this month will save it approximately £260,000 per annum. This represents around 2.6% of the approximately £10 million annual savings the World Service plans to make in its distribution budget by the end of the first three years of the spending review period, and around 0.6% of the £46 million per annum of savings in its overall operating budget over the same period. At the end of this period the BBC World Service will be funded from the television licence fee.

### British Overseas Territories

**Rehman Chishti:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent consideration he has given to the recommendations of the Seventh Report of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 2007-08, HC 147, on the Overseas Territories, in respect of the Government's oversight responsibility for the Overseas Territories. [48008]

**Mr Bellingham:** The Government take their oversight responsibility for the Overseas Territories very seriously.

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Richmond (Yorks) (Mr Hague) updated the House on our approach to the Overseas Territories in a written ministerial statement on 10 March 2011, *Official Report*, column 76WS.

### Departmental Ministerial Policy Advisers

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much his Department has spent on (a) salaries and (b) pension entitlements for special advisers in the financial year 2010-11 to date. [46578]

**Alistair Burt:** I refer the hon. Member to the Cabinet Office website which reports details of special advisers employed on a quarterly basis:

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/special-adviser-data-releases>

The estimated pay bill includes pension costs.

Appointment as a special adviser is pensionable under the civil service pension arrangements. Special advisers have a choice of pension arrangements, which are set out in the Model contract for special advisers:

Nuvos—a defined benefit occupational pension scheme that currently has a 3.5% member contribution rate. Employer contribution rates from 1 April 2010 range from 16.7% of pay for those earning under £21,000 a year, to 24.3% for those earning more than £74,000 a year.

A partnership pension account—this is a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution based on age.

### Departmental Public Bodies

**Jon Trickett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 16 March 2011, *Official Report*, columns 9-10WS, on the public bodies reform programme, what estimate he has made of the savings to his Department net of costs incurred of the assumption of additional departmental responsibilities to accrue from (a) the abolition of three public bodies within his Department's area of responsibility and (b) the change in function of two such bodies. [48139]

**Mr Jeremy Browne:** On 16 March 2011 the Minister for the Cabinet Office issued a written ministerial statement updating Parliament on progress on public bodies reform. That statement also announced that Departments estimate cumulative administrative savings of at least £2.6 billion will flow from public bodies over the spending review period.

I anticipate net overall administrative savings from structural reforms to the Foreign and Commonwealth public bodies over the spending review period of £30,000. Overall administrative reductions from reform of all Foreign and Commonwealth departmental public bodies are estimated to be £275,000 over the spending review period.

### Diplomatic Service: British Nationals Abroad

**Mr Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent steps his Department has taken to improve consular services for UK citizens overseas. [46612]

**Mr Jeremy Browne** [*holding answer 16 March 2011*]: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) received over 1.9 million consular inquiries in 2009-10. We dealt with almost 20,000 serious consular assistance cases, including approximately 6,000 deaths and 6,000 detentions of British nationals. In addition, we respond to major crises; and issue replacement travel documents to British nationals whose passport is lost, stolen or otherwise unavailable and they need to travel urgently.

We continually review our consular services to ensure that they are the best we can provide: focused on providing assistance to the most vulnerable as efficiently as possible and building working relationships with partners where they are able to provide services that the FCO cannot.

On 16 December 2010, *Official Report*, column 121WS, I announced that the Government would restore Exceptional Assistance Measures for all British nationals affected by a terrorist attack overseas, regardless of whether or not they have travel insurance.

We have enhanced our support to British nationals involved in international parental child abduction to bring UK court orders to the attention of local authorities and to lobby to lift travel restrictions where there is an imminent risk of harm to the child.

Since 1 November 2010 we have been working with Victim Support National Homicide Service to provide support to bereaved people living in England and Wales following a murder or manslaughter overseas. We are currently working on further enhancements to the support we can provide to victims of murder and manslaughter overseas, as I informed members during a Westminster Hall debate on 3 November 2010, *Official Report*, columns 285-92WH. We will announce any significant changes to the House, and incorporate them into our publication 'Support for British nationals abroad: A Guide'.

In respect of crisis responses, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs announced on 23 February 2011 that he would establish a review, directly reporting to Ministers, into the FCO's arrangements for the evacuation of British nationals in a crisis.

### Egypt: Politics and Government

**Mr Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of political movements in Egypt; what recent discussions he has had with the Government of (a) Israel, (b) Jordan and (c) Egypt on this issue; and if he will make a statement. [R] [47682]

**Alistair Burt:** In the past there has not been the political space in Egypt for a strong democratic opposition to be able to develop. We believe that it is important that the political reform process in Egypt includes representatives from every part of society. Before parliamentary elections are held in Egypt, opposition groups will need time to coalesce and form their respective platforms.

During my visit to Egypt from 9 to 11 March, I met the Prime Minister and other members of the Government, and encouraged them to work out a public timetable for elections to allow for the development of effective political parties. A key first step to this action will be a new law on political parties. We understand that the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces will issue such a law shortly after the referendum on constitutional reforms. We will continue to urge the Egyptian Government to engage in meaningful dialogue with opposition and activist groups to build trust with them so as to enable the aspirations of the people to be realised.

The Prime Minister last spoke to King Abdullah of Jordan on 17 March, when they discussed various regional events. The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and the Secretary of State for Defence met with Defence Minister Barak when he visited London on 17 March 2011 and discussed a number of regional issues, including Egypt. Egypt has played an important role in the middle east peace process and its peace agreement with Israel is vital to regional stability.

#### Former Ministers

**Andrew Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what guidelines his Department has put in place in respect of the provision of briefings to former Ministers. [44154]

**Alistair Burt:** Briefing is provided in accordance with the guidance set out in Volume 2 of the Directory of Civil Service Guidance, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

#### Iran: Politics and Government

**Mr Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of reports of pro-democracy protests in Iran; what recent discussions he has had with (a) the government of Israel, (b) the Arab League, (c) his EU counterparts and (d) the United Nations Secretary General on this issue; and if he will make a statement. [R] [47667]

**Alistair Burt:** In the past month, the Iranian authorities have done everything they can to try to suppress the first series of protests to take place in Iran since December 2009. They have beaten protesters and arrested hundreds—while claiming to support freedom elsewhere in the Middle East. The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and I have issued statements about this outrageous hypocrisy and made clear our concern about the suppression of these legitimate protests. While we have not discussed these protests with the Government of Israel, the Arab League or the UN Secretary-General, we have had discussions with EU partners and the G8.

#### Iran: Terrorism

**Mr Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent reports he has received on Iranian involvement with Islamist militants; what recent discussions he has had with (a) the government of Israel, (b) the Palestinian Authority, (c) the government of Egypt, (d) the government of Jordan, (e) his EU counterparts, (f) the Arab League and (g) the United Nations Secretary General on this issue; and if he will make a statement. [47697]

**Alistair Burt:** We continue to monitor closely Iranian support to Hezbollah, Hamas, Palestinian rejectionist groups and Iraqi militia groups. We are gravely concerned by the latest evidence that Iran continues to supply the Taliban with weaponry.

We have consistently stressed the negative impact this behaviour has on stability in the region. We regularly discuss this issue with a range of international partners.

#### Iraq: Iran

**Mr Offord:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department has taken to encourage the Iraqi army to allow (a) stationery, (b) beds and (c) other items into Camp Ashraf since December 2010. [47843]

**Alistair Burt:** The Iraqi Government have confirmed to our embassy officials that food, water and medical supplies are allowed to enter Camp Ashraf. However, we are aware of reports from camp residents that some items have not been permitted in the camp.

Our embassy in Baghdad will continue to urge the Iraqi Government to ensure that the residents of Camp Ashraf are treated in accordance with international humanitarian standards, and will raise concerns where appropriate.

#### Israel: Foreign Relations

**Mr Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to strengthen links with Israel; what steps he plans to take on this matter in the next six months; and if he will make a statement. [R] [47686]

**Alistair Burt:** Israel is an important strategic partner for the UK. We have regular dialogue at both ministerial and official level on a wide range of issues, including the situation in the region, the middle east peace process and our ongoing cooperation on Iran.

I visited Israel and the Occupied Territories in January 2011 and met Foreign Minister Lieberman. The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs also visited in November 2011. Defence Secretary Barak met with the Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Defence, when he visited London on 17 March 2011.

We are confirming dates for the forthcoming UK-Israel Strategic dialogue which is an opportunity for high level discussions on a wide range of foreign policy issues.

### Ivory Coast: Armed Conflict

**Stephen Twigg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had on the role of the United Nations in protecting civilians in Côte d'Ivoire. [47995]

**Mr Bellingham:** The violence that has led to the deaths of civilians in Cote d'Ivoire is unacceptable and I urge all sides to exercise restraint. The Government are in regular contact with the UN and international partners about the ongoing crisis in Cote d'Ivoire, including on the protection of civilians. The UN must be allowed to fulfil its mandate to investigate human rights abuses without hindrance. Through our diplomatic representation in Abidjan, we are in regular contact with UN Special Representative Choi, while our missions at the UN in New York and Geneva are working closely with UN colleagues there to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis. We support the proposal by the UN Commission on Human Rights to send a Commission of Inquiry to Cote d'Ivoire to investigate violence and abuses committed since the elections in November 2010. We are also in contact with President Ouattara and his Ministers and will continue to urge them to ensure forces loyal to them refrain from violence.

### Japan: Tsunami

**Mr Douglas Alexander:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when his Department was contacted by International Rescue Corps about the provision of support in Japan following the recent tsunami. [47969]

**Mr Hague:** The International Rescue Corps (IRC) first directly contacted the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) after their arrival at Tokyo Haneda airport on 15 March when they approached British embassy representatives there. The IRC had previously been in contact with the Department for International Development, who had informed the FCO of IRC's intention to provide assistance.

On the evening of 15 March 2011, the IRC told our embassy in Tokyo that it needed a letter of support for an expressway pass. The embassy faxed this letter, as a note verbale, to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs at approximately 07:00 on 16 March 2011, and followed up with phone calls to the Ministry.

**Mr Douglas Alexander:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to which British aid organisations he has (a) granted and (b) refused permission to work in Japan since the tsunami. [47970]

**Mr Hague:** None. It is not for me to grant or refuse permission for British aid organisations to work in Japan. The Japanese Government rightly takes all decisions on the large number of offers of assistance that it has received.

**Mr Douglas Alexander:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what occasions International Rescue Corps has been approved by his Department to work in disaster areas. [47972]

**Mr Hague:** The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is not the lead Department in this area of work. Since 2008, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), co-operating with the Department for International Development, has invited non-governmental organisations to become part of the UK international search and rescue group, members of which can be invited to participate in missions when required.

### Lebanon: Capital Punishment

**Mr Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 8 March 2011, *Official Report*, column 1041W on Lebanon: capital punishment, what information he has received on the fate of each individual sentenced to death for Israeli related spying activities; if he will make representations to the Government of Lebanon on each individual; and if he will make a statement. [47604]

**Alistair Burt:** I understand that the seven Lebanese citizens sentenced to death on charges of spying for the Government of Israel are likely to have been held by the Ministry of Defence prior to appearing before a military court. Following sentencing, prisoners are usually transferred to the civilian Roumieh prison. The Lebanese have not carried out a death sentence since 2004.

Our ambassador in Beirut has raised the issue of Lebanon's continued use of the death penalty on a number of occasions, including with the Minister of Justice, Chief of Justice and Head of the Lebanese Bar Association.

### Lebanon: Politics and Government

**Mr Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the situation in Lebanon; what recent discussions he has had with the government of Israel on this issue; and if he will make a statement. [47695]

**Alistair Burt:** Najib Mikati was asked by President Sleiman to form the next Government following the withdrawal of the opposition from the Government National of Unity on 12 January 2011. Discussions between Najib Mikati and senior Lebanese politicians are continuing.

We want to see a Government formed in accordance with Lebanon's constitution, which commands the broadest possible support of the people of Lebanon and upholds its international obligations including the Special Tribunal and an end to impunity for assassinations. It is important that any new Government are committed to restraint and the principle of non-violence as well as a sovereign and independent future for Lebanon.

We have regular discussions with the Government of Israel on the situation in the region and they are aware of our views on Lebanon.

### Libya: British Nationals Abroad

**Andrew Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British nationals who indicated a willingness to leave Libya on flights chartered by his Department have not taken up places on such flights to date. [43888]

**Alistair Burt:** The Department evacuated all those who wanted to leave on Foreign and Commonwealth Office chartered flights between 23 and 28 February 2011. We are aware of around 220 British nationals remaining in Libya following the UK's evacuation. Of these, 100 have told us they wish to remain in Libya. Of the others, nearly 70 have told us that they may decide to leave at some point. We continue to work with those who have contacted us for help in order to identify options for them to leave Libya.

**Mr Douglas Alexander:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 7 March 2011, *Official Report*, column 841W, on Libya: British nationals abroad, whether he plans to publish the report of the review of his Department's arrangements for leading the evacuation of British nationals in a crisis. [47578]

**Mr Hague** [*holding answer 18 March 2011*]: Yes.

### Libya: Politics and Government

**Mr Douglas Alexander:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's position is on the desertion of Libyan air force personnel to other countries. [47760]

**Mr Hague:** The refusal by members of Gaddafi's own air force to commit human rights violations against the Libyan people on behalf of his regime is a further demonstration of the increasing pressure his regime is coming under, including from inside Libya. Gaddafi has lost all legitimacy to rule and must put an immediate stop to the use of armed force against civilians and hand over power without delay to a government that will recognise the aspirations of the Libyan people and be more representative and accountable.

We continue to work closely with international partners to isolate the Gaddafi regime and to ensure that anyone responsible for abuses or contemplating further crimes knows that they will be held to account.

**Frank Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the cost to his Department of the civilian operation to evacuate UK nationals from Libya. [47997]

**Alistair Burt:** To date, the provisional total cost to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the civilian operation to evacuate UK nationals from Libya is around £1.8 million, but this figure will not be confirmed until all final invoices are received.

### Lydia Hunt

**Stephen Timms:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress he is making with the Mexican authorities in the investigation into the abduction of Lydia Hunt. [47332]

**Mr Jeremy Browne:** We are in regular contact with the Mexican authorities about this case. I have raised it with Mexican Ministers and the Mexican ambassador to the UK. Our ambassador to Mexico has also raised

it at senior level. We cannot interfere in the Mexican investigation into Lydia Hunt's abduction, but hope for progress soon.

### Meetings

**Andrew Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what briefings his Department has given to former Ministers in the last six months; which department conducted the briefings; and what the payband was of each official involved. [43985]

**Alistair Burt:** Briefing is provided in accordance with the guidance set out in Volume 2 of the Directory of Civil Service Guidance, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

### Middle East: Peace Negotiations

**Mr Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his most recent assessment is of the state of the Middle East peace process; what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Government of Israel, (b) the Government of Egypt, (c) the Government of Jordan, (d) his EU counterparts and (e) the United Nations Secretary General on this issue; and if he will make a statement. [R] [47684]

**Alistair Burt:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Richmond (Yorks) (Mr Hague), gave to the hon. Member for Leeds West (Rachel Reeves) on 15 Mar 2011, *Official Report*, column 148.

UK Ministers and officials regularly discuss the middle east peace process with counterparts in Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the UN. We are in regular contact with our colleagues in the EU. There was EU unity in the UK, France, Germany, and Portugal's, vote in favour of the UN Security Council Resolution on settlements on 18 February 2011. The E3 has called for an urgent return to negotiations, to resolve all final status issues, based on clear parameters.

The Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Defence met with Defence Minister Barak when he visited London on 17 March 2011 and discussed the peace process and developments across the middle east.

The Prime Minister last spoke to King Abdullah of Jordan on 17 March 2011. They discussed a number of regional issues. I visited Egypt between 9-11 March 2011 and discussed the middle east peace process with Foreign Minister Nabil al-Arabi. Mr al-Arabi reiterated that Egypt would stand by its international commitments and we believe that this is a positive sign of Egypt's continued commitment to peace with Israel.

### Morocco: Politics and Government

**Mr Douglas Alexander:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the situation in Morocco; and if he will make a statement. [47561]

**Mr Hague:** There have been a number of small scale demonstrations in Morocco over recent weeks. We welcome the recent announcement by HM King Mohammed VI of planned constitutional reform and look forward to its implementation.

#### **Muammar Gaddafi**

**Mr Douglas Alexander:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 8 March 2011, *Official Report*, column 1044W, on Muammar al-Gaddafi, whether he has received representations from the government of Venezuela on his comments that Colonel Gaddafi had travelled to that country. [47579]

**Mr Hague** [*holding answer 18 March 2011*]: Our embassy in Venezuela is in frequent contact with the Venezuelan Government on a range of issues.

#### **Overtime**

**Andrew Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much his Department spent on overtime for staff working in the private office of the Secretary of State in each of the last five years. [43938]

**Alistair Burt:** In financial year 2009-10 staff in the Secretary of State's office claimed a total of £63,816 in overtime and travel time. Due to the way these payments are recorded it is not possible to provide a breakdown of the two amounts.

Due to changes in the IT system in which this information is recorded, it is not possible to provide figures for the preceding years without incurring disproportionate cost.

#### **Pakistan: Christianity**

**Andrew Bridgen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Pakistan on the treatment of Christians in that country. [48012]

**Alistair Burt:** I raised religious freedoms, including the treatment of Christians in Pakistan, with Pakistan's former Minister for Minorities Mr. Shahbaz Bhatti in January this year. My noble Friend Lady Warsi also raised these issues with the Speaker of the Pakistan Parliament on 17 January 2011. Following Mr Bhatti's murder, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister wrote to express his condolences to President Zardari. I made a statement condemning his killing, alongside my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and my noble Friend Lady Warsi. We will continue to engage with the authorities in Pakistan on this issue.

#### **Palestinians: Economic Situation**

**Mr Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the economic situation in the Palestinian Territories; what recent discussions he has had with (a) the government of Israel, (b) the Palestinian Authority, (c) the government of Egypt, (d) the government of Jordan, (e) his EU counterparts and (f) the United Nations Secretary General on this issue; and if he will make a statement. [47688]

**Alistair Burt:** According to International Monetary Fund figures, economic growth across the Palestinian Territories was 6.8% in 2009. The west bank's economy grew at 7.2% in 2009; however, much of this growth was derived from higher Government spending and international aid rather than from exports, which fell in that period. The west bank's economy continues to be constrained by a number of factors, including movement and access constraints on goods and people, and poor investment confidence.

Gaza's economy grew at 5.4% in 2009 from a very low base after the damage incurred in Operation Cast Lead. We are concerned that Israeli access restrictions continue to stifle sustainable economic recovery in Gaza, and we look forward to the full implementation of Israel's commitments to allow Gazan exports to international markets, and to increase the flows of goods into the territory.

UK Ministers and officials regularly discuss the economic situation in the Palestinian Territories with the Palestinian Authority, Israel, regional countries, UN agencies, other donor countries and organisations.

#### **Somalia: Piracy**

**Mr Spellar:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the potential effects of Somali piracy on UK oil supplies. [47289]

**Mr Bellingham:** The UK imports small quantities of oil from the Persian Gulf, so physical supplies are not directly affected by the problem of piracy off the Somali coast. However, the phenomenon is a concern because the undisrupted supply of Gulf oil to global markets helps to ensure stable oil prices, including for UK consumers. The UK imports increasing volumes of liquefied natural gas from the Gulf, which uses the same maritime routes, and UK-flagged vessels and their crews are vulnerable to the threat of piracy.

#### **Swaziland: Politics and Government**

**Stephen Twigg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had on the Commonwealth's role in the promotion of democratisation in the Kingdom of Swaziland. [48088]

**Mr Bellingham:** The Government are concerned at the human rights and governance situation in Swaziland, including restrictions on political parties, trade union rights, freedom of association, independence of the judicial and penal systems, gender equality and, most recently, application of the Suppression of Terrorism Act and violence perpetrated by state actors, including harm wrought against those in detention. We discuss these issues, in robust terms, with the Government of Swaziland. Our non-resident high commissioner, with her EU colleagues, met with King Mswati III on 10 March 2011, during which human rights and governance issues were raised. We also work with a range of international partners to encourage the Government of Swaziland to address these concerns. In particular, we welcome the Commonwealth's engagement over the last few years, including its observation mission for the 2008 elections, and its current work to support the drafting of the enabling legislation for the new Human Rights Council.

### Yemen: Politics and Government

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has (a) made and (b) received representations on reports of deportations of UK journalists from Yemen on 14 March 2011. [47908]

**Alistair Burt:** Our embassy in Sana'a was informed on 14 March 2011 that two British nationals, working as journalists, had been detained in Yemen. Our embassy in Sana'a maintained contact with them and pressed the Yemeni Government for consular access. These individuals along with nationals from another country were taken into custody and subsequently deported from Yemen having contravened the conditions of their visas. In a press release on 16 March 2011 the embassy of the Republic of Yemen in London announced that several journalists had been detained and deported for working as journalists whilst on student or tourist visas.

### COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

#### Departmental Public Bodies

**Tessa Jowell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 16 March 2011, *Official Report*, columns 9-10WS, on the public bodies reform programme, what estimate he has made of the savings to his Department net of costs incurred in the assumption of additional departmental responsibilities to accrue from (a) the abolition of 16 public bodies within his Department's area of responsibility and (b) the change in function of the Homes and Communities Agency. [48137]

**Grant Shapps:** On 16 March 2011 the Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General, issued a written ministerial statement updating Parliament on progress on public bodies' reform. That statement also announced that Departments estimate cumulative administrative savings of at least £2.6 billion will flow from public bodies over the spending review period.

The Department for Communities and Local Government is not absorbing any functions from the arm's length bodies being closed or reformed. Details of the estimated savings in the administrative budgets of individual Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) arm's length bodies were published on the DCLG website at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/newsroom/1865652>

Although technically not an arm's length body, most of the functions of the Government Office Network have been discontinued: a limited number of functions have been transferred to Departments, including this Department.

#### Housing Benefit

**Ms Buck:** To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what estimate he has made of the proportion of properties in the central London broad rental market area that will be charging rents equal to or less than the relevant maximum level

of local housing allowance following introduction of the new limits on that allowance for houses with each number of bedrooms. [43836]

**Steve Webb:** I have been asked to reply.

Table 9 in our publication 'Impacts of Housing Benefit proposals: Changes to the Local Housing Allowance to be introduced in 2011-12':

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/impacts-of-hb-proposals.pdf>

sets out the proportion of private rented sector (PRS) accommodation by broad rental market area (BRMA) that is expected to fall under the new local housing allowance (LHA) limits. These limits are based on the 30th percentile rent of properties in the PRS, with absolute caps applied to control housing benefit expenditure.

#### Infrastructure: Planning

**Peter Aldous:** To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government if he will take steps to increase the efficiency of the planning process for large infrastructure projects. [48091]

**Greg Clark:** I refer my hon. Friend to the written ministerial statement on 10 March 2011, *Official Report*, columns 72-73WS.

#### Jephson Housing Association Group: Expenditure

**Andrew Selous:** To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government how much money Jephson Housing Association Group has received from the public purse in (a) 2010-11 and (b) each of the last three years. [48132]

**Grant Shapps:** The following table shows the total amount paid to Jephson Housing Association Group through the Homes and Communities Agency's National Affordable Housing Programme for each year from 2007-08. The figures for 2010-11 are up to the end of February.

	£ million
2007-08	7.8
2008-09	16.9
2009-10	17.1
2010-11 <sup>1</sup>	10.6

<sup>1</sup> Figures are to the end of February 2011.

Source:

Homes and Communities Agency

#### Social Rented Housing: Peterborough

**Mr Stewart Jackson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government how many new (a) social rented and (b) intermediate tenure properties have been completed in Peterborough constituency in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [47877]

**Andrew Stunell:** Official statistics on the number of social rent, intermediate rent and low cost home ownership completions in each local authority in England are available on the Department for Communities and Local Government website:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/affordablehousingupply/>

These figures include new build completions and acquisitions to the affordable housing tenure.

## TREASURY

### Aggregates Levy

**Mr Bain:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue accrued from the aggregates levy in each of the last four financial years. [47834]

**Justine Greening:** Revenue accrued from the aggregates levy can be found on the UK Trade Information website at:

<https://www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task=bullaggr>

### Departmental Compensation

**Richard Fuller:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much HM Revenue and Customs has spent on payments to compensate members of the public for errors made in the processing of individual cases in each of the last five years. [47381]

**Mr Gauke:** It is not possible to distinguish payments made to individual customers from those made to businesses. However, total payments made under HMRC's ex-gratia financial redress policy for 2005-06; 2006-07; 2007-08; and 2008-09 are contained in the HMRC annual reports. For 2009-10 the payments made totalled £3.74 million, including a single, exceptional payment of £1.2 million.

The information is available from the HMRC website at:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/about/reports.htm>

### Departmental Procurement

**Mr Raab:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost to the public purse was of the (a) procurement and (b) outsourcing function of (i) his Department and (ii) each (A) agency, (B) non-departmental public body and (C) non-ministerial Department for which he is responsible in the last financial year for which figures are available. [43957]

**Justine Greening:** The cost of the procurement and outsourcing functions (where there is a separate outsourcing function) for the financial year 2009-10 are:

Organisation	Type	Cost of procurement function in 2009-10	Cost of outsourcing function
HM Treasury Group	Government Department Group includes Debt Management Office, Asset Protection Agency and Office of Government Commerce	£765,468	<sup>1</sup> —
National Savings & Investment	Executive agency	£261,828	£935,072
Royal Mint Advisory Committee	NDPB	No independent procurement function	<sup>1</sup> —
HMRC	Non-ministerial Department	£13,366,777	<sup>1</sup> —
Valuation Office Agency	Executive agency of HMRC	£73,000 approximately (2010-11). Function did not exist in 2009-10.	<sup>1</sup> —
Government Actuaries Department	Non-ministerial Department	GAD does not have a designated procurement function. They have a small number of officers who are involved in various areas of purchasing at a total of £35,000 per annum.	<sup>1</sup> —

<sup>1</sup> No outsourcing function.

### Excise Duties: Beer

**Andrew Rosindell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect of recent trends in the level of beer duty on the consumption of beer (a) in public houses and (b) in general in the UK. [48057]

**Justine Greening:** HMRC has conducted some research into the impact of price changes on alcohol consumption. From changes in duty rates the effect on prices can be estimated and, from this, the change in consumption. HMRC estimate that a 1% increase in prices results in a 0.77% decrease in the consumption of beer in on-licensed premises such as public houses and restaurants.

HMRC also estimates that a 1% increase in prices results in a 1.11% reduction in sales in the off-licensed trade.

These results are published in the technical paper:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/research/alcohol-consumption-uk.pdf>

### Fuels: Prices

**Andrew George:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will extend to liquid petroleum gas his proposal for a pilot discount on petrol and diesel in the Inner and Outer Hebrides, the Northern Isles and the Isles of Scilly. [47297]

**Justine Greening:** Liquefied petroleum gas for road use is a fuel type with an existing UK-wide duty discount. The Government intend to submit a formal proposal to the European Commission for a pilot scheme that will deliver a maximum of 5p per litre duty discount on petrol and diesel in remote rural areas.

**Charlie Elphicke:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what discussions (a) he and (b) his officials have had with the downstream oil industry since January 2011 on proposals to introduce a fuel price stabiliser mechanism; and if he will make a statement; [47319]

(2) if he will assess for benchmarking purposes the effects of the introduction of the French fuel stabilising price mechanism introduced in 2000. [47518]

**Justine Greening:** The Government routinely discuss tax matters with industry stakeholders and assesses a range of factors. The Chancellor keeps all taxes under review along Budget timelines.

#### Public Sector: Pay

**Christopher Pincher:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer from what date the flat pay rise of £250 for public sector workers earning less than £21,000 per year (a) was paid in 2010-11 and (b) will be paid in 2011-12. [45585]

**Danny Alexander:** The June Budget announced a two-year pay freeze from 2011-12 for public sector workforces, except those earning £21,000 or less, who will receive an increase of at least £250.

The month at which this takes effect will vary according to the existing pay arrangements in each workforce. The pay year currently begins in April for the armed forces, NHS, and Prison Service, and September 2011 for teachers.

Civil service pay, below senior civil service, is delegated to Departments, and they will apply the policy according to their own pay year, which varies among Departments. Pay was frozen in 2010-11 for civil servants in Departments who had not yet agreed a legally binding pay deal, except for those earning £21,000 or less, who will receive at least £250 a year. Those civil servants will then exit the freeze ahead of other groups.

#### Rent a Room Scheme

**Mr Brine:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has considered the merits of raising the tax-free gross income threshold for the Rent a Room scheme. [47569]

**Justine Greening:** I refer the hon. Member to the Government's response to the consultation on investment in the private rented sector, available at:

[http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/investment\\_in\\_the\\_uk\\_private\\_rented\\_sector\\_response\\_summary.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/investment_in_the_uk_private_rented_sector_response_summary.pdf)

#### Taxation: Compost

**Mr Brine:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will bring forward proposals to introduce a levy on retail peat-based composts. [47769]

**Justine Greening:** The Government recognise the environmental benefits of the use of peat-free composting material. We are therefore committed to achieving a full transition to sustainable alternatives to peat as soon as possible, and DEFRA are currently consulting on a range of proposals to achieve this goal.

#### VAT: Construction

**Mrs Ellman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his policy is on the application of value added tax to works connected with the retrofitting of derelict domestic properties. [48126]

**Mr Gauke:** The renovation and alteration of derelict domestic properties is liable to VAT at 5%, so long as the buildings have not been lived in during the two years immediately preceding commencement of the works.

#### DEFENCE

##### Air Force: Military Bases

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many flying days were lost as a result of (a) adverse weather conditions and (b) other factors at each RAF station in each of the last five years. [45847]

**Nick Harvey:** The information requested is not held centrally, nor is it held uniformly by all RAF stations. A comprehensive answer could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Available information for entire days of flying lost in the last three years is included in the following table:

*Flying days lost by each RAF station*

	2008		2009		2010		2011 <sup>1</sup>	
	Weather	Other	Weather	Other	Weather	Other	Weather	Other
RAF Benson	2	2	2	2	3	0	0	0
RAF Brize Norton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RAF Cranwell	2	2	2	2	10	3	0	0
RAF Leeming	2	0	1	0	33	12	1	0
RAF Leuchars	0	0	1	0	6	0	0	0
RAF Linton-on-Ouse	7	0	5	0	17	9	0	0
RAF Lossiemouth	8	0	0	0	13	7	0	0
RAF Lyneham	2	2	2	2	1	0	0	0
RAF Marham	4	1	10	1	15	3	1	0
RAF Northolt	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
RAF Odiham	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0
RAF Shawbury	2	2	2	2	0	13	0	0
RAF Valley	13	0	15	0	19	11	4	0
RAF Waddington	1	0	1	0	5	0	0	0

<sup>1</sup> To 28 February.

<sup>2</sup> Not available.

The figure for RAF Lyneham relates to flying days lost as a result of snow only.

Weather-related reasons which can preclude non-operational flying, include low cloud base and high wind, snow and ice. Certain stations with a key operational role have an enhanced level of snow and ice clearing equipment enabling them to return to flying operations more quickly. Other reasons for lost flying days can include spilt fuel or debris on runways, bird activity, designated flight safety days, air traffic control maintenance and, last year, volcanic activity in Iceland.

### Nuclear Weapons

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the (a) reason for and (b) scope is of his Department's collaboration in studies for the development of the US Administration's W88 nuclear warhead. [47136]

**Peter Luff:** Co-operation on a broad range of nuclear issues of mutual interest to the United Kingdom and the United States take place routinely under the auspices of the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement. This includes collaboration with the US on its plans for the refurbishment or replacement of non-nuclear components within their W88 nuclear warhead which could have implications for the UK's consideration of its future warhead options.

As confirmed in the recent Trident Value for Money review, surveys have shown that our current warheads can be supported until the late 2030s and no decision will be required on its potential replacement until the next Parliament.

### Somalia: Piracy

**Mr Jim Murphy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what estimate he has made of the average number of Royal Navy ships transiting the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian sea and the Somali Basin in the latest period for which figures are available; [47605]

(2) what estimate he has made of the average number of UK nationals on Royal Navy ships transiting the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian sea and the Somali Basin in the latest period for which figures are available. [47608]

**Nick Harvey:** Between March 2010 and February 2011 there were 11 Royal Navy (RN) (including Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA)) ships that transited the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian sea and the Somali Basin.

Between March 2010 and February 2011 there were approximately 2,000 UK nationals, based on the seagoing complement, on RN ships (including RFA) that transited the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian sea and the Somali Basin.

## CABINET OFFICE

### Census

**Tessa Munt:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) if he will estimate the cost to the public purse of the UK Census held in (a) 1981, (b) 1991 and (c) 2001 at 2011 prices; [46825]

(2) for what reasons other than population growth there has been an increase in the cost to the public purse of administration of the UK Census. [47078]

**Mr Hurd:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the authority to reply.

*Letter from Stephen Penneck, dated March 2011:*

As Director General for the Office for National Statistics (ONS) I have been asked to reply to your recent questions asking: (i) for an estimate of the cost to the public purse of the UK Census held in (a) 1981, (b) 1991 and (c) at 2011-adjusted prices (46825); and (ii) for what reasons other than population growth there has been an increase in the cost to the public purse of administration of the UK Census. (47078)

(i) With respect to the censuses in England and Wales the most recent estimate of costs are:

Census	Cost (£ million)	Cost at 2011 prices (£ million)	Population (million)	Cost per person per year at 2011 prices (£)
1981	45	185	48.5	0.38
1991	117	219	49.9	0.44
2001	214	308	52.0	0.59

(ii) With respect to the 2011 Census in England and Wales, the cost increase compared with 2001 is predominantly due to: the need for developing, evaluating and operating an address register, a questionnaire tracking system, and a secure online questionnaire completion system; the development, testing and processing of a fourth page of questions per person; the additional resources to conduct the follow-up operation in the areas which are hardest to enumerate; and increased contact centre capacity and improved communications. These developments followed the several recommendations of the Treasury Select Committee, the Public Accounts Committee and other bodies following the 2001 Census.

The cost of the census in Scotland and Northern Ireland is the responsibility of the General Register Office for Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, and is a matter that is devolved to the Scottish Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly respectively.

**Mike Weatherley:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many people (a) in England and Wales and (b) in Brighton and Hove gave their religion as Jedi in their response to the 2001 Census. [47259]

**Mr Hurd:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the authority to reply.

*Letter from Stephen Penneck, dated March 2011:*

As Director General for the Office for National Statistics, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question asking how many people (a) in England and Wales and (b) in Brighton and Hove gave their religion as Jedi in their response to the 2001 Census (47259).

The web link provided shows the information requested:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/rank/jedi.asp>

## Departmental Procurement

**Stephen Barclay:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) how many procurement projects with a monetary value greater than (a) £10 million, (b) £50 million and (c) £100 million (i) his Department and (ii) each non-departmental public body and agency for which he is responsible was engaged upon in the latest period for which figures are available; [45547]

(2) which procurement projects engaged upon by (a) his Department and (b) each non-departmental public body and agency for which he is responsible had a designated senior responsible owner in the latest period for which figures are available; and on what date each such officer was appointed in each such case. [45548]

**Mr Maude:** The Cabinet Office and its non-departmental public bodies are not engaged upon any current procurement projects above the value of £10 million.

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will publish the memorandum of understanding between his Department and (a) Serco and (b) Capita. [47396]

**Mr Maude:** The requested MOUs contain information which is currently commercially sensitive for both Government and the suppliers in question, and I therefore will not publish them at this time.

### Departmental Regulation

**Gordon Banks:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what regulations his Department introduced between 9 February 2011 and 28 February 2011. [46952]

**Mr Maude:** No regulations have been introduced by my Department between 9 February 2011 and 28 February 2011.

### East Grinstead

**Nicholas Soames:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will bring forward proposals to relocate (a) staff and (b) offices of Government Departments to East Grinstead; and if he will make a statement. [46131]

**Mr Maude [holding answer 14 March 2011]:** The relocation of Government staff outside of London continues to be considered among other options to deliver the savings set out at the spending review and increase the efficiency of the Government's estate.

It is the Government's property strategy to implement and manage a system of national property controls across the central civil and operational estate as well as setting up property vehicles (PVs) that will make savings through a more co-ordinated approach to property asset management of the central civil office estate. As a first step, the Government Property Unit will set up pilot PVs for the central London and Bristol office estate from 2011-12.

The current spending controls on Government property will result in a reduction in both the cost and size of the estate. To date, the national property controls have produced estate cost reductions of around £50 million. As the estate reduces in size, retained buildings will be utilised more intensively wherever possible. This reduction of property in London and elsewhere could see posts being relocated to areas close to London, and where there is a strong business case, to other parts of the country.

### Government Departments: Manpower

**Tessa Jowell:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many staff are employed on two year fixed-term contracts in (a) his Department and (b) the Civil Service. [46428]

**Mr Maude:** The Cabinet Office uses fixed-term appointments in accordance with the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Principles as part of its resourcing model to fill posts expected to last for a specified period of time. The length of the fixed-term appointment varies depending on the expected length of the role being filled.

The number of staff employed on fixed-term contracts at 28 February 2011 (the latest date available) was 47.

The Cabinet Office does not hold information on the number of staff employed on fixed-term contracts in the civil service and this could be collected only at disproportionate cost.

### Government Departments: Personnel

**Graham Evans:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will assess the merits of sharing human resources personnel between departments for the purpose of making savings to the public purse. [47229]

**Mr Maude:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 27 October 2010, *Official Report*, column 327W.

### Government Departments: Procurement

**Alun Cairns:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether he has set any targets for the (a) number and (b) monetary value of Crown contracts as a proportion of Government contracts. [46091]

**Mr Maude [holding answer 14 March 2011]:** The Efficiency and Reform Group began a programme of renegotiation with Government's top suppliers in July last year.

The aim of this process was to agree Memoranda of Understanding between the Crown and each supplier, setting out ways in which Departments could realise a range of savings opportunities.

Crown contracts have not been agreed as part of this process.

**Alun Cairns:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what steps he is taking to ensure that all Government departments at all levels benefit from the use of Crown contracts. [46092]

**Mr Maude [holding answer 14 March 2011]:** The Cabinet Office is overseeing the implementation of the Memoranda of Understanding agreed between the Crown and Government's top suppliers as part of its centrally-led programme of renegotiation.

Officials have been working closely with central Government Departments to ensure they are able to benefit from the savings opportunities contained within the MoUs.

### Obesity and Anorexia: Death

**Mr Amess:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many deaths (a) in Southend, (b) in Essex and (c) nationally were attributed to an individual being (i) overweight and (ii) underweight in each year since 2009. [45595]

**Mr Hurd:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the authority to reply.

*Letter from Stephen Penneck, dated March 2001:*

As Director General for the Office for National Statistics, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many deaths (a) in Southend, (b) in Essex and (c) nationally were attributed to an individual being (i) overweight and (ii) underweight in each year since 2009. (45595)

The terms 'overweight' and 'underweight' are not normally used in the registration of deaths. Consequently, figures can only be provided for deaths recorded using the medically recognised terms 'obesity' and 'malnutrition' or 'effects of hunger'. The number of deaths so recorded is unlikely to be a complete or accurate reflection of the actual numbers of deaths which result, directly or indirectly, from being overweight or underweight.

The tables attached provide the number of deaths where (i) obesity was the underlying cause of death (Table 1) or was mentioned on the death certificate, either as the underlying cause or as a contributory factor (Table 2), and where (ii) malnutrition was the underlying cause of death (Table 1) or malnutrition or effects of hunger were mentioned on the death certificate, either as the underlying cause or as a contributory factor (Table 2), for (a) Southend-on-Sea unitary authority, (b) Essex county and (c) England and Wales, for 2009 (the latest year available). Data for deaths registered in 2010 will be available in July 2011.

Malnutrition is rarely the underlying cause of death, as people with malnutrition or effects of hunger mentioned on their death certificate often have another serious illness, and it is this illness that is the underlying cause of death. For example they may have cancer of the digestive tract, which means they can't eat properly or can't absorb nutrients; they may have suffered from a stroke or have advanced dementia which can cause difficulties chewing and swallowing; or they may abuse alcohol and so not eat properly.

The number of deaths registered in England and Wales each year by sex, age and cause are published annually on the National Statistics website at:

[www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=15096](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=15096)

*Table 1. Number of deaths where obesity or malnutrition was the underlying cause of death, Southend-on-Sea unitary authority, Essex county, and England and Wales, 2009<sup>1, 2, 3, 4</sup>*

Cause	Deaths (persons)		
	Southend-on-Sea	Essex	England and Wales
Obesity	0	10	324
Malnutrition	0	1	82

<sup>1</sup> Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes E66 (obesity) and E40-E46 (malnutrition).

<sup>2</sup> Based on boundaries as of 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Figures for England and Wales include deaths of non-residents.

<sup>4</sup> Figures are for deaths registered 2009.

*Table 2. Number of deaths where obesity, malnutrition or effects of hunger were mentioned on the death certificate, Southend-on-Sea unitary authority, Essex county, and England and Wales, 2009<sup>1, 2, 3, 4</sup>*

Cause	Deaths (persons)		
	Southend-on-Sea	Essex	England and Wales
Obesity	2	38	1,672

*Table 2. Number of deaths where obesity, malnutrition or effects of hunger were mentioned on the death certificate, Southend-on-Sea unitary authority, Essex county, and England and Wales, 2009<sup>1, 2, 3, 4</sup>*

Cause	Deaths (persons)		
	Southend-on-Sea	Essex	England and Wales
Malnutrition or effects of hunger	2	6	375

<sup>1</sup> Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes E66 (obesity), E40-E46 (malnutrition) and T73.0 (effects of hunger). Deaths were included where these causes was mentioned anywhere on the death certificate, either as the underlying cause or as a contributory factor. Effects of hunger can only ever be recorded as a contributory factor. Figures in Table 1 are therefore included in the figures in Table 2.

<sup>2</sup> Based on boundaries as of 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Figures for England and Wales include deaths of non-residents.

<sup>4</sup> Figures are for deaths registered in 2009.

### Public Bodies

**Jon Trickett:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what estimate he has made of the potential savings to accrue from abolition of the public bodies scheduled for abolition in the Public Bodies Bill; and what method he has used to make this estimate. [47745]

**Mr Maude:** Departments are anticipating that cumulative administrative savings of at least £2.6 billion will flow from public bodies over the spending review period.

When reductions in programme and capital spend are taken into account, we estimate that total spending through public bodies will be reduced by at least £11 billion per year by 2014-15. If the savings for each year of the spending review are taken into account then a cumulative amount of £30 billion will no longer be spent through public bodies.

These figures are for all public bodies covered in the updated list of reforms published on 16 March 2011, including those in the Public Bodies Bill.

The methodology used was to compare projected spending in 2014-15 against a baseline of 2010-11 spend rolled forward with inflation based on the GDP deflators provided in the Office for Budget Responsibilities' autumn forecast. The methodology is consistent with the spending review.

These figures are a collation of departmental estimates.

## ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

### Alcoholic Drinks

**Luciana Berger:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change how much his Department has spent on the contents of ministerial drinks cabinets since 12 May 2010. [48354]

**Gregory Barker:** Nothing.

### Carbon Emissions

**Gordon Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change when he plans to respond to the recommendations of the report by the Committee on Climate Change on the fourth carbon budget. [48125]

**Gregory Barker:** The Climate Change Act 2008 requires Government to set the level of the fourth carbon budget in law not later than 30 June 2011. It also requires Government to lay before Parliament a report setting out proposals and policies for meeting the carbon budget as soon as is reasonably practicable after setting it in law. DECC's Business Plan stipulates this will be in October 2011.

### Cold Weather Payments: Bexley

**Mr Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change how many people in the weather station area covering the London borough of Bexley received a cold weather payment in (a) 2009 and (b) 2010. [45449]

**Steve Webb:** I have been asked to reply.

The available information is given in the table.

*Estimated number of benefit units that received at least one cold weather payment for weather stations linked to postcode districts in the London borough of Bexley*

Weather station	2009-10	2010-11
Gravesend	118,700	119,400
Heathrow	548,600	534,500

#### Notes:

1. The information provided is management information. Our preference is to answer all parliamentary questions using Official/National Statistics but in this case, we only have management information available. It is not quality assured to the same extent as Official/National Statistics and there are some issues with the data, for example, figures given are estimates. Actuals are not available. Estimates for 2010-11 may be revised after the end of the cold weather payment season, but will still be estimates not actuals.

2. A cold weather payment is made to an eligible customer when the average temperature has been recorded as, or is forecast to be, 0° C or below over seven consecutive days at the weather station linked to the customer's postcode. (When the temperature criterion is met, the weather station is said to trigger.)

3. Each of Gravesend and Heathrow weather stations is linked both to an area within the London borough of Bexley and also to an area outside the London borough of Bexley. Estimated numbers given are for the weather station as a whole, not for the part of the London borough of Bexley linked to the weather station.

4. Estimates of potential qualifiers for each weather station for 2010-11 were made at the beginning of the winter. Both Gravesend and Heathrow weather stations have already triggered this winter, so the estimated number of benefit units that received at least one cold weather payment in 2010-11 will not change during the rest of the winter. The estimates for 2010-11 may be revised once the national out-turn for the winter is known.

5. Cold weather payments are made to benefit units. A benefit unit can be a single person or a couple and can include children.

6. Some benefit units received more than one payment in a year.

7. Estimated numbers have been rounded to the nearest 100.

#### Sources:

Postcode districts in the London borough of Bexley: analysis of National Statistics Postcode Directory.

Postcode district to weather station links: Department for Work and Pensions records.

Records of triggers and estimates of potential qualifiers by weather station: Department for Work and Pensions records.

### Departmental Regulation

**Gordon Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change what regulations his Department introduced between 9 and 28 February 2011. [47041]

**Gregory Barker:** No statutory instruments made by the Department came into force between 9 and 28 February 2011.

**Gordon Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change what regulations his Department revoked between 9 to 28 February 2011. [47056]

**Gregory Barker:** From 9 to 28 February 2011, the Department has not revoked any statutory instruments in full.

However, the Energy Bill, introduced into the House of Lords on 8 December 2010, sets out proposals to repeal the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) in England, Scotland and Wales. This will reduce regulatory burdens, support the Government's localism agenda and remove redundant legislation from the statute book.

DECC is committed to reducing the burden of regulation on UK business, and a series of internal and external exercises have been or are being conducted towards this aim. For example, in June 2010 my noble Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, responsible for the Department's regulatory agenda, wrote to 250 of the Department's key stakeholders asking for their views on ways to reduce DECC's regulatory burden. The response letter from Lord Marland and a summary of responses to this exercise was published in November 2010 on the DECC internet site:

[http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/about/better\\_reg/better\\_reg.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/about/better_reg/better_reg.aspx)

Following on from this exercise, DECC plans to repeal a number of statutory instruments as well as powers under primary legislation (in total, 28 repeals). The exact processes for making the repeals are still being explored (suitable vehicles for the repeals are being considered, and consultation with relevant parties such as the devolved Administrations needs to take place for certain policies).

### Electricity: Meters

**Kate Green:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change what discussions he has had with (a) the European Commission and (b) his EU counterparts on progress on the cost-benefit analysis on the implementation of smart metering. [47636]

**Charles Hendry:** The Department has published detailed impact assessments of smart metering, most recently in July 2010. These assessments are readily available to the European Commission and other member states, although I have not had discussions with the European Commission or my EU counterparts about them. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Package electricity and gas directives require member states to ensure the implementation of intelligent metering systems. This implementation may be subject to economic assessment, which, if undertaken, should take place by 3 September 2012.

### Feed-in Tariffs

**Sheryll Murray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change if he will ensure that projects in receipt of funding or in development under the feed-in tariff are not subject to any changes in the level of support they receive arising from the outcome of the feed-in tariff review. [47907]

**Gregory Barker:** We have always said there is no intentions to act retrospectively. The proposed changes to the scheme recently announced in the consultation on the fast-track review of the FITs scheme, and any changes that arise from the comprehensive review will only apply to new entrants into the scheme.

The consultation on the fast track review proposals seeks views on timing and implementation.

#### Fuel Oil: Prices

**Dr Wollaston:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (1) if he will bring forward proposals to regulate the price of heating oil (*a*) for rural communities and (*b*) in general; [47802]

(2) if he will consider the merits of introducing a domestic heating oil price stabiliser for rural communities. [47803]

**Charles Hendry:** The OFT has launched its market study into the off-grid energy market, particularly with regards to heating oil and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). The study will cover both consumer and competition issues. It will look at the market's structure and the choice of suppliers, whether competition is working well for consumers, and contractual terms and fairness in supply agreements. The OFT expects to publish the study in October 2011; its findings and conclusions will help to determine whether any changes are needed to the off-grid energy market.

### INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### Democratic Republic of Congo: Overseas Aid

**Mark Pritchard:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans he has to assist with (*a*) capacity-building, (*b*) governance, (*c*) civil society and (*d*) conflict resolution in the Democratic Republic of Congo in advance of the parliamentary and presidential elections scheduled for later in 2011. [47344]

**Mr O'Brien:** Our support to the Democratic Republic of Congo elections is focused on the following areas: building the capacity of the new electoral commission; improving public understanding of the electoral process, particularly among women and first-time voters; helping the Congolese police to keep the peace before, during and after elections; promoting open debate in advance of elections through support for independent Congolese media; and funding Congolese civil society organisations working on elections-related issues through our civic education and civil society support programmes.

#### Departmental Drinks

**Luciana Berger:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much his Department has spent on the contents of Ministerial drinks cabinets since 12 May 2010. [48396]

**Mr Duncan:** None.

#### Departmental Plants

**Luciana Berger:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much his Department has spent on indoor and outdoor plants and trees since his appointment. [48419]

**Mr Duncan:** The Department for International Development (DFID) has not purchased any indoor or outdoor plants or trees since May 2010. A contract for the maintenance of internal plants, at a cost of £586 per month, was terminated at the end of June 2010 and has not been replaced.

#### Developing Countries: Natural Disasters

**Richard Fuller:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department takes to (*a*) retain and (*b*) disseminate more widely the information it holds on natural resources in developing countries. [47384]

**Mr O'Brien:** The Department for International Development (DFID) sometimes gathers and retains information on natural resources as part of the design and support of programmes for management of natural resources in developing countries. Data on DFID programmes is placed on the DFID website.

DFID supports developing countries to evaluate their own natural resources and make this information publicly available. For example in Sierra Leone DFID is supporting establishment of an independent National Minerals Agency. As part of the EU Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan we help developing countries shed light on the problem of illegal logging and support them to publicly disclose information on related forest trade, policies and revenues. Last year we transferred to digital format the complete inventory of the Bangladesh Sunderban mangrove forest and disseminated this to a wide range of bodies in Bangladesh, including the Government. We also lodged copies of the information with selected UK universities.

#### Developing Countries: Remittances

**Ms Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what information his Department holds on (*a*) the countries that are recipients of remittances from people in the UK, (*b*) the monetary value of remittances from the UK to each country and (*c*) the number of people who send remittances abroad; [48047]

(2) what research his Department has (*a*) commissioned and (*b*) evaluated on the (i) income levels of people who send remittances from the UK and (ii) proportion of individuals' incomes that comprise remittances. [48048]

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:** The Department for International Development (DFID) relies on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for data on UK transfers. The ONS does not publish separate estimates for remittances as they are not considered to be of sufficient quality. Instead, estimates for remittances are combined with estimates for net transfers from UK charities, defined in the UK Balance of Payments (the Pink Book) as 'other

payments by households'. In 2009, 'other payments by households' totalled £5.3 billion, the majority of which were remittances.

This figure covers all remittances sent from the UK and is not disaggregated by country. Transfer payments by individuals are also not recorded systematically. It is therefore not possible to identify each country that receives remittances from the UK; the value of remittances to individual countries; the number of people who send remittances abroad; or the value of their transfers or their income levels.

DFID's 2006 Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Remittance Survey:

[www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/ukremittancecessurvey.pdf](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/ukremittancecessurvey.pdf)

polled 1,800 households, which had transferred money from the UK in the past 12 months. It found that the median monthly income of remitting households was £1,324. The average annual value of remittances per household was £874; equivalent to 5.5% of monthly income.

#### International Labour Organisation: Finance

**Ms Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which International Labour Organisation projects on (a) anti-trafficking, (b) forced labour and (c) child labour his Department funded in the last four years. [47639]

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:** The Department for International Development (DFID) has provided a total of £17.05 million in un-earmarked funding to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) over the past four years under a central partnership agreement. That agreement lapsed in March 2010 and has not been renewed. Based on ILO reporting, around £3.5 million of this funding was directed towards "building global alliances against forced labour and human trafficking". The central partnership agreement did not specifically target child labour issues.

In addition, DFID has funded some ILO projects and programmes at a country level and will continue to do so while I am confident that they provide value for money and effective delivery. Complete financial information on these country level programmes cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

#### International Planned Parenthood Federation: Finance

**Mr Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what payments his Department plans to make to the International Planned Parenthood Federation for (a) abortion, (b) family planning and (c) other reproductive health services in the next 12 months; what assessment he has made since June 2010 of the value for money of such expenditure; and if he will make a statement. [47708]

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:** The Department of International Development (DFID) will provide £8.6 million to the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) in 2011-12 through a Programme Partnership Arrangement (PPA). DFID does not classify spending under the categories requested and this information cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

It is a major priority for the UK Government to improve sexual and reproductive health and rights, including access to modern family planning methods and promoting choice for women in the developing world. The UK Government doesn't enter the ring on the rights and wrongs of abortion. But the fact is that nearly 70,000 women in the developing world die every year as a result of unsafe abortions—and millions more risk their lives. Giving women the power over whether and when they have children is one of my top priorities. The UK Government will not stand by and let women die needlessly in pregnancy and childbirth.

On value for money, the Government take the view that investing in reproductive health is highly cost-effective and has far reaching returns for women and girls. A copy of IPPF's PPA Evaluation, 2008-10 will be placed in the Library of the House, of which Chapter 4 covers value for money.

#### Marie Stopes International: Finance

**Mr Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what payments his Department plans to make to Marie Stopes International for (a) abortion, (b) family planning and (c) other reproductive health services in the next 12 months; what assessment he has made since June 2010 of the value for money of such expenditure; and if he will make a statement. [47707]

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:** The Department of International Development (DFID) will provide £79,296 to Marie Stopes International (MSI) in 2011-12. This is the last year of the five-year Civil Society Challenge Fund grant totalling £127,430.00 that MSI is receiving for a project to empower communities to protect and advance sexual and reproductive health for poor people in Ethiopia. In addition DFID is in discussion with MSI about a longer term partnership.

DFID does not classify spending under the categories requested and this information cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

It is a major priority for the UK Government to improve sexual and reproductive health rights, including access to modern family planning methods and promoting women's choice, in the developing world. The UK Government do not enter the ring on the rights and wrongs of abortion. But the fact is that nearly 70,000 women in the developing world die every year as a result of unsafe abortions—and millions more risk their lives. Giving women the power over whether and when they have children is one my top priorities. The UK Government will not stand by and let women die needlessly in pregnancy and childbirth.

#### Overseas Aid

**Ms Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will publish the operational plans for each country receiving bilateral aid from his Department. [47564]

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:** Yes.

### World Bank: Energy

**Mark Lazarowicz:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when he next plans to discuss the World Bank energy strategy review with the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change. [47888]

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:** We received a copy of the World Bank's Energy Sector Strategy on 16 March. Department for International Development (DFID) officials will be consulting across Whitehall to formulate a UK Government response. I meet the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change on a regular basis and both of us are in close touch with officials on the strategy. Should we need to meet specifically on the strategy we will do so prior to its discussion by the World Bank's Committee on Development and Effectiveness on 11 April.

### LEADER OF THE HOUSE

#### E-petitions

**Richard Fuller:** To ask the Leader of the House what progress has been made in the transfer of e-petitions to the Direct.gov portal. [47382]

**Sir George Young:** The Government have announced their intention to transfer the online petition system to the Direct.gov portal by the summer. Officials within the Cabinet Office are working on an effective verification system to ensure that petitions become a useful and mature tool for engaging with politics.

### EDUCATION

#### Baccalaureate

20. **Laura Sandys:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education if he will take steps to ensure that the Government's post-16 funding allocation allows secondary schools to teach the International Baccalaureate. [47478]

**Mr Hayes:** We want schools and colleges to have the freedom and flexibility to choose from the best qualifications, including those such as the International Baccalaureate which offers real breadth and rigour to support the development of rounded individuals. That is why our priority for 16-19 funding has been to protect the core education programmes that equip young people with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed and to progress into higher education and employment.

#### Sex Education

21. **Andrea Leadsom:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education what steps he is taking to ensure that only age-appropriate sex education material is used in primary schools. [47479]

**Mr Gibb:** It is important that pupils are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate to their age and religious and cultural background. That is why, when providing sex education, all schools must have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State and published in 2000.

The guidance provides information about how schools can set in place arrangements to protect pupils from inappropriate teaching and materials.

#### Teach First

22. **Elizabeth Truss:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education whether he plans to expand the Teach First scheme to Norfolk. [47480]

**Mr Gibb:** The recent Schools White Paper committed us to provide funding to more than double the size of the Teach First programme. Teach First is an independent charity and it decides, in consultation with the Department, where it can best deliver its mission of reducing educational disadvantage. Teach First is currently conducting a feasibility study for its expansion, including how it might expand from its current urban-based model, to one that could include dispersed rural schools.

#### Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

23. **Nicola Blackwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education what plans he has for single assessments and education, health and care plans for children with special educational needs and disabilities. [47481]

**Sarah Teather:** The special educational needs and disability Green Paper announced that by 2014 we will replace SEN assessments and statements with a single assessment process and Education, Health and Care Plans which will provide stronger support for children and families. We will be running pathfinders testing out the single assessment and plans from September and working with the voluntary and community sector and local authorities on this and tendering for the pathfinders in June.

#### Apprentices: Finance

**Rosie Cooper:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education what funding he has allocated to young apprenticeships in each of the next four years. [37440]

**Mr Gibb:** The outcomes of Professor Alison Wolf's Review of Vocational Education, published on 3 March 2011, and the spending review settlement, will inform our decision about the future of the Young Apprenticeship programme and associated funding: an announcement will be made shortly.

We have confirmed funding for existing young apprentices in the next two financial years of £15.3 million in 2011-12 and £4 million in 2012-13: this will ensure that pupils who started a Young Apprenticeship in 2009 and 2010 are able to complete the programme.

#### Departmental Procurement

**Stephen Barclay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education how many procurement projects with a monetary value greater than (a) £10 million, (b) £50 million and (c) £100 million (i) his Department and (ii) the non-departmental public body and executive agency for which he is responsible was engaged upon in the latest period for which figures are available. [45549]

**Tim Loughton:** Based on information held centrally on procurement projects during the financial years 2009-10 and 2010-11 the Department was engaged on (a) seven procurement projects with a monetary value greater than £10 million; (b) five procurement projects with a monetary value greater than £50 million; and (c) five procurement projects with a monetary value greater than £100 million. Non-departmental public bodies and executive agencies were involved with two procurement projects with a monetary value greater than £10 million.

#### Departmental Public Consultation

**Alok Sharma:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education how many public consultations his Department and its predecessors have conducted in each of the last 10 years; for how long each consultation was open; how many responses were received to each consultation; and what the cost to the public purse of conducting each consultation was. [46589]

**Tim Loughton:** A copy of the document giving details of consultations conducted by the Department for Education and its predecessors in each of the past 10 years has been placed in the Libraries. A full summary of the cost for each consultation would be possible only at disproportionate cost.

#### Departmental Regulation

**Nicholas Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education on how many occasions his Department has

consulted representatives of small businesses on the effects of proposed new regulations since 6 May 2010. [46148]

**Tim Loughton:** Nearly all public consultations are put on the departmental website and anyone can respond to them. There have been 30 consultations on new regulations since 6 May 2010.

The Department does not hold centrally aggregated records of responses to consultations. However, when the results of consultation are published, they generally contain a summary of organisational responders, except where they have requested to remain confidential.

#### Free School Meals: Education Maintenance Allowance

**Mr Stewart Jackson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education how many children receive (a) free school meals and (b) education maintenance allowance in each local authority ward in (i) Peterborough constituency and (ii) North West Cambridgeshire constituency. [46957]

**Mr Gibb [holding answer 17 March 2011]:** Information on free school meal eligibility is shown in the tables.

The answer includes full-time pupils aged 0 to 15 and part-time pupils aged five to 15 known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals.

*Maintained nursery, maintained primary<sup>1</sup>, state-funded secondary<sup>1, 2</sup> and special<sup>3</sup> schools: school meal arrangements<sup>4, 5</sup>. As at January 2010. Pupils attending schools located in each ward within Peterborough parliamentary constituency*

	Maintained nursery and primary <sup>1</sup>			State-funded secondary <sup>1, 2</sup>			Special <sup>3</sup>		
	Number on roll <sup>4, 5</sup>	Number of pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals <sup>4, 5</sup>	Percentage known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals	Number on roll <sup>4, 5</sup>	Number of pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals <sup>4, 5</sup>	Percentage known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals	Number on roll <sup>4, 5</sup>	Number of pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals <sup>4, 5</sup>	Percentage known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals
Bretton North	1,082	312	28.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	114	49	43.0
Central	921	167	18.1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Dogsthorpe	1,199	304	25.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	119	47	39.5
East	1,041	265	25.5	637	233	36.6	35	18	51.4
Eye and Thorney	485	40	8.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Newborough	189	8	4.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
North	624	122	19.6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Park	452	59	13.1	2,348	379	16.1	n/a	n/a	n/a
Paston	641	212	33.1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ravensthorpe	459	151	32.9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Walton	398	78	19.6	1,329	305	22.9	n/a	n/a	n/a
Werrington North	701	76	10.8	859	106	12.3	n/a	n/a	n/a
Werrington South	616	43	7.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
West	1,121	145	12.9	1,378	231	16.8	n/a	n/a	n/a
Peterborough (all wards)	9,929	1,982	20.0	6,551	1,254	19.1	268	114	42.5

n/a = Not applicable. No schools of this type.

<sup>1</sup> Includes middle schools as deemed.

<sup>2</sup> Includes city technology colleges and academies.

<sup>3</sup> Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools, excludes general hospital schools.

<sup>4</sup> Includes sole and dual (main) registrations.

<sup>5</sup> Pupils who have full time attendance and are aged 0 to 15, or pupils who have part time attendance and are aged 5 to 15. Age as at 31 August 2009

Source:

School Census

Maintained nursery<sup>1</sup>, maintained primary<sup>2</sup>, state-funded secondary<sup>2, 3</sup> and special<sup>4</sup> schools: school meal arrangements<sup>5, 6</sup>. As at January 2010. Pupils attending schools located in each ward within North West Cambridgeshire constituency

	Maintained nursery <sup>1</sup> and primary <sup>2</sup>			State-funded secondary <sup>2, 3</sup>			Special <sup>4</sup>		
	Number on roll <sup>5, 6</sup>	Number of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals <sup>5, 6</sup>	Percentage known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals	Number on roll <sup>5, 6</sup>	Number of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals <sup>5, 6</sup>	Percentage known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals	Number on roll <sup>5, 6</sup>	Number of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals <sup>5, 6</sup>	Percentage known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals
Barnack	207	11	5.3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Earlth	568	23	4.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ellington	263	8	3.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Elton and Folksworth	200	13	6.5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Fletton	948	172	18.1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Glington and Wittering	626	25	4.0	1,219	40	3.3	n/a	n/a	n/a
Northborough	190	9	4.7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Orton	1,079	300	27.8	812	108	13.3	72	23	31.9
Longueville									
Orton Waterville	795	203	25.5	627	164	26.2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Orton with Hampton	907	116	12.8	618	64	10.4	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ramsey	540	72	13.3	1,232	109	8.8	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sawtry	491	38	7.7	1,177	104	8.8	n/a	n/a	n/a
Somersham	326	15	4.6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Stanground Central	712	143	20.1	1,246	177	14.2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Stanground East	196	15	7.7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Stilton	265	23	8.7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Upwood and The Raveleys	427	52	12.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Warboys and Bury	505	33	6.5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Yaxley and Farcet	914	106	11.6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
North West Cambridgeshire (all wards)	10,159	1,377	13.6	6,931	766	11.1	72	23	31.9

n/a = Not applicable. No schools of this type.

1. There are no maintained nursery schools in North West Cambridgeshire parliamentary constituency.

2. Includes middle schools as deemed.

3. Includes city technology colleges and academies.

4. Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools, excludes general hospital schools.

5. Includes sole and dual (main) registrations.

6. Pupils who have full time attendance and are aged 0 to 15, or pupils who have part time attendance and are aged 5 to 15. Age as at 31 August 2009.

Source:

School Census

The question of how many young people in Peterborough constituency and North West Cambridgeshire constituency received EMA is a matter for the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) who operate the education maintenance allowance for the Department for Education. Peter Lauener, the YPLA's chief executive, has written to the hon. Member with the information requested and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Libraries.

*Letter from Peter Lauener, dated 16 March 2011:*

I am writing in response to your Parliamentary Question PQ46957.

The Department of Education has responded to you regarding the first part of your question. I have been asked to provide a reply to the latter part of your question regarding how many children in each local authority ward in Peterborough and North West Cambridgeshire constituency have received Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).

Information on the number of young people who have received Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is available for upper tier local authorities but not by constituency or by local authority ward.

EMA take-up is defined as young people who have received one or more EMA payments in the academic year. As at 28/02/2011 EMA take-up for the 2010/2011 academic year for the City of Peterborough and Cambridgeshire local authority was 2,719 and 4,917 respectively.

EMA take-up data showing the number of young people who have received one or more EMA payments during 2004/05, 2005/06, 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 is available on the YPLA website, at the following address:

<http://ema.ypla.gov.uk/resources/research/takeup/>

### Members: Correspondence

**Damian Collins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education when he plans to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Folkestone and Hythe of 9 February 2011 on the pupil premium. [46964]

**Tim Loughton** [holding answer 15 March 2011]: My noble Friend Lord Hill of Oareford replied to my hon. Friend on 16 March 2011.

**Mr Iain Wright:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education (1) on what date (a) officials in his Department first identified and (b) he was first made aware of the difficulties in the operation of the IT system for monitoring and answering parliamentary questions and letters from hon. Members; [48045]

(2) what consideration his Department gave to informing (a) Mr Speaker's office, (b) the Leader of the House's office, (c) the Table Office and (d) hon. Members of the effects on the time taken to respond to questions and letters from hon. Members of the difficulties his Department has encountered in the operation of the IT system for monitoring and answering such material. [48046]

**Mr Gibb:** On 4 February a technical failure occurred within the Department's IT system that supports the processing of parliamentary questions. This system does not monitor letters from hon. Members. We were advised following initial investigations that the problem would be rectified within a few days and given this initial advice we did not inform Parliament. On further investigation the scale of the problem was far greater than originally anticipated, taking three weeks to be resolved. The Department did not intend to mislead Parliament, however given the eventual scale of the issue we accept that we should have informed Parliament of this situation. Since the House returned on 28 February the Department has answered over 600 questions.

#### Runaway Children

**Vernon Coaker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education what progress has been made on the implementation of the Young Runaways Action Plan. [44130]

**Tim Loughton:** The Young Runaways Action Plan, published in June 2008, was produced by the previous Government. It subsequently published 'statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care'. in July 2009. Under the previous system of Public Service Agreements and National Indicators, NI 71 recorded self-evaluation scores by local authorities on measures to monitor and respond to cases of children missing from home or care. The most recent data published for NI 71 was in September 2010 and can be found on the Department for Education website here:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STR/d000958/index.shtml>

#### Schools: Administration

**Richard Harrington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education what steps he is taking to reduce the administrative burden upon school staff. [47474]

**Mr Gibb:** The Government are committed to reducing the administrative burden on school staff. We have already announced that: the time consuming self-evaluation

form will be removed; the inspection framework will be streamlined; all data collections from schools are being reviewed; and have included measures in the Education Bill to remove unnecessary regulations. In addition, we are taking action to significantly reduce the volume of guidance and advice issued to schools and have adopted a new approach to ensure guidance is clear and concise. These changes are just the start of an ongoing programme of work and our intention is to work with local authorities and other Government Departments to reduce the administrative burden further.

#### Schools: Governing Bodies

**Mr Iain Wright:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education what his policy is on measures to increase the number of people applying to become governors of schools in disadvantaged areas. [36832]

**Mr Gibb:** The School Governors' One Stop Shop (SGOSS) is a private company with charitable status which is funded by the Department to recruit and place governor volunteers from the business world in schools with vacancies. SGOSS works with local authorities and schools across England and, while it focuses on areas with high vacancy rates, any school or local authority can approach it for help to fill vacancies. Its services are free of charge to schools and local authorities.

The Department is also working with the Education and Employment Taskforce to promote school governance as a volunteering opportunity to companies. Governor volunteers will bring with them a range of skills acquired in the workplace, which will be particularly helpful to governing bodies in all areas, including those which are disadvantaged.

#### Schools: Roads

**Graham Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education (1) how many primary schools did not have a road safety officer in the latest period for which figures are available; [45754]

(2) at how many primary schools one or more access points from the street is not lit by public street lighting; [45879]

(3) how many primary schools in England are situated on roads where the speed limit is the national speed limit. [45880]

**Mr Gibb:** This information is not held centrally.

#### Schools: Sports

**Amber Rudd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education how much School Sports Partnership grant was allocated to Hastings and Rother in (a) 2007, (b) 2008, (c) 2009 and (d) 2010. [33698]

**Tim Loughton:** The information is set out in the table.

	<i>School sport partnership grant</i>	<i>Coaching</i>	<i>Swimming</i>	<i>FE sport co-ordinators</i>	<i>Total</i>
2007	255,292	17,500	—	—	272,792
2008	284,654	21,500	4,999	26,100	337,253
2009	282,153	21,500	4,999	26,100	334,752

	<i>School sport partnership grant</i>	<i>Coaching</i>	<i>Swimming</i>	<i>FE sport co-ordinators</i>	<i>£ Total</i>
2010 <sup>1</sup>	290,710	21,500	4,999	26,100	343,309

<sup>1</sup> Anticipated.

### Squatting

**Mike Weatherley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education how many buildings on his Department's estate were occupied by squatters in each year between 2006 and 2010; and on how many occasions his Department sought interim possession orders to remove squatters from such buildings in each of those years. [47619]

**Tim Loughton:** None of the Departments buildings were occupied by squatters during the year 2006 to 2010.

### Written Questions: Government Responses

**Mr Iain Wright:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education when he plans to answer question 37084, tabled on 25 January 2011 for named day answer on 31 January 2011, on a free schools event. [40788]

**Mr Gibb [holding answer 14 February 2011]:** A response was issued to the hon. Member's question on 9 March 2011, *Official Report*, columns 1117-118W.

### Science: Females

**Nicola Blackwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education what steps he is taking to encourage girls to choose science, technology, engineering or mathematics at GCSE level. [46039]

**Mr Gibb:** The Government are funding a number of initiatives to encourage the greater participation of girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM subjects) at GCSE, A Level and beyond. These include:

Commissioning the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM), and the National Strategies to look at ways to help widen participation in mathematics with a particular focus on engaging more girls (including reviewing the ways in which schools approach how mathematics is delivered);

Identifying resources that will engage girls more in these subjects;

Establishing the Stimulating Physics network to provide support at regional level to widen participation in A level physics; and

The network of Science Learning Centres disseminating best practice from their Girls into Physics action research programme.

In addition, the STEM Ambassadors programme arranges for over 20,000 individuals drawn from more than 1,500 employers to volunteer their time and expertise to help schools and colleges, acting as role models and enhancing and enriching their pupils' understanding of, and enthusiasm for, STEM subjects. Almost 50% of the current STEM Ambassadors are female.

In 2010, more girls than boys were entered for GCSE Mathematics, and AS and A Level Biology.

### WORK AND PENSIONS

#### Child Benefit

**Thomas Docherty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether parents of children aged under 12 years who cease to be eligible for child benefit as a result of their partner being a higher rate income tax payer will be eligible for carers credit. [44656]

**Steve Webb:** The withdrawal of child benefit from families containing a higher rate taxpayer will not affect national insurance credits for state pension entitlement.

#### Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission: Fees and Charges

**Graeme Morrice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what research his Department has undertaken into the potential effect on vulnerable groups of a charging regime for child support. [47156]

**Maria Miller:** The Government will develop detailed proposals in relation to charging criteria and these will be outlined in draft regulations later in the year. Impact assessments accompanying the draft regulations will set out the estimated effects on volumes and individuals who will be affected by the proposed new charges.

#### Children: Maintenance

**Graeme Morrice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the introduction of private voluntary agreements to collect child maintenance payments on the number of resident parents using such agreements. [43390]

**Maria Miller:** Family-based arrangements are already possible and while some parents use them, research suggests around half of parents currently using the statutory child maintenance scheme would want to make family based arrangements if given support to do so. The coalition Government want to support more families to be able to collaborate and come to family-based arrangements which in general are better for children, as both parents continue to be actively involved in their children's lives.

The recent Child Maintenance Green Paper "Strengthening Families, promoting parental responsibility: the future of child maintenance" also recognises that some parents may need support in reaching these arrangements. The intention is to integrate the information and support available to separating and separated parents, with the aim of supporting more parents as they look to agree family-based arrangements.

**Ms Buck:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what charges will be levied under the planned charging regime for the future child support scheme against a (a) parent with care and (b) non-resident parent in receipt of jobseeker's allowance who has been unable to agree a voluntary family-based agreement. [46062]

**Maria Miller:** The Government want to encourage parents to take responsibility for their children's financial support after parental separation and to facilitate co-parenting and ongoing involvement of both parents in their children's lives. The majority of parents currently using the statutory service have indicated they would make a family-based arrangement if given support to do so.

The Green Paper consultation document "Strengthening families, promoting parental responsibility: the future of child maintenance" recently published by the Government outlines proposals for the reform of the child maintenance system in more detail. Chapter two of the consultation document outlines the Government's proposals for charging. Financial decisions on this aspect of policy will be made once the consultation has concluded.

The consultation closes on 7 April 2011 and can be viewed at:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/strengthening-families.pdf>

### Crisis Loans

**Dr Whiteford:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on how many occasions during their operation the number of social fund crisis loans available to an individual over a 12-month period has been capped. [47307]

**Steve Webb:** Social fund crisis loans for living expenses will be capped at the level of three within a 12-month rolling period from 4 April 2011.

A pilot was conducted between 27 April 2009 and 31 March 2010 in South West region and 8 June 2009 and 31 March 2010 in the East Midlands where the number of social fund crisis loans for living expenses were capped at three within a rolling 12-month period.

The Department collected management information on this pilot but it is not robust enough to be used as a response to a parliamentary question.

**Dr Whiteford:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the likely effect of his decision on the (a) level and (b) availability of crisis fund loans on the number of loans taken out by people on low incomes from high-cost or illegal lenders. [47339]

**Steve Webb:** As outlined in my written ministerial statement of 3 March 2011, we have had to take urgent action to bring spending on crisis loans back under control and ensure we can continue to meet genuine need, including through budgeting loans.

We have no information on which to make an assessment in respect of crisis loans. However, without corrective action the funding shortfall for crisis loans would have to be met from the budgeting loan scheme which evidence suggests is an important alternative to illegal lending for the poorest in society.

### Crisis Loans: Barking and Dagenham

**Margaret Hodge:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the Jobcentre Plus Social Fund Budget areas covering the London borough of Barking and Dagenham have received (a)

crisis loans, (b) community care grants, (c) funeral payments, (d) budgeting loans and (e) maternity grants in the last 12 months for which figures are available.

[47242]

**Steve Webb:** We are unable to report on social fund awards at the London borough level however the London borough of Barking and Dagenham is part of the North and North East London Social Fund budget area level. Awards in this area are as follows:

*Initial awards in London Social Fund Budget area March 2010 and 2011*

	Number
Budgeting Loan	34,720
Community Care Grant	6190
Crisis Loan	64,160
Funeral Payment	760
Sure Start Maternity Grant	10,510

#### Notes:

1. The information provided is Management Information. Our preference is to answer all parliamentary questions using Official/National Statistics but in this case we only have Management Information available. It is not quality assured to the same extent as Official/National statistics and there are some issues with the data, for example, they do not include applications which were processed clerically and have not yet been entered on to the Social Fund Computer System.

2. These are initial awards and do not include awards made on review other than for Funeral Payments and Sure Start Maternity Grant which do include awards made on appeal.

3. Figures have been rounded.

#### Source:

DWP Policy, Budget and Management Information System (PBMIS)

### Departmental Public Appointments

**Fiona Mactaggart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which public bodies sponsored by his Department (a) have been and (b) are to be closed, merged or reorganised following his appointment; and how many (i) women and (ii) men who are public appointees at each body will no longer hold such an appointment in consequence. [47112]

**Chris Grayling:** The coalition Government are committed to increasing the accountability of public bodies, and this involves reducing their number and their cost to the taxpayer. The proposals for the majority of bodies across all Departments was announced and published on 14 October 2010. An updated list reflecting changes since October 2010 has been published on the Cabinet Office website this month.

Summary information on public appointments is published annually by the Cabinet Office. This includes data on gender. Copies of the most recent report can be downloaded from:

[www.civilservice.gov.uk/ndpb](http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/ndpb)

### Departmental Public Bodies

**Lisa Nandy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 16 March 2011, *Official Report*, columns 9-10W, on the public bodies reform programme, what estimate he has made of the savings to his Department net of costs incurred in the assumption of additional departmental responsibilities to accrue from (a) the abolition of

three public bodies within his Department's area of responsibility, (b) the merger of one such body and (c) the change in function of two such bodies. [48143]

**Chris Grayling:** On 16 March 2011, *Official Report*, columns 9-10W, the Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General, the right hon. Member for Horsham (Mr Maude), issued a written ministerial statement updating Parliament on progress on public bodies reform. That statement also announced that Departments estimate cumulative administrative savings of at least £2.6 billion will flow from public bodies over the spending review period.

I anticipate net overall administrative savings from structural reforms over the spending review period of £0.141 million. Overall administrative reductions from reform of all departmental public bodies are currently estimated to be £17.95 million over the spending review period.

### Disability Living Allowance

**Mr Byrne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) with reference to paragraph 6 of his Department's impact assessment on reform of disability living allowance, what estimate he has made of the savings to accrue from (a) a facility to regularly review all awards and (b) the establishment of rates of allowance based on (i) ability to carry out daily life activities and (ii) ability to get around in each year to 2015-16; [46391]

(2) with reference to paragraph 6 of his Department's impact assessment on reform of disability living allowance, what estimate he has made of the potential savings which will arise from a move away from automatic entitlement in each year to 2015-16; [46393]

(3) with reference to paragraph 6 of his Department's impact assessment on reform of disability living allowance, what estimate he has made of the potential savings to the public purse from (a) the new assessment process and (b) the deferred eligibility periods proposed by his Department in each year to 2015-16; [46394]

(4) with reference to paragraph 16 of his Department's impact assessment on reform of disability living allowance, what estimate he has made of the cash savings arising from the application of his policy to the persons in each (a) care rate and (b) mobility rate band in each year to 2014-15; [46395]

(5) with reference to his Department's impact assessment on reform of disability living allowance, what estimate he has made of the potential savings of implementation of the policy if present entitlement conditions continue for (a) one year, (b) 18 months, (c) 24 months and (d) 36 months; [46396]

(6) with reference to his Department's impact assessment on reform of disability living allowance, what estimate he has made of the number of claimants of disability living allowance in each income decile who will have their allowance reduced in each year to 2015-16; [46397]

(7) what estimate he has made of the potential change in (a) the average disability living allowance payment and (b) the number of claimants of the allowance as a result of his proposed reforms in each year to 2014-15. [46407]

**Maria Miller:** Support in personal independence payment will be focused on those who face barriers to independent living. The assessment is being developed and at this stage, therefore, an assessment is not available of the impact changes could have on existing disability living allowance, or future recipients. We are working with disabled people and organisations who represent them on the detailed design and delivery of personal independence payment and the outcomes from this work will be reflected in updates to the impact assessment for this change. We have already announced that personal independence payment will be a non taxable, non means-tested benefit payable to people in and out of work.

**Mr Byrne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions with reference to his Department's impact assessment on reform of disability living allowance, what estimate he has made of the proportion of the disability living allowance budget which was spent on claims which were fraudulent in the latest period for which figures are available. [46392]

**Chris Grayling:** The estimated level of fraud in disability living allowance for the period October 2008 to September 2009 is 0.5% (£60 million). The estimate is based on a national benefit review of disability living allowance which was carried out in 2004-05.

The latest estimates of fraud and error in the benefits system can be found at:

[http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd2/fem/fem\\_oct08\\_sep09.pdf](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd2/fem/fem_oct08_sep09.pdf)

**Ms Abbott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions by what means disability living allowance assessments will take into account the needs of patients with (a) sickle cell disease, (b) thalassaemia, (c) multiple sclerosis, (d) mental health conditions and (e) other fluctuating conditions; and if he will make a statement. [46896]

**Maria Miller:** The Government published the consultation document 'Disability Living Allowance Reform' on 6 December 2010, which was followed by the publication of the Welfare Reform Bill on 16 February 2011. Both outlined proposals to replace disability living allowance for working age claimants with a new benefit—personal independence payment.

The assessment for personal independence payment is being developed in collaboration with an independent group of specialists in health, social care and disability, including disabled people. We are designing the assessment to target support on those disabled people who are most impacted by their health condition or impairment, regardless of the nature of that impairment. As such we intend it to take account of physical, sensory, mental, intellectual and cognitive impairments, including variable and fluctuating conditions.

We are considering the most appropriate delivery model for the personal independence payment assessment and no decisions have yet been taken. We will continue to work with disabled people and their organisations on the details of our reforms, including the detail of the assessment criteria and its operation, to ensure that we get them right.

**Dr Wollaston:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in (a) Totnes, (b) the South West and (c) England receive the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance. [47529]

**Maria Miller:** The information is as follows:

*Disability living allowance recipients with higher rate mobility component in Totnes parliamentary constituency, the South West and England, August 2010*

	Number
Totnes	2,550
South West	127,130
England	1,432,020

*Notes:*

1. Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest ten.
2. Totals show the number of people in receipt of an allowance, and excludes cases where the payment has been suspended.
3. Constituencies used are for the Westminster Parliament 2010.

*Source:*

Department for Work and Pensions, Information Directorate, 100% WPLS.

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the Social Security Advisory Committee's response to the consultation on his proposed changes to disability living allowance. [47808]

**Maria Miller:** The consultation on DLA reform ran from 6 December 2010 to 18 February 2011. We received over 5,000 individual responses and 500 responses from organisations, including the response from the Social Security Advisory Committee.

We are considering the responses at the moment and plan to publish the Government response shortly.

#### **Disability Living Allowance: Autism**

**Bridget Phillipson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will take steps to ensure that the proposed changes to disability living allowance do not have an adverse effect on claimants diagnosed with autism. [47786]

**Maria Miller:** The Government propose to replace disability living allowance with personal independence payment in 2013-14. We are still considering the most appropriate delivery model for the personal independence payment assessment and no decisions have yet been taken, including how it will apply to existing DLA recipients. We know it is essential that the assessment accurately captures the needs of disabled people with autistic spectrum disorders and this is something that the development group is considering. For example, they believe that the new assessment should explicitly take account of the impact of a health condition or impairment, including autistic spectrum disorders, on an individual's ability to communicate. This would set it apart from the current DLA assessment. We also recognise the importance of providing adequate training and guidance for assessors and of ensuring that the assessment process is appropriate to individual's circumstances, including individuals with autistic spectrum disorders.

Both I and departmental officials have met with the National Autistic Society to discuss our reform proposals and to seek their views on how the new benefit can best support those with autism. We agree with many of the

points raised in the National Autistic Society's recent report on DLA reform, "Who benefits?", and we are looking closely at how these recommendations can be incorporated into its design. We are keen to continue to work with disabled people and their organisations as the detail of the assessment criteria and its operation is developed and tested.

**Christopher Pincher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will take steps to exempt those diagnosed with autism from compulsory disability living allowance personal interviews. [47830]

**Maria Miller:** The Government propose to replace disability living allowance with personal independence payment in 2013-14. We are still considering the most appropriate delivery model for the personal independence payment assessment and no decisions have yet been taken, including how it will apply to existing DLA recipients. However, we believe that advice from a suitably trained and approved individual, for example a healthcare professional, will be an important part of ensuring that the assessment is more objective and consistent. In most cases, we expect this to involve a face-to-face consultation to enable an in-depth look at an individual's circumstances.

We know it is essential that the assessment accurately captures the needs of disabled people with autistic spectrum disorders and this is something that the development group is considering. For example, they believe that the new assessment should explicitly take account of the impact of a health condition or impairment, including autistic spectrum disorders, on an individual's ability to communicate. This would set it apart from the current DLA assessment. We also recognise the importance of ensuring that the assessment process is appropriate to individual's circumstances, including individuals with autistic spectrum disorders. Both I and departmental officials have met with the National Autistic Society to discuss our reform proposals and to seek their views on how the new benefit can best support those with autism. We will continue to work with disabled people and their organisations as the detail of the assessment criteria and its operation is developed and tested.

#### **Disability Living Allowance: Expenditure**

**Stephen Timms:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the likely change in expenditure as a result of extending the qualifying period for disability living allowance from three months to six months. [37195]

**Maria Miller:** On 6 December we launched a consultation on the reform of disability living allowance with the key proposal of a new benefit, to be known as personal independence payment, which will be introduced from 2013. The consultation proposed that personal independence payment will have a six-month qualifying period and a six-month prospective test. The consultation closed on 18 February.

Extending the qualifying period to six months will be implemented alongside the new assessment which is still being developed. Any change in expenditure will, therefore, be dependent on both these factors.

### Disability Living Allowance: Fraud

**Susan Elan Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the level of fraudulent disability living allowance claims as a proportion of total claims in the latest period for which figures are available. [42734]

**Maria Miller:** The estimated level of fraud in disability living allowance for the period October 2008 to September 2009 is 0.5% (£60 million). The estimate is based on a National Benefit Review of Disability Living Allowance which was carried out in 2004-05.

The latest estimates of fraud and error in the benefits system can be found at:

[http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd2/fem/fem\\_oct08\\_sep09.pdf](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd2/fem/fem_oct08_sep09.pdf)

No estimates are available of payments made in error where eligibility has ceased.

### Disability Living Allowance: West Midlands

**Mr Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in (a) Coventry and (b) the West Midlands receive the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance. [47377]

**Maria Miller:** The information requested is as follows:

*Disability living allowance recipients with higher rate mobility component in Coventry local authority and West Midlands—August 2010*

	Total
Coventry	9,620
West Midlands	169,890

Notes:

1. Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
2. Totals show the number of people in receipt of an allowance and excludes cases where the payment has been suspended.
3. These figures are published at:  
<http://83.244.183.180/100pc/tabtool.html>

Source:

Department for Work and Pensions, Information Directorate, 100% WPLS

### Employment and Support Allowance: Barking and Dagenham

**Margaret Hodge:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham have been in receipt of contributory-based employment and support allowance (work related activity group) for 12 months or longer. [47243]

**Chris Grayling:** The information requested is as follows:

*Number of people in receipt of contributory-based Employment and Support Allowance (Work Related Activity Group) in the London borough of Barking and Dagenham, August 2010*

Work Related Activity Group	All	Duration 12 months or more
All	260	140

*Number of people in receipt of contributory-based Employment and Support Allowance (Work Related Activity Group) in the London borough of Barking and Dagenham, August 2010*

Work Related Activity Group	All	Duration 12 months or more
Contributory element	100	50

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
2. Benefit type: The type of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) is defined as pay status at the caseload date—this may differ to the status at the start or end of the claim.
3. ESA replaced incapacity benefit and income support paid on the grounds of incapacity for new claims from 27 October 2008.
4. Phase/stage of ESA claim is only available from February 2010 onwards. The phase is derived from payment details held on the source system.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study

### Employment Schemes: Cancer

**Mr Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what requirements he plans to put in place for people receiving (a) oral chemotherapy and (b) radiotherapy treatment for cancer to (i) undergo medical assessments and (ii) participate in work-related activities in order to receive benefits under the provisions of the Welfare Reform Bill; and if he will make a statement. [46439]

**Chris Grayling:** We are determined that the social security system should support people who are diagnosed with cancer in the most sensitive, fair and appropriate way. We have no interest in making it harder for those who cannot work to claim benefits.

We have taken positive steps to improve the work capability assessment (WCA) so that it is fairer and more effective for individuals diagnosed with cancer. The current system allows individuals undergoing certain types of chemotherapy to have automatic entry to the support group. In June we announced changes, coming into force later this month, extending this entitlement to people awaiting or between courses of these types of chemotherapy.

Meanwhile, Professor Malcolm Harrington, as part of his second independent review, has asked Macmillan Cancer Support to consider whether further improvements are needed, including whether people receiving oral chemotherapy should be placed directly into the support group. We look forward to receiving Macmillan's and Professor Harrington's recommendations for any further improvements.

### Employment Schemes: Procurement

**Alun Cairns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what measures will be in place to ensure that small and medium-sized enterprises that win Work Programme contracts are not put at a financial disadvantage as a result of the time taken for payments to be made under the payment-by-results scheme. [48020]

**Chris Grayling:** In order to drive the best value for money for the taxpayer we are using a Prime Provider model to deliver the Work Programme. The Prime Providers will be underpinned by smaller, specialist sub contractors to ensure the individual needs of all customers

are met at a local level. It is at this sub contractor level where we would expect to see small and medium-sized enterprises.

The provider payment model for the Work Programme has been extensively tested and assured to ensure that it is commercially and financially viable for potential suppliers. The payment model is largely outcome-based with a job outcome payment paid once the customer has been in employment for 13 or 26 weeks depending on customer group, and sustainment payments paid monthly thereafter for continued employment. During the first three years of the contracts the Department will also be paying an attachment fee to providers. The attachment fee is specifically designed to help providers with cash flow in the early years of the contracts, before being withdrawn as the programme matures and they start to receive greater remuneration from outcome-based payments.

Within the standard terms and conditions of contract for the Work Programme, the Department has committed to pay all providers within 30 calendar days of notification. The Prime Contractor will be entitled to receive interest after 30 calendar days on any payment that is not made when properly due.

In addition, the Department has sought to strengthen the hand of smaller organisations in their dealings with our Prime Providers, and I believe that the systems we are putting in place will mean a more level playing field. In particular our 'Merlin Standard' will ensure that smaller organisations are treated fairly in their dealings with primes and that supply chains remain robust and healthy.

### EU Agenda for New Skills and Jobs

**Priti Patel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his policy is on the comprehensive review of health and safety legislation by 2014 proposed in the EU Agenda for new skills and jobs; what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of conducting the review; and if he will make a statement. [47012]

**Chris Grayling:** The European Commission has yet to announce the scope and nature of its proposed review of EU health and safety legislation. Consequently, it is not yet possible to provide a meaningful or accurate estimate of how much it would cost. The Government will work to ensure that any future proposals respect the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, and are accompanied by a full impact assessment. Provided these principles are respected, in principle, a review of EU legislation in this field could provide the opportunity and evidence for removing obsolete or inefficient laws. In particular it could be used to examine which EU health and safety rules for low risk businesses are overly prescriptive, which are disproportionate and which seek unnecessarily to eliminate risk instead of managing it. These aims would be consistent with the recommendations in "Common Sense, Common Safety", which the Government accepted in October 2010.

### Families

**Andrew Selous:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he has taken to reduce the incidence of family breakdown since his appointment. [48121]

**Maria Miller:** A Social Justice Cabinet Committee has been established chaired by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which seeks to tackle the underlying factors that trap people at the bottom of the social ladder, one of these factors being family breakdown. I am also looking at international models to see if there is best practice in this area which could usefully be integrated into our proposals for Great Britain.

Our programme for government made clear our commitment to supporting and strengthening families. Where relationship breakdown is unavoidable our approach is the same—we will support strong families including those that are separating or separated to work together to reach agreements that are in the best interests of their children. In the recently published Green Paper 'Strengthening families: promoting parental responsibility: the future of child maintenance':

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/strengthening-families.pdf>

we outline our proposals for the reform of child maintenance. These include encouraging parents to work collaboratively to fulfil their responsibilities and, where child maintenance is involved, to make family-based child maintenance arrangements wherever possible as these will facilitate co-parenting and the ongoing involvement of both parents in children's lives.

My Department is also working closely with the Department for Education and the Ministry of Justice with the aim of joining up support to separating and separated parents so they receive the help they need to work together and make post-separation arrangements that are in their children's best interests.

### Free Movement of Labour

**Mr Graham Stuart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans his Department has to provide assistance to local authorities on the abolition of transitional arrangements for A8 workers; and whether his Department plans to provide guidance on this issue. [46272]

**Chris Grayling:** The Department operates a dedicated email enquiry point to provide assistance to local authorities on such matters.

Detailed guidance on the benefit position of A8 nationals from 1 May 2011 will be made available to local authorities shortly. In addition, we have been working with Homeless Link who published guidance on A8 rough sleepers earlier this month.

### Housing Benefit: Affordable Housing

**Kerry McCarthy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what research he has commissioned on the availability of affordable homes in (a) Bristol East constituency, (b) Bristol, (c) the South West and (d) nationally following implementation of his proposed changes to local housing allowances. [46713]

**Steve Webb:** The Department is in the process of a procurement exercise with leading research organisations for the evaluation and monitoring of the impact of the housing benefit measures. The precise form of the evaluation will depend upon the outcome of negotiations with the successful contractor, but we anticipate that it will

consider the availability of affordable homes and include fieldwork examining the effects on different types of households in a range of areas across Great Britain.

### Housing Benefit: Berkshire

**Alok Sharma:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have claimed housing benefit in (a) Reading West constituency, (b) Reading and (c) Berkshire in each of the last 10 years. [46632]

**Steve Webb:** The information requested for Reading West constituency is not available.

A copy of the available information on HB recipients by local authority has been placed in the Library.

### Means-tested Benefits: Peterborough

**Mr Stewart Jackson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many children in each electoral ward of the Peterborough city council area lived in households in receipt of means-tested benefits in the latest period for which figures are available. [47664]

**Maria Miller:** There were 7,295 children aged 15 and under in Peterborough living in households where a parent or guardian is in receipt of income support, jobseeker's allowance or pension credit in May 2008.

The following table shows the number of children aged 15 and under in each electoral ward of the Peterborough city council area living in households where a parent or guardian is in receipt of income support, jobseeker's allowance or pension credit in May 2008.

<i>Ward name</i>	<i>Total children aged 15 and under</i>
Barnack	25
Bretton North	595
Bretton South	155
Central	635
Dogsthorpe	715
East	655
Eye and Thorney	115
Fletton	285
Glington and Wittering	50
Newborough	50
North	370
Northborough	10
Orton Longueville	785
Orton Waterville	260
Orton with Hampton	280
Park	240
Paston	575
Ravensthorpe	515
Stanground Central	250
Stanground East	140
Walton	170
Werrington North	190
Werrington South	105
West	125

*Source:*

DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study, HMRC Child Benefit administrative data.

### New Deal Schemes

**Stephen Timms:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for what reasons there was a reduction in the number of flexible new deal starts between May and November 2010. [46502]

**Chris Grayling:** The reduction in the number of flexible new deal starts between May and November 2010 reflects two factors:

starts were due to reduce over this period as the stock of jobseeker's allowance customers who had to wait for FND to begin reduced;

starts fell more due to a fall in the number of people who claimed jobseeker's allowance, and so in due course, the numbers who became eligible for the provision.

### Personal Independence Payment: Autism

**Mr Bain:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will take steps to ensure that a person with autism who undergoes an assessment for the proposed personal independence payment will have the appropriate support to attend an assessment. [47039]

**Maria Miller:** We are considering the delivery model for the personal independence payment assessment and no decisions have yet been taken. We recognise the importance of ensuring that the assessment process is appropriate to individual's circumstances, including individuals with autistic spectrum disorders. We are clear that if an individual is able to bring someone who knows them well with them to a face-to-face consultation, and wishes to do so, this will be welcomed. It will of course be essential to ensure that we get the processes right and we will be keen to work with disabled people and their organisations as we further develop these.

### Post Office Card Account

**Sarah Newton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions by what date he expects a direct debit payment facility on the Post Office card account to have been enabled. [47814]

**Steve Webb:** The Government remain committed to giving Post Office card account holders the chance to benefit from direct debit discounts. However, this does not necessarily mean adding a direct debit facility to the Post Office card account itself.

We are awaiting the outcome of new research, exploring the options for all consumers to have the opportunity to benefit from direct debit discounts.

Officials from all interested Departments are working closely to steer the direction of the research. This will explore the possibilities for a commercially viable business model for a new account, which would be designed to meet the needs of low income consumers by supporting positive financial management, smoothing expenditure and enabling access to better value services and products.

### Private Pensions

**Mike Weatherley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the number of people in the UK with private pensions which provide an income of between £17,500 and £30,000 per year. [46760]

**Steve Webb:** Estimates from the Family Resources Survey show that in 2008-09 there were 700,000 people in the UK in receipt of private pension income of between £17,500 and £30,000 per year.

*Notes:*

1. The Family Resources Survey is a nationally representative sample of approximately 25,000 households in the United Kingdom. Data for 2008-09 was collected between April 2008 and March 2009.
2. The figures from the Family Resources Survey are based on a sample of households which have been adjusted for non-response using multi-purpose grossing factors which align the Family Resources Survey to Government office region population by age and sex. Estimates are subject to sampling error and remaining non-response error.
3. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred thousand adults.

*Source:*

DWP analysis of 2008-09 Family Resources Survey.

### Public Expenditure

**Mr Bain:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the number of people in (a) Glasgow North East constituency, (b) Glasgow, (c) Scotland and (d) Great Britain who will be affected by the change in the under-occupancy rules affecting 25 to 35-year-olds over the period of the comprehensive spending review; and if he will estimate the average change to their annual incomes. [46930]

**Steve Webb:** It is estimated that in Great Britain by the end of the comprehensive spending review period 88,000 people aged 25 to 34 who would otherwise have received the one bedroom rate of local housing allowance may instead be assessed at the shared accommodation rate. On average their annual housing benefit award will be around £2,500 lower in 2014-15 than it would have been if assessed at the one bedroom rate.

Estimates of the local and regional effects will be published when the relevant regulations are laid later this year.

*Note:*

The figure of £2,500 is rounded to nearest £500.

### Social Security Benefits

**Stephen Timms:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions under what criteria working families would be exempted from the proposed overall benefit cap. [46281]

**Chris Grayling:** As the spending review announced, households which contain a member who is in receipt of working tax credit will be exempt from the cap. We are still considering the precise criteria for an equivalent exemption under universal credit.

In addition, war widows and war widowers and households that contain a member who is in receipt of disability living allowance or constant attendance allowance will be exempt from the benefit cap.

We are looking at ways of easing the transition for families and providing assistance in hard cases.

### Social Security Benefits: Autism

**Graeme Morrice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his policy is on requiring (a) knowledge and (b) understanding of autism spectrum disorder in (i) the training of assessors and (ii) the conduct of assessments for work capability assessments. [47155]

**Chris Grayling:** All Atos health care professionals (HCP's) who carry out assessments for employment and support allowance receive training on autistic spectrum disorders. As part of induction training they are issued with evidence-based protocols on mental health conditions which include information on autistic spectrum disorders. In addition, the training for all registered nurses and physiotherapists includes cases with role players where autistic spectrum disorder is the principal diagnosis.

Following this, all HCP's are required to engage in a programme of continuing medical education and Atos, in conjunction with the DWP, have developed a number of training modules specifically on autistic spectrum disorders as part of this.

### Social Security Benefits: EU Nationals

**Priti Patel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the potential implications for the UK of the EU Agenda for new skills and jobs proposals for the future of social security systems; whether such proposals will entail (a) costs to the public purse and (b) transfers of powers from the UK; and if he will make a statement. [46851]

**Chris Grayling:** The Commission Communication "An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs" makes no specific proposals in relation to social security beyond calling for an awareness campaign on the EU social security coordination rules so that citizens understand their rights when moving within Europe. This campaign has been designed by the European Commission and does not involve any direct costs to the public purse or transfer of powers from the UK. Furthermore, the campaign does not change in any way conditions for receiving social security benefits, and the UK already has in place strict controls on access to non-contributory benefits for migrants.

The Communication also refers to social security as one of four components of the policy concept of "flexicurity". This was defined by Council Principles in December 2007. The term is applied to a range of measures within national competence under the long-running European Employment Strategy, now incorporated into Europe 2020, which allows for coordination between member states. Flexicurity seeks to improve the flexibility of labour markets while providing adequate security of employment. The UK is one of the leading models in this regard and we are promoting our approaches to welfare reform with other countries so that across the EU more people are in employment.

**Priti Patel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the implications for the UK of EU proposals to maximise the potential contribution of migration to full employment; and if he will make a statement. [46852]

**Chris Grayling:** The European Commission report “An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs” was published on 23 November 2010. My Department has not made a specific assessment of the implications of this report. It acknowledges that the main responsibility for policy in this area rests with member states and none of the proposals it makes imply any change to existing rules on EU migration.

Issues which the report considers include barriers to employment created by discrimination and non-recognition of skills. These can adversely affect the employment prospects of UK nationals seeking work in other EU countries as well as those of EU nationals who would like to work in the UK.

The UK Government have stated their intention to reduce migration levels over the lifetime of this Parliament. An annual limit on the number of non-EU workers will be introduced in April 2011 to ensure only those with the skills the country needs can come to the UK from outside the EU to work.

### Universal Credit

**Stephen Timms:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the evidential basis is for his estimate that universal credit will lead to a reduction of 300,000 in the number of workless households. [46505]

**Chris Grayling:** I refer the right hon. Gentleman to the latest universal credit impact assessment available on the Department for Work and Pensions website.

**Mr Bain:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make an assessment of the costs and benefits of splitting payments under the universal credit to partners in two person couples with children. [47001]

**Maria Miller:** Under universal credit, couples living in the same household will make a joint claim for the benefit payment and we assume that ordinarily the payment will be made as a single sum to the household. In recognition of the fact that different households organise their finances and budget in different ways, we are allowing couples to decide between them whether the money goes to a joint bank account or to one or other of them.

However, there may be exceptional cases that require alternative arrangements and the Government intend to retain power to arrange payments to couples to offer safeguards. We are considering the circumstances for and details of these alternative arrangements, and work is ongoing. For example, where there is proven abuse of the money by one partner, the Government already have and will retain the power to direct payments to the other partner, or there may be instances where it is more appropriate to divide the payment.

### Universal Credit: Disability

**Margaret Curran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether (a) statutory sick pay and (b) employment and support allowance claimed for the first six months of an illness be treated as earnings when calculating earnings disregard for the purposes of his proposed universal credit. [48015]

**Maria Miller:** There are no grounds for treating employment support allowance as earnings.

It may be logical to treat payments such as statutory sick pay in the same way as earnings as they are paid by employers. Final decisions have not yet been made.

**Margaret Curran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether any extra support offered to disabled people in receipt of universal credit will be available to those who (a) live alone and (b) do not have a carer. [48016]

**Maria Miller:** The Government’s aim for universal credit is to simplify the current complex array of overlapping premiums to ensure that disabled people benefit from improved work incentives as well as supporting those in greatest need. The aim is that universal credit will include additional amounts that correspond to the two components currently payable in employment and support allowance.

### Winter Fuel Payments

**Mr Mark Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the annual effect on his Department’s expenditure of removing the entitlement to winter fuel allowance from persons with an annual income of more than (a) £50,000 and (b) £100,000. [47124]

**Steve Webb:** Winter fuel payment eligibility covers those who are over female state pension age (including men who have yet to reach the male state pension age of 65) and are ordinarily resident in the UK.

Information on winter fuel payment eligibility and households with higher annual incomes is available from data collected in the Family Resources Survey.

(a) If entitlement to winter fuel payments were restricted to those in households with annual net Before Housing Costs income of £50,000 or less, it is estimated that the total winter fuel payment bill for Great Britain would reduce by £110 million per year.

(b) If entitlement to winter fuel payments were restricted to those in households with annual net before housing costs income of £100,000 or less, it is estimated that the total winter fuel payment bill for Great Britain would reduce by £20 million per year.

In 2011/12, winter fuel payment expenditure is forecast to be £2.082 billion. As such, the saving represented by restricting to those in households with annual net before housing costs income of £50,000 or less represents 5% of these payments, while restricting to those with £100,000 or less represents 1%.

#### Notes:

1. Information on household income and eligibility for winter fuel payments are available from the Family Resources Survey, for which 2008-09 is the latest year available.

2. Estimates are based on survey data and are therefore subject to uncertainty. For this reason savings are rounded to the nearest £10 million.

3. For the purpose of this question, net household incomes before housing costs have been used. This includes net earnings from employment and self-employment, state support, income from occupational and private pensions, investment income and other sources. Incomes are net of income tax, national insurance and council tax. In practice, the level of savings may vary due to how this would be implemented.

4. Savings to winter fuel payment expenditure use the 2011-12 expenditure forecasts and are therefore based on a £200 payment to households containing someone aged over female state pension age, with an additional £100 payment to households containing someone aged 80 or over. There are additional rules determining how much households containing more than one eligible individual and individuals in receipt of certain benefits receive. These additional rules are also included in the calculations. Family Resources Survey data has been used to calculate the proportion of expenditure which goes to the high income households as specified.

#### Work Capability Assessment

**Stephen Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether his Department has engaged Unum in the (a) design and (b) administration of the (i) work capability assessment and (ii) appeals process.

[46816]

**Chris Grayling:** The work capability assessment was developed in 2008 with the assistance of technical working groups. As you may be aware, the Government consult widely with stakeholders and sources of public and private sector expertise, to ensure that its policies are evidence-based. Two Unum employees, a doctor and an occupational therapist, were invited to join the technical working group that carried out the review of the personal capability assessment. As with all members of the technical working group they were appointed as recognised experts in benefit assessment and in supporting return to work for people with disability.

I can confirm that since the initial review of the personal capability assessment as part of the technical working groups, that representatives of the company, Unum, have not been involved in either the administration or review of the work capability assessment.

The Department of Work and Pension has also not engaged with Unum in the design or administration of the appeals process.

### BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS

#### Business: Ethics

**Lisa Nandy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills when he expects to publish the Government's corporate responsibility strategy. [47122]

**Mr Davey:** The Government believe that all businesses can play a part in tackling the social, environmental and economic challenges we face—and benefit commercially in the process—by minimising the negative social and environmental impacts of their activities and maximising the positive. Encouraging responsible behaviour by business through the alignment of market incentives with positive social outcomes is relevant in a broad range of policy areas across Government.

The Prime Minister recently launched the Every Business Commits agenda, calling on businesses to help create a more sustainable and community-centred approach to doing business.

More broadly the Government are focused on influencing the development of international policy on corporate responsibility, including through engagement with the European Commission, and work to update the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

There are no current plans to publish a specific document setting the Government's strategy for corporate responsibility.

#### Business: North East

**Tom Blenkinsop:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills on how many occasions his Department has consulted representatives of small businesses in Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency on the effects of proposed new regulations since his appointment. [47588]

**Mr Prisk:** The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has launched 34 written consultations since May 2010. These are available for viewing on the Department's Internet site at:

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/Consultations>

BIS seeks views on these from businesses from all regions and of all sizes, including those of small businesses. The specific information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

#### Business: Regulation

**Nick de Bois:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what assessment he has made of the progress of implementation of the Government's one-in, one-out policy in respect of domestic legislation affecting business and the third sector. [47375]

**Mr Prisk [holding answer 18 March 2011]:** The One-in, One-Out policy took effect from autumn 2011. It applies to domestic regulation and the Government plan to release a Statement of Regulation shortly. The Statement of Regulation will detail the classification of regulation due to come into effect in the first half of 2011 as either an In, Out or net zero measure. To ensure the analysis underpinning the regulatory measures is accurate, all measures are independently validated by the Regulatory Policy Committee.

#### Business: Rural Areas

**Mrs Grant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what plans he has to reduce the burden of administration on rural businesses. [42588]

**Mr Prisk:** Rural economies have a greater reliance on small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and this means it is especially important that the administrative burden is proportionate and fair if they are to thrive.

All Ministers in Government are committed to this. Rural businesses will benefit from a number of initiatives I am taking, such as amending the Companies Act to bring small company audit rules in line with the EU minimum in 2012, saving UK companies up to £40 million in unnecessary audit fees.

In addition, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs have commissioned research to reduce the regulatory burdens on very small businesses by examining how environmental regulation impacts on micro businesses, including those in rural areas, and how it can be designed in ways that minimises the burden while still achieving environmental outcomes.

### Departmental Public Bodies

**Tessa Jowell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 16 March 2011, *Official Report*, columns 9-10WS, on the public bodies reform programme, what estimate he has made of the savings to his Department net of costs incurred in the assumption of additional departmental responsibilities to accrue from (a) the abolition of 22 public bodies within his Department's area of responsibility, (b) the merger of five such bodies and (c) the change in function of one such body.

[48136]

**Mr Davey:** On 16 March 2011 the Minister for the Cabinet Office issued a written ministerial statement updating Parliament on progress on public bodies reform. That statement also announced that Departments estimate that cumulative administrative savings of at least £2.6 billion will flow from public bodies over the spending review period.

I anticipate cumulative administrative budget savings from those public bodies sponsored by BIS which are undergoing structural reforms to be £737 million over the spending review period, with additional costs of transition including redundancies to be funded from the Department's programme budgets. Overall administrative cost reductions from all of BIS's public bodies are estimated to be £882 million over the spending review period.

### Departmental Regulation

**Gordon Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what regulations his Department introduced between 9 and 28 February 2011.

[47148]

**Mr Prisk:** Between 9 February and 28 February 2011 BIS introduced seven regulations. These are:

The Registrar of Companies (Fees) (Companies, Overseas Companies and Limited Liability Partnerships) (Amendment) Regulations 2011;

The Registrar of Companies (Fees) (Limited Partnerships) (Amendment) Regulations 2011;

The Registrar of Companies (Fees) (European Economic Interest Grouping) (Amendment) Regulations 2011;

The Patents County Court (Financial Limits) Order 2011;

The Employment Equality (Repeal of Retirement Age Provisions) Regulations 2011;

The Student Fees (Amounts) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011;

The Export Control (Amendment) Order 2011.

### Foundation Courses: Universities

**Mr Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills which universities in England offer foundation degrees; and what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of such degrees in increasing access to university education.

[47451]

**Mr Willetts:** Data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency Student Record show that 42,330 entrants were registered on foundation degree courses with 97 English higher education institutions (HEIs) in academic year 2009/10, as shown in the following table.

With almost 100,000 students studying foundation degrees in 2009/10, such courses are now a significant part of the higher education landscape, alongside long-established HE qualifications such as the Higher National Diploma. These qualifications play a key role in helping to equip the current and the future work force with the associate professional and technician-level skills that will play an important role in delivering economic growth.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England produces an annual report on foundation degree key statistics, describing the key characteristics of courses and students. The latest report showed that of those students registered at an HEI, and gaining their foundation degree award in 2007/08, 59% of students who studied full-time and 42% of those who studied part-time went on to study for an honours degree the following year.

*Foundation degree entrants<sup>1</sup> by higher education institution—English higher education institutions academic year 2009/10*

Higher education institution	Entrants
Open University	3,410
University of Plymouth	2,935
University of Central Lancashire	1,825
University of Teesside	1,245
Staffordshire University	1,200
University of the Arts, London	1,125
University of Greenwich	1,065
University of Kent	1,020
University of Sunderland	935
University of Hertfordshire	900
University of Brighton	885
University of Essex	880
University of Huddersfield	855
Edge Hill University	835
Bournemouth University	830
Anglia Ruskin University	805
Thames Valley University	805
Kingston University	795
University of the West of England, Bristol	780
University of Worcester	640
University Campus Suffolk	640
Buckinghamshire New University	605
University of Wolverhampton	600
University of Chester	590
De Montfort University	590
University of Bedfordshire	585
University of Northampton	585
University College Birmingham	555
Canterbury Christ Church University	550
Bath Spa University	510
London South Bank University	490
London Metropolitan University	475
Oxford Brookes University	470
University of Derby	450
University of Cumbria	440
University of Bolton	405
Manchester Metropolitan University	400
University of East Anglia	400
University of Portsmouth	365
Middlesex University	340
Birmingham City University	335
University of Bath	330
Harper Adams University College	320
Sheffield Hallam University	305
Nottingham Trent University	300
University of Birmingham	300
Arts University College at Bournemouth	280

Foundation degree entrants<sup>1</sup> by higher education institution—English higher education institutions academic year 2009/10

Higher education institution	Entrants
Southampton Solent University	275
University of Hull	275
Leeds Metropolitan University	250
University of Gloucestershire	245
Liverpool John Moores University	245
Aston University	245
University of Northumbria at Newcastle	235
University of Salford	230
York St John University	220
University of East London	220
University of Chichester	210
University of Winchester	205
Birkbeck College	205
Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication	200
University of Leicester	190
Conservatoire for Dance and Drama	190
University of Bradford	185
University of Lincoln	175
Newman University College	150
Roehampton University	150
Coventry University	150
Norwich University College of the Arts	140
City University	135
University of Southampton	130
St Marys University College, Twickenham	110
University of Warwick	110
St Georges Hospital Medical School	100
Writtle College	100
Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln	95
Liverpool Hope University	95
University of Westminster	90
University College Plymouth St Mark and St John	85
University of Sussex	80
Leeds Trinity University College	75
University for the Creative Arts	65
University of Leeds	60
Institute of Education	55

Foundation degree entrants<sup>1</sup> by higher education institution—English higher education institutions academic year 2009/10

Higher education institution	Entrants
Royal Agricultural College	50
University of Reading	45
Leeds College of Music	45
University of Surrey	35
University of Bristol	30
Royal Northern College of Music	25
University of Lancaster	25
Queen Mary and Westfield College	25
Royal Veterinary College	25
University of Sheffield	25
Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance	20
Heythrop College	15
University of York	10
Total English HEIs	42,330

<sup>1</sup> Covers entrants of all domiciles to both full-time and part-time foundation degree courses.

Note:

Figures are based on a HESA standard registration population and have been rounded to the nearest five.

Source:

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record.

### Higher Education

**Mr Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills how many university spin-offs were established by each higher education institution in each of the last five years; and how many such spin-offs were active three years after their establishment. [47432]

**Mr Willetts:** Data on the number of university spin-offs are collected by the Higher Education-Business and Community Interaction survey (HE-BCI), which is currently conducted by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Table 1 shows (a) the number of formal university spin-offs and (b) the number of formal university spin-offs still active after three years, for each UK higher education institution (HEI).

Table 1: Number of spin-offs, by higher education institution, 2005-06 to 2009-10<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>

Institution	(a) Formal spin-offs established					(b) Formal spin-offs still active after three years				
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Cranfield University	1	0	0	0	0	4	4	6	5	4
Royal College of Art	1	5	3	7	13	0	2	2	2	3
Bishop Grosseteste University College, Lincoln	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Darlington College of Arts	0	1	—	—	—	0	0	—	—	—
University College Falmouth	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
University of Winchester	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
University of the Arts London	3	2	3	20	32	1	0	2	3	2
University of Northampton	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Ravensbourne	0	0	0	0	27	0	0	0	0	0
Bournemouth University	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	3	4	4
Coventry University	0	2	2	11	10	2	4	6	7	10
University of Derby	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
University of East London	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
University of Greenwich	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	3

Table 1: Number of spin-offs, by higher education institution, 2005-06 to 2009-10<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>

Institution	(a) Formal spin-offs established					(b) Formal spin-offs still active after three years				
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
University of Hertfordshire	0	0	3	4	3	5	4	3	4	3
University of Huddersfield	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Kingston University	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2
Leeds Metropolitan University	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Liverpool John Moores University	6	11	7	3	0	12	13	13	9	6
Manchester Metropolitan University	4	3	0	4	4	4	1	0	3	3
Middlesex University	1	5	4	3	3	9	5	4	3	3
De Montfort University	1	0	4	1	0	5	7	5	4	6
University of Northumbria at Newcastle	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Nottingham Trent University	0	0	2	1	1	4	4	2	4	3
Oxford Brookes University	0	1	3	5	5	1	1	1	2	4
University of Plymouth	1	3	1	0	8	6	5	5	6	7
University of Portsmouth	3	5	1	1	0	5	3	3	3	3
Sheffield Hallam University	0	0	1	1	0	5	5	5	6	2
London South Bank University	1	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	2	1
Staffordshire University	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	2
University of Sunderland	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	2	2	1
Teesside University	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	2
The University of West London	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
University of the West of England, Bristol	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	2
University of Chichester	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
University of Westminster	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	1	1	1
University of Wolverhampton	2	0	0	0	0	3	3	4	5	2
University of Wales, Newport	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
Glyndwr University	3	8	5	0	0	2	2	7	6	0
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	0	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
University of Glamorgan	3	1	1	5	2	4	3	6	5	6
Swansea Metropolitan University	0	0	4	2	1	0	0	0	6	6
Trinity University College	2	0	2	0	0	0	3	2	2	3
University of Abertay Dundee	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	3
Queen Margaret University Edinburgh	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Robert Gordon University	6	7	5	0	1	0	1	4	4	4
University of the West of Scotland	1	0	2	0	3	1	2	2	0	3
Glasgow Caledonian University	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	2	2
Edinburgh Napier University	0	11	7	1	1	0	8	6	4	0
Aston University	3	3	1	1	10	3	6	7	9	9
University of Bath	1	1	1	2	0	4	4	5	6	6

Table 1: Number of spin-offs, by higher education institution, 2005-06 to 2009-10<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>

Institution	(a) Formal spin-offs established					(b) Formal spin-offs still active after three years				
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
University of Birmingham	7	0	4	1	0	23	20	20	25	20
University of Bradford	1	2	7	0	9	5	4	4	6	6
University of Bristol	4	0	2	2	0	25	18	18	22	24
Brunel University	1	5	7	7	5	7	5	6	6	5
University of Cambridge	8	2	1	0	2	30	34	51	55	48
City University, London	0	2	2	3	5	1	2	1	1	2
University of Durham	1	2	3	2	6	17	17	12	16	15
University of East Anglia	1	1	0	2	1	2	2	1	2	3
University of Essex	0	0	0	1	1	3	2	1	0	1
University of Exeter	2	0	2	1	2	8	9	10	9	10
University of Hull	1	2	3	8	8	5	3	5	5	6
Keele University	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	3	2	3
University of Kent	4	4	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	3
Lancaster University	4	1	5	2	1	4	4	7	10	12
University of Leeds	4	5	8	1	1	27	26	19	25	23
University of Leicester	0	16	16	17	17	6	10	12	13	14
University of Liverpool	10	7	1	20	4	14	11	20	14	18
Birkbeck College	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Goldsmiths College, University of London	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Imperial College London	10	13	15	2	4	53	42	63	64	70
Kings College London	3	0	0	0	0	14	15	14	16	15
Queen Mary, University of London	2	2	1	1	1	6	6	9	9	9
Royal Holloway, University of London	3	2	1	0	0	2	2	1	1	3
Royal Veterinary College	0	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	0
St George's Hospital Medical School	0	0	0	1	0	4	4	4	3	3
School of Pharmacy	0	0	0	1	1	0	4	4	4	5
University College London	3	7	2	2	3	27	31	29	30	30
Loughborough University	1	2	2	0	0	14	15	17	15	15
University of Newcastle upon Tyne	2	0	5	5	5	12	15	11	13	15
University of Nottingham	1	4	2	2	2	12	15	17	13	17
University of Oxford	7	7	2	4	2	42	45	43	38	39
University of Reading	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	3	3	2
University of Salford	1	1	0	9	9	13	13	9	9	9
University of Sheffield	6	8	0	0	2	33	42	46	49	46
University of Southampton	3	0	0	1	0	15	17	17	15	14
University of Surrey	0	4	2	0	2	7	10	9	12	10
University of Sussex	0	0	0	1	0	3	4	4	4	2
University of Warwick	10	0	2	1	2	14	11	18	20	15
University of York	1	1	0	0	0	9	14	16	16	16
University of Edinburgh	3	5	6	1	8	24	34	38	54	57
University of Glasgow	1	2	0	3	2	10	11	14	15	13

Table 1: Number of spin-offs, by higher education institution, 2005-06 to 2009-10<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>

Institution	(a) Formal spin-offs established					(b) Formal spin-offs still active after three years				
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
University of Strathclyde	2	2	3	2	6	30	35	33	34	33
University of Aberdeen	3	2	3	4	2	14	14	18	22	23
Heriot-Watt University	2	1	1	0	0	13	13	14	0	0
University of Dundee	3	0	1	2	2	14	16	17	19	15
University of St Andrews	1	0	4	1	1	7	10	11	12	13
University of Wales, Trinity Saint David	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	2
Aberystwyth University	5	3	4	2	2	8	8	7	5	5
Bangor University	2	5	7	0	3	2	6	7	5	5
Cardiff University	2	2	1	1	3	18	19	19	23	26
Swansea University	6	9	9	1	0	0	5	11	14	12
Queen's University Belfast	1	1	3	2	0	29	35	34	33	35
University of Ulster	0	1	7	5	2	9	10	14	14	13
Institute of Cancer Research	1	0	0	6	7	5	5	4	5	5
University of Manchester	4	8	4	2	3	0	32	32	34	35
Total	186	226	219	215	273	746	844	923	976	969

<sup>1</sup> Spin-offs include those with some HEI ownership.

<sup>2</sup> 2005/06 to 2007/08 data collected by HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England); 2008/09 to 2009/10 by HESA.

<sup>3</sup> HEI's not listed had no spin-offs recorded in the last five years.

Source:

Higher Education-Business and Community Interaction survey (HE-BCI).

### Higher Education: Admissions

**Mr Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what plans he has to write to state school pupils to encourage them to apply to particular universities; to which universities he plans to encourage applications; and if he will make a statement. [47433]

**Mr Willetts:** We are considering a range of options that might help prompt able young people to consider and apply to university, and to achieve their full potential.

This Government are committed to widening participation and fair access to higher education. We are establishing a new framework, with increased responsibility on universities to widen participation. Universities wanting to charge more than a £6,000 annual graduate contribution will have to demonstrate what more they will do to attract more students from disadvantaged backgrounds through outreach activities, targeted scholarships and other financial support. The Director of the Office for Fair Access issued guidance to universities on 8 March setting out his expectations of what Access Agreements should cover. Universities wanting to charge more than a £6,000 graduate contribution will also have to participate in the new National Scholarships Programme, which will be worth £150 million by 2014-15.

**Margot James:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what minimum UCAS tariff score he is setting for entrants to university, in line with the recommendation made by Lord Browne in his review. [47531]

**Mr Willetts:** Lord Browne's recommendations on a tariff were intended to introduce more competition into the system by allowing institutions with higher demand

to expand in response to student choice. While we currently have no plans to introduce a minimum tariff score for entry to higher education, we are interested in exploring whether there could be some categories of students with higher UCAS scores for whom a tariff approach could work. But decisions about admission to university will remain a matter for individual universities, and not for Government. We will set out proposals in the forthcoming White Paper.

### Office of Fair Access: Universities

**Mr Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills which universities have not met the access benchmarks agreed with the Office of Fair Access in each year since that Office's inception; and if he will make a statement. [47452]

**Mr Willetts:** This is a matter for the director of Fair Access. I have asked him to write to the hon. Member and place a copy of his response in the Libraries of the House.

To date, Office of Fair Access (OFFA) has published sector level summary information on progress on milestones. This information is available in the relevant annual reports describing monitoring outcomes, available at:

[www.offa.org.uk](http://www.offa.org.uk)

From September 2012, the director of Fair Access will assess annually the progress made by each institution towards appropriate benchmarks and other measures of widening participation, access and student retention that Higher Education Institutions will have agreed with OFFA through their access agreements. OFFA will require institutions to publish a summary of their progress against their milestones and targets each year.

### Post Offices: Closures

**Nia Griffith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills (1) which post office branches were under long-term temporary closure on 1 March 2011; [47910]

(2) how many post office branches were under long-term temporary closure on 1 March 2011; and how many of these were (a) Crown post offices, (b) full-time sub-post offices, (c) part-time sub-post offices, (d) franchise branches, (e) satellite branches, and (f) outreach branches; [47911]

(3) how many post office branches there were on 1 March 2011; and how many of these were (a) Crown post offices, (b) full-time sub-post offices, (c) part-time sub-post offices, (d) franchise branches, (e) satellite branches, (f) outreach branches and (g) under long-term temporary closure. [47912]

**Mr Davey:** The information requested is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. I have therefore asked Paula Vennells, the managing director of Post Office Ltd, to respond directly to the right hon. Member and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

### Public Sector: Training

**Patrick Mercer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what plans his Department has to support the re-training and re-skilling of public sector workers. [44917]

**Mr Maude:** I have been asked to reply.

All individuals, including public sector workers, are able to access the further education (FE) and skills system to re-train and re-skill. The Government's Skills Strategy, Skills for Sustainable Growth, sets out how the FE and skills system will be reformed to better support and improve the skills of the workforce, the performance of the economy and engagement in learning.

As part of this strategy Government have announced plans to make available more apprenticeship places. In the NHS, for example, of the 8,167 apprenticeships in 2009/10, 60% were taken up by the current work force.

### Regional Growth Fund

**Amber Rudd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills when he expects to inform applicants to the regional growth fund of the outcome of their application. [47756]

**Mr Prisk** [*holding answer 18 March 2011*]: The Government welcome the very strong response to the first round of bidding to the regional growth fund. Applications are being appraised and we aim to make public the outcome of that round and inform applicants as soon as possible.

### Science and Technology Funding Council

**Mr Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Science and Technology Funding Council; and how much his Department has allocated it in each of (a) the last five years and (b) the next three years. [47454]

**Mr Willetts:** The Performance Management System (PMS) for Research Councils was introduced in 2005 and has three elements: Delivery Plans set out the key deliverables for the spending review period; Scorecards record progress over the previous months, together with targets and risks for the coming period; and an Output Framework is published annually and includes information on economic impact, knowledge generation and exchange, and public engagement. As part of PMS, performance review meetings are held every six months between BIS and each of the Research Councils and Research Councils UK. A revised process which reduces the burden, but keeps the essence of the system, will be in place for the next financial year.

The allocations to STFC are as follows:

	£000
<hr/>	
(a) <sup>1</sup>	
2007-08	573,464
2008-09	623,641
2009-10	630,337
2010-11	651,635
(b) <sup>2</sup>	
2011-12	538,009
2012-13	519,398
2013-14	516,627

<sup>1</sup> The STFC was formed on 1 April 2007, so there are no allocations before then.

<sup>2</sup> The allocations from 2011-12 onwards are not on a comparable basis to previous years because substantial activities will transfer from STFC to the UK Space Agency when the Agency is established on 1 April 2011.

### Science: Females

**Nicola Blackwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what steps he is taking to encourage girls to choose science, technology, engineering or mathematics at A level. [46038]

**Mr Gibb:** I have been asked to reply.

The Government are funding a number of initiatives to encourage the greater participation of girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM subjects) at GCSE, A Level and beyond. These include:

Commissioning the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM), and the National Strategies to look at ways to help widen participation in mathematics with a particular focus on engaging more girls (including reviewing the ways in which schools approach how mathematics is delivered);

Identifying resources that will engage girls more in these subjects;

Establishing the Stimulating Physics network to provide support at regional level to widen participation in A level physics; and

The network of Science Learning Centres disseminating best practice from their Girls into Physics action research programme.

In addition, the STEM Ambassadors programme arranges for over 20,000 individuals drawn from more than 1,500 employers to volunteer their time and expertise to help schools and colleges, acting as role models and enhancing and enriching their pupils' understanding of, and enthusiasm for, STEM subjects. Almost 50% of the current STEM Ambassadors are female.

In 2010, more girls than boys were entered for GCSE Mathematics, and AS and A Level Biology.

### Technology Strategy Board

**Mr Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills how much funding the Technology Strategy Board allocated to each (a) university and (b) further education college in England in each of the last five years; how much it plans to allocate in each of the next three years; and if he will make a statement.

[44986]

**Mr Willetts** [holding answer 8 March 2011]: The Executive Technology Strategy Board was established as a non-departmental public body in July 2007. Technology Strategy Board grant funding to individual universities and further education colleges in England is detailed as follows although it should be noted that funding announced in a given year will often support activities over subsequent years, usually no more than three years.

Future allocations cannot however be specified as grant funding is awarded to business led research projects on the basis of their technical and economic case, and there is no pre-allocation of funds for collaborations with the knowledge base.

2008	£
<i>Universities</i>	
Anglia Ruskin University	324,508
Aston University	164,835
Birkbeck, University of London	41,144
Birmingham City University	374,571
Bournemouth University	111,208
Brunel University	704,169
Buckinghamshire New University	139,344
City University	114,610
Coventry University	600,568
Cranfield University	1,364,165
De Montfort University	1,372,509
Heriot-Watt University	290,539
Imperial College London	2,664,490
Keele University	78,793
Kingston University	358,260
Lancaster University	282,107
Liverpool John Moores University	661,897
London Metropolitan University	124,880
London South Bank University	555,268
Loughborough University	1,091,557
Manchester Metropolitan University	411,831
Newcastle University	805,633
Nottingham Trent University	408,302
Oxford Brookes University	516,960
Sheffield Hallam University	269,098
Staffordshire University	271,313
Teesside University	473,528
The Open University	84,199
The University of Birmingham	1,394,235
The University of Bolton	539,726
The University of Huddersfield	218,130
The University of Hull	148,642
The University of Liverpool	2,433,673
The University of Manchester	1,248,459
The University of Northampton	323,141
The University of Nottingham	2,238,492
The University of Reading	813,192
The University of Sheffield	2,414,117

2008	£
The University of Southampton	1,774,408
The University of Sussex	389,176
The University of Warwick	491,385
University College London	1,641,422
University of Bath	1,263,502
University of Bradford	637,045
University of Brighton	877,306
University of Bristol	1,443,909
University of Cambridge	1,066,674
University of Central Lancashire	133,089
University of Cumbria	58,664
University of Derby	70,517
University of Durham	656,232
University of East London	202,947
University of Exeter	1,026,546
University of Gloucestershire	609,182
University of Greenwich	399,040
University of Hertfordshire	512,887
University of Kent	200,465
University of Leeds	1,628,159
University of Leicester	196,830
University of Lincoln	122,914
University of London	652,169
University of Northumbria at Newcastle	216,736
University of Oxford	74,713
University of Plymouth	421,912
University of Portsmouth	351,870
University of Salford	69,539
University of Surrey	443,901
University of the West of England Bristol	742,354
University of Warwick	474,801
University of Westminster	171,024
University of Wolverhampton	990,248
Total	46,443,659
<i>FE colleges</i>	
Hereward College	23,000
Kingston College	71,704
London College of Fashion	2,900
Peterborough Regional College	51,283
Runshaw College	68,044
West Nottinghamshire College	51,283
Total	245,214

**Mr Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills how many staff were employed by the Technology Strategy Board in each of the last three years; how many he expects to be employed in each of the next three years; and if he will make a statement.

[45997]

**Mr Willetts** [holding answer 14 March 2011]: The Technology Strategy Board employs both permanent staff, and secondees and interims from business. Breakdown of staff numbers is as follows:

	Payroll employees	Secondees and interim appointments
March 2009	62	41
March 2010	98	24
March 2011	101	35

While the Technology Strategy Board will have a reduced administrative budget in future years, we cannot specify the number of staff that will be employed over the next three years or the balance between permanent staff and secondees and interims however as this will have to reflect the nature of its programmes going forward including delivery of new activities such as Technology and Innovation Centres.

#### **Technology Strategy Board**

**Mr Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills how many businesses received funding from the Technology Strategy Board in each of the last three years; how many he expects to receive funding in each of the next three years; and if he will make a statement. [45998]

**Mr Willetts** [*holding answer 14 March 2011*]: During the period 2008-10 the Technology Strategy Board provided collaborative Research & Development funding to over 1,700 individual businesses. In addition, over 1,300 individual businesses have participated in Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) managed by the Technology Strategy Board. However, funding for KTPs goes to the academic partner in the partnership, with the businesses involved paying their own costs.

It will not be possible to specify the number of businesses that will receive funding in future years however, as this is allocated through a competitive process with collaborative R&D projects ranging in scale from £10,000 to £100 million.

#### **Trade: Somalia**

**Mr Spellar:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what assessment his Department has made of the potential effects of Somali piracy on UK trade. [47290]

**Mr Prisk:** It is not possible to make an effective assessment of the potential effects of Somali piracy on UK trade. Many companies will have taken steps to respond to the threat to their goods posed by the piracy, leading to an increase in the costs of shipping. Some shipments have been rerouted to the west coast of Africa. However, decisions have been made on a case by case basis by the companies concerned.

During 2010, approximately 23,000 ships, with \$952 billion of trade transited the Gulf of Aden. Of these ships fewer than 0.01% were hijacked.

#### **Veterinary Medicine**

**Mr Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills how many places to study for veterinary science qualifications are available in universities in England in the academic year 2011-12; and if he will make a statement. [47455]

**Mr Willetts:** This information is not available, we do not plan for the number of students at a course or subject level. The actual number of places on veterinary courses will depend on the decisions of individual universities. We expect the total number of places on all courses in 2011/12 to be broadly similar to 2010/11.



# Ministerial Corrections

Monday 21 March 2011

## JUSTICE Care Proceedings

**Annette Brooke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many care proceedings cases in each local authority area are currently open in the family courts; how many were open in each of the last five years; and how many have reached a conclusion (a) in 2010 to date and (b) each of the last five years. [226]  
[Official Report, 3 June 2010, Vol. 510, c. 55-59W.]

*Letter of correction from Mr Jonathan Djanogly:*

An error has been identified in the written answer given to the hon. Member for Mid Dorset and North Poole (Annette Brooke) on 3 June 2010. The December 2008 figures in Table 1 of the response in relation to care supervision orders outstanding in the Family Proceedings Courts (FPCs) are incorrect.

The full answer given was as follows:

**Mr Djanogly:** Table 1 shows the number of care and supervision cases outstanding as at the end of December in each year from 2005 to 2009 in the Family Proceedings Courts and County Courts of England and Wales. Data are presented by HM Courts Service areas as a local authority area breakdown is not collected centrally and could be obtained only through the inspection of individual case files at disproportionate cost.

Table 1

HMCS area	Total number of care and supervision outstanding cases in the Family Proceedings Court					Total number of care and supervision outstanding cases in the County Courts				
	December					December				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Avon and Somerset Devon and Cornwall, and Gloucestershire	342	350	348	342	370	260	303	275	310	389
Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Thames Valley	227	187	216	227	301	188	221	175	179	320
Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk	282	264	372	282	371	273	236	241	233	286
Cheshire and Merseyside	126	225	210	126	253	240	300	248	261	356
Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria	484	642	636	484	533	198	270	264	235	317
Cumbria and Lancashire	82	115	113	82	101	185	198	218	200	297
Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight and Wiltshire	162	154	206	162	215	160	151	173	165	233
East Midlands	395	444	367	395	560	164	176	176	214	287
Greater Manchester	133	174	140	133	295	361	378	394	353	547
Humber and South Yorkshire	166	183	188	166	201	252	265	239	245	335
Kent Surrey and Sussex	325	340	364	325	512	256	260	287	245	340
London Civil and Family	1,017	1,020	888	1,017	1,426	850	733	724	561	758
Mid and West Wales	94	106	97	94	168	67	43	40	53	115
North and West Yorkshire	185	169	293	185	409	229	258	240	225	294
North Wales	16	25	30	16	57	57	77	67	52	80
South East Wales	157	205	162	157	260	136	133	122	116	156
Staffordshire and West Mercia	152	217	219	152	274	104	115	88	88	148
West Midlands and Warwickshire	303	320	332	303	966	391	340	342	294	464
National total	4,648	5,140	5,181	4,648	7,272	4,371	4,457	4,313	4,029	5,722

*Notes:*

1. The data are taken from the HMCS FamilyMan System and Family Case Tracker.
2. The figures relate to the new HMCS areas.
3. The total number of outstanding cases show the total number of care and supervisions cases open at the end of December each year.

Table 2 shows the number of care and supervision orders made in each calendar year from 2004 to 2008 for county courts and the High Court.

Table 2

HMCS area	Care and supervision orders made in the County Courts and High Court, England and Wales				
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Avon and Somerset, Devon and Cornwall and Gloucestershire	395	355	334	372	450
Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Thames Valley	386	274	337	310	331

Table 2

HMCS area	Care and supervision orders made in the County Courts and High Court, England and Wales				
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk	327	325	445	399	350
Cheshire and Merseyside	330	396	393	466	453
Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria	369	403	303	349	464
Cumbria and Lancashire	316	257	342	327	283
Dorset, Hampshire and IOW and Wiltshire	311	255	299	255	272
East Midlands	391	369	299	292	351
Greater Manchester	561	490	715	736	579
Humber and South Yorkshire	435	489	559	611	476
Kent, Surrey and Sussex	266	200	418	471	371
London Civil and Family	916	846	989	878	868
Mid and West Wales	82	113	109	100	71
North and West Yorkshire	516	427	484	552	530
North Wales	106	84	92	167	173
South East Wales	240	278	262	239	168
West Mercia and Staffordshire	175	195	208	253	186
West Midlands and Warwickshire	474	509	588	434	446
National Total	6,596	6,265	7,176	7,211	6,822

*Notes:*

1. The data are taken from the HMCS FamilyMan System.
2. Figures relate to the number of children subject to each application.
3. Disposals in each year may relate to applications made in earlier years.
4. Figures are provided for County Courts and the High Court.

Table 3 shows the number of care and supervision orders made from April 2007 to December 2008 in the Family Proceedings Courts; figures for earlier periods are not available for these areas.

More recent statistics than those shown are not yet available.

Table 3

HMCS area	Care and supervision orders made in the Family Proceedings Courts, England and Wales	
	April 2007 to December 2007	January 2008 to December 2008
Avon and Somerset, Devon and Cornwall and Gloucestershire	262	361
Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Thames Valley	174	272
Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk	133	202
Cheshire and Merseyside	139	135
Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria	327	387
Cumbria and Lancashire	85	84
Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight and Wiltshire	107	121
East Midlands	198	372
Greater Manchester	76	116
Humber and South Yorkshire	64	153
Kent, Surrey and Sussex	161	258
London Crime, Central and South	533	543
Mid and West Wales	69	56
North and West Yorkshire	176	214
North Wales	9	43
South East Wales	149	172
West Mercia and Staffordshire	172	239
West Midlands and Warwickshire	93	129
National total	2,927	3,857

*Notes:*

1. The data are taken from the HMCS FamilyMan System and One Performance Truth database.
2. Figures relate to the number of children subject to each application.
3. Disposals in 2007 and 2008 may relate to applications made in earlier years.
4. Figures are provided for Family Proceedings Court.
5. For Family Proceedings Courts the earliest available data that can be broken down by HMCS area is from April 2007. Therefore figures for 2007 relate to data from April 2007 to December 2007.

The correct answer should have been:

**Mr Djanogly:** Table 1 shows the number of care and supervision cases outstanding as at the end of December in each year from 2005 to 2009 in the Family Proceedings

Courts and County Courts of England and Wales. Data are presented by HM Courts Service areas as a local authority area breakdown is not collected centrally and could be obtained only through the inspection of individual case files at disproportionate cost.

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National total	2,927	3,857

## Notes:

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2. Figures relate to the number of children subject to each application.
3. Disposals in 2007 and 2008 may relate to applications made in earlier years.
4. Figures are provided for Family Proceedings Court.
5. For Family Proceedings Courts the earliest available data that can be broken down by HMCS area is from April 2007. Therefore figures for 2007 relate to data from April 2007 to December 2007.

**Prisoners: Sentencing**

**Gavin Shuker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many people were serving a custodial sentence of (a) five years or fewer, (b) four years or fewer, (c) three years or fewer, (d) two years or fewer and (e) one year or less for each category of offence in the latest period for which figures are available. [32361]

[Official Report, 21 December 2010, Vol. 520, c. 1166W.]

*Letter of correction from Mr Crispin Blunt:*

An error has been identified in the written answer given to the hon. Member for Luton South (Gavin Shuker) on 21 December 2010. The figures in the table supplied on the breakdown of the custodial prison population for various sentence lengths by offence group for 30 September 2010 are incorrect.

The full answer given was as follows:

**Mr Blunt:** The following table provides information on custodial sentences in prison establishments in England and Wales by sentence length band and offence category as at 30 September 2010.

*Custodial prison population as of 30 September 2010 by sentence length and offence category*

Offence category	Sentence length				
	Less than five years	Less than four years	Less than three years	Less than two years	Less than one year
Violence against the person	7,033	5,991	4,846	3,535	1,761
Sexual offences	2,315	1,753	1,232	720	212
Robbery	3,513	2,486	1,500	619	143
Burglary	5,053	4,188	2,954	1,526	507
Theft and handling	3,719	3,517	3,207	2,768	2,047
Fraud and forgery	1,225	1,066	903	698	324
Drug offences	5,866	4,370	2,677	1,085	229
Motoring offences	877	857	823	759	547
Other offences	4,851	4,383	3,849	3,234	2,234
Offences not recorded	190	159	128	107	92

These figures have been drawn from administrative IT systems, which, as with any large scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

The correct answer should have been:

**Mr Blunt:** The following table provides information on custodial sentences in prison establishments in England and Wales by sentence length band and offence category as at 30 September 2010.

*Custodial prison population as of 30 September 2010 by sentence length and offence category*

Offence category	Sentence length				
	Less than five years	Less than four years	Less than three years	Less than two years	Less than one year
Violence against the person	7,097	5,951	4,594	3,154	1,736
Sexual offences	2,882	1,742	1,245	721	208
Robbery	3,394	2,484	1,730	930	142
Burglary	4,596	4,144	2,963	1,719	499
Theft and handling	3,594	3,484	3,016	2,514	2,019
Fraud and forgery	1,166	1,060	826	573	322
Drug offences	5,840	4,306	2,997	1,600	224
Motoring offences	847	835	737	633	532
Other offences	4,819	4,392	3,695	2,953	2,221
Offences not recorded	408	372	315	253	193

These figures have been drawn from administrative IT systems, which, as with any large scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

### Prostitution: Newham

**Lyn Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many convictions there were for (a) kerb crawling, (b) soliciting for the purposes of prostitution in a public place, (c) keeping a brothel and (d) control of prostitution in respect of offences committed in the London borough of Newham in (i) 2008, (ii) 2009 and (iii) 2010. [33388]

[Official Report, 17 January 2011, Vol. 521, c. 652-53W.]

*Letter of correction from Mr Crispin Blunt:*

An error has been identified in the written answer given to the hon. Member for West Ham (Lyn Brown) on 17 January 2011. The figures in the table for the number of defendants convicted for keeping a brothel in the Metropolitan police force area were incorrect along with some of the information included in the footnotes that accompanied the table.

The full answer given was as follows:

**Mr Blunt:** The number of defendants found guilty at all courts for selected prostitution related offences in the Metropolitan police force area for the years 2008 to 2009 can be viewed in the table.

Information at borough level is not collated centrally by the Ministry of Justice.

Court proceedings data for 2010 are planned for publication in the spring.

*Number of defendants found guilty at all courts for selected prostitution related offences in the Metropolitan police force area for the years 2008-09<sup>1,2,3</sup>*

Offence	2008	2009
Kerb crawling	165	117
Soliciting for the purposes of prostitution in a public place	114	65
Keeping a brothel	5	10

*Number of defendants found guilty at all courts for selected prostitution related offences in the Metropolitan police force area for the years 2008-09<sup>1,2,3</sup>*

Offence	2008	2009
Control of prostitution	16	4

<sup>1</sup> The figures given in the table on court proceedings relate to persons for whom these offences were the principal offences for which they were dealt with. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences it is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe.

<sup>2</sup> Every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented are accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that these data have been extracted from large administrative data systems generated by the courts and police forces. As a consequence, care should be taken to ensure data collection processes and their inevitable limitations are taken into account when those data are used.

<sup>3</sup> Includes the following statutes and corresponding offence descriptions:

*Kerb, crawling:*

Sexual Offences Act 1985, S.1

kerb crawling

Sexual Offences Act 1985, S.2

Persistent soliciting of person or persons for the purpose of prostitution

*Soliciting for the purposes of prostitution in a public place:*

Sexual Offences Act 1985, S.1

Common prostitute loitering or soliciting for the purpose of prostitution

*Keeping a brothel:*

Sexual Offences Act 1956 S.33A as added by the Sexual Offences Act 1967

Keeping a brothel for prostitution

Sexual Offences Act 1956 S.34

Letting premises for use as a brothel

Sexual Offences Act 1956 S.34

Letting premises for use as a brothel for homosexual practices

Sexual Offences Act 1956 S.35

Tenant permitting premises to be used as a brothel

Sexual Offences Act 1956 S.35 as amended by the Sexual Offences Act 2003 S.53

Tenant permitting premises to be used as a brothel for homosexual practices

Sexual Offences Act 1956 S.33 as amended by the Sexual Offences Act 1967

Keeping a brothel for homosexual practices

*Control of prostitution:*

Sexual Offences Act 2001 S.53

Controlling prostitution for gain

*Source:*

Justice Statistics Analytical Services—Ministry of Justice

The correct answer should have been:

**Mr Blunt:** The number of defendants found guilty at all courts for selected prostitution related offences in the Metropolitan police force area for the years 2008 to 2009 can be viewed in the table.

Information at borough level is not collated centrally by the Ministry of Justice.

Court proceedings data for 2010 are planned for publication in the spring.

*Number of defendants found guilty at all courts for selected prostitution related offences in the Metropolitan police force area for the years 2008-09<sup>1,2,3</sup>*

Offence	2008	2009
Kerb crawling	165	117
Soliciting for the purposes of prostitution in a public place	114	65
Keeping a brothel	11	15
Control of prostitution	16	4

<sup>1</sup>The figures given in the table on court proceedings relate to persons for whom these offences were the principal offences for which they were dealt with. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences it is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe.

<sup>2</sup> Every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented are accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that these data have been extracted from large administrative data systems generated by the courts and police forces. As a consequence, care should be taken to ensure data collection processes and their inevitable limitations are taken into account when those data are used.

<sup>3</sup> Includes the following statutes and corresponding offence descriptions:

*Kerb crawling:*

Sexual Offences Act 1985, s.1

Kerb crawling

Sexual Offences Act 1985, s.2

Persistent soliciting of person or persons for the purpose of prostitution

*Soliciting for the purposes of prostitution in a public place:*

Sexual Offences Act 1985, s.1

Common prostitute loitering or soliciting for the purpose of prostitution

*Keeping a brothel:*

Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.33A as added by the Sexual Offences Act 2003 s.55

Keeping a brothel for prostitution

Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.33

Keeping a brothel

Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.34

Letting premises for use as a brothel

Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.35

Tenant permitting premises to be used as a brothel

Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.36

Tenant permitting premises to be used for prostitution

Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.33 as amended by the Sexual Offences Act 1967

Keeping a brothel for homosexual practices

Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.34

Letting premises for use as a brothel for homosexual practices

Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.35 as amended by the Sexual Offences Act 2003 s.53

Tenant permitting premises to be used as a brothel for homosexual practices

Similar provisions in Local Acts

Other offences against keeping a brothel

*Control of prostitution:*

Sexual Offences Act 2001 s.53

Controlling prostitution for gain

*Source:*

Justice Statistics Analytical Services—Ministry of Justice.

# ORAL ANSWERS

Monday 21 March 2011

	<i>Col. No.</i>		<i>Col. No.</i>
<b>EDUCATION</b> .....	677	<b>EDUCATION—continued</b>	
Academies (Chatham and Aylesford).....	689	School Funding.....	679
Baccalaureate.....	682	School Funding.....	683
Design.....	688	Special Educational Needs.....	677
Education Maintenance Allowance.....	691	Special Needs and Disabilities.....	680
Free School Meals.....	687	Sports Facilities.....	689
Free Schools.....	685	Student Information.....	691
History.....	685	Teaching Standards.....	690
Primary Schools (Halifax).....	677	Topical Questions.....	692
School Curriculum.....	688		

# WRITTEN MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Monday 21 March 2011

	<i>Col. No.</i>		<i>Col. No.</i>
<b>CABINET OFFICE</b> .....	39WS	<b>HEALTH</b> .....	42WS
Big Society Bank.....	39WS	NHS Pay Review Body.....	42WS
<b>DEFENCE</b> .....	39WS	<b>JUSTICE</b> .....	43WS
Armed Forces' Pay Review Body.....	39WS	Prison Service Pay Review.....	43WS
<b>EDUCATION</b> .....	40WS	<b>PRIME MINISTER</b> .....	43WS
School Teachers' Review Body.....	40WS	Review Body on Senior Salaries.....	43WS
<b>ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE</b> .....	41WS	<b>TRANSPORT</b> .....	44WS
Energy Council.....	41WS	Drink and Drug-driving.....	44WS
<b>FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE</b> .....	42WS	Regional Cycling Projects.....	46WS
International Criminal Court (Victims Fund).....	42WS	<b>WORK AND PENSIONS</b> .....	46WS
		Health and Safety System.....	46WS

# WRITTEN ANSWERS

Monday 21 March 2011

	<i>Col. No.</i>		<i>Col. No.</i>
<b>BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS</b> .....	871W	<b>CABINET OFFICE—continued</b>	
Business: Ethics.....	871W	Government Departments: Manpower.....	836W
Business: North East.....	872W	Government Departments: Personnel.....	836W
Business: Regulation.....	872W	Government Departments: Procurement.....	836W
Business: Rural Areas.....	872W	Obesity and Anorexia: Death.....	837W
Departmental Public Bodies.....	873W	Public Bodies.....	838W
Departmental Regulation.....	873W	<b>COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT</b> ..	827W
Foundation Courses: Universities.....	873W	Departmental Public Bodies.....	827W
Higher Education.....	876W	Housing Benefit.....	827W
Higher Education: Admissions.....	881W	Infrastructure: Planning.....	828W
Office of Fair Access: Universities.....	882W	Jephson Housing Association Group:	
Post Offices: Closures.....	883W	Expenditure.....	828W
Public Sector: Training.....	883W	Social Rented Housing: Peterborough.....	828W
Regional Growth Fund.....	883W	<b>CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT</b> .....	763W
Science and Technology Funding Council.....	883W	Audio Equipment: Regulation.....	763W
Science: Females.....	884W	BBC: Radio.....	764W
Technology Strategy Board.....	885W	Communications Bill.....	764W
Technology Strategy Board.....	887W	Departmental Public Appointments.....	764W
Trade: Somalia.....	888W	National Lottery: Young People.....	765W
Veterinary Medicine.....	888W	Ofcom: Finance.....	765W
<b>CABINET OFFICE</b> .....	833W	Rugby.....	766W
Census.....	833W	Sky News.....	766W
Departmental Procurement.....	834W	Video Games: Age.....	766W
Departmental Regulation.....	835W	Video Games: Violence.....	766W
East Grinstead.....	835W		

	<i>Col. No.</i>
<b>CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT—<i>continued</i></b>	
White Space Devices .....	767W
<b>DEFENCE</b> .....	832W
Air Force: Military Bases .....	832W
Nuclear Weapons .....	833W
Somalia: Piracy .....	833W
<b>EDUCATION</b> .....	845W
Apprentices: Finance .....	846W
Baccalaureate .....	845W
Departmental Procurement .....	846W
Departmental Public Consultation .....	847W
Departmental Regulation .....	847W
Free School Meals: Education Maintenance Allowance .....	848W
Members: Correspondence .....	850W
Runaway Children .....	851W
Schools: Administration .....	851W
Schools: Governing Bodies .....	852W
Schools: Roads .....	852W
Schools: Sports .....	852W
Science: Females .....	853W
Sex Education .....	845W
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities .....	846W
Squatting .....	853W
Teach First .....	846W
Written Questions: Government Responses .....	853W
<b>ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE</b> .....	838W
Alcoholic Drinks .....	838W
Carbon Emissions .....	838W
Cold Weather Payments: Bexley .....	839W
Departmental Regulation .....	839W
Electricity: Meters .....	840W
Feed-in Tariffs .....	840W
Fuel Oil: Prices .....	841W
<b>ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS</b> .....	803W
Agriculture .....	803W
Anaerobic Digestion .....	804W
Animal Welfare .....	804W
Cotton: Subsidies .....	804W
Dairy Farming .....	805W
Departmental Billing .....	805W
Departmental Food .....	806W
Departmental Procurement .....	806W
Departmental Public Appointments .....	807W
Departmental Regulation .....	807W
Departmental Security .....	808W
Dutch Elm Disease .....	808W
Farms: Sky Lanterns .....	808W
Fisheries .....	809W
Food: Labelling .....	809W
Forestry Commission .....	809W
Forests .....	810W
Gangmasters Licensing Authority .....	811W
Genetically Modified Organisms: Somerset .....	811W
Horse Racing: Animal Welfare .....	811W
Labelling .....	812W
Milk: Prices .....	813W
Peat .....	813W
Phytophthora Ramorum .....	813W
Plastics: Recycling .....	814W
Refrigerators: Waste Disposal .....	814W
Veterinary Services: Finance .....	814W
Water Abstraction .....	815W
<b>FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE</b> .....	815W
Bahrain: Politics and Government .....	815W

	<i>Col. No.</i>
<b>FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE—<i>continued</i></b>	
BBC World Service .....	816W
British Overseas Territories .....	817W
Departmental Ministerial Policy Advisers .....	817W
Departmental Public Bodies .....	817W
Diplomatic Service: British Nationals Abroad .....	818W
Egypt: Politics and Government .....	818W
Former Ministers .....	819W
Iran: Politics and Government .....	819W
Iran: Terrorism .....	820W
Iraq: Iran .....	820W
Israel: Foreign Relations .....	820W
Ivory Coast: Armed Conflict .....	821W
Japan: Tsunami .....	821W
Lebanon: Capital Punishment .....	822W
Lebanon: Politics and Government .....	822W
Libya: British Nationals Abroad .....	822W
Libya: Politics and Government .....	823W
Lydia Hunt .....	823W
Meetings .....	824W
Middle East: Peace Negotiations .....	824W
Morocco: Politics and Government .....	824W
Muammar Gaddafi .....	825W
Overtime .....	825W
Pakistan: Christianity .....	825W
Palestinians: Economic Situation .....	825W
Somalia: Piracy .....	826W
Swaziland: Politics and Government .....	826W
Yemen: Politics and Government .....	827W
<b>HEALTH</b> .....	767W
Caffeine: Young People .....	767W
Contraceptives .....	768W
Departmental Assets .....	768W
Departmental Procurement .....	768W
Departmental Public Bodies .....	769W
Epilepsy: Drugs .....	769W
Flu: Vaccination .....	770W
General Practitioners: Certificate of Completion of Training .....	770W
Health Services: West Midlands .....	770W
NHS: Disciplinary Proceedings .....	772W
NHS: Manpower .....	772W
Nurses: Sick Leave .....	772W
Potassium Iodide .....	773W
Queen's Hospital Romford .....	773W
Screening: Babies .....	773W
Surgery .....	774W
Surgery: Admissions .....	774W
Tobacco: Sales .....	774W
<b>HOME DEPARTMENT</b> .....	775W
Alcoholic Drinks: Prices .....	775W
Antisocial Behaviour: Fixed Penalties .....	776W
Criminal Records .....	776W
Departmental Public Appointments .....	777W
Departmental Rail Travel .....	777W
Detention Centres: Children .....	778W
Entry Clearances: Overseas Students .....	778W
Foreign Nationals .....	779W
Foreign Workers: EU Nationals .....	780W
Human Trafficking .....	780W
Illegal Immigrants .....	781W
Immigration .....	781W
Immigration Control .....	782W
Liberal Democrats: Conferences .....	782W
Police: Pensions .....	782W
Police: Retirement .....	783W
Serious Organised Crime Agency .....	783W
Squatting .....	783W

	<i>Col. No.</i>		<i>Col. No.</i>
<b>HOME DEPARTMENT—continued</b>		<b>TRANSPORT—continued</b>	
Visas .....	783W	Transport: Free Schools .....	788W
<b>INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b> .....	841W	Trust Ports .....	788W
Democratic Republic of Congo: Overseas Aid .....	841W	Wrexham Shropshire and Marylebone Railway Company .....	788W
Departmental Drinks .....	841W	<b>TREASURY</b> .....	829W
Departmental Plants .....	842W	Aggregates Levy .....	829W
Developing Countries: Natural Disasters .....	842W	Departmental Compensation .....	829W
Developing Countries: Remittances .....	842W	Departmental Procurement .....	830W
International Labour Organisation: Finance .....	843W	Excise Duties: Beer .....	829W
International Planned Parenthood Federation: Finance .....	843W	Fuels: Prices .....	830W
Marie Stopes International: Finance .....	844W	Public Sector: Pay .....	831W
Overseas Aid .....	844W	Rent a Room Scheme .....	831W
World Bank: Energy .....	845W	Taxation: Compost .....	832W
<b>JUSTICE</b> .....	788W	VAT: Construction .....	832W
Alcoholic Drinks: Convictions .....	788W	<b>WOMEN AND EQUALITIES</b> .....	763W
Bail .....	789W	Civil Partnerships .....	763W
Chief Coroner .....	790W	Equal Opportunities: Nationality .....	763W
Crime .....	790W	<b>WORK AND PENSIONS</b> .....	854W
Criminal Injuries Compensation .....	790W	Child Benefit .....	854W
Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority .....	791W	Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission: Fees and Charges .....	854W
Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority: Terrorism .....	791W	Children: Maintenance .....	854W
Domestic Violence .....	791W	Crisis Loans .....	855W
Family Breakdown .....	792W	Crisis Loans: Barking and Dagenham .....	855W
Interim Possession Orders .....	792W	Departmental Public Appointments .....	856W
Juries .....	793W	Departmental Public Bodies .....	856W
Olympic Games 2012 .....	793W	Disability Living Allowance .....	857W
Police: Sentencing .....	793W	Disability Living Allowance: Autism .....	859W
Prerogative Power of Mercy .....	795W	Disability Living Allowance: Expenditure .....	860W
Prison and Probation Ombudsman: Personnel .....	797W	Disability Living Allowance: Fraud .....	861W
Probation: Expenditure .....	797W	Disability Living Allowance: West Midlands .....	861W
Public Bodies Reform Programme .....	799W	Employment and Support Allowance: Barking and Dagenham .....	861W
Secure Training Centres: Restraint Techniques .....	799W	Employment Schemes: Cancer .....	862W
Sentencing .....	801W	Employment Schemes: Procurement .....	862W
Sentencing: Appeals .....	801W	EU Agenda for New Skills and Jobs .....	863W
Social Security Benefits: Appeals .....	802W	Families .....	863W
Theft: Dogs .....	802W	Free Movement of Labour .....	864W
Victims: Compensation .....	803W	Housing Benefit: Affordable Housing .....	864W
Youth Justice Board .....	803W	Housing Benefit: Berkshire .....	865W
<b>LEADER OF THE HOUSE</b> .....	845W	Means-tested Benefits: Peterborough .....	865W
E-petitions .....	845W	New Deal Schemes .....	866W
<b>TRANSPORT</b> .....	784W	Personal Independence Payment: Autism .....	866W
Cycling England: Finance .....	784W	Post Office Card Account .....	866W
Driving Tests .....	784W	Private Pensions .....	866W
HM Coastguard .....	784W	Public Expenditure .....	867W
London and Southeastern Railway: Passengers .....	785W	Social Security Benefits .....	867W
Maritime and Coastguard Agency .....	786W	Social Security Benefits: Autism .....	868W
Motor Vehicles: Insurance .....	786W	Social Security Benefits: EU Nationals .....	868W
Rolling Stock .....	786W	Universal Credit .....	869W
Sea Rescue: Falmouth .....	787W	Universal Credit: Disability .....	869W
Tolls: EC Action .....	787W	Winter Fuel Payments .....	870W
Transport for London: Finance .....	787W	Work Capability Assessment .....	871W

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

Monday 21 March 2011

	<i>Col. No.</i>		<i>Col. No.</i>
<b>JUSTICE</b> .....	11MC	<b>JUSTICE—continued</b>	
Care Proceedings .....	11MC	Prostitution: Newham .....	19MC
Prisoners: Sentencing .....	17MC		

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**CONTENTS**

**Monday 21 March 2011**

**Oral Answers to Questions [Col. 677] [see index inside back page]**  
*Secretary of State for Education*

**United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 [Col. 700]**  
*Motion—(The Prime Minister)—on a Division, agreed to*

**Members' Salaries [Col. 807]**  
*Motion—Sir George Young)—agreed to*

**Cawston Park Hospital [Col. 825]**  
*Debate on motion for Adjournment*

**Written Ministerial Statements [Col. 39WS]**

**Written Answers to Questions [Col. 763W] [see index inside back page]**

**Ministerial Corrections [Col. 11MC]**

---