



House of Commons
Foreign Affairs Committee

Developments in UK Foreign Policy

Oral and written evidence

Wednesday 8 September 2010

*Rt Hon William Hague MP, Secretary of State
for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and
First Secretary of State*

*Mr Simon Fraser CMG, Permanent Under-
Secretary at the Foreign and Commonwealth
Office and Head of the Diplomatic Service*

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The Foreign Affairs Committee

The Foreign Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and its associated agencies.

Current membership

Richard Ottaway (*Conservative, Croydon South*) (*Chair*)
Rt Hon Bob Ainsworth (*Labour, Coventry North East*)
Mr John Baron (*Conservative, Basildon and Billericay*)
Rt Hon Sir Menzies Campbell (*Liberal Democrats, North East Fife*)
Rt Hon Ann Clwyd (*Labour, Cynon Valley*)
Mike Gapes (*Labour, Ilford South*)
Andrew Rosindell (*Conservative, Romford*)
Mr Frank Roy (*Labour, Motherwell and Wishaw*)
Rt Hon Sir John Stanley (*Conservative, Tonbridge and Malling*)
Rory Stewart (*Conservative, Penrith and The Border*)
Mr Dave Watts (*Labour, St Helens North*)

The following Member was also a member of the Committee during the parliament:

Emma Reynolds (*Labour, Wolverhampton North East*)

Powers

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Oral evidence

Taken before the Foreign Affairs Committee on Wednesday 8 September 2010

Members present

Richard Ottaway (Chair)

Mr John Baron
Sir Menzies Campbell
Mike Gapes
Emma Reynolds
Andrew Rosindell

Mr Frank Roy
Sir John Stanley
Rory Stewart
Mr Dave Watts

Witnesses: **Rt Hon William Hague MP**, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and First Secretary of State, and **Mr Simon Fraser CMG**, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Head of the Diplomatic Service, gave evidence.

Chair: Foreign Secretary, it gives me great pleasure to see you here today. This is the first public hearing of the Committee in this Parliament, and it is right and proper that you should be our first witness. You are very welcome. I also extend a warm welcome on behalf of the Committee to your new Permanent Secretary, Simon Fraser. It is good to see him here. We have an informal meeting pencilled in with him in a few days' time.

Mr Fraser: Tomorrow.

Q1 Chair: Yes, tomorrow afternoon. We look forward to seeing you then. I shall open the batting, Foreign Secretary. Everyone has questions for you, and we are scheduled for a two-hour slot. In your speech of 1 July, you said that you returned to Front-Bench politics five years ago "expressly to shadow Foreign Affairs and obviously hoping to occupy the office I now hold". You were a long time waiting for that. Has anything surprised you since you arrived at the Foreign Office? Has anything caught you unawares?

Mr Hague: I would not say that anything has been an astonishing surprise. Having shadowed the post for four and a half years, you think that you get to know the organisation to some extent from the outside. As you know, I think, from reading that speech, it is my determination that we place the Foreign Office back at the centre of Government; that the Foreign Office see itself not as a small, spending Department, but as a central, thinking Department of the Government; and that it should have a close relationship with the Prime Minister and should not be shut out of foreign policy decisions. That is how we are conducting ourselves.

I suppose that, if there has been a surprise, it is that it requires something of a cultural change. The Foreign Office is full of brilliant people on the whole—sparing no blushes—including those who have been away and come back. There are a lot of well-informed people, but I think that the habits of years, or even decades—I am not just making a criticism of the last Government here—have induced something of a sense of institutional timidity. That might be over-stating it, but the Foreign Office has not been as used as I would like it to be to being prepared to lead on all occasions

within Government and to say, "Here are the ideas. This is the expertise. This is the knowledge that is necessary to frame foreign policy. Here we can confidently set out what it is going to be and the internal discussions of Government."

One of my objectives in the first few months in office has been to instil that confidence without arrogance. I suppose that the need to do that has been a bit of a surprise, but on the reassuring side, so far, every time that I have found it necessary to interview among officials in the Department to see who is going to take on a new role, a private office and so on, I have found that there are some really outstanding people in the Foreign Office. I think that should be of some reassurance for the future.

Q2 Chair: Excellent. You are, of course, part of a coalition. To what extent have you had to modify your approach as a result of the coalition? Have any FCO issues been referred to the Coalition Committee, and if so, which ones?

Mr Hague: There haven't been any FCO issues referred to the Coalition Committee, although there were, of course, FCO issues that had to be dealt with within our original coalition agreement, which I took part in negotiating. There were therefore some inevitable policy compromises. That was certainly true in European policy, but it was not as difficult a thing to bring about as might have been predicted a year or two ago, because both parties in the coalition readily agreed that there should be no further transfer of powers to the European Union and that we should have something like the referendum Bill that we intend to introduce later in this Session.

On some areas, however, such as the question of trying to return powers from the EU to the UK, and whether a sovereignty clause or sovereignty Act should be passed, we had to say in the coalition agreement that we will return to those issues and examine them together, and that we would have to decide on the area of criminal justice and home affairs and the question whether to opt in to EU measures on a case-by-case basis. So clearly there are compromises there. On FCO-related matters, although the nuclear deterrent is also an MOD matter, we agreed in the

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coalition agreement that the Liberal Democrats should be able to differ.

Those compromises were built from the beginning into the construction of the coalition. We haven't had to take FCO issues to the Coalition Committee, but bear it in mind, Mr Chairman, that a huge range of Foreign Office issues is being discussed in the National Security Council, the creation of which is a very important development in this Government. Senior Ministers in the coalition are therefore discussing international relations together on a very regular basis. Tomorrow will see the 16th meeting of the National Security Council, so the coalition is dealing with these issues together.

In the Foreign Office, we have a working coalition: one of the Ministers of State is a Liberal Democrat Member, Jeremy Browne, who is doing an absolutely superb job. We regard ourselves as one team—the Conservative Ministers don't meet separately from the Liberal Democrat or anything like that. It is an integrated team. I think that the coalition, in the case of the Foreign Office, has so far worked very well.

Q3 Sir John Stanley: Foreign Secretary, you have said that the UK's alliance with the US is our most important relationship. Last week, I was in northernmost Greenland with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's Defence Committee at the US base at Thule. As you well know, the radar system there is linked with the radar system at RAF Fylingdales in your native Yorkshire. We were briefed there on the very important upgrading of the radar at Thule so that, in addition to carrying out its long-established intercontinental ballistic missile identification and tracking system function, it will be integrated with the existing operational anti-ballistic missile system in the United States at the two operational locations that the US has. Have the coalition Government, since their formation, had any approaches from the US Administration that a similar upgrading might take place at RAF Fylingdales so that it is integrated with an ABM capability in Europe, as well as performing its existing tracking system function for ballistic missiles? If so, what response have the coalition Government made?

Mr Hague: I am not aware of any approach on that since the coalition Government came in. We haven't discussed it within the coalition Government. I can say that, of course, on such issues we will want to work very closely with the United States of America, as we always have. Many of these systems—as you say, Sir John—have been closely integrated, so we would listen carefully to any approach that the United States made on that, but I am not aware of such a discussion over the past few months.

Q4 Sir John Stanley: If you have any supplementary information and if you choose to make any further inquiries, you will inform the Committee in a letter, perhaps.

Mr Hague: Of course. Absolutely. It may well be something that we have to return to in the future. Absolutely.

Sir John Stanley: Thank you.

Chair: Foreign Secretary, we would like now to touch on the question of finances and how they affect the Department. I am going to ask Mike Gapes to open the batting on this one.

Q5 Mike Gapes: Welcome, Foreign Secretary. Just before the general election, your predecessor, David Miliband, got some additional funding from the Treasury to cope with the crisis that the FCO was having in its budget in the past financial year and for this financial year. One of the first decisions of the coalition was to slash the additional funds that your predecessor had got and take £55 million out of the £6 billion cuts in-year for this year out of the FCO's budget. One of your other predecessors, Lord Howe, was quoted as saying that the FCO budget should be increased and a former Permanent Secretary, Lord Kerr, said you can't wield the knife again without losing global reach and influence. You made a speech at the Royal United Services Institute in March where you said that you hadn't waited thirteen years to return to office simply to oversee the management of Britain's decline in world affairs. Given that you are about to embark on a massive programme of spending cuts in the comprehensive spending review, isn't that inevitably going to have serious consequences for our footprint internationally and our role in world affairs?

Mr Hague: I am hoping—I am not intending—to have a dramatic result on our role in world affairs. That is always something I would always fight very strongly to maintain, as you can see from those speeches I made in the past and would continue to make. It is true, of course, that we have a monumental fiscal problem in this country. We face now a £155 billion budget deficit that all Departments have to play their role in reducing. There is no escape from that. Every Department has to do its utmost to tackle that. But the background—just to go back a little further than Mr Gapes' question, Mr Chairman—is that really in the last two years the Foreign and Commonwealth Office had quite substantial reductions. In fact, members of this Committee, and certainly your predecessors in this Committee, are very familiar with this, because it produced a report about the removal of the—there it is—overseas price mechanism. This led, by the last financial year, to £140 million of unplanned reductions in FCO spending. That is quite a large proportion—£140 million may not sound a lot in terms of overall Government budget, but the FCO itself is only 0.3% of the entire budget, and you can't control about half of that, such as international subscriptions and peacekeeping contributions, and large parts of it go to the BBC World Service, the British Council and so on.

Before we'd started, the inheritance was that the FCO's discretionary spending had already been cut by 17% in two years under the previous Government, which meant some serious things. It meant reductions under the previous Government in human rights and democracy projects in Iran, Sudan, Zambia, Russia and Central Asia. Counter-proliferation, counter-narcotics and counter-radicalisation programmes were reduced. Support for overseas territories was reduced, and some locally engaged staff in the United States were required to take unpaid leave. I maintained then,

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and I still maintain, that, whatever the level, it cannot make sense to fund a Foreign Ministry of a country represented in most countries of the world on the basis of how the exchange rate goes up and down. It is very important to put that right. Of course, how we put it right is wrapped up in the comprehensive spending review now under way.

It was against that background that my predecessor faced an emergency. The package that was put together to deal with that was not very substantial; a lot of it involved selling the FCO's own assets, and some of it was rather imaginary. In the comprehensive spending review we are trying, while playing our part in bringing down Government spending, to bear in mind the big reduction that has already taken place and get FCO finances on to a more planned and sustainable footing, but we have had to find some reductions. I set out in a written ministerial statement a few months ago some of those reductions: £18 million of reductions in some programme areas for instance.

Q6 Mike Gapes: But given that you've already taken £55 million on top of the context that you've described, are you now arguing with the Chancellor and in the comprehensive spending review process that the FCO should take a significantly smaller budget cut than other Departments?

Mr Hague: Let me put it this way: the Chancellor and I don't argue; we discuss these things together. I've tried to ensure that the whole Government are conscious of the fact that the FCO had a large unplanned reduction in spending before we came to the comprehensive spending review. That doesn't mean that there is nothing that can be reduced; there will be efficiencies to be found, and I am not looking for and not planning the substantial reduction of this country's presence around the globe. I am sure that you, Mr Chairman, may wish to come on to the emphasis that we are placing on commercial relations and expanding our business and commerce around the world, but the FCO network is an essential part of the infrastructure of this country for economic recovery.

Q7 Mike Gapes: May I then put it to you: is the FCO overseas network ring-fenced?

Mr Hague: No, it's not ring-fenced, and it shouldn't be, because there will always be arguments to close certain posts and, indeed, to open other posts. Of the, I think, 254 FCO posts, 140 are actual sovereign posts in the capitals of other countries. A case can sometimes be made in some countries to say, "Well, actually, we've got several posts and we don't need so many", or premises can be combined with the Department for International Development or the British Council. I think that it would be quite wrong to say, "Right, everything we've got now is set in stone", because there will be ways that we can do things more efficiently; there will be things that we want to open as well in the future. I don't know whether the Permanent Secretary wants to expand on that point about how there is scope for adjustment here and there.

Mr Fraser: I agree that we need to maintain a degree of flexibility in how we represent ourselves overseas,

but I think that the principle that the Foreign Secretary has established, which is quite a long-standing principle, that we should have global reach in the network and that we should have a network of sovereign posts, which enables us to represent our interests around the world, is a principle which we should uphold.

Q8 Mike Gapes: May I put this to you? You mentioned DFID in your answer earlier. I take this from your written response to our questions that you sent to us, in which you said: "FCO and DFID are reviewing the FCO's ODA scoring methodology to ensure that this work is fully captured and consistent with the OECD's guidelines for ODA scoring." Put into non-jargon, that means that you're raiding the DFID budget to do things that have in the past been paid for out of the FCO budget. Is that true?

Mr Hague: Not in terms of raiding anything. There is quite a proportion of FCO spending that is categorised as overseas development spending.

Q9 Mike Gapes: How much?

Mr Hague: In the last year, £137 million.

Q10 Mike Gapes: And you're expecting DFID to pay that amount, which was previously paid for out of the FCO budget?

Mr Hague: You will have to wait for the results of the comprehensive spending review. You're trying to anticipate, understandably and interestingly, those things, but we will have to wait for them. That spending can be provided for out of various different budgets. Of course, the important thing is that it is ODA-compliant. As we look to this country hitting the target—0.7% of gross national income being ODA spending—by 2013, which we are all strongly agreed on across parties, it is important to recognise that part of the spending of the Foreign Office contributes to that. Is it possible for the Department for International Development to contribute to that spending? Yes, it may be, and there would be nothing wrong with that; that is overseas development spending.

Q11 Mike Gapes: So DFID is ring-fenced, and its ring-fenced spending will be used to fund things in the FCO budget. Is that what you're saying?

Mr Hague: I'm saying that you have to wait for the outcome of the comprehensive spending review. What is ring-fenced is no Department's budget; it is spending 0.7% on overseas development that is the ring-fenced objective of the Government.

Q12 Mike Gapes: But you would be tweaking the definitions.

Mr Hague: There is no need to tweak any definition. Already, £137 million of FCO spending falls in that category. Clearly, we can go into all this in much more detail, and the Committee may want to hold a whole session on the outcome of the comprehensive spending review when we have it, but it would obviously be wrong or misleading of me to anticipate that now.

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Q13 Mike Gapes: I have one final question. You are not just the Foreign Secretary; you are the First Secretary of State, too. As such, you are on the star chamber. Presumably, given that you are the First Secretary of State, you have a first-among-equals status within your colleagues. Does that put you in a difficult position to simultaneously argue a very tough line with your colleagues and defend your Department's position, which clearly is concerned about the financial implications for the future of our country abroad?

Mr Hague: I have never had any difficulty with being tough with my colleagues and defending my corners. The serious answer is that the FCO's spending is 0.3% of total spending. The Foreign Secretary, quite apart from the First Secretary of State, is in a good position to serve on that committee because the Foreign Office spending is such a tiny proportion of Government spending as a whole.

Q14 Chair: I have one quick question, Foreign Secretary. I think you just about touched on this matter. You may well say that we have to wait until the review comes out, but you've made it quite clear that you're going to expand your effort in certain areas—trade and the focus on China, India, Brazil, Russia and the Gulf. Yet you face reductions, which means there has to be cuts elsewhere. Are you in a position at the moment to say exactly how you're going to square this circle?

Mr Hague: No, not in that sense, but it is important to think of it not just in that sense, if I may say so. Part of this is the whole Government working together. One of my objectives is for foreign policy to run through the veins of all the Departments. The achievement of our foreign policy objectives, particularly in elevating key bilateral relationships with the emerging powers and economies of the world, must take place across the whole British Government, and therefore the achievement of that is not just down to the resources of the FCO. I have been to Japan, and, with the Prime Minister, to India and many of the Gulf states. But it was the Business Secretary who went to Brazil recently. This is to be pursued across the board; we want to elevate links in culture, health care and education with these countries.

Quite a large proportion of the increased impact that we want to make in those elevated bilateral relations comes from the whole Government working together cohesively. So far, the best illustration of that has been in the Prime Minister's visit to India, on which he was joined by at least five Ministers and a planeload of business people, cultural leaders and sporting figures. That did not require the rearrangement of the Foreign Office budget, because it is the result of properly directing our national effort into those bilateral relationships. I cannot exclude the possibility that it might be necessary to move resources; if our relationship with countries such as India, Indonesia, or Malaysia, or other emerging economies in the east, meant that they should receive a greater share of our resources, then we would do that.

Our prime effort is to get the whole Government working together, which requires a huge amount of

ministerial and official energy. That is one of the reasons for the Foreign Office now having six Ministers, whereas there were four under the outgoing Government. We actually now have another half a Minister, because it was announced yesterday that we will share the Trade Minister with the Business Department. That means that Ministers are able to travel—Jeremy Browne is in the air on his way to Japan as we speak—and that means that we can do more, even without much of an enlargement of the budget for such things.

Chair: That is clear and very helpful. Rory?

Q15 Rory Stewart: Foreign Secretary, thank you very much for coming. As you say, the Foreign Office has, in a sense, been a victim, and not just of the exchange rate; over probably the past 30 or 40 years, it has been increasingly marginalised in comparison with other Government Departments and other agendas. Now, these hugely funded Departments, such as DFID, and the Foreign Office, looking smaller and smaller, and less and less well funded. It may be unfair to draw such comparisons, but the total core budget of the Foreign Office is now less than £1 billion, and this year, we are probably spending £5 billion in Afghanistan alone on exactly the kind of war that we employ the Foreign Office to try to prevent. A couple of issues arise from that, and I would love to hear your views on them. One is the effect on the morale and identity of the Department's staff, and the second is the effect on your estates and embassies. If you face cuts, there are two ways in which those cuts seem to hit most acutely. First, Foreign Office staff are already losing allowances. Their travel packages are being affected, and they feel that their educational packages are under threat. That will affect their morale. Secondly, in the fight over where the money goes, there is a danger that the embassy in Washington, for example, argues that it matters much more than an embassy somewhere else, and fights for its turf. We might end up closing an embassy in another capital. Not only would there be a ripple effect in the region, but it is difficult to re-open such embassies once we have closed it.

Mr Hague: Yes. This country gets good value, and the spending reductions that I have spoken about have really intensified that. France, with a budget of nearly £4 billion, has 279 missions overseas. We have 261—I said 254 earlier—missions in total overseas. We have a little over half of France's budget with which to maintain almost the same number of missions. To put that in starker terms, the entire spending of the Foreign Office, including the World Service, the British Council, international subscriptions and everything else, is less than the spending of Kent county council. So this country gets pretty good value for money from our overseas operations.

Linking this question to the question asked earlier by Mr Gapes, if you closed the 40 cheapest posts—we have 261 posts—you would save only £2.5 million. That is why, whatever we have to do with our budget, it is quite unlikely that one would choose the option of closing dozens of posts. We are not engaged in some large reduction of our international network. To save a lot of money from that, you would have to

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close the biggest posts, or the ones that require the most security and protection. Clearly, a post in Kabul or Baghdad is very expensive to run, as you in particular, Mr Stewart, will appreciate. We would have to close those to save a lot of money on the network, and that would be inconceivable.

I hope that that trade-off between those large and small posts will not have to be made; it is certainly not one I am intending to make. Closing the small missions around the world is a false economy on the whole. That is not to say that they cannot sometimes be rationalised or that two countries cannot be well served together from one central point. I think in general, however, that the reduction and withdrawal of this country's diplomatic presence—something that we know has taken place in large parts of Africa—is a mistake. With all these budgetary restrictions, I cannot reverse what has happened in the past, but I am not looking at making serious further reductions in the size of that network, and I think that it would be a major national error to do so.

Morale has varied in the Foreign Office recently. I cannot speak with authority about morale before the past few months. Surveys of morale have varied considerably over the past few years. It would be fair to say that in the Foreign Office, as across the whole of the public sector, until spending decisions are made there will be an anxiety about what they will entail. I hope that we are succeeding in communicating to all the staff of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office this sense of purpose—the sense of the central role in Government, of working with other Departments, of intensifying relationships with emerging powers, and of emphasising commercial aspects of diplomacy, but not at the expense of our other commitments around the world.

We have got things humming again. That is good for morale, and the feedback about it in the FCO is good. Wherever possible, I speak to all the staff wherever I go—Washington, Kabul, the European capitals—and that includes small embassies such as that in Finland, where I was the other day. I try to get all the staff together who work in our missions overseas, and address them all, and I explain what we are doing, because I think that they should hear from the top of the organisation how we are setting about it. Hopefully, that is good for morale as well.

Q16 Rory Stewart: Finally, on staff morale, one of the things that you said in your opening speeches as Foreign Secretary was that you were committed to investing in area expertise and linguistic expertise. That is a change, to some extent, in the culture of the Foreign Office. Some people have felt over the last 10 years that you do better in the Foreign Office if you tick certain boxes in terms of management theory and jargon, and that the old strengths of a more academic, area-based, language-based expertise did not help you. Are you managing to shift that culture? Are you managing to create a culture in which young diplomats feel that it is worth their while becoming great experts on the politics, language and cultures of a society, rather than becoming great management gurus?

Mr Hague: That is the objective. We need the good management as well, by the way. It is important not to lose the good management, and the good practice in looking after people in a human resources sense, while trying to re-create that geographic expertise and that deep knowledge of certain parts of the world. Certainly, it is my objective to tilt things in that direction—to accentuate in a diplomat's career the value of serving in a difficult place, of knowing a region of the world with great intimacy and of the language expertise that comes from that. Those things have to be re-accentuated, so that the people who get to the top of the organisation 20 to 30 years from now have come through that background.

When I was in Islamabad, I was asked by the staff magazine a version of what you asked me earlier, Mr Chairman, which was: what had surprised me about the Foreign Office? At the end of a long day, I said that not everyone can spell, but I think that that may be true across the nation. I also said that not enough people apply for the difficult postings. We have to allow for the fact that many people are serving difficult postings in Kabul, or Lashkar Gah or Baghdad. Nevertheless, I would like to see a greater readiness to apply for the other hardship postings to build up the necessary expertise.

I should add one rider to the whole discussion about staff morale in the Foreign Office. One reason why we get more network for our money than France or other countries is that 67% of FCO staff are locally employed. They are not sent out from London to work in our embassies and consulates; they are actually local staff. This country owes an enormous amount to the local staff, who are absolutely indispensable to our diplomatic effort. All of us engaged in conducting our foreign affairs should always recognise that.

Q17 Sir Menzies Campbell: Foreign Secretary, I am encouraged by what you have said about not taking an axe to existing missions. I very much hope that, in your approach to spending considerations, we will not find ourselves forced into asking locally engaged staff to work for a week for nothing. That happened in our US embassy during the past 12 months, which was a gross embarrassment to the ambassador and was certainly of no advantage to our reputation in Washington.

So far we have talked about global reach and influence, and there has always been an implication for value for money. There is an institution for which you have responsibility that demonstrates all three of those principles: it is, of course, the World Service. By comparison with other news operations, it has a greater reach at a lower per capita price, and some would argue that it has a greater effect than just about any other that might be suggested. As you know, the BBC, particularly the World Service, understands that it has to be more prudent and to run a tighter ship. None the less, there is some anxiety about the consequences of that for the World Service.

Allied with that, what do you think the consequences might be for that global reach, which you have mentioned, if the World Service were to find itself subject to a substantial reduction in the resources available to it?

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Mr Hague: It is very important that the World Service maintains that global reach. In opposition, I argued that the BBC World Service and the British Council are fundamentally important parts of Britain's presence in the world. That is not as an arm of the state—although some countries critical of us would depict them as that—because they have complete editorial and managerial independence. But they are a very important part of Britain's presence in the world—of our soft influence, as it is sometimes described, or our smart power, as the Americans sometimes describe it. So I attach huge importance to the World Service.

Again, we are engaged in a spending review. As with my replies to the questions from Mr Gapes, I cannot anticipate the outcome of the spending review now, although officials and I will be pleased to explain that outcome in detail after it. The review will undoubtedly affect the World Service. I don't think that any parts of the administration of the public sector will be completely immune from the spending review. But I stress—there have been reports on this in one newspaper this morning—that no decisions have been made about this. I will shortly be putting to the World Service what I think it might achieve in contributing to the spending review. This morning, for instance, I read that the Burma office is to be closed. Well, there is no such thing as the Burma office of the BBC; there is a service that is broadcast into Burma, but that does not cost very much. As I argued about diplomatic posts closing, that would probably not be a very good way of saving money.

In opposition, I appeared on platforms with Burmese human rights activists and launched books with them about their experiences. I have been on the World Service to talk about Burma and the importance of communicating to it. The chances that I will sit in my office and say, "Let's close the World Service into Burma," are correspondingly small. Any opening or closing of a language service by the BBC World Service requires ministerial approval. No such request has been received or considered or granted, so I hope that is of some reassurance about the stories that are going around at the moment about the BBC World Service.

Can the World Service make itself more efficient and therefore contribute to the spending round? Yes I think it can, and it thinks it can. Can we find a settlement with the World Service that allows it to become more efficient without actually reducing those essential services that you and I care about so much? Let us hope that we can.

Q18 Sir Menzies Campbell: Am I entitled to infer from that answer that if any question came up as to whether the service to a particular country might be curtailed or closed, you would unquestionably take account of the contribution that service made to the understanding and the preservation of human rights in that country?

Mr Hague: Yes, absolutely.

Q19 Sir Menzies Campbell: You have laid great store by the advantages of what I might rather triflingly call "economic diplomacy," and I think you

have emphasised the Commonwealth, where of course English is spoken by and large, so perhaps the significance of the World Service is slightly different, but what I think would concern people like myself, and I suspect yourself to some extent, would be if the economic ambitions were somehow to supplant the human rights responsibilities.

Mr Hague: I do not see those as contradictory. In fact, you have heard me speak about those other issues, and you will be glad to know, Sir Ming, that you have only a week to wait for me to speak about the human rights issues as well. I will give a speech a week today about how we reconcile idealism and realism in foreign policy—which, as we know, has always been a challenge in foreign policy throughout the ages—while avoiding the pitfalls of giving a single-word description of an ethical foreign policy, which then creates so many issues in how you apply it.

It is very important that we support our values. Britain is not a nation that can ever have a foreign policy without a conscience. It is part of our identity as a nation. In the late 18th century—the period of history that I am most conversant with—it was British people who fought so hard to abolish the slave trade, including in other countries. I hope we will always be true to those values in Britain. Yes, we stress the action that the Foreign Office must take to improve the security of the nation and to advance the prosperity of the nation, but unless we do those things, we are in no position to advance human rights in the rest of the world.

I will be talking about that at greater length next week, and I am sure that you have noticed that in the new Government—the coalition Government—we have taken important decisions about setting up an inquiry into allegations of complicity in torture, and we have completed and published the guidance on the treatment of detainees. I argue that as our share of world economic output shrinks and as so many other economies grow, and as it becomes harder and harder to impose our values on other countries, we have to be a particularly good example of our values to other countries. I hope that that is something that people across all political parties in Britain can readily agree on.

There is no reduction in the attachment of this country to human rights issues; we are very, very busy on those issues on a daily basis. The BBC World Service will remain of fundamental importance to this country's presence in the world.

Sir Menzies Campbell: If I may be presumptuous, I offer you the phrase "foreign policy with an ethical dimension" for the speech next week, if it is not already written.

Mr Hague: I think we will try to come up with something new.

Q20 Sir Menzies Campbell: Just one last point: there has been some discussion about the publication of the annual report on human rights by your Department, which began under Robin Cook, who was, of course, the author of the expression "foreign policy with an ethical dimension", but which is also something that the Committee has previously set great store by. Can we take it from your Department's

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response, and your article in, I think, *The Daily Telegraph*, that there will be a publication—I heard that it will appear annually—which may not have as many glossy pictures, but which will still fulfil the same responsibility as it has in the past?

Mr Hague: Yes is the short answer to that. There is a longer answer, if you would like it, which is that we are obviously looking at how to do this most cost-effectively. We are working on something like a Command Paper to be laid before Parliament, which will be a comprehensive look at the FCO's human rights work each year. It will identify countries where the human rights record is a cause of particular concern, and so it will still fulfil the same role as the report with which we are familiar. We will also ensure extensive reporting of our human rights activity online, to give a more up-to-date report of what is going on around the world. It will have both those elements, and we are looking at the timing—indeed, we would welcome the Committee's views on the timing of the human rights report to Parliament. One option is to present it in March from next year, covering the period up to December each year. Any views you have on that will be gratefully received.

Q21 Mike Gapes: I want to come in on this issue. The last human rights report was published in March this year by the previous Government. Personally, I hope you do not delay whatever you are going to publish or we will have a big gap.

I have a specific question. You wrote an article in *The Daily Telegraph* on 31 August on human rights, and you listed a number of countries which, under the previous Government, were called “countries of concern”. Your article, however, did not mention one that our Committee was keen for the previous Government to add to their list of countries of concern, which they did in the last report—that country was Sri Lanka. Given the new emphasis on trade and the new emphasis on business connections, have you made any representations about the fact that 30,000 people are still detained in camps in Sri Lanka, following the end of the conflict in 2009? What representations have you made to the Sri Lankan Government recently?

Mr Hague: The Sri Lankan Foreign Minister will be visiting in the not-too-distant future, and that will be a meeting where we have to discuss all these things. The new Government's position on this is very much the same as the last Government's, where there was cross-party agreement on the issue. Never mind anything we have been doing in government; in opposition before the election, I also stressed our strong concerns to the Sri Lankan Government and, to go directly to your point on how you strike the balance between human rights and trade, the impact that this has on potential trade agreements between the European Union and Sri Lanka. There is no change in policy. The Government continue to make strong representations, and I will raise the issue you have mentioned and others with the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister when he comes to London.

Q22 Sir John Stanley: Foreign Secretary, in your response to one of the questions from Sir Ming, you

referred to the coalition Government's welcome decision to carry out an inquiry as to whether there has been any complicit involvement by British officials in torture. Will you tell the Committee whether the scope for this inquiry will extend to the allegations that those who were subject to torture took US flights through the British Indian Ocean Territory at Diego Garcia?

Mr Hague: The inquiry can look at any issue it wishes to, and I do not think it is barred from doing so. The previous Government made some frank disclosures to Parliament about those flights through Diego Garcia. I have not seen anything that would lead us to need to add to that in any way. As far as I am aware, what was declared by the previous Government is the current position, which I questioned them about—as did members of the Committee. The work of the inquiry is primarily focused on allegations of complicity in torture, but I do not think we prohibit it from taking its work more widely, if it wishes to do so.

Chair: Now we move on from finance and human rights to Afghanistan.

Q23 Mr Baron: Foreign Secretary, thank you for joining us today. Perhaps, in all fairness, I should declare an interest; as the Foreign Secretary is probably aware, I have been a sceptic from the start about our involvement in Afghanistan. I feel that we underestimated the mission, and certainly, it was under-resourced. We have had a series of errors since, including over-optimistic scenarios. My chief concern at the moment is over what still appear to be mixed messages with regard to the purpose, and I wonder if I could just question you on that a little bit. For example—we have seen this quite recently—last year, the then Prime Minister was saying on the one hand that our troops were in Afghanistan to keep the streets of London or of the UK safe from terrorism, or to reduce the threat of terrorism, yet in almost the next sentence he was threatening President Karzai with troop withdrawal if he did not clean up his act. Those two statements do not stand well next to each other. I would suggest that if the purpose is to deny al-Qaeda a base from which to operate and pose a threat to the streets not only of this country but of our allies, it seems a little bit incoherent that we have set a deadline of 2015. If the objective is as stated, surely we should stay there until we have achieved that objective rather than putting in an arbitrary timetable. Do you see any contradiction in that position?

Mr Hague: No, I think that what the Prime Minister said about 2015 is absolutely right. Let me just say in passing, while coming back to that, that what I agree with in Mr Baron's question is that it is important to set expectations correctly—not to raise false hopes of progress so rapid that it cannot be fulfilled. That mistake has been made quite often in the past.

I think really the right tone here, which I tried to set in the statement that I made to the House at the end of July after the Kabul conference, is that this remains a phenomenally difficult challenge. The British people, the troops, the soldiers, the marines, the other members of the services, the aid workers and the diplomats are doing an extraordinary job, but it

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remains a phenomenally difficult assignment. One is reminded of that every time we visit there, and so it is very important to guard against over-optimism. It discredits our efforts if we make predictions that do not come true. As you can probably see from the way we have conducted this over the last few months, we have tried to avoid predictions that so many provinces will be handed over by such and such a date. We have not got into that kind of language, and we will have to look at all that with the NATO summit coming up this autumn with the other NATO nations.

Equally, it is very important not to listen only to the bad news. We tend to see Afghanistan through the prism of Helmand in this country—understandably, because that is where our forces are deployed, and normally that is where we visit as Ministers. A few weeks ago, however, I went to Herat in the west of Afghanistan near the border with Iran, and saw a completely different picture. It was not a universally rosy picture, but it was a very different one from Helmand. I was able to talk to students in the university, and there were 400 factories near the airfield turning out goods that are the normal goods of a developing country—making motorbikes or whatever it was they may have been making. Then you see a different perspective on Afghanistan.

I think some genuine progress is being made in the capability of Afghans to govern themselves—we saw that at the Kabul conference. The military efforts now under way are certainly making progress, and we have seen that as Ministers visiting. We have been to places in which you could not have walked around safely a year or so ago. It is now very important, as the Prime Minister has often stressed, that a political process takes place as well—that it is possible for it to take place as well—because nobody thinks that there is a military-only solution to the situation in Afghanistan. That brings us—by a roundabout route, I admit—to your question, Mr Baron. That is the background, as I see it; is it right, then, to say that by 2015 our forces will not be engaged in military operations or will not be there in the same numbers? I think it is, because by then—if we are still there then—we will have been engaged there for a much longer period than the whole of the Second World War. It is consistent with the internationally agreed position, reinforced at the Kabul conference, that the Afghan National Security Forces should lead and conduct military operations in all provinces by the end of 2014. On the current trajectory, the building up of the Afghan National Army is even slightly ahead of schedule—at least in numbers.

On the current trajectory, the building up of the Afghan National Army is even slightly ahead of schedule, at least in numbers. Of course, it still requires the training, the quality, the equipment and so on. What we and the Prime Minister have said is consistent with that.

It is important for Afghans to know that while we are making this immense effort, which has cost so many British lives already, there will come a point when they have to be able to look after their own affairs. What we have said about 2015 is consistent with that and can therefore contribute to improving the situation and making sure that Afghans take responsibility. But

that time is sufficiently distant—it is still five years from now. It in no way undermines the military effort that is taking place today.

Q24 Mr Baron: You have to understand my scepticism, Foreign Secretary, because as you rightly pointed out, we have had a series of over-optimistic scenarios painted. I do not know whether the Afghan forces are going to be ready to take on the fight or the situation that they have been asked to take on by 2014. Therefore, that brings us back to whether the main priority is, as is stated, to deny al-Qaeda its training camps, or to deny it the use of Afghanistan as a base. If that is the case, perhaps there is an inconsistency in having a timetable, because we simply do not know whether we will have succeeded by 2014 or 2015. Let me put it another way: are you absolutely clear and will you stand by the statement that if we do not achieve our objective by 2015, we will withdraw regardless?

Mr Hague: I do not want anyone to be in any doubt about this: we will be fulfilling the Prime Minister's commitment by 2015. The Prime Minister is very clear that by 2015 British troops will not be in Afghanistan in a combat role, nor in the numbers that are there now.

Mr Baron: Regardless of whether we have achieved the objective?

Mr Hague: Unless we are clear about it, we are not credible about it. We are very clear about it. Of course there could be some troops in a training role and as part of wider diplomatic relations in the longer term, as we have in other countries, but we do not want to be fighting in Afghanistan for a day longer than is necessary.

I fully understand the scepticism and it is a wholly legitimate question. On Afghanistan, there have been so many difficult judgments for our predecessors to make, as well as for us, that we should never deride any different point of view. It is entirely understandable that there is some scepticism, but we think that it is right to say that by that time we will have been applying ourselves to this for 50% longer than we applied ourselves to the Second World War. The whole effort of British forces in Afghanistan will be in partnership with Afghan forces. The allies whom we have been working alongside, who will be closely partnered with our forces over the next few months and years, are entitled to expect that they will be able to take on that burden themselves by that time.

Q25 Mr Baron: May I move us on to the military situation? The conflict is described in counter-insurgency terms, probably quite rightly, but I suggest that the victory against the Taliban is as far off as ever. We have had problems in the past about troop density levels in Helmand, which was illustrated by the American surge of marines, with tens of thousand of troops going in. We have had equipment issues such as lack of helicopters, but history suggests that if you are going to fight a successful counter-insurgency war or campaign, you need certain preconditions in place: control of your borders; a broadly sympathetic population standing behind you, helped by a credible Government; and a good ratio of troops to the local

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population. I suggest—I am being devil’s advocate—that we do not have those in Afghanistan, so what makes you think that we are going to win this counter-insurgency campaign?

Mr Hague: I must stress that I do not think that any of us in the Government would argue that there is a purely military solution to our problems in Afghanistan. There is no moment when we will say, “Right, we’ve won everything,” in the sense of winning the Second World War. At some point, the military effort produces a country where the writ of the Afghan Government runs in the vast majority of that country or where that effort is superseded by partial or substantial political settlement, as a result of a political process.

What makes us think that we can make some progress now, was the thrust of your question. It is only very recently that all the necessary elements of the campaign have come together. Despite the fact that western forces have been there since 2001, it is only really now that the necessary number of forces are deployed in Afghanistan—as General Petraeus has recently been making clear—and that we have the necessary proportion and amounts of development aid. As you know, one of the announcements of the new Government has been a 40% increase in development aid going to Afghanistan. It is only now that we have an economic process that is owned and thought out by the Afghans themselves and the Afghan Government in Kabul. All these things have come together in recent times. I am not being starry-eyed about it, because I maintain the tone that I was talking about a few moments ago. This remains a phenomenally difficult problem. It is the single most difficult problem—the most preoccupying problem—that we face in international affairs, but we now have the finest military minds, the good military plan, the necessary quantities of development aid, the experience of provincial reconstruction and the motivated Ministers and key Ministers in Afghanistan to have the best chance for success that it is possible to put together.

It is right to maintain the effort to succeed because the consequences of abandoning that effort now would be extremely serious for Afghanistan, for Pakistan and ultimately for our own national security.

Q26 Mr Baron: May we put the military situation briefly to one side? I agree 100% with what you say; there cannot just be a military solution. The military buy time, and it has to be politicians who try to get to the solution. I put it to the Foreign Secretary that I doubt whether we are winning the hearts and minds or the campaign. The US Department of Defence submission to Congress clearly said that the most lethal weapon the Taliban have is their propaganda machine. There is a discredited Government, and economically it pays to sign up to the Taliban. If you look at the latest pay scales and so forth, you can earn more money in the Taliban than is earned from the average salary across the country—so the figures tell us.

Recent surveys have suggested that increasing numbers of Afghans are becoming disillusioned with the direction that Afghanistan is taking. What is your

assessment of the hearts-and-minds situation, Foreign Secretary? It does not feel on the ground that we are winning that either. That is an essential component if we are to achieve any sort of success in the country.

Mr Hague: It is very hard to generalise. There are surveys, although opinion surveys in a country like Afghanistan are quite difficult to conduct on a scientific basis. Among the other things you have mentioned, they have shown that the majority of people do not want ISAF to leave Afghanistan, so surveys can lead to a contradictory conclusion. That certainly does not suggest that they want us to end our campaign.

My experience of meeting people in Afghanistan was in some of the most difficult areas in parts of Helmand. I walked around, meeting people in the bazaar in Nad Ali a couple of months ago. Those areas have been made more secure and, while local people can see roads being built and health care being improved, their hearts and minds are certainly behind the effort that we are putting into Afghanistan.

We are coming up to parliamentary elections in Afghanistan on 18 September. I do not want to raise any hopes or expectations given what has happened in previous elections, but we will undoubtedly see vast numbers of people wanting to take part in a process about the future of their country, which they would not be able to do in a Taliban country. It would be wrong to leap to the conclusion that the local population do not want us there. Do we still have many problems, such as too many people working with the Taliban? Of course we do, but I think that quite a bit of progress has been made in recent times. I do not think that the people of Afghanistan want us to leave.

Chair: I say to colleagues that we have a lot of work to get through, so will they keep the questions short?

Q27 Rory Stewart: Very quickly, Foreign Secretary. A lot of the time we have been talking about a political strategy, which has been the sort of holy grail in Afghanistan. Obviously, there have been a lot of obstacles to it: sometimes, the Afghan Government do not seem to be fully behind it; the Taliban are fragmented and elusive; and sometimes the Government of the United States do not seem to be very interested. But if we could get those things on side and if we could push ahead with this thing, what is it? What does a political strategy look like? Who do you talk to? What do you talk to them about? How do you talk to them? What are you offering?

Mr Hague: This has to be an Afghan-led process, of course. A process of reconciliation must be Afghan-led, and President Karzai received the support of the peace jirga at the beginning of June to undertake that process. I don’t think it would be right to sit here in London and lay down, “Here are the people we have to talk to and this is the deal that you have to talk about with those who you can deal with, and clearly, there will be others who you can’t possibly deal with.” I don’t think that it is possible for us to do that, and even if we could, it would certainly not be possible to announce it all in public to any forum.

It has to be an Afghan-led political reconciliation process. That is something that the Prime Minister and

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other Ministers and I have discussed several times with President Karzai. I think that he is committed to such a process. He has Ministers around him who are also committed to it. They have gone to great lengths in the politics of their own country over the past few months to make sure that they have the authority to do that. They reaffirmed that at the Kabul conference at the end of July. They have to be in the driving seat of that process.

Q28 Sir Menzies Campbell: Foreign Secretary, you gave a very clear answer to Mr Baron's question about 2015. Do I take it that the position you have outlined is the position of the coalition Government and that it will be the position at that date irrespective of the position of the United States Government?

Mr Hague: This is the United Kingdom position, yes. It is our sovereign right to set out our position, and we will maintain it.

Sir Menzies Campbell: So the answer is yes?

Mr Hague: The answer is the one that I gave, yes.

Sir Menzies Campbell: For the avoidance of doubt.

Q29 Mr Watts: Foreign Secretary, what is the benefit of the 2015 figure? Bearing in mind that there is cross-party general support for the concept that, as soon as the Afghan nation is able to look after itself, we will withdraw, what's the advantage that you see of 2015? It seems to some people that that tells the Taliban and so on that, if they stay until 2015, the West will have lost its will to defend itself and they will be able to go back to normal business.

Mr Hague: Well, remember that 2015 is still some way away. It is very important to have that sense of perspective about it. It is further away than the initial deployment of our troops in Helmand is back, so we are still talking about a very long military commitment. Let's not minimise that in any way.

What is the benefit of it? The benefit is that we must be clear with the leaders and the people of Afghanistan that it is absolutely crucial for their future that they are able to look after their own affairs and security, and that it is not possible for the United Kingdom or, I think, other countries to take on ourselves the burden of their security indefinitely. We are there until it is possible for them to manage their own security and affairs without presenting a danger to the rest of the world. Of course, we have every right to expect it to be in that period, so I think it intensifies the pressure for the targets for the Afghan National Security Forces to be met by 2014 and to be met along the way. We don't want anyone to think that, for decades, it is possible for British forces to be deployed in this way.

Q30 Sir John Stanley: Foreign Secretary, I am sure that you would agree that, to achieve success in Afghanistan, we have to provide a reasonable degree of security across the whole of that country. I am sure that you would also agree that an absolutely fundamental aspect of that is effective cross-border security co-operation between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Do you agree that that critical cross-border security co-operation still has a long way to go? Do you see any prospects of achieving the sort of

ultimately intense and successful cross-border co-operation, which we achieved across the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland before we got a final settlement there? Do you see any chance of achieving that degree of cross-border security co-operation between Afghanistan and Pakistan?

Mr Hague: Well, I see a good chance of that improving. It is a very, very difficult border to police, as you know. Geographically, it could not have been designed to be more difficult; it's much more difficult than the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. But I think the good sign here—again, I don't want to exaggerate anything or raise any expectations too far—is that the co-operation between the Governments and the militaries of Afghanistan and Pakistan has improved in recent times. Certainly, that is the feedback we have had from both sides of the border; I have heard that from General Kayani himself, the head of the Pakistani armed forces. So there is an improvement taking place in those relationships, which facilitates the co-operation. But let us be frank: to effectively police that particular frontier is in itself one of the most difficult tasks in the world.

Chair: That completes the questions on Afghanistan. Andrew Rosindell is going to ask you about the overseas territories.

Mr Hague: What a surprise!

Q31 Andrew Rosindell: Good afternoon, Foreign Secretary. It is a pleasure to see you here today. You will of course be aware that the United Kingdom retains sovereignty over up to 16 territories spanning the globe, from the Rock of Gibraltar down to the Pitcairn Islands in the South Pacific; from the British Indian Ocean Territory all the way down to the South Atlantic Falkland Islands. These are 16 Territories for which we have responsibility, the people of which have shown tremendous loyalty to the Crown over many, many years. I believe, in recent years, that they have felt disappointed and let down by the apparent neglect by our own Government here in London.

I would like to make three points. First, would you tell us what the new Government's position is regarding the British overseas territories? Will there be a new, more positive approach that will bring the territories closer to Britain and make them feel British? At the moment, many of them wonder why they remain under Britain. Secondly, if they are British Overseas Territories, why are they under the Foreign Office? Finally, will you give us a reassurance that under this coalition Government, there will never again be a return to the colonial attitude of the Government of Mr Blair in 2002? They sought to impose a joint sovereignty deal on the people of Gibraltar without even consulting the people of that territory, even though the people there had previously voted 99% against being annexed by Spain.

Mr Hague: I also feel strongly about the three points—it is hard to feel more strongly than Mr Rosindell does, but I feel very strongly about them. I think there should be a clear strategy in this country for the Overseas Territories. I think we should be able to assist them in their economic development. You can

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see the evidence of a change in approach under the new Government. For instance, the Department for International Development has made its announcement about the airport at St Helena.

I think we have a responsibility to ensure the security and good governance of the Overseas Territories, as well as to support their economic well-being. They can create substantial challenges for the United Kingdom in many different ways, and we must recognise that. The predecessor to this Committee has looked in detail at some of those challenges. We need to manage those risks quite carefully, but I think we've moved quickly in the past few months to tackle certain problems. I have mentioned St Helena. There have been fiscal crises in some of the Caribbean territories, and a very severe problem in the Turks and Caicos Islands, as we know. Again, the Department for International Development has made a £10 million loan to help them through the past few months. Our Governor there is working very hard on those problems.

I have commissioned a review of our overall approach to the Overseas Territories. That review is not yet complete, but we look forward to discussing it with the Committee in future months. I've put in charge of that policy Henry Bellingham—you've had discussions with him—who is a Minister with great enthusiasm for putting some real purpose into our policy towards the Overseas Territories. That is the overall position. Why are they in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office? Well, I think it might be a diversion of your effort to campaign to put them in the Home Office. We are clearly doing our best in the Foreign Office to give leadership on this, and remember, we're not the same as France; we don't regard our overseas territories as parts of the home state. They do not have representatives in our national legislature, so they are in a different position. I think that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is the appropriate home, but we'll try to show over the coming years that we deserve that role.

On Gibraltar, as I'm sure you will have heard me say in the past, there will be no change in the position of Gibraltar and the people of Gibraltar without the consent of the people of Gibraltar.

Q32 Andrew Rosindell: If I could make one remark, Foreign Secretary, the Crown Dependencies have a different constitutional status; they are under the Ministry of Justice. Maybe you would like to look at why they are treated differently, because that may help to assess why the Overseas Territories remain under the Foreign Office, yet the Crown dependencies remain under a domestic Department.

May I ask two very brief questions specifically on two particular Territories? I recently visited the Turks and Caicos Islands and there is a near state of emergency in the eyes of the public there. Will the British Government look at the situation there, which is on the brink, and take urgent and, I hope, immediate action to support the Governor and to work with the people over there to restore law and order, deal with the illegal immigration and bring back democracy as fast as is practicable?

Secondly, referring to human rights, could you tell us what your view is on the human rights of the people of the Chagos Islands, who were ejected from their homeland in the 1960s? Would it not be an enormously significant gesture if the new Conservative Government were to reverse the decision of the then Labour Government and allow those people to return, in a limited way, to their homeland, which is what they rightly deserve?

Mr Hague: Two huge issues there. Let me try to deal with them as briefly as possible. In the case of the Turks and Caicos Islands, a lot of work is going on. The Governor, as you know, is working very hard. The FCO has committed about £3 million over two years to supporting the Governor to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. There are some UK-recruited advisers in place, and we will keep under review whether we need to add to those. When the ministerial Government were suspended—and suspended quite rightly—by the previous Government, the UK said that it would be for two years but the period could be shortened or lengthened, so that has to be kept under review.

You mentioned democracy, and it is important to allow the Turks and Caicos islanders to express their views. We have a constitutional electoral reform adviser there, who has held a series of public meetings, following which she published her report for further comment. She is now conducting further public meetings in the islands, and all of them are broadcast live on TV and radio. She will meet the Advisory Council on the Consultative Forum later this month. We are doing what we can to ensure that there is genuine consultation with the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Will it be necessary to give additional assistance? It may well be. As I mentioned, the Department for International Development has already provided a loan of £10 million released to them in three tranches in June, July and August. They are now facing another shortfall at the end of September, so we'll have to decide with DFID, or DFID will have to decide, how to deal with that. To add to the point I made about the timetable on this: we have the flexibility to hold elections later, if necessary. I think that this Committee in the previous Parliament—Mr Gapes has the report there—expressed concerns that the necessary reforms will not be well embedded by July 2011 and that former Ministers could be re-elected and resume allegedly corrupt activities, so we will be on our guard for that and ready to change the timetable if necessary. I am not sure if that answers all the questions about the Turks and Caicos Islands. Did the permanent secretary want to add anything about them?

Mr Fraser: No.

Mr Hague: On the question of the Chagos Islands—this question could of course take up several hours, which we clearly don't have—I am looking at this in great detail. It is one of those long-standing, frustrating issues—a great parliamentary cause. I feel that it is necessary, if I am going to be absolutely confident of our policy on the British Indian Ocean Territory, that I have looked into it personally, in detail. I was holding a meeting in the Foreign Office

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earlier this week about this. I have to say that, when you go into it in detail, it is quite hard to hold out the prospect of a fundamental change of policy, so I do not want to raise any hopes of that. Of course, on the question of human rights there is a European Court of Human Rights case going on at the moment, so it would be wrong of me to get into the details of that now. But it is important to recognise that we have a treaty with the United States. Yes, it was entered into by a previous Government, a Labour Government, but it nevertheless was entered into. That lasts for 50 years, renewable for 20 years.

The outer islands of the Chagos Archipelago are really what is under discussion—whether people could return to those. There was a feasibility study in 2002 that concluded that it wasn't really feasible. It is important to recognise that those are atolls. Very little of that land is more than 1 metre above sea level. It is hundreds of miles—I think they are knocking on for 1,000 miles—from any other settlements, so making settlements viable in such a place, particularly given the possible pressures of climate change on sea levels, is a very daunting prospect. An initial detailed look on my part has really brought that sobering realisation to me that, however much it is nice to have an almost romanticised idea that it would be possible for islanders to return to where they were removed from decades ago, in practical terms that is a really difficult proposition. However, we continue to look at this policy. I am continuing to examine it in detail, as is, again, the responsible Minister, Henry Bellingham. But in the light of what I have seen so far, we will be maintaining the position that we have taken on proceedings in the European Court.

Chair: Thank you very much. Can I move on now, Foreign Secretary? Later this year we are doing a report entitled, "The Role of the FCO". We are waiting for the spending review to come out and the strategic defence review. There is a NATO summit coming as well. However, as you will hear, we want to get some questions in early. These are a bit more thematic now, and Emma is going to lead off.

Q33 Emma Reynolds: Foreign Secretary, over the past few months you have made several major foreign policy speeches, which I have read with great interest. In one such speech you said, "although the world has become more and more multilateral...it has also become more bilateral". However, you have also said recently that you were determined to "give due weight to Britain's membership of...multilateral institutions". How do you assess the risk that strong but uncoordinated bilateral relationships between member states and countries outside of the European Union might, in fact, weaken multilateral frameworks, such as the European Union. In a multi-polar world, where the role of the European Union is surely a way of increasing our weight rather than decreasing it, are you in danger of underestimating the impact that our role in the European Union can have?

Mr Hague: Well, I hope not. We have made it very clear that we want to see the European Union use its collective weight in the world effectively. Indeed, a lot of my time so far as Foreign Secretary has been spent doing that. I think one of the most important

things we have done in the EU in the past few months was the sanctions package that we agreed at the end of July at the Foreign Affairs Council on Iran, which went beyond what was passed at the UN Security Council in resolution 1929, and which has made quite an impact. It has been quite a surprise to the Iranian leadership. It has certainly delighted our allies around the world that Europe was able to agree a strong sanction, a really meaningful sanctions package. We, and I personally, put a lot of effort into that.

Another example would be the Western Balkans. Most of my time in recent days, in a diplomatic sense, has been spent on Western Balkans issues. We are trying to ensure that we are able to facilitate a process in which Serbia and Kosovo are able to speak together. We have been trying, in common with my colleagues in France and Germany and with Cathy Ashton, to make sure that there is an agreed EU approach to the whole of that, because when all 27 countries of the EU come together and say, "This is the way to have a process of dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo," that maximises the chances of Serbia agreeing to that. So I don't want you to think in any way that we're not playing our role in the EU using its collective weight in the world.

However, I think it's very important to point out that that cannot deal with all of our requirements around the world. The European Union doesn't agree on every subject of foreign policy, and European nations all have their own commercial and economic priorities. It's important for Britain to retain our own capability to advance those on our own behalf. It may be that the European Union can work together collectively on strengthening our relationships with China, India, Brazil and so on, and that is one of the things we think the EU should do, but it's vital that Britain is able to make those bilateral links.

As I argued in the speech I made at the beginning of July, we are in a networked world. It's not just relations between states; it's not just that it's become a multi-polar world where you must have good working relations with countries that are not in any particular bloc. They have to be good bilateral relations, and they're not just government-to-government relations. They are relations of civil society, of education, culture, sport etcetera. That's why, on top of participating fully and enthusiastically in multilateral organisations, playing a big role in the G20 and so on, it's also crucial for Britain to be intensifying our links with the fastest-growing economies of the world. If we don't do so, others will. France and Germany will not shrink from doing so; it's very important that Britain is able to do so in our own right, as well as working on so many international issues with our European partners.

Sorry, this is another long explanation of things. This means that our multilateral and our bilateral priorities are not in conflict, but relying solely on thinking that the world is simply progressing to a more multilateral structure would be a mistake. No one is going to protect us to a greater extent if we don't protect ourselves, and no one is going to secure our prosperity for us unless we actually go out and secure the jobs and contracts for British firms. So it's crucial to have that bilateral commitment and that intensification of

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relations with the emerging powers as well as to do all that multilateral work.

Q34 Emma Reynolds: Can I ask you about competing bilateral relations, especially in areas of the world that are particularly sensitive? The Prime Minister recently stated in India that Pakistan was facing both ways on terrorism, and in Turkey he stated that Gaza was a prison camp. Isn't there a risk? In some areas, he was greeted with plaudits by saying it was a frank and open diplomacy. My view is that the main point of diplomacy is the consequences and what you achieve, and the objectives that you are pursuing. Which were the positive objectives that the Prime Minister was pursuing in these cases, or were they simply off-the-cuff remarks? What are the risks of pronouncing about another country when you're in a neighbouring country which is quite sensitive?

Mr Hague: In the modern world, it's very hard to be so rigid that as you go around the world, you never say anything about any other countries in the world.

Emma Reynolds: I'm not suggesting that, but—

Mr Hague: You're asked about these things all the time. Our view on Gaza, which I think is a cross-party view in our Parliament, is that it's vital to open up more for larger quantities of goods to be able to get in there, and indeed out of there. I think that is well known and the Prime Minister was stating that view. On India and Pakistan, let me put it in this context: we have clearly set out the ambition of an "enhanced partnership" with India—those were the words in the Queen's Speech. What necessarily goes along with that is a strategic relationship with Pakistan. Those two things go naturally together; otherwise, we make the position of Pakistan more difficult. I think that Pakistan understands that very well. Yes, it is true that one or two people in Pakistan did not react well to what the Prime Minister said. But it is also true—let me underline this—that, after the Prime Minister met President Zardari and they had a discussion about those remarks, and after the immense UK contribution to the disastrous floods we have just seen in Pakistan, the co-operation between the Government of Pakistan and our Government is very, very strong. And the appreciation in Pakistan for Britain's friendship and commitment to Pakistan is very strong, and that is how it must be.

Q35 Emma Reynolds: But didn't his previous comments make that relationship and that meeting when President Zardari was in the UK more difficult? Did the Prime Minister seek your advice before using those words? My interpretation of the situation is that one of the effects was that he may well have weakened President Zardari's hand in his own country, which is the last thing we want to do.

Mr Hague: No, not at all. I wouldn't give that interpretation to it—you won't be surprised to hear that. Do we all talk to each other and advise each other? Yes, indeed, it is a characteristic of this Government that the principal adviser to the Prime Minister on foreign policy is the Foreign Secretary. That has not always been the case in Governments of various complexions over the years. The Prime Minister was making the point that there is more work

to be done on tackling terrorism, including in Pakistan, which is absolutely true. There is no ongoing interruption of the work and the co-operation that we have with the Pakistani intelligence services. There were one or two dramatic headlines at the time.

Q36 Emma Reynolds: A delegation was supposed to come to the UK.

Mr Hague: A delegation has been to the UK. Relations are in good shape between the UK and Pakistan. You give me the opportunity to re-emphasise that we must communicate to the people of Pakistan, not just the Government, that we are interested in Pakistan not just because there are threats to our national security that emanate from Pakistan—although clearly, there have been—but that we need that long-term relationship with the people of Pakistan; that we regard the role that more than 1 million British Pakistanis play in that relationship as a positive thing; and that we are there for the long term to work with them. That is why we have substantially increased the development budget for Pakistan.

We have really led the way on the reaction to the floods. Hillary Clinton told me on the telephone last week that she really recognised British leadership in the response to the floods in Pakistan. We are second only to the United States in the contribution that we have made, and British people—never mind the Government—have made a great contribution. It is very important that that is followed up. I went to Pakistan for three days at the end of June and spent a lot of time doing television programmes and radio interviews in Pakistan to try to communicate to the people of Pakistan, not just to Ministers, the commitment of Britain.

Emma Reynolds: Thank you.

Q37 Mr Roy: Can I go back to that? Wouldn't it have been more effective for the Prime Minister to speak about the Pakistan security services in Pakistan, rather than wait until he was in India? Wouldn't it have been better and more effective if he had spoken about the prison camp that is Gaza when he was in Israel, as opposed to in some other country?

Mr Hague: He will be going to those places, too, so stand by for him addressing the issues in those countries. As I say, I think it would be wrong to be critical of talking about international affairs in general when travelling the world. Inevitably, in interviews, you do that. I think that what the Prime Minister said on those occasions was absolutely right. Let me put both things that you raise in perspective. I have mentioned how closely we are working with Pakistan on the floods and in many other ways and also with Israel. In the run-up to the direct talks that started last week between Israel and the Palestinians, our Prime Minister played an important role, talking to Mr Netanyahu and urging President Abbas to enter the talks. We are able to have those discussions with Israel notwithstanding anything we may have said about Gaza. I think countries understand that we will not always agree on every topic. Sometimes they say things about the United Kingdom and sometimes we say things about them. Actually what we have in the

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case of Israel and Pakistan, despite there being, for obvious reasons, tensions in both relationships, is close co-operation when it counts.

Q38 Mr Roy: I want to move on, Foreign Secretary, to your earlier remarks in relation to the National Security Council. You said that it had met 16 times. What has been achieved so far?

Mr Hague: A good deal. First, we have clarified our position on Afghanistan, and you have been asking me about some of that clarity today. We have made sure that Ministers work cohesively together where we have our troops deployed to such an extent in Afghanistan. I think that on that and on many other subjects, Departments of State are working together more successfully than has sometimes been the case in the past. The purpose of the National Security Council is not to create a new Department. It is to make existing Departments work well together.

On the issue of the Pakistan floods, DFID has done a terrific job. At the same time, the Deputy Prime Minister has been there and added to our diplomatic effort and seen for himself the situation on the ground. I have been playing my role and asking other European countries to contribute more. It is a cohesive effort on all issues of international relations. I think that the National Security Council makes that much, much easier to achieve.

Perhaps I will mention a couple of other attributes. It means that we have a common sense of our ambition in the world. I have been talking about intensifying the relations with emerging powers and economies in the world. Having the National Security Council helps to make sure that we have that same sense of what we are achieving together, but foreign policy runs through the veins of the other Departments of State. Foreign policy is not just something for the Foreign Office; it is something for the whole Government to pursue. The National Security Council really helps to achieve that. It means that the advice coming to the Prime Minister about foreign affairs issues comes through the national security adviser—in this case Sir Peter Ricketts who was the Permanent Secretary at the Foreign Office—and it comes to the Foreign Secretary and the Defence Secretary as well, so we are thinking about these things together.

Finally, it means that in one of the most important pieces of work that we are undertaking as a Government, at the strategic defence and security review that is under way at the moment, we have at the National Security Council the key members of the Government, the heads of the intelligence agencies and the Chief of the Defence Staff able to work together and used to working together in making these really important decisions together. So it provides a framework for all of those things, and so far, it has been a success.

Q39 Mr Roy: Maybe I'm wrong, but is there not a kind of dilution of responsibility moving from the Foreign Office towards No.10 and the Cabinet Office by its very existence?

Mr Hague: No, not at all. We have a Prime Minister who strongly believes, thankfully, that the Foreign Office should have its proper role in Government. It

does mean that the Foreign Office has to step up to the mark. If we say that we are going to lead the thinking and that foreign policy is going to flow through the veins of the whole Government, it means that the ideas and expertise have to flow from the Foreign Office into the National Security Council. I am confident that that is what is happening, or what is beginning to happen. If anything, there has been an entirely proper move the other way. For instance, we have formed not just the National Security Council but the European Affairs Committee of the Cabinet, which I chair. So it is the Foreign Secretary who now chairs the decisions across Government about European policy and the trade-offs between one Department or negotiation with another. We have a joint secretariat of the Foreign Office and the Cabinet Office servicing that committee. The Foreign Office is institutionally much more back in its proper place in government as a result of the changes we've made so far.

Q40 Mr Roy: For those 16 meetings, they are all advantages that you have just explained. What disadvantages have you come across? What are the teething problems, because obviously it is a whole new concept?

Mr Hague: I wouldn't go so far as to say that there aren't disadvantages. It means that there are a lot of meetings, and we all have lots of meetings to go to, but they couldn't be more important meetings. I'm going to end up giving you another advantage because I can't think of a disadvantage. It means that the senior members of the Government concerned with development, energy, home security, foreign affairs and defence, and the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister, think together about the huge challenges we face in security and international relations. For instance, we held one of our meetings, which lasted almost a whole day at Chequers, at the end of May about Afghanistan. We could really go into all the arguments, explore the options, have people in from outside to talk to us and so on. It means that we're not just ticking boxes or agreeing a paper that we haven't really discussed. We are spending the time thinking together about national security and international relations more broadly. I'm sorry, however many times you ask me for a disadvantage, I'll come up with an advantage.

Mr Roy: We'll find one at some point.

Mr Hague: So far, it has worked well. That is the honest truth.

Q41 Mike Gapes: I have a very short question. Foreign Secretary, you mentioned Sir Peter Ricketts as the key official. It has been reported that he is not going to be on the National Security Council very long. Could you comment on that?

Mr Hague: No. It was this morning. Any comment on that will have to come later. We are very grateful to him for taking it on, on the first day the Government took office. I don't think it would be right for me to go into any more detail on that now.

Chair: We are going to move on to trade and commercial issues now.

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Q42 Mr Watts: Foreign Secretary, I think you said that you expect to have less resources and staff available to you after the spending review. Can you say a few words about the pronouncements on the focus on commerce? What particularly will you or your diplomats stop doing if they are going to do something different? Are they going to be promoters of British business? Can you tell me whether you think your diplomats will have the skills required to do that change of job? Following on from Mr Stewart's comments, what changes will you make in your recruitment policy that will make sure you've got people and diplomats who have the skills and background to be able to be of some assistance to business?

Mr Hague: That is a very important question. You can see our commitment to have the necessary skills from the fact that the new permanent secretary has come from the Business Department. I think I'll ask him to say a word in a moment about the skills, on which we already have quite a number of things in train; perhaps he could expand on those.

Let me be clear. This, in many ways, requires some additional energy. It is not so much that people are taken off other things—although we will have to assess all the priorities as we go along—but building it into everything that we do. When I leave your Committee, whenever we finish, the Foreign Minister of Vietnam will be coming to the Foreign Office. Much of our meeting will be about trade issues. My decision is that an increased proportion of all the time that I spend with my counterparts around the world will be about trade and commercial issues. I will bring up with him five or six different areas in which Britain can do more business in Vietnam.

It's really that sense of building into everything we do. Wherever the Prime Minister, the Chancellor, the Business Secretary or I go, we should have a clear sense of what is at stake in that country for British business. That then should run through the work of the whole Foreign Office, as well as other Departments. The Prime Minister appointed yesterday Stephen Green, someone who I think will be an excellent Trade Minister. He is very well respected in the business world and, indeed, around the world. So it is being done in that spirit. It requires some organisational changes and re-emphasis. Perhaps Simon can talk about that.

Mr Fraser: I am very happy to do so. First, I very much endorse the point that it is not that we have not done this in the past. It is just that it is entirely appropriate at the current moment in particular, given the world economic situation and the national economic situation, that there should be a focus on what we do in the Foreign Office, as indeed in other Government Departments, on what we can do to support economic recovery in this country and more generally. So it is not necessarily the case that we will be doing that instead of doing other things, but I agree very much with the point that it is the mindset of the organisation and how we approach our bilateral and multilateral relationships and the issues that we should prioritise.

In that sense, looking across the organisation now, of course we have the very welcome appointment of a

new Trade Minister. Of course, we have UK Trade & Investment. That is an organisation that is jointly parented, if you like, by the Foreign Office and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. I think that UKTI is an effective organisation, and I certainly do not think that we should seek to duplicate or replace it, but I think that it is now considering a new strategy for promoting trade and inward investment, and that is one thing that we want to log into.

Within the Foreign Office, we have set up a taskforce to ensure that, across the organisation, people are taking those opportunities and thinking about economics and commercial opportunity, in the way that the Foreign Secretary has described, in all aspects of our work.

We are just about to launch a new business planning process, which will be the basis for our activity and our resource allocation once we know the outcome of the spending round. Within that business planning process, one of the big strands will be promoting British prosperity through our economic and commercial activity in the network. So, in all those ways, I think that we can achieve a greater focus and a clearer understanding of where the priorities lie in our diplomatic activity, both in London and around the network.

Q43 Mr Watts: May I just push you on a point that concerns some people? I am well aware that diplomats act as both diplomats and promoters of trade. But if those diplomats believe that you have set such a high priority on trade, is it not likely that, for example, if they were speaking to their counterparts in China, they would be less likely to raise issues of human rights than they would have been previously, if they believe that your Department is solely set about or is giving its highest priority to trade? I wonder if you could say a few things about how you will ensure that your diplomats understand that they have still two major roles to perform within their duties.

Mr Fraser: If I may just pick up on that—it's a very important point—of course all our embassies in all countries around the world have a set of priorities for that country, and of course, in the case of China, there will be priorities relating to developing the political relationship, and ensuring that we apply the appropriate pressure or raise the appropriate issues relating to human rights, just as there will be priorities relating to pursuing climate change objectives and commercial opportunities. I think that one must have confidence that our representatives in those countries will see the broad perspective, and of course that is what they are tasked to do by the Foreign Office here in London. So I hope that we can avoid, if you like, a disproportionate shift of focus of the sort that you are describing.

Mr Hague: To add to that, since I criticised the previous Government over funding the Foreign Office, let me be nice to them about one thing. I think that they did a good job on handling relations with China, and building up the economic dialogue with it. They then added to that—in the closing weeks, actually, of the last Government—strategic dialogue with China, which I then commenced. I went to Beijing in the

middle of July to commence that. We are the only country other than the United States and Japan with that level of formalised dialogue with China.

We will continue all of that work. It is fundamentally in the interests of this country to encourage a good economic and trading relationship with China. But at no stage did the last Government—nor will this Government—say, “Well, we are not raising human rights in China any more.” I think that they understand that in China. We will continue to raise our human rights concerns. We have the balance right.

Q44 Mr Watts: Can you answer about the recruitment side? Does a change mean that there will be a difference in the recruitment procedures? Are you looking for different qualities and different skills than you have done in the past?

Mr Hague: Again, Simon might want to answer this, but more experience of business would certainly benefit the FCO. That can be done in all sorts of ways, including through secondments to business, including for heads of mission before they are posted, plus by training people in different ways. We can use private sector expertise to embed a strong sense of commercial diplomacy in the FCO. Simon, do you want to answer Mr Watts’ specific point about recruitment?

Mr Fraser: On recruitment in general, we have had a principle of recruiting people with a broad range of abilities and potential. Then, of course, we train them through their careers. The training that we offer in the Foreign Office should be tailored to the priorities that we have. Indeed, as the Foreign Secretary has mentioned, there are new programmes in place, focused particularly on economic and commercial ability.

There is another thing. Recently we have been pursuing a policy of secondment of people to business, particularly some of our people who are going to important head-of-mission posts in countries where the economic relationship is very significant. A good case in point is our current ambassador in China, who spent nearly a year on secondment to Rolls-Royce. There are a number of ways in which we can address the question of expertise and commercial knowledge.

Q45 Sir John Stanley: Foreign Secretary, my question leads on from those of Dave Watts. The British Foreign Office has undoubtedly a great many very major achievements to its credit but, being brutally frank, it has had some very serious moments of failure—and moments of failure when it has failed to recognise and grapple with the security realities. The British Foreign Office was, as we know, the arch-exponent of appeasement in the run-up to the second world war. It is in the memory of many of us still in the House that the British Foreign Office, in the run-up to the Falklands war, could not have given a clearer indication to the Argentine military junta that it wanted to get shot of the Falkland Islands.

Against that background, and against the calls from the Prime Minister for the British Foreign Office to be apparently “messianic” in its pursuit of business interests, can you assure this Committee that the

ultimate responsibility and priority of the British Foreign Office during this coalition Government will be the security of the British people, the security of the countries with which we are in military alliance and the security of our overseas territories?

Mr Hague: Yes is the broad answer to that question, with the Ministry of Defence and the rest of the Government. In the priorities that we have promulgated in the Foreign Office, within pursuing an active foreign policy and strengthening a rules-based international system in support of our values, the three key priorities that we have listed start with safeguarding Britain’s national security by countering terrorism and weapons proliferation, and working to reduce conflict. Of course, working to reduce conflict includes being vigilant about conflicts. As you say, that has not always been the case.

The second is to build Britain’s prosperity by increasing exports, investments and so on, and the third is to support British nationals around the world through modern and efficient consular services—something that we have not touched on today. Again, that is a vast subject in itself. People do not always realise that, at any one time, 2 million British people are overseas and many of them turn for help to the Foreign Office. So yes is the answer to Sir John’s question.

Chair: John Baron has the final question.

Q46 Mr Baron: Foreign Secretary, you said yourself that, increasingly, international affairs are being conducted through more informal, ad hoc forums. That is in contrast to what we have been used to in organisations like the UN, where there is a fixed membership and an agreed agenda or remit, etcetera. To what extent is the Foreign Office adapting to that? How influential will Britain be in trying to reform and address that issue on a more global scale?

Mr Hague: I think that the Foreign Office is well placed to adapt to that. You can gather from what I’ve been saying about the networked world and the importance of networks of bilateral relationships that the central thrust of our approach is exactly on this point of ensuring that we have patterns of influence in the world, rather than thinking that one or another organisation is the key to influencing world events. I think we have the strategy right on that. The Foreign Office has the adaptability and it’s had—we may have to reinforce it over time—the language skills and knowledge. That goes back to Mr Stewart’s questions earlier. Those things need accentuating more in the future to give us the flexibility and the knowledge of different parts of the world, to be able to cope with that shifting pattern of world economic and political influence.

We may have to be adaptable in where we deploy people and in where we spend our ministerial/diplomatic effort. There is an intensified effort to be made in the Far East and South America; it is quite a long time since a British Foreign Secretary did a full-scale visit to South America, but I am intending to do that in the spring. Funnily enough, while I am on that theme, there are countries that get forgotten. No British Foreign Secretary has been to Australia for 20 years. We mustn’t neglect those important

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relationships. It can be economically important. We will have to adapt, and I think that we're prepared to do so and have the strategy.

Q47 Mr Baron: One very quick question because I am conscious that we need to get you away. May I briefly return to Afghanistan? To what extent do you foresee the final solution, whatever it is, involving negotiations with the Taliban?

Mr Hague: That goes back to the issue of reconciliation, which I've stressed must be Afghan-led. Here we get into the question of what is the Taliban, because it is not a single organisation. Many different factions and shifting alliances make up the

Taliban. It's for that Afghan-led process to determine and to discover which of those people, based on what President Karzai and the rest of us set out at the Kabul conference about respect for the constitution of Afghanistan and the readiness to forswear violence, are willing to be part of a reconciliation process. It depends on that; it depends on them whether they are prepared to be reconciled on such a basis.

Chair: Foreign Secretary, thank you very much indeed. You've got our relationship off to a flying start, and I look forward to seeing you regularly, as and when we can arrange it, and likewise, Mr Fraser.

Mr Hague: Thank you very much.

Written evidence

Letter to the Chair of the Committee from the Rt Hon William Hague MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and First Secretary of State

DEVELOPMENTS IN UK FOREIGN POLICY

Thank you for your note of 26 July asking for written evidence before my appearance before your committee on 8 September. Your original questions are shown below in bold followed by my responses.

1. What concrete things do you want to achieve as Foreign Secretary by 2015? What milestones have you in mind on the way to your key goals?

We have set out to pursue a distinctive British foreign policy that builds up the UK's global influence, that is active and activist in Europe and around the world and that promotes the UK's national interest while working with other countries and strengthening the rules-based international system in support of our values. By 2015 we therefore hope to have achieved visibly strengthened bilateral relationships for Britain with a number of key countries including India, Turkey, Brazil the Gulf States. Over the next five years we will use the National Security Council framework to elevate relationships with individual countries in a systematic fashion across the board, in areas such as health, education and commerce as well as diplomacy. This work is discussed in more detail in the answer to question 2 below. We believe this approach will benefit the British economy and support successful multilateral action against nuclear proliferation and climate change as well as effective UK diplomacy in regions that affect UK interests.

We are also ambitious about what the Foreign and Commonwealth Office can achieve. By 2015 we also wish to see an FCO that leads foreign policy thinking across the whole of Government, that makes a first class contribution to the work of the National Security Council, that has a sharpened commercial focus and that successfully promotes British interests overseas through the UK's overseas network.

My Ministerial colleagues and I also wish to see a Foreign Office that is a strong institution for the future, in 2015 and beyond; continuing to attract the most talented entrants from diverse backgrounds, and home to, and in future years placing a greater emphasis on geographic expertise, counter-terrorism and counter-proliferation and experience of working in difficult countries overseas as well as management and leadership ability.

We want to play a highly active and activist role in the European Union.

We want to see the EU bill we will bring before the House later this autumn become law next year, to strengthen the democratic accountability of EU decision-making in this country.

We want the EU's agenda to focus on the areas we believe should be the EU's priorities for delivery over the next few years: on energy security, climate change and, above all, on improving the growth and competitiveness of European economies.

A new multi-annual EU budget needs to be agreed for the years from 2014, and is important that it reflects the straightened circumstances most EU countries find themselves in.

By 2015 we hope to see the European External Action Service set firmly on a course that complements and supplements the execution of our foreign policy and does not interfere with it. It is in our national interest that the countries of the EU become more effective at using their collective weight in the world and addressing challenges such as energy security and the Western Balkans.

We will ensure that there is no further transfer of competence from Britain to the EU.

2. As you know, we hope to hold evidence sessions with you on "Developments in UK foreign policy" once every six months or so. What are the Foreign Office's immediate priorities (between now and spring 2011) in terms of both policy and administration? What measures/markers will be put in place in order to determine whether these priorities have been achieved?

We will pursue an active and activist foreign policy, working with other countries and strengthening the rules-based international system in support of our values to:

- Safeguard Britain's national security by countering terrorism and weapons proliferation, and working to reduce conflict.
- Build Britain's prosperity by increasing exports and investment, opening markets, ensuring access to resources, and promoting sustainable global growth.
- Support British nationals around the world through modern and efficient consular services.

These are the overarching priorities that will guide the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

SPECIFIC FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES

Afghanistan remains the most important foreign policy priority for the Government. Our aim is to ensure that Afghanistan will not again become a haven for international terrorists who threaten our security. We will continue to work with our NATO allies in ISAF to confront the insurgency, while promoting coalition cohesion and burden sharing. The Lisbon NATO summit in November will be a key assessment point and will feed into the US review of Afghanistan policy at the end of the year. We will also continue to work with our Afghan partners to improve their ability to take on an increasing share of the security burden and to provide proper and appropriate governance to the Afghan people. This will be in line with commitments made at the London and Kabul conferences earlier this year, now known as the Kabul process, in which the Parliamentary elections in September will be an important milestone.

In Pakistan, the UK's immediate priority is to support the Government in addressing the flooding, helping to minimise the humanitarian impact and supporting longer term stability and growth. We will also continue to deepen the relationship with Pakistan through a refreshed strategic dialogue and work with Pakistan to tackle militancy in the border areas and elsewhere.

The Middle East will also be a priority over the next six months. We are working to elevate our political, economic, commercial and defence relationships with the Gulf States. We also aim to relaunch the Friends of Yemen process in September, looking to work with President Saleh and Gulf partners to support Yemen in taking the reforms necessary to meet its economic, political and security challenges. On Iran, we will implement the significant EU sanctions package agreed in July and continue to exert concerted diplomatic pressure to persuade Iran to engage positively with the E3+3 process. We will engage with the new government in Iraq, when formed, to deepen ties and help build stability. We welcome the launch of direct talks on the Middle East Peace Process on 2 September. The UK will do all it can to support the parties and buttress these important talks, working with the United States, the EU and our other international partners. We will also continue to press to ensure full implementation of the steps Israel announced on 20 June to ease restrictions on Gaza.

The Government will build on the Prime Minister's successful visit to Washington in July and the working relationships that I and my ministerial colleagues have established with our US opposite numbers. We will continue to exchange analysis and thinking and to work closely with the US in all areas of shared interest. We will also promote the UK's commercial goals in the US, working for tax and regulatory policies that are in the interests of UK businesses.

Over the next six months we will work intensively on UK relationships with key emerging powers. I will build on the Prime Minister's successful visit to India to embed the enhanced partnership with India. This will include deepening our cooperation on trade, in particular supporting early conclusion of the EU/India Free Trade Agreement, education, and climate, working with other Government departments (more detail in answer 13 below).

Strengthening our commercial relationship with China will be a particular priority, including progress on market access. We will work with China, including within the G20 to ensure a sustained, stable and balanced global recovery, promoting better regulation, an open global trading system, low carbon development and international action to prevent dangerous climate change. We will support China's process of modernisation and internal reform, including pressing for more progress on human rights, which we judge to be in China's and the UK's interests. All of these will feature as themes of the next UK-China Summit, scheduled for early November. I will also work to build our other bilateral relationships in East Asia.

We will work to intensify our relationship with Brazil over the next six months across a broad agenda including the commercial opportunities related to Rio's infrastructure development for the 2016 Olympics and the 2014 Football World Cup in Brazil. The Secretary of State for Business Innovation and Skills represented the UK at the Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) meeting in Sao Paulo at the end of August and we will seek to establish a UK/Brazil CEO Forum.

We hope that the G20 Seoul Summit in November will commit to financial regulatory reform with a target date for implementation, economic cooperation under the G20's Framework for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth as well as action to address the development needs of low income countries through multi-year targets. I will also work to put multilateral negotiations back on track to conclude an ambitious Doha trade round.

We will also work across Government to re-inject momentum into global efforts to combat climate change. We want to see the UNFCCC negotiations in Cancun in November/December 2010 agree practical measures to help limit global warming to two degrees and to build the foundations for a comprehensive global agreement on climate change.

On EU matters, we will bring an EU bill before the House later this autumn. We are already engaging with our fellow EU member countries and EU institutions on what we see as the EU's priorities and that engagement will continue intensively. We have before us a number of pieces of legislation on financial services being considered at the European level. They are of great importance to our economy and we are working extremely closely with the Treasury to ensure that they reflect Britain's interests and advance our broader priority of promoting growth and competitiveness across the EU.

Now that the European External Action Service has been established, we want to support Cathy Ashton in her efforts to take its work forward in ways that complement and supplement, but do not compete with, Member States' foreign policy priorities. We want the best British candidates to be successful in a merit-based appointment process, for the service to bear down on costs in a way that reflects the tightening of public expenditure across the EU, and for the EEAS to respect fully member state competences consistent with the Lisbon Treaty.

The EU's finances are an important item on the EU's agenda in the near future. Again, the FCO is working very closely with our colleagues in the Treasury. We must agree the EU's annual budget for 2011. This is going to be a difficult issue. We are working within the overall multi-annual framework agreed in December 2005, a framework that does not reflect where we are now economically, and the budget will be decided by QMV. We also begin preparing discussions on the next multi-annual EU budget framework. This will begin with the Commission's EU budget review. We expect that to be published later this month. We are disappointed by the delay in that publication. We expect this to be a difficult process, but it is important for the EU's credibility that, when across Europe governments are having to tighten their belts, the EU tightens its belt too.

The FCO will continue to support British nationals around the world through modern and efficient consular services. Over the next six months, we will:

- work to achieve successful merger of the FCO and Home Office passport operations by 1 April 2011. After more than 20 years of running separate passport services, the Identity and Passport Service will take over responsibility for issuing passports to British nationals overseas as well as at home to reduce costs and increase security;
- continue to bear down on our costs as part of the Government's priority to bring the public finances back into balance. By 1 April 2011 we will have cut 110 jobs as part of a plan to downsize the consular service by 25% by 1 April 2013; and
- deliver the early priorities of the new 2010–13 Consular Strategy in four areas: to improve the quality of service we provide our citizens by using their feedback more effectively; to invest in our staff to sustain professionalism and encourage those on the frontline to take decisions; to strengthen our network by using different types of consular representation, new technologies, partnerships and by using resources more flexibly; and to achieve greater clarity and control over consular finances.

My key priorities on the administration side are to conclude the Spending Review to deliver a sustainable FCO and allocating resources within the FCO for maximum impact and efficiency; and to agree a new Business Plan to deliver the Coalition Priorities and the outcomes of the Strategic Defence and Security review and the Spending Round. That work includes continuing the existing, and establishing a new, aggressive efficiencies programme—not least in the Administration itself. The FCO will also be working up an implementation plan for the Estates Strategy to respond to the NAO report earlier this year and maintain an effective global network for the whole of Government.

Like other Government Departments we are drafting a Business Plan, which will be reviewed by Treasury and the Efficiency and Reform Group. The Business Plan will contain measures of success, which will be cascaded down through the organisation into unit business plans.

APPOINTMENTS

3. *Please give a complete list of FCO Special Representatives and Envoys currently in post, with details of their responsibilities and their terms of reference. Are there currently any plans to create any more such posts?*

Special Representatives are appointed at the discretion of the Foreign Secretary. The four Special Representative positions were established under the last government and confirmed by the Foreign Secretary. The Post-Holocaust Envoy is a new appointment. They are appointed to provide strategic advice to ministers, to increase British influence internationally and to help co-ordinate cross-Whitehall policy.

There are no plans to create any more such positions.

The Special Representatives and Envoy are:

Mr John Ashton, Special Representative for Climate Change;

Sir Andrew Burns, UK Envoy for post-Holocaust issues;

Michael Ryder, UK Special Representative for Sudan;

Sir Brian Fall, UK Special Representative for the South Caucasus; and

Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Sir Sherard has been on leave during the summer. Karen Pierce has been filling the role.

4. *Has any evaluation been carried out of the work of FCO Special Representatives and Envoys? If so, please supply details.*

There has been no formal evaluation of the work of FCO Special Representatives and Envoys. But regular assessments of the activities of individual representatives are carried out by the FCO Directorates in whose areas of responsibility the representative's work falls, for example as part of regular reviews during the annual business planning cycle.

FCO PRIORITIES

5. *We understand that the new Government has abolished its predecessor's framework of Public Service Agreements (PSAs) and Departmental Strategic Objectives (DSOs), and that Departments are now to have Structural Reform Plans (SRPs). These are currently being published in draft form and will be finalised after publication of the Comprehensive Spending Review. When will the FCO's draft SRP be published? Will the SRP contain formal priorities or objectives for the FCO? If so, will they be linked to a formal system of performance reporting and measurement like the previous PSAs and DSOs? If the SRP will not contain formal objectives, is the Government or Foreign Secretary otherwise formulating or publishing a set of priorities or objectives for the FCO, over and above the points you are setting out in your series of four keynote speeches?*

I have replaced the Departmental Strategic Objectives (DSOs) with three new three foreign policy priorities. Britain will pursue an active and activist foreign policy, working with other countries and strengthening the rules-based international system in support of our values to:

- Safeguard Britain's national security by countering terrorism and weapons proliferation and working to reduce conflict.
- Build Britain's prosperity by increasing exports and investment, opening markets, ensuring access to resources, and promoting sustainable global growth.
- Support British nationals around the world through modern and efficient consular services.

These will feature prominently in the forthcoming FCO's Departmental Business Plan, one element of which will be the Structural Reform Plan, and a reformed Business Planning framework to deliver them. This is work in process, and we aim to publish further details in the autumn.

FCO FINANCES AND THE CSR

6. *The FCO is contributing £55 million towards the £6 billion in cuts announced by the new Government on 24 May. On 29 June, you announced cuts of over £18 million in the FCO's programme spend. What specific cuts are you making to other areas of FCO spending in order to make up the £55 million figure?*

The Government has made it clear that our most urgent priority is to tackle the UK's deficit in order to restore confidence in our economy and support the recovery. The review of our Strategic Programme funds led to a significant contribution to the required savings. We are finding the remaining savings from a number of areas; from the government's spending moratorium, reduced consultancy spend, savings on procurement, reduced capital spend and asset sales. The British Council and the BBC World Service have also agreed to contribute to meeting a share of the cut.

By reprioritising the FCO's overall spending we will seek to ensure that these reductions will not adversely impact the services provided to UK citizens abroad and that we retain a global network of Posts in order best to promote the interests of the UK overseas including our work on increasing Britain's prosperity and security.

7. *We understand that some FCO spending already counts towards the UK's official overseas development spending. How much, and what, FCO spending counts in this way? What proportion of the UK's current official overseas development spending comes from the FCO's budget?*

In 2009–10, £137 million of FCO expenditure was assessed as ODA, about 2% of total UK ODA. This expenditure included:

- some Strategic Programme Funds, including those supporting action on climate change, governance and human rights, and capacity building in ODA-eligible countries;
- internationally-agreed proportions of UK contributions to the UN regular budget, and to the Commonwealth Fund and the Commonwealth Small States Office; and
- a proportion of the FCO's Grant-in-aid to the British Council.

The FCO delivers ODA-eligible work in around 100 countries, including preventing conflict, strengthening political and economic governance and accountability, and capacity building. FCO and DFID are reviewing the FCO's ODA scoring methodology to ensure that this work is fully captured and consistent with the OECD's guidelines for ODA scoring.

8. You will be aware that, in its Report on the FCO's 2008–09 Departmental Annual Report, the previous FAC recommended that “the Overseas Price Mechanism should be re-established, or an alternative mechanism put in place to protect the FCO from suffering severe financial consequences” as a result of exchange-rate fluctuations. As part of the current Comprehensive Spending Review, is the FCO discussing with its Treasury colleagues the possibility of restoring the OPM, or of establishing a similar alternative mechanism?

This matter is under discussion at present. Further information will be available in due course.

THE FCO'S OVERSEAS NETWORK

9. To enable effective scrutiny of the FCO's decisions on the shape of its overseas network, on 8 September and beyond, we would be grateful if the FCO could tell us, for all UN Member States (plus such other territories as are relevant), whether it has a sovereign Post there and if not, when the sovereign Post was closed (if relevant); whether the FCO has any subordinate Post(s) there; whether DFID has an office there and if so, whether it is co-located with the FCO Post; and whether the UK has a resident Ambassador/High Commissioner there, and if not, which Ambassador/High Commissioner is accredited. This information might be most easily presented in the form of a table, with the following headings:

Country/Territory—Sovereign Post Y/N?—If none, closed when?—Subordinate Post(s) Y/N?—DFID office Y/N?—If yes, co-located with FCO Y/N?—Resident Ambassador/High Commissioner Y/N?—If none, which Ambassador/High Commissioner is accredited?

It would also be helpful if the FCO could state the total number of overseas Posts which it currently maintains (sovereign and subordinate Posts, including representations/delegations to international organisations).

A. The table below summarises the number of Posts we have in our overseas network. Further details on individual Posts can be found at Annex “A”.

OVERSEAS NETWORK SUMMARY

Total Number of United Nation Member States (UNMS)	192
Total Number of UNMS with FCO sovereign posts (bilateral posts in capitals with resident UK Head of Mission)	140
Total Number of UNMS with cross-accredited representation (non-resident UK Head of Mission)	52
Total Number of UNMS with no FCO sovereign post or cross-accreditation	0
Total Number of UNMS with DfiD Representation	44
Total Number of Subordinate Posts (bilateral posts outside capitals)	96
Total number of Overseas Territories with resident Governor	9
Total Number of Delegations to international Organisations	9
Total Number of FCO posts	254

THE FCO AND NATIONAL SECURITY

10. In your 1 July speech you referred to the National Security Council, not the FCO, as the key forum that ensures that “foreign policy runs through the veins of the entire administration”; but you also said that the FCO “has not been encouraged to be ambitious enough in articulating and leading Britain's efforts overseas and foreign policy thinking across Government.” Is there not a potential contradiction between seeking a stronger role for the FCO within Whitehall compared to the previous Government, and the creation of a substantial new security policy-making machinery in the Cabinet Office?

The National Security Council provides for the first time an effective mechanism to bring together strategic decisions about foreign affairs, security, defence and development and to align national objectives in these areas. It does not replace decision making in departments but ensures that these decisions are brought aligned where appropriate and that they support clear national objectives. It is right and practical that the Secretariat which supports the Council and coordinates its work is based in the Cabinet Office, particularly as the Council covers domestic as well as international security issues. This is entirely consistent with the FCO articulating and leading Britain's efforts overseas and foreign policy thinking across government, with Secretaries of State deciding the strategic direction in the National Security Council, for example through the Strategic Defence and Security Review.

11. *How will the FCO relate to and work with the National Security Council in practical terms (preparation of papers, contact between staff, internal FCO structures, etc)?*

I want the FCO to be ambitious in articulating and leading foreign policy thinking across the Government. The FCO has led the Foreign Policy agenda of the NSC. With papers on a wide range of priorities including India, Afghanistan and Pakistan. In practical terms, the FCO has a core team of staff acting as an interface with the National Security Council's Secretariat in the Cabinet Office, managing the FCO's internal procedures to ensure that papers get to the people who need to see them, and ensuring that FCO contributions to the Council have maximum impact. Policy departments across the FCO take the lead in preparing for Council discussion of subjects for which they are responsible, including liaising with colleagues across government. These arrangements are working well, although they will continue to evolve as the Council's work develops.

12. *In your speech of 1 July, you called the Strategic Defence and Security Review "a fundamental reappraisal of Britain's place in the world and how we operate within it as well as of the capability we need to protect our security." In concrete terms, how is the FCO contributing to the SDSR process? In that process, what is the FCO saying that the UK needs to be able to do, in terms of acting internationally to ensure its security?*

The Defence Secretary told the House of Commons on 21 June that the starting point for the SDSR would be the UK's foreign policy priorities. (HC *Hansard* 21 June 2010 col 61) FCO has played a lead role in setting the context for the Review through its work on the changing threats and opportunities the UK faces. In concrete terms, this has meant intensive contact between officials in the FCO, NSC and other departments, and between Ministers, setting out the FCO's views and analysis.

The FCO itself will be covered by the review, which I am convinced will confirm that our skills and expertise and our global network are more necessary than ever to protect our security, promote our economy and support British citizens overseas.

The Review will be published in the autumn in coordination with the Spending Review (SR). FCO officials will continue to be involved until the conclusion of the review and I shall remain engaged in the process through discussions in the National Security Council.

BILATERAL RELATIONS

13. The Prime Minister has spoken of the importance of the relationship between the United Kingdom and India, and has described this as "the new special relationship". The bilateral UK-India relationship was singled out in the Queen's Speech as being of special importance to the Government in going forward. What has the Indian Government's response been to the renewed emphasis on the UK-India relationship?

The Indian Government's response has been very positive. The Prime Minister visited India on 29–30 July. I accompanied him as did the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Business Secretary and a large delegation of business people and leaders from education, culture and sport. After the UK-India Summit on 30 July Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said that the visit had demonstrated "the strength of the bonds that tie India and the UK" Prime Minister Singh added that he had "no doubt that this will be good for both our countries, and responds to the wishes and aspiration of both our peoples". Throughout the visit Ministers had productive and wide ranging discussions with their Indian counterparts. Both sides agreed specific initiatives to develop economic and trade relations, science and technology, energy, education, defence, culture and people to people contacts.

14. *The Prime Minister is taking the lead for the UK Government towards India, while the Deputy Prime Minister will take the lead in relation to China. What does this involve and what does it mean in practice for the FCO's work in and with these countries?*

The Prime Minister told President Hu Jintao in Toronto that he would lead the UK's relationship with China and agreed to visit China in November for the annual Summit. The Summit is reinforced by the Strategic Dialogue which I lead for the UK, and the Economic and Financial Dialogue led by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The only other countries to have this range of formal high level mechanisms with China are the US and Japan. The Deputy Prime Minister's contacts with Chinese leaders will further add to the relationship. The FCO will coordinate work across Government Departments on the strategic partnerships with India and China, both of which are of fundamental importance to the UK's prosperity and security.

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

UN Security Council reform

15. *In the second of your recent speeches setting out UK foreign policy, in July in Tokyo, you said that the UK and Japan "will one day work alongside each other as permanent members of an expanded United Nations Security Council". When do you expect that day to be?*

As I said in my speech on 1 July: "this Government will be at the forefront of those arguing for the expansion of the United Nations Security Council". We are clear and unambiguous in our support for permanent membership in the Security Council for the G4 (Japan, Germany, Brazil and India) as well as African representation. Our goal is a UN Security Council that is more representative of the 21st century.

But reform is not in our gift. It can only happen when two thirds of the UN membership agree, including the five current permanent members. While there is currently broad support for the idea of reform, there is no agreement on how this should happen, and fundamental divides remain.

Intergovernmental Negotiations in informal plenary of the United Nations General Assembly started in 2009 in New York under the chairmanship of Ambassador Tanin of Afghanistan. We continue to support Ambassador Tanin's ongoing efforts to bring about consensus. In the absence of agreement on a permanent reform model, we have, with France, suggested that an intermediate solution could break the deadlock. We are ready to work with others in considering what an intermediate solution might look like.

The UK will continue to urge UNSG reform while accepting that progress will be gradual.

Commonwealth

16. *In your 1 July speech, you said that the Government wished to "reinvigorate" the Commonwealth and "help it develop a clearer agenda for the future". We are aware that Sir Malcolm Rifkind has been appointed to the Eminent Persons Group which Commonwealth Heads of Government have asked to examine the future role of the Commonwealth. Could you provide further information about the Government's plans to "reinvigorate" the Commonwealth? When is the EPG due to report?*

We believe that we need to think afresh about the UK's relationship with the Commonwealth and encourage other member states to work with us to reinvigorate this extraordinary organisation. It has unique value as a diverse network of states spanning five continents and thirty percent of the world's population. We will encourage the Commonwealth to focus on the contribution it can make in inter-faith dialogue, conflict prevention, democracy, development and trade and the work of international organisations. The FCO will work more closely with the Commonwealth Secretariat and associations, member states and other interested parties. We will encourage the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) and Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) review to issue strong recommendations ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2011. The EPG report will be finalised at its meeting on 20–22 March 2011, and the recommendations will be considered by Heads at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Perth, Australia, in October 2011. My Ministerial colleagues and I will work with other government departments, particularly DFID, to strengthen UK ties with Commonwealth countries.

EU

17. *The EU General Affairs Council adopted its Decision establishing the European External Action Service on 26 July. The EU's 2010 budget will now be amended to allow for the costs of the new Service in the remainder of the current calendar year. We would be grateful to know:*

- *For the rest of 2010 (pro rata) and for 2011, the likely budget for the EEAS (including the EU Delegations in third countries), broken down into operational and administrative spending if relevant; and a statement of the way in which this compares with the budgets for the units of the Commission and Council Secretariat that are becoming part of the EEAS, in order to be able to identify any additional spending arising from the creation of the EEAS.*

The EEAS budget is entirely administrative spend. Operational spend forms part of Heading 4 ("EU as a global player") of the EU budget. The Commission published "Draft Amending Budget No 6" on 17 June. This amends the 2010 EU budget to account for the additional costs this year from the creation of the EAS, including newly created posts. These total €9.5 million (HMT Explanatory Memorandum (EM) 11251/10 of 13 July refers). The costs of the Commission and Council Secretariat units that will become part of the EEAS will not transfer on to the EAS budget until 2011. This is a special arrangement to avoid moving costs around in the middle of the budget year.

The EEAS budget for 2011 is not yet agreed. The European Commission will present proposals in September. The cost of the Commission and Council units that we expect to be transferred to the EEAS in 2009 was around €398.5 million. However, the EEAS budget will also have to meet the additional costs of member state nationals that will be seconded to the EEAS and part of the staff of EU Special Representatives.

- *The expected number of EEAS staff, on 1 January 2011 when the initial transfers of personnel from the Commission and Council Secretariat take place, and when the EEAS reaches its full strength.*
- "Draft Amending Budget Number 6" (HMT EM 11251/10 of 13 July refers) sets out that the current establishment plan for the EEAS involves 1,114 posts transferred from the Commission; 411 posts transferred from the General Secretariat of the Council; and 100 new posts for member states' diplomats.
- *The number of UK civil servants whom you expect to be seconded into the EEAS, when the Service is first set up and when it reaches its full strength. Have any UK officials been appointed already to any EEAS posts?*

EEAS appointments should be made through a transparent procedure and be based on merit, not nationality. There are a large number of FCO staff who are keen to go on secondment and who would contribute effectively to the formulation and delivery of EU external policy. We are doing all we can to support good UK civil servants in their applications. The UK represents 12% of the EU population and we must ensure that greater numbers of bright British officials enter all the EU institutions.

The recruitment process for the first round of 30 EEAS jobs is under way. In the last few weeks, a further 10 senior positions in Brussels have also been published. The deadline for these applications is 6 September 2010. A further 81 new positions in EU delegations abroad have also been advertised, with a deadline of 10 September 2010. Finally, 10 additional roles have been advertised with the application date of 16 September 2010. I will keep the Committee informed of the outcome of these recruitments.

18. *In your 1 July speech, you identified a developing “generation gap” in terms of the presence of British personnel among the staff of the EU institutions. What is the FCO doing to address this, including as regards the re-introduction of the European Fast Stream in the civil service?*

I consider it a strategic priority, as part of our broader approach to the EU, to take action to increase the relative number of UK personnel working in the EU Institutions. I have already written to Cabinet colleagues highlighting this issue and seeking their support and Europe Directorate of the FCO, in close coordination with UKREP and the Cabinet Office, is actively developing a campaign to raise interest in careers in the EU institutions. This will need to be a sustained and long-term campaign and its success is linked to us continuing to explain the facts about the UK’s relationship with the EU as part of our commitment to being active and activist.

Given that recruitment for permanent staff in the policy stream of the EU Institutions is only open at the most junior level, my first priority is to raise the overall number and quality of UK applicants applying to sit the entrance tests (the concours) in March 2011 and beyond. These will tend to be recent graduates (Bachelors and those with postgraduate qualifications) and in particular those who have studied French or German or who are competent for other reasons. Working with the European Personnel Selection Office, which is responsible for all recruitment into the EU Institutions, my officials intend to hold a series of events to raise awareness amongst young people of the opportunities presented by a career in the EU. The first is scheduled for mid-October, when I hope to be joined by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Europe at a reception in the FCO where our guests will include university Vice Chancellors, Heads of Language Departments, careers advisers and interested members of the media. We will also launch an area on the FCO website dedicated to EU careers.

The reintroduction of the European Fast Stream is also an important element of our effort since these officers will receive development training and support specifically tailored to passing the concours. The Government has recruited 21 such officers this year and intend to maintain this level of recruitment in future years. I hope that most of this year’s intake will be present at the October FCO event.

In addition, it is important that we continue to second UK experts from across Whitehall and externally to the EU Institutions to supplement their full time staff. BIS is already leading work to develop a more strategic approach to the use of secondments of UK Civil Servants to posts in the EU institutions, where UK experience and insight can add real value.

OVERSEAS TERRITORIES

19. *In his letter to the Chairman of the Committee dated 1 July 2010, Henry Bellingham MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, wrote that the Government was developing “a more dynamic relationship” with the Overseas Territories. What does this mean in practice? What concrete steps has the Government taken in pursuing this relationship?*

The great majority of those living in the Territories are British citizens. I welcome the opportunity as Foreign Secretary to lead the Government’s work on the Overseas Territories. We have a responsibility to ensure the security and good governance of the Territories and to support their economic wellbeing. This is a responsibility I take extremely seriously. I also recognise that the Territories can create substantial challenges for the UK Government. We need a vigilant and active approach to managing these risks. This is especially true at a time when a number of our Territories have been hit hard by the global recession.

We have moved rapidly to tackle some of the problems left unaddressed by the previous government:

- In July the Secretary of State for International Development announced the resumption of the St Helena Air Access Project. This is a major project which will transform the lives of the people of St Helena and for the first time offer them the prospect of a future free from dependence on the UK taxpayer.

- In July, following a joint review by the FCO and DfID of the UK's intervention in the Turks and Caicos Islands, the Government moved to stabilise the territory's public finances. The terms of this support were set out in the Written Ministerial Statement by the Secretary of State for International Development on 1 July. We are now working towards a longer term fiscal stabilisation plan. This will provide a basis for completing the reform programme which is required before the territory can confidently return to full democratic government. We have also established a Joint FCO/DfID Ministerial Steering Group on the Turks and Caicos Islands to ensure effective and coordinated policy-making and delivery.
- Between May and July the Government worked in partnership with governments of the Caribbean Territories in fiscal crisis to take urgent steps to control their deficits and to develop plans to put their finances on a stable footing. This resulted in the territories presenting credible budgets, supported, for the first time, by three year fiscal recovery plans. Our approach to public spending in the UK has lent authority to our encouragement to Territory authorities to bring their own expenditure under control.
- From our first days in office we have been firm and clear about our support for the Falkland Islands and their right to develop a hydrocarbons industry.

This is a broad and complex agenda involving many government departments. The FCO and DfID are working together to review the development needs of all the Overseas Territories. I have also asked officials to review the Government's overall approach to the Territories. I look forward to discussing this review with the Committee in the months ahead.

FCO TRADE AND INVESTMENT WORK

20. *The Prime Minister has stated that the FCO's diplomats must become "economic ambassadors for Britain" and that there needs to be "quite a big step change in our approach to foreign and diplomatic relations in massively upgrading the importance of trade in terms of the contacts that we have with other countries". What practical steps are being taken to respond to the Prime Minister's call for change as outlined above?*

The Prime Minister has stated that the Coalition Government's top priority is reducing the deficit and returning Britain to strong, sustainable growth. There are two overarching objectives for the Government's agenda for recovery in which the FCO will play a central role: Direct support for the British economy and British firms, to help them exploit global opportunities; and the creation of a strong, sustainable and open global economy. UK exports of goods and services of £387 billion in 2009 corresponded to 27.7% of GDP at market prices of £1,396 billion (down from 29.2% in 2008). Exports will therefore be crucial to the UK's successful economic recovery.

The international environment is increasingly competitive, with nations such as France, Germany, the USA and Japan all in the process of building up their export capability and appeal to foreign investment in order to drive their own economic recovery. This brings the need for the UK Government to offer support to British companies into sharper focus.

The FCO is responding energetically to the Prime Minister's call for a step change in its approach to foreign and diplomatic relations. I have recently announced that building Britain's prosperity (by increasing exports and investment, opening markets, ensuring access to resources and promoting sustainable global growth) will be one of three key priorities for the FCO. Trade and investment already forms a core part of the FCO's work. We have a network of 1,300 trade and investment staff operating through our posts in 96 different markets. Customers attribute bottom line profits of £5 billion per year to UKTI support, and this has doubled over the last three years.

I aim to establish a new commercial culture across the FCO and throughout our overseas posts, so that our ministers and senior officials—in the FCO and across Government—are briefed to press key commercial issues in every meeting and visit. I am keen to ensure that ministerial visits across government are coordinated better, to ensure maximum coverage and impact on commercial matters. I am also keen to strengthen the links between business and FCO Ministers, senior officials and Heads of Mission. And I have asked FCO officials to carry out an audit of other FCO activity to ensure that opportunities for UK business are being properly identified and supported.

I have established a new joint FCO/UKTI Commercial Task Force. This is led by a senior FCO officer with extensive UK Trade and Investment experience, and will incorporate FCO and UKTI officers. It will work closely with all parts of the FCO to establish this commercial culture in the FCO.

The FCO has also created a new team to lead cross-Government work on the emerging powers, and will develop action plans for those countries with the highest potential for UK business. Officials are also strengthening the FCO's resources for work on trade policy and in support of the UK economy.

Simon Fraser, the new FCO Permanent Under-Secretary, has extensive experience of trade issues. I have asked him to take forward the programme of increasing the importance of trade and investment in the FCO's work.

21. *What is being done to ensure that diplomatic staff who have not previously worked in this area are able to acquire the necessary trade and commercial expertise that may be required of them?*

The FCO provides economic training to all staff going overseas to take a job with significant economic content, including those working on joint economic and commercial jobs. This training is also available to staff in London and to Heads of Mission. The training includes tailor-made economic courses on the specifics of international trade and macroeconomics, as well as the opportunity for ad-hoc training on related issues. In response to the economic crisis, and as recommended by a review of the FCO's economic capability, the FCO has expanded the availability of economics training to greater numbers of officers, including those overseas. I and senior FCO officials will continue to ensure that staff develop the skills and capacity necessary to meet the new level of commercial and economic ambition within the FCO.

In addition, UKTI training is available to all FCO staff going overseas to take a job which has a high commercial (trade and inward investment) content. UKTI training is modular, with FCO officers taking the modules relevant to their particular post and responsibilities. UKTI also runs courses specifically for new Heads of Missions and Deputy Heads of Missions before they take up their posting; these include a session on the skills needed in developing strategic conversations with businesses. Once in the post, staff have the opportunity to continue to develop trade and commercial expertise through locally-run FCO and UKTI workshops and distance learning via the Open University. In addition to training, UKTI also offers staff the opportunity to further develop their understanding of business issues, through secondments to other government departments, attachments to business, and industry briefing visits.

The FCO currently has some 71 members of staff on outward secondment, many to the private sector. In addition, our programme of short-term attachments to business for outgoing Heads of Mission enables them to gain first hand business experience.

22. *How can you ensure that the FCO's culture evolves swiftly to reflect one which gives the highest priority to trade?*

As I have described above, the Commercial Diplomacy Taskforce will carry out an intensive programme over the next 6 months. It will establish clear milestones for its work and will evaluate its work on a regular basis. It will work closely with UKTI, and with the FCO's New Emerging Powers, Trade Policy and UK Economy teams.

I have made clear that Ambassadors and High Commissioners will be expected to meet challenging targets for UK exports and inward investment to the UK, linked to UKTI targets. A substantial proportion of the economic work of our Embassies will be more clearly focused on working to achieve demonstrable benefits for British business and the British economy, for example making sure that new opportunities in free trade agreements, are communicated effectively so that British firms can take advantage of them. Ambassadors and High Commissioners will also be expected to develop even stronger links with the UK regions to promote opportunities in their markets for UK companies.

Officials will improve the present system of coordinating Ministerial visits across government to ensure that all Ministerial visits take full advantage of the opportunity to focus on commercial matters. This will ensure Ministers are fully briefed and able to lobby their counterparts on the key commercial issues in the markets they visit, whether that is on market access, trade agreements, taxation agreements or specific issues.

I will ensure that FCO input on Trade Policy is increased. Our International Trade Team has already been strengthened with additional trade policy officers including a supporting hub of economic analysts. This team will work closely with BIS to provide strategic advice to our Embassies. An international network of trade policy advisors will work across embassies to further mainstream trade into the bilateral dialogue. Our Embassies will lobby to build momentum behind the Doha Round, drive progress on EU Free Trade Agreements, and address the barriers which prevent British businesses accessing key markets. The FCO will also support the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) in shaping and delivering its international objectives.

I have already reinforced the FCO team which supports the UK Economy with an additional four policy officers and a supporting hub of economic analysts. This team will work very closely with other Whitehall departments including HM Treasury and BIS, with UKTI and the Commercial Diplomacy Taskforce. The team will coordinate a whole of Government effort, setting the strategic direction for the Government's work to promote the UK Economy overseas and provide material and central direction to our posts to highlight the strengths of the UK economy and help build the UK's economic credibility internationally. It will also task posts to explore barriers to greater economic relations for example with emerging powers as well as identifying innovative economic policies from overseas that could work here. It will generate ideas for sectors where there are specific new opportunities which could be taken forward by different Government departments, including in education, health services and defence.

23. *When will a new FCO-BIS Trade Minister be appointed?*

An appointment will be made soon. The Prime Minister is keen that a permanent Minister for UKTI is appointed as soon as possible. However, it is also important that the person appointed has the right business credentials for the post.

The Prime Minister has stated that he expects all of his Ministers to promote British business as a core part of their international work. FCO Ministers and I have already begun to do so. Until a permanent UKTI Minister is appointed, Business Minister Mark Prisk will continue to have responsibility for UK Trade and Investment, and he is fulfilling this role very successfully. He has already been focused on driving forward the trade and investment agenda and involved in developing relationships with investors. The Prime Minister has also appointed Lord Brittan for a six month period as Trade Adviser. He will work closely with Ministers across the Government to define an overarching trade and investment strategy, and to help to drive forward the Government's trade agenda, including the forthcoming Trade White Paper.

I hope you find these answers useful and I look forward to appearing before your committee soon.

2 September 2010

THE FCO OVERSEAS NETWORK

Country/Territory	Name of Post (if none, capital city)	UN Member State? (Y/N)	Sovereign Post? (Y/N)	Subordinate Post? (Y/N)	Type of Post	Date of Post Closure	DFID Office (Y/N)	DFID Colocate with FCO? (Y/N)	Resident Ambassador/ High Commissioner / Governor (Y/N)	If none: Accredited Ambassador/ High Commissioner/ Governor
Afghanistan	Lashkagar	Y	N	Y	Provincial Reconstruction Team		Y	Y	N	
Afghanistan	Kabul	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	
Albania	Tirana	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Algeria	Algiers	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Andorra	Andorra La Vella	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Madrid, Spain
Angola	Luanda	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	
Anguilla (Overseas Territory)	Anguilla	N	N	N	Governor		N	N	Y	
Antigua and Barbuda	St John's	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	2008	N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Bridgetown, Barbados
Argentina	Buenos Aires	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Armenia	Yerevan	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Ascension Island (Overseas Territory)	Ascension Island	N	N	N	Administrator		N	N	N	Governor resident in Jamestown, Saint Helena
Australia	Adelaide	Y	N/A	N/A	British Consulate	2006	N	N	N	
Australia	Canberra	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	
Australia	Brisbane	Y	N	Y	British Consulate		N	N	N	
Australia	Melbourne	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Australia	Perth	Y	N	Y	British Consulate		N	N	N	
Australia	Sydney	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Austria	Vienna	Y	N	N	UK Delegation to the Organisation for Security Cooperation in Europe		N	N	N	
Austria	Vienna	Y	N	N	UK Mission to the United Nations		N	N	N	
Austria	Vienna	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Azerbaijan	Baku	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Bahamas	Nassau	Y	N/A	N/A	British High Commission	2005	N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Kingston, Jamaica
Bahrain	Manama	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Bangladesh	Sylhet	Y	N	Y	Consular Office		N	N	N	
Bangladesh	Dhaka	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		Y	N	Y	
Barbados	Bridgetown	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		Y	N	Y	
Belarus	Minsk	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Belgium	Brussels	Y	N	N	UK Delegation to NATO		N	N	N	

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Belgium	Brussels	Y	N	N	UK Permanent Representation to EU		Y	Y	N	
Belgium	Brussels	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Belize	Belmopan	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	
Benin	Porto-Novo	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Abuja, Nigeria
Bermuda (Overseas Territory)	Hamilton	N	N	N	Governor		N	N	Y	
Bhutan	Thimphu	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in New Delhi, India
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	La Paz	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Banja Luka	Y	N	Y	British Embassy Office		N	N	N	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Sarajevo	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	
Botswana	Gaborone	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	
Brazil	Belo Horizonte	Y	N/A	N/A	British Trade Office	2005	N	N	N	
Brazil	Curitiba	Y	N/A	N/A	British Trade Office	2005	N	N	N	
Brazil	Recife	Y	N	Y	British Trade Office		N	N	N	
Brazil	Porto Alegre	Y	N	Y	British Commercial Office		N	N	N	
Brazil	Brasilia	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	
Brazil	Rio De Janeiro	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Brazil	Sao Paulo	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
British Virgin Islands (Overseas Territory)	Tortola	N	N	N	Governor		N	N	Y	
Brunei Darussalam	Bandar Seri Begawan	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	
Bulgaria	Sofia	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Burkina Faso	Ouagadougou	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Accra, Ghana
Burundi	Bujumbura	Y	N	N	British Liaison Office	1995	Y	N	N	Ambassador resident in Kigali, Rwanda
Cambodia	Phnom Penh	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	
Cameroon	Douala	Y	N/A	N/A	British Consulate General	2005	N	N	N	
Cameroon	Yaounde	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	
Canada	Calgary	Y	N	Y	British Trade Office		N	N	N	
Canada	Ottawa	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	
Canada	Montreal	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Canada	Toronto	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Canada	Vancouver	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	

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Cape Verde	Praia	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Dakar, Senegal
Cayman Islands (Overseas Territory)	George Town	N	N	N	Governor		N	N	Y	
Central African Republic	Bangui	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Yaounde, Cameroon
Chad	N'Djamena	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Yaounde, Cameroon
Chile	Santiago	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
China	Beijing	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	N	Y	
China	Chongqing	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
China	Guangzhou	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
China	Hong Kong SAR	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
China	Shanghai	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Colombia	Bogota	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Comoros	Moroni	Y	N	N	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Port Louis, Mauritius
Congo	Brazzaville	Y	N/A	N/A	British Embassy	1991/2	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo
Costa Rica	San Jose	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Cte D'Ivoire	Abidjan	Y	N/A	N/A	British Embassy Office	2005 (suspended)	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Accra, Ghana
Croatia	Zagreb	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Cuba	Havana	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Cyprus	Nicosia	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	
Czech Republic	Prague	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Pyongyang	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Goma	Y	N	Y	British Embassy Office		N	N	N	
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Kinshasa	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	
Denmark	Copenhagen	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Djibouti	Djibouti	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Dominica	Roseau	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Bridgetown, Barbados
Dominican Republic	Santo Domingo	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Ecuador	Quito	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	

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Egypt	Alexandria	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Egypt	Cairo	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
El Salvador	San Salvador	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	2003	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Guatemala City, Guatemala
Equatorial Guinea	Malabo	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Abuja, Nigeria
Eritrea	Asmara	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Estonia	Talinn	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	
Falkland Islands (Overseas Territory)	Stanley	N	N	N	Governor		N	N	Y	
Fiji	Suva	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	
Finland	Helsinki	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
France	Bordeaux	Y	N	Y	British Consulate		N	N	N	
France	UK Del to Council of Europe, Strasbourg	Y	N	N	International Organisation Delegation		N	N	N	
France	UK Del to OECD, Paris	Y	N	N	International Organisation Delegation		N	N	N	
France	Lyon	Y	N	Y	British Consulate		N	N	N	
France	Marseille	Y	N	Y	British Consulate		N	N	N	
France	Paris	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	N	Y	
France	Lille	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Gabon	Libreville	Y	N/A	N/A	British Embassy	1991/92	N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Yaounde, Cameroon
Gambia	Banjul	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	
Georgia	Tbilisi	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Germany	Berlin	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Germany	Dusseldorf	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Germany	Frankfurt	Y	N/A	N/A	British Consulate General	2005	N	N	N	
Germany	Leipzig	Y	N/A	N/A	British Trade Office	2005	N	N	N	
Germany	Hamburg	Y	N/A	N/A	British Consulate General	2006	N	N	N	
Germany	Munich	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Germany	Stuttgart	Y	N/A	N/A	British Consulate General	2006	N	N	N	
Ghana	Accra	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		Y	N	Y	
Gibraltar (Overseas Territory)	Gibraltar	N	N	N	Governor		N	N	N	

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Greece	Athens	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Greece	Corfu	Y	N	Y	British Vice Consulate		N	N	N	
Greece	Heraklion, Crete	Y	N	Y	British Vice Consulate		N	N	N	
Greece	Zakynthos	Y	N	Y	British Vice Consulate		N	N	N	
Greece	Rhodes	Y	N	Y	British Consulate		N	N	N	
Grenada	Saint George's	Y	N/A	N/A	British High Commission Office	2008	N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Bridgetown, Barbados
Guatemala	Guatemala City	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Guinea	Conakry	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Guinea Bissau	Bissau	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Dakar, Senegal
Guyana	Georgetown	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		Y	Y	Y	
Haiti	Port au Prince	Y	N/A	N/A	British Consulate General	2005	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Holy See	Vatican City	N	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Honduras	Tegucigalpa	Y	N/A	N/A	British Embassy	2004	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Guatemala City, Guatemala
Hungary	Budapest	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Iceland	Reykjavik	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
India	Ahmedabad	Y	N	Y	British Trade Office		N	N	N	
India	Bangalore	Y	N	Y	Deputy High Commission		N	N	N	
India	Bhopal	Y	N/A	N/A	Information Centre	2005	Y	N	N	
India	Bubaneswar	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A		Y	N	N	
India	Chennai	Y	N	Y	British Deputy High Commission		N	N	N	
India	Goa	Y	N	Y	British Tourist Assistance Office		N	N	N	
India	Hyderabad	Y	N	Y	British Trade Office		N	N	N	
India	Kolkata	Y	N	Y	British Deputy High Commission		Y	N	N	
India	Mumbai	Y	N	Y	British Deputy High Commission		N	N	N	
India	Pune	Y	N	Y	British Trade Office		N	N	N	
India	New Delhi	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		Y	N	Y	
Indonesia	Jakarta	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	N	Y	
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Tehran	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Iraq	Baghdad	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	
Iraq	Basra	Y	N	Y	British Embassy Office		N	N	N	
Iraq	Erbil	Y	N	Y	British Embassy Office		N	N	N	
Ireland	Dublin	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	

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Israel	Tel Aviv	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Italy	Florence	Y	N	Y	British Consulate		N	N	N	
Italy	Naples	Y	N	Y	British Consulate		N	N	N	
Italy	Rome	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	
Italy	Milan	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Italy	Turin	Y	N/A	N/A	British Consulate	1995/1996	N	N	N	
Italy	Genoa	Y	N/A	N/A	British Consulate	1995/1996	N	N	N	
Jamaica	Kingston	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		Y	Y	Y	
Japan	Fukuoka	Y	N/A	N/A	British Trade Office	2005	N	N	N	
Japan	Nagoya	Y	N/A	N/A	British Consulate	2007	N	N	N	
Japan	Tokyo	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Japan	Osaka	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Jordan	Amman	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	
Kazakhstan	Astana	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Kazakhstan	Almaty	Y	N	Y	British Embassy Office		N	N	N	
Kazakhstan	Atyrau	Y	N	Y	British Trade Office		N	N	N	
Kenya	Nairobi	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		Y	Y	Y	
Kiribati	Tarawa	Y	N	N	British High Commission Office		N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Suva, Fiji
Kiribati	Tarawa	Y	N/A	N/A	British High Commission	2005	N	N	Y	
Kosovo	Pristina	N	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	N	Y	
Kuwait	Kuwait	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Kyrgyzstan	Bishkek	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	Y	N	N	Ambassador resident in Astana, Kazakhstan
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Vientiane	Y	N/A	N/A	British Trade Office	2005	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Bangkok, Thailand
Latvia	Riga	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Lebanon	Beirut	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Lesotho	Maseru	Y	N/A	N/A	British High Commission	2005	N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Pretoria, South Africa
Liberia	Monrovia	Y	N	N	Political Office (US Embassy Implant)		N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Freetown, Sierra Leone
Liberia	Monrovia	Y	N/A	N/A	British Embassy	1990/1991	N	N	Y	
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Tripoli	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Liechtenstein	Vaduz	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Berne, Switzerland
Lithuania	Vilnius	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Luxembourg	Luxembourg	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Madagascar	Antananarivo	Y	N/A	N/A	British Embassy	2005	N	N	Y	

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Madagascar	Antananarivo	Y	N	N	British Interests Section		N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Port Louis
Malawi	Lilongwe	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		Y	Y	Y	
Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	
Malaysia	Kuching	Y	N/A	N/A	British Consulate	1998	N	N	N	
Maldives	Male	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Colombo, Sri Lanka
Mali	Bamako	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Malta	Valletta	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	
Marshall Islands	Majuro	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Manila, the Philippines
Mauritania	Nouakchott	Y	N	N	Implant in EC Delegation (Laptop diplomat)		N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Rabat, Morocco
Mauritius	Port Louis	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	
Mexico	Guadalajara	Y	N	Y	British Trade Office		N	N	N	
Mexico	Monterrey	Y	N	Y	British Trade Office		N	N	N	
Mexico	Tijuana	Y	N	Y	British Trade Office		N	N	N	
Mexico	Mexico City	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Micronesia, Federated States of	Palikir	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Manila, the Philippines
Monaco	Monaco	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Paris, France
Mongolia	Ulaanbaatar	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Montenegro	Podgorica	Y	Y	N	British Embassy				Y	
Montserrat (Overseas Territory)	Brades	Y	N	N	Governor		N	N	Y	
Montserrat (Overseas Territory)	Manjack	N	N/A	N/A	N/A		Y	N	N	
Morocco	Casablanca	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Morocco	Rabat	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Morocco	Tangier	Y	N	Y	British Consulate		N	N	N	
Mozambique	Maputo	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		Y	N	Y	
Myanmar / Burma	Yangon / Rangoon	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	
Namibia	Windhoek	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	
Nauru	Yaren	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Suva, Fiji
Nepal	Kathmandu	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	N	Y	
Netherlands	Amsterdam	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Netherlands	The Hague	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
New Zealand	Wellington	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	

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New Zealand	Auckland	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Nicaragua	Managua	Y	N/A	N/A	British Embassy	2004	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in san Jose, Costa Rica
Niger	Niamey	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Accra, Ghana
Nigeria	Abuja	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		Y	N	Y	
Nigeria	Enugu	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A		Y	N	N	
Nigeria	Kano	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A		Y	N	N	
Nigeria	Kaduna	Y	N	Y	British Liaison Office		N	N	N	
Nigeria	Lagos	Y	N	Y	British Deputy High Commission		Y	Y	Y	
Nigeria	Port Harcourt	Y	N	Y	British Liaison Office		N	N	N	
Norway	Oslo	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Norway	Bergen	Y	N	Y	Honorary Consulate		N	N	N	
Oman	Muscat	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Pakistan	Islamabad	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		Y	Y	Y	
Pakistan	Karachi	Y	N	Y	British Deputy High Commission		N	N	N	
Pakistan	Lahore	Y	N	Y	British Trade Office		N	N	N	
Palau	Melekeok	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Manila, the Philippines
Palestinian Territories	Gaza	N	N	Y	British Information Services Office		N	N	N	
Final status to be determined	Jerusalem	N	N	Y	British Consulate General		Y	N	N	
Panama	Panama City	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Papua New Guinea	Port Moresby	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	
Paraguay	Asuncion	Y	N/A	N/A	British Embassy	2005	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Buenos Aires, Argentina
Peru	Lima	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Philippines	Manila	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Pitcairn Islands (Overseas Territory)	Adamstown	N	N	N	Resident Representative		N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Wellington, New Zealand
Poland	Warsaw	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Portugal	Lisbon	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Portugal	Oporto	Y	N/A	N/A	British Consulate	2005	N	N	N	
Portugal	Portimao	Y	N	Y	British Consulate		N	N	N	
Qatar	Doha	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Republic of Korea	Seoul	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Republic of Korea	Pusan	Y	N/A	N/A	British Trade Office	1999/2000	N	N	N	
Republic of Moldova	Chisinau	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	

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Romania	Bucharest	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Russian Federation	Ekaterinburg	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Russian Federation	Moscow	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Russian Federation	St. Petersburg	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Rwanda	Kigali	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	
Saint Helena (Overseas Territory)	Jamestown	N	N	N	Governor		Y	N	Y	
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Basseterre	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Bridgetown, Barbados
Saint Lucia	Castries	Y	N	N	British High Commission		N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Bridgetown, Barbados
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Kingstown	Y	N/A	N/A	British High Commission	2007	N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Bridgetown, Barbados
Samoa	Apia	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A		N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Wellington, New Zealand
San Marino	San Marino	Y	N	N	British Consulate General		N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Rome, Italy
São Tomé and Príncipe	São Tomé	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Luanda, Angola
Saudi Arabia	Jeddah	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Saudi Arabia	Riyadh	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Saudi Arabia	Al-Khobar	Y	N	Y	British Trade Office		N	N	N	
Senegal	Dakar	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Serbia	Belgrade	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	N/A
Seychelles	Victoria	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	
Sierra Leone	Freetown	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		Y	Y	Y	
Singapore	Singapore	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	
Slovakia	Bratislava	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Slovenia	Ljubljana	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Solomon Islands	Honiara	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	
Somalia	Mogadishu	Y	N/A	N/A	British Embassy	1991/2 (suspended)	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Nairobi, Kenya
South Africa	Cape Town	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
South Africa	Durban	Y	N	Y	British Trade Office		N	N	N	
South Africa	Johannesburg	Y	N	Y	British Trade Office		N	N	N	
South Africa	Pretoria	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		Y	N	Y	
Spain	Alicante	Y	N	Y	British Consulate		N	N	N	
Spain	Bilbao	Y	N	Y	British Consulate		N	N	N	

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Spain	Barcelona	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Spain	Las Palmas	Y	N	Y	British Consulate		N	N	N	
Spain	Malaga	Y	N	Y	British Consulate		N	N	N	
Spain	Madrid	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Spain	Ibiza	Y	N	Y	British Vice Consulate		N	N	N	
Spain	Palma	Y	N	Y	British Consulate		N	N	N	
Spain	Santa Cruz de Tenerife	Y	N	Y	British Consulate		N	N	N	
Spain	Seville	Y	N/A	N/A	British Consulate	2000/2001	N	N	N	
Sri Lanka	Colombo	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	
Sudan	Khartoum	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	
Sudan	Juba	Y	N	Y	British Embassy Office		N	N	N	
Suriname	Paramaribo	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Georgetown, Guyana
Swaziland	Mbabane	Y	N/A	N/A	British High Commission	2005	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Pretoria, South Africa
Sweden	Gothenburg	Y	N/A	N/A	British Consulate General	2006	N	N	N	
Sweden	Stockholm	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Switzerland	Berne	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Switzerland	Geneva	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Switzerland	UK Mission to the United Nations, Geneva	Y	N	N	International Organisation Delegation		N	N	N	
Switzerland	UK Permanent Representation to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva	Y	N	N	International Organisation Delegation		N	N	Y	
Switzerland	Zurich	Y	N/A	N/A	British Consulate General	1997/1998	N	N	N	
Syrian Arab Republic	Damascus	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Syrian Arab Republic	Aleppo	Y	N/A	N/A	British Trade Office	2007	N	N	N	
Taiwan	Taipei	N	N	Y	British Trade & Cultural Office		N	N	N	
Taiwan	Koahsiung	N	N/A	N/A	Trade and Cultural Office	2009	N	N	N	
Tajikistan	Dushanbe	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	
Thailand	Bangkok	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	
Thailand	Chiang	Y	N/A	N/A	British Consulate	1998/1999	N	N	N	
[The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia]	Skopje	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Timor-Leste	Dili	Y	N/A	N/A	British Embassy	2006	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Jakarta, Indonesia

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Togo	Lome	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	Ambassador resident in Accra, Ghana
Tonga	Nuku'alofa	Y	N/A	N/A	British High Commission	2006	N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Suva, Fiji
Trinidad and Tobago	Port Of Spain	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		N	N	Y	
Tristan Da Cunha (Overseas Territory)	Tristan Da Cunha	N	N	N	Administrator		N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Jamestown, Saint Helena
Tunisia	Tunis	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Turkey	Ankara	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Turkey	Izmir	Y	N	Y	British Consulate		N	N	N	
Turkey	Istanbul	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Turkey	Antalya	Y	N	Y	Vice Consulate		N	N	N	
Turkmenistan	Ashgabat	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Turks and Caicos Islands (Overseas Territory)	Grand Turk	N	N	N	Governor		N	N	Y	
Tuvalu	Funafuti	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Record	N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Suva, Fiji
Uganda	Kampala	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		Y	Y	Y	
Ukraine	Kiev	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
United Arab Emirates	Abu Dhabi	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
United Arab Emirates	Dubai	Y	N	Y	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
United Republic of Tanzania	Dar Es Salaam	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		Y	Y	Y	
United States of America	Atlanta	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
United States of America	Boston	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
United States of America	Chicago	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
United States of America	Dallas	Y	N/A	N/A	British Consulate General	2005	N	N	N	
United States of America	Denver	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
United States of America	Houston	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
United States of America	Los Angeles	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
United States of America	Miami	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
United States of America	Orlando	Y	N	Y	British Consulate		N	N	N	
United States of America	New York	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	

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United States of America	San Francisco	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
United States of America	San Juan	Y	N/A	N/A	British Consulate General	2002	N	N	N	
United States of America	Seattle	Y	N/A	N/A	British Consulate General	2006	N	N	N	
United States of America	Phoenix	Y	N/A	N/A	British Trade Office	2005	N	N	N	
United States of America	UK Mission to the United Nations, New York	Y	N	N	International Organisation Delegation		Y	Y	N	
United States of America	Washington	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	N/A
Uruguay	Montevideo	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Uzbekistan	Tashkent	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Vanuatu	Port-Vila	Y	N/A	N/A	British High Commission	2005	N	N	N	High Commissioner resident in Suva, Fiji
Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of	Caracas	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		N	N	Y	
Vietnam	Hanoi	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	
Vietnam	Ho Chi Minh City	Y	N	Y	British Consulate General		N	N	N	
Yemen	Aden	Y	N/A	N/A	British Consulate General	2005	N	N	N	
Yemen	Sana'a	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	
Zambia	Lusaka	Y	Y	N	British High Commission		Y	Y	Y	
Zimbabwe	Harare	Y	Y	N	British Embassy		Y	Y	Y	

Letter to the Clerk of the Committee from the Head, Parliamentary Relations Team, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

At the Foreign Affairs Committee's 8 September evidence session with the Foreign Secretary and Simon Fraser on "Developments in UK Foreign policy", there was an exchange with Sir Menzies Campbell on staffing in the US.

Sir Menzies referred to savings made in the FCO's US Network, saying that locally, engaged staff had been forced to work "a week for nothing". Sir Menzies went on to say that this was an embarrassment to the Ambassador personally and that it ill-served our reputation in Washington.

This is inaccurate. As the Foreign Secretary said earlier in the session, locally engaged staff in the US were asked to take a week of unpaid leave, not to work without pay. This was part of a wider set of measures in response to extreme financial pressures last Financial Year in the US Network, due to the sterling's fall in value against the dollar and the loss of the Overseas Pricing Mechanism (OPM).

The Ambassador is of course sorry that such measures were necessary; but they were in line with local US employment practice and did not represent an embarrassment to him personally. Nor did they affect the Embassy's wider reputation in Washington DC. We remain grateful to our local staff in the US Network for their continued commitment and professionalism during these financially uncertain times.

22 September 2010

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