



International Relations and Defence Committee

Corrected oral evidence: The impact of merging of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development

Wednesday 8 June 2022

3 pm

Watch the meeting

Members present: Baroness Anelay of St Johns (The Chair); Lord Alton of Liverpool; Lord Anderson of Swansea; Baroness Blackstone; Lord Boateng; Lord Campbell of Pittenweem; Baroness Fall; Baroness Rawlings; Lord Stirrup; Baroness Sugg; Lord Teverson; Lord Wood of Anfield.

Evidence Session No. 3

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Questions 23 - 38

Witnesses

[I](#): Sir Philip Barton, Permanent Under-Secretary, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office; Juliet Chua, Director-General, Corporate, Finance and Transformation, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.



Examination of witnesses

Sir Philip Barton and Juliet Chua.

Q23 **The Chair:** Good afternoon and welcome to this meeting of the International Relations and Defence Committee in the House of Lords. It is my pleasure to welcome as our witnesses today Sir Philip Barton, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and Juliet Chua, Director G-general, Corporate, Finance and Transformation, at the FCDO. Transformation is really at the root of some of the questions today.

Thank you for joining us to assist in our short inquiry into the consequences of the merger between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office—I declare a past interest, having been a Minister there for just over three years—and Deputy Foreign Intelligence Director.

The session is on the record, transcribed and broadcast. I also remind Members that if they have any relevant interests to declare they should do so before asking any questions. I will start with the first question, which is always very general in nature, and I have already given the game away on what it is going to be about. After that, my colleagues will ask more focused questions. As we go through the formal run of questions, I anticipate that my colleagues will wish to ask supplementaries, after which I will open the questions to colleagues more broadly. I will try to give precedence to people who have not already had an opportunity to ask a question.

First, Sir Philip, from your point of view as Permanent Under-Secretary at the FCDO, what is your assessment of the success of the merger so far? What have been the main challenges that you feel you have overcome? What challenges remain and how are you trying to deal with those?

Sir Philip Barton: Thank you very much for inviting us this afternoon. When I saw that you were doing this inquiry, I was genuinely pleased that you are taking the time to look at our experience so far as a newly merged department. I look forward to the outcome of your deliberations.

I think we are succeeding. We have been going for about 20 months now. When the Prime Minister announced the merger, he said he wanted the UK to be more coherent and have more impact in its international work, and I think we have done that.

Bringing together two large Departments will always be challenging. It is challenging in the private sector as well when you bring together two companies. We now have 17,000 people in 280 posts around the world, 50-odd Directorates here in the UK and three different locations working in merged teams. Straightaway, when we started, we put in place a single leadership structure and single governance arrangements.

By the end of financial year 2021-22 we had merged the teams. We now have single budgets, single plans for all our areas of work, a single



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programme management framework and—this is crucial to the impact point internationally—really clear leadership roles for our [a](#)Ambassadors and [high-High C](#)ommissioners in their respective countries and missions over the totality of the UK's efforts in where they are working. As a result, we are more agile, and I think we are achieving more by doing diplomacy and development together.

That was illustrated by last year, the year of the UK's international leadership. We successfully re-established the G7 as a cornerstone of the international architecture. We used it in Liverpool to set the foundations for a really strong, co-ordinated G7 response on Russia/Ukraine. The Prime Minister used it at Carbis Bay, with various announcements around health and the Covid response. We had COP-26 in Glasgow, and the [d](#)D~~e~~partment was fundamental both to the operational organisation of the event and to all the diplomacy effort around it. We ended up with something at the high end of expectations, keeping 1.5 alive.

I could carry on, but I will stop there rather than give you lots more. Beyond that, we have also been getting on with the things we said we would do through the [I](#)ntegrated [R](#)evue, such as the Indo-Pacific tilt.

The single biggest challenge, by some distance, has been doing all this in the face of a global pandemic, which has impacted us all in our personal lives. It has impacted the way we have been able to go about our business. It has had a big impact on our global network and our ability to come and go and sustain that. That made it more difficult, but I think we have responded to those challenges and we have demonstrated that we can deliver more, as the Prime Minister wanted.

Looking ahead, there are some longer-term things, which I suspect you will want to get into, where we are still laying the long-term foundations of a single [d](#)D~~e~~partment for the future.

The Chair: The implication of that is that it is only Covid that has caused extra problems and, as other organisations have been doing, you have been trying to counteract the complications of that. If Covid had not happened, what challenges would you have faced in any event because of the merger, or were there no challenges?

Sir Philip Barton: No. Mergers are always complex things. We had two [d](#)D~~e~~partments that collaborated well together in many areas but sometimes were also doing different things. Both of them had a very strong sense of mission that were overlapping but slightly different. We have taken the time [and-trouble](#) to try to create a new sense of mission, purpose and culture for our new [D](#)epartment.

There are also systems things. We are now rolling out a single IT platform to make sure that we all have the same IT. It takes a bit of time to work through those sorts of organisational things, whether you are doing this, as I say, in government or in the private sector. As



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machinery-of-government changes go, this is one of the larger ones that **g**Governments have done over the years.

The Chair: As you will appreciate, we have seen the reports about difficulties with IT access by ex-D**f**ID staff at the FCDO and the complications involved with that. We have been very concerned about that and about the difference in culture between the two. Some of those issues will be raised in questions from my colleagues.

Q24 **Baroness Sugg:** Thank you for coming. You mentioned, Sir Philip, the importance of having the right foundations for a single **d**D**e**partment, and obviously, the structure of the **d**D**e**partment will be incredibly important, both for effectiveness and staff morale. Recently, the FCDO has undergone a significant reorganisation, with the creation of the position of Second Permanent Under-Secretary.

Could you explain what the practical implications have been of that change? How do you divide responsibilities? To what extent was the creation of that post a response to the merger, or was it because of additional responsibilities that the **D****e**partment took on, such as the European negotiations?

Sir Philip Barton: I think the Foreign Secretary wrote to you with the headlines in March. The driver for the Second Permanent Under-Secretary role and the other changes we made was mostly the result of the Foreign Secretary and I concluding that Russia's invasion of Ukraine had very significantly changed what we needed to do as a **D****e**partment going forward. We needed to increase our bandwidth at senior levels and to make sure that we were focused on the right areas.

There are basically two different models for Second Permanent Secretaries. There is a model where, in a sense, you have a deputy Permanent Secretary with formal delegations doing a large part of the accounting officer role for the Permanent Secretary. There is another model of somebody at Permanent Secretary level who is outward-facing. It is that latter model that we have in Sir Tim Barrow. His role is essentially to be the most senior diplomat with the time to do a lot of external engagement, to use things such as the G7 network, to be the Foreign Secretary's principal foreign policy adviser, to deliver whatever the biggest foreign policy-of-the-day challenge is. At the moment, that is clearly Russia/Ukraine. That was the driver for that part of the changes we made.

The other elements were creating, importantly, an explicit role for the leadership of our development work, where we had not had an individual at the **b**B**o**ard with "development" in their job title. Although the new strategy is for the whole **d**D**e**partment, Nick Dyer will be accountable for making sure across the whole **d**D**e**partment and more broadly that we implement the **I****n**ternational **d**D**e**velopment **S****t**ategy, giving us a focus for the co-ordination of our Russia/Ukraine work, being clear about our



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geographic leadership, and increasing our senior capacity on international economics work.

Baroness Sugg: You mentioned the new DG on Humanitarian and Development, which hopefully should give a refocus on development that some people have said has been lost because of the understandable and traditional Foreign Office priorities, I suppose, with Ukraine.

Can you explain a bit more about how the DG will work in practice? You mentioned that they will sit on the boardBoard, but how many staff will there be under them? Will they report directly to a Minister? The International Development Sstrategy highlighted a shift from multilateral to bilateral, so will they be involved in the decisions that the High Commissioners and aAmbassadors make on those bilateral programmes?

Sir Philip Barton: The way I think about it is that, in a sense, he has two roles. One is that classically underneath the DG there are various dDirectorates—for example, hHumanitarian, gGlobal hHHealth and a couple of others. He is formally responsible for those, but then has a wider leadership role at bBoard level across the Department. The financial accountabilities for example for country programmes X or Y will remain with those high High commissionersCommissioners, ambassadors Ambassadors and, ultimately, DGs responsible for those geographic areas. There is a systems leadership across the dDepartment of our wider development work.

We are keen not to have a development silo, because development is for the whole dDepartment, some bits more than others, but for everybody, including all our aAmbassadors and hHigh Commissioners. Our Ambassador in Germany should and does think about our relationship with Germany over development issues, just as much as our High Commissioners in an African country getting direct development assistance. Ministerially, he works very closely with the Foreign Secretary.

Q25 **Lord Boateng:** Sir Philip, an observation raised by previous witnesses on the topic of the FCO-DFFID merger has been the very wide remits of Ministers in the new Department and, indeed, the frequent rotation of their responsibilities.

To give an example, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, whom we hugely appreciate for his competence and skill in this House, is responsible for: India and the Indian Ocean; Afghanistan; Pakistan and central Asia; north Africa; multilateral engagement, including G7 sanctions and strategic engagement; open societies, including the Westminster Foundation for Democracy; the Independent Commission for Aid Impact; protocolProtocol; the Commonwealth, which is just sort of tagged on at the end, which is a concern to this Committee; and humanitarian issues. That is a huge brief geographically and in terms of subject.

The Ministers for Africa, in whom I have a particular interest, again, have



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been very competent, but there have been five of them in five years. What does the current division of responsibilities and the turnover mean operationally in terms of impact on the ground and managing the [Department's](#) priorities?

Sir Philip Barton: First, I agree that we are very lucky to have Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon. He has been in the [Department](#) and was in the FCO before. It is absolutely fantastic to have a Minister of his experience and longevity. On my list I have the Commonwealth in the middle, so it is definitely not tagged on.

First, as you know, in the end, ministerial appointments are a matter for the Prime Minister. In my experience, all Permanent Secretaries either want fewer or more Ministers, depending on where they sit at any particular point in time.

Lord Boateng: Where do you stand on that issue?

Sir Philip Barton: I think you may have spotted that I am ducking your question. First, and crucially, we have very effective Ministers and we are lucky. Secondly, they work together very well as a team under the Foreign Secretary's leadership. We make sure that we have portfolios that are as coherent as they can be and build on pre-existing relationships and expertise of individual Ministers so that, with them, we can make the most of their impact around the world as they go about.

You mentioned the Minister for Africa. She has travelled pretty relentlessly since her appointment, getting around the continent of Africa. I think that has been hugely impactful and valuable.

Lord Boateng: With this frequent turnover and wide range of responsibilities, inevitably there is a greater and proper degree of reliance on senior civil servants. I have been fortunate in that I have been both a Minister at every level, from [Permanent Under Secretary](#) to Cabinet, and a civil servant, indeed in your department. So one thing that undoubtedly concerns me about the merger, and I do not think I am alone in this, is that you have different terms and conditions for people who have been brought in from different [Departments](#).

To my certain knowledge, that is potentially extremely demoralising when you are in post, when you know what you have to do and what you have to manage, and someone gets a different set of terms and conditions from you. Just how many people are in this position? What progress has been made in bringing them all on to the same terms and conditions, preferably ones that are not less favourable than the ones they are currently on, and how are you integrating the IT systems? Unless they are also integrated, this is not really a recipe for an impactful and efficient operation, is it?

Sir Philip Barton: I should have mentioned, Chair, when you asked me about challenges, that alignment of terms and conditions is definitely one of the challenges. I will let Juliet set out where we have got to, but I will



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make one point before that. Of course, the unhappiness in our missions overseas was there before the merger, because people from different [Departments](#) posted on to the platform of the FCO—as was—would talk to colleagues and find out they were on different terms and conditions. The merger is actually an opportunity to fix that. Juliet, do you want to set out where we are?

Juliet Chua: As you say, clearly this is an area of high priority to our staff. Both organisations had different terms and conditions that had been built up over a number of years, reflecting two different business models. We are working through how we bring those two together. It is a complex task. There are over 200 different allowances, arrangements and conditions to work through. We have put in place an aligned single pay scale for our CBS staff at the 32 posts where [DFID](#) and FCO were most closely located. This year we will put in place a single pay scale for our delegated grades and a single scale for SCS staff.

The Chair: Sorry, for the record, could you explain what those initials stand for? There is FCDO language and there is normal language.

Juliet Chua: My apologies, Chair, absolutely. CBS stands for country-based staff. It is the term we use for all our staff employed in country. Our UK-based staff are UK staff both employed in the UK and who will be at post. So essentially there are two different sets of terms and conditions for those in country and those employed out of London and on postings. There are allowances when you go overseas as well as the basic pay structures.

We have put in place a single pay scale for our country-based staff at the posts where [DfID](#) and FCO were separately located. We are bringing together a single pay scale for our delegated grades, so staff underneath the senior Civil Service this year, and for our SCS colleagues. We are now working through a process of essentially putting together a business case for our allowances reform. That takes time and is obviously related to affordability. We will need to put that to the Cabinet Office and the Treasury early in [Spring](#) 2023 to be able to make progress across the spending review period for the three years.

Q26 **Baroness Rawlings:** Thank you, Sir Philip, for coming. We have heard previously that over 200 staff have left the FCDO since the merger, in particular former [DFID](#) staff, leading to a brain drain of expertise. How many [DFID](#) people have left following the merger? How many people in the FCDO currently work on development, and how does this compare with other thematic priorities of the FCDO?

Sir Philip Barton: I will let Juliet give you the figures on absolutely who has left, but the headlines are that we have basically lost the same amount of people as the two legacy [departments](#) were losing. There has not been an increase, and it has been broadly the same whether people were from a development or a diplomacy background. The data does not show the picture that you have described.



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On your question about how many people are doing development, the honest truth is that we do not count people in that way, because, in a sense, as I said earlier, a lot of people are doing development, some only partially. So we cannot answer that question; it is not how we allocate people. Basically, we have ~~directors~~Directors-general~~General~~ in charge of big areas. Often that will be in merged teams doing diplomacy and development, and they will have a pay ~~bid~~bill allocation that pays for a certain number of people. I am afraid I cannot answer your “How many people are doing development?” question, because, as I say, we do not count it that way. Juliet, do you want to give the numbers on retention?

Juliet Chua: Let me come in on our turnover. Our turnover rate from April 2021 to March this year was 10.8%, so it was broadly stable and comparable to previous years. We have looked closely at retention overall. A critical part of the merger is to make sure that we attract and retain the capability we need for the future.

When we look specifically at the development specialists—the expert cadres that have built up over a number of years in DfFID—there are over 1,000 staff who are located in 13 different development specialisms. Some 113 of them left in the period from April last year to March this year, which, as I say, is comparable to previous years. So we do not recognise the framing of a brain drain.

We want to make sure that we have really strong pipelines for development specialisms. That is absolutely critical. We have put in place a Ddevelopment Faculty as part of the ~~international~~International academyAcademy. We are revisiting the standard setting for technical specialisms, both for what we need now and in the context of the ~~international~~International Ddevelopment Strategy in thinking for the future. Also, and I think this is an opportunity in the merger, there are paths in for those from previous specialisms across the whole ~~d~~Ddepartment. We see examples of those from a development background now ~~playing-filling~~ roles as ~~heads~~Heads of ~~mission~~Mission and we see former FCO colleagues becoming ~~development~~Development directorsDirectors. The opportunity is to build new pathways with potentially more breadth and depth than either of the previous Ddepartments were able to offer.

Q27 **Baroness Rawlings:** I would like to ask you a question relating to finance. It was known that the FCO was on quite a tight budget before the merger, and that DfFID, with 0.7%, was actually well funded before the merger. What is your view regarding the confidence and influence that has grown at the new Foreign Office, or the FCDO, with so much more money available?

Sir Philip Barton: It is worth remembering, in a sense, that DfFID had a lot of programme money and ODA, but the operational expenditure used to pay for people was quite tightly controlled. The Foreign Office did have some ODA and spent some, and had some other programme money as



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well, but on a much smaller scale, and had quite a tight budget on the kind of money you need to run a global network.

In coming together as a single [dDepartment](#), we are now a big [dDepartment](#) with a lot of people, with more complexity in our global network. We have a very significant amount of money compared to the FCO, but not compared to [DfID](#), and, as you all know, there was the difficult decision the Government took in light of the pandemic to temporarily reduce the amount of ODA from 0.7% to 0.5% of GNI. So, overall, there is temporarily less programme resource, although it is still very significant at whatever it is now—roughly £10 billion or so a year.

Baroness Rawlings: Was it affected at all by leaving the EU, because there were so many programmes that were with the EU in [DfID](#) financially?

Sir Philip Barton: There is a tail of money that goes to the EU, but that is coming to an end in the next year or two, if I remember rightly.

Juliet Chua: It is included in the [Wwithdrawal Aagreement](#), yes.

The Chair: When you say a tail, what kind of tail are you talking about, and what does it do?

Sir Philip Barton: I think, Juliet, it is set out in the [Wwithdrawal Aagreement](#).

Juliet Chua: Yes, absolutely. It is essentially our contribution to development spending within the EU. We can write to the committee if you would like further details on the profile of that going forward.

Sir Philip Barton: As part of the [Wwithdrawal Aagreement](#), there was an agreement on the amount of money. Basically, it was around the forward financial plan which the EU had in its timeframe for allocation. There was a commitment on the part of the UK, on a declining basis, to meet part of that as part of the [wWithdrawal Aagreement](#).

The Chair: I am sure the committee would appreciate further information on that.

Q28 **Baroness Blackstone:** Good afternoon. Since the merger of the two [De](#)partments, it would be a bit surprising if there had been no changes at all in the objectives of the development programme. In fact, you have just published a new strategy. Could you set out for the committee the ways in which our development objectives have been changed as a result of the merger?

Sir Philip Barton: The overall framing is the key change. The strategy places our development effort at the heart of our broader foreign policy. As we look at a problem or an issue, we use all our tools—development, diplomacy, investment, trade, sometimes defence and intelligence when



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there is also the security aspect—clearly using them in particular around economic development.

I am sure you have seen the strategy, which goes on to talk about how we have recast the Commonwealth Development Corporation as British International Investment, as part of a wider toolkit of things we want to do to make sure that countries have access to honest and reliable investments. We are also using the City of London, our technical assistance and export credit, where appropriate. And there are other priority areas—women and girls, humanitarian issues, climate change, nature and global health—on the thematic side.

Q29 Baroness Blackstone: So you are confirming that economic and trade issues have become more important in the overall development strategy than they were when there was a separate department.

May I go on from there to ask whether the fact that you have moved in this respect may be one of the reasons why 200 people who came from DFID have left: because their particular interests are not being covered in quite the same way as they were before? Secondly, do you really think that you can go on doing as much for poor developing countries as was done before, when you have both a significantly reduced budget and the loss of quite a lot of development expertise, which existed in a separate development department?

Sir Philip Barton: On your second point, I do not think we have lost as much expertise, as we said earlier, as you might have been given the impression previously. We have put in place the ways in which we will make sure that we retain and build that capability in the areas we need.

A big part of what the strategy is trying to do is about economic development being one of the best ways of lifting people out of poverty, and often policy change can achieve just as much, if not more sometimes, as budget transfers. One of the benefits of the merger is that in some places we have been clear in putting together our diplomatic influence, for example by persuading Governments to take a more business-friendly approach and therefore to be more open to international investment, which enables economic development and helps with poverty reduction, alongside perhaps our programming and technical assistance.

Baroness Blackstone: In the answer to the question that the Chair put at the beginning, you did not really respond on the issue of what particular difficulties and challenges you now face. You said that you were working on a long-term foundation for a single department, et cetera, but en route you must be coming up against some particular difficulties that cause you to think, "How am I going to solve this?" Can you tell us a bit about what the real challenges are to you, in a very open and honest way?



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Sir Philip Barton: Looking at it openly and honestly, not least as the accounting officer, it is challenging to put together two different financial systems. It is challenging to work through the differences in issues. I think we have a good, robust plan to do that, and we are stepping through that plan in a prioritised, ordered way. My overall approach since the beginning is that we need to do things in the right order.

The key elements would be the right overall governance and the right senior leadership, and then the merging of teams. You do not want to wait too long, because uncertainty is corrosive. We started in the middle of a financial year, so we could only go so far, but as soon as we had a new financial year we went to single budgets. We are now putting in place single financial controls. We are backing that up with a new overall IT system, which means that we will have a much better tool for managing, as a single department, both our HR and our ~~high~~ financial information. That is all work in progress. It is challenging, but we are stepping through it, as I say, in an ordered, prioritised way.

Q30 **Lord Teverson:** Sir Philip, as you know, this committee has often looked at Afghanistan in the past and no doubt will in the future. In fact, we produced a report early last year on it, and individually we took a lot of interest in the evacuation operation taken at the time.

I have recently reread the report of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the House of Commons, and I have to say I was absolutely shocked reading it. I was seriously shocked. I have never read a report that was as damning as that one is. Just for the benefit of members of the committee, perhaps I could read two sentences from the conclusion. It says: "The absence of the FCDO's top leadership—both ministerial and official—when Kabul fell is a grave indictment of the attitudes of the Government, representing a failure of leadership across the board in the Foreign Office. In particular, the fact that the ~~d~~Department's top civil servant did not return until the civilian evacuation was over, while staff across the ~~d~~Department struggled to implement a poorly planned evacuation process under intense pressure, is difficult to understand and impossible to excuse".

The report, as you know, went on to not having confidence in you. Given the gap that there has been since that report and the evacuation, how do you reflect on that? Do you feel that that report was just or unjust? Indeed, more positively, looking forward, how has the ~~d~~Department changed its systems and how it would work if ever those sorts of circumstances came about again?

Sir Philip Barton: The first thing to say is that I have been asked about my leave. I was asked repeatedly by the Foreign Affairs Committee, and I am happy to repeat to all of you what I said to the committee. If I had my time again, I would have come back from my leave earlier. I am very happy to repeat that. That is what I should have done.

I have, of course, read the FAC report very carefully, and I have also read the International Development Committee's report on Afghanistan.



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We have responded—or the Government have responded—to the IDC report and will do so in the normal way to the FAC's report.

I also reread this committee's report from last year that predated the evacuation. I thought it was a very thoughtful report that set out the challenges very well.

On your question about the evacuation, the backdrop is well-known. The seeds were ~~sewn~~ sown through the US agreement with the Taliban in Doha, which set a deadline for military withdrawal. The UK advocated for a conditions-based approach, but, in the end, President Biden decided to continue with the Doha deal. Although we had as our central assessment a likely eventual Taliban military takeover as the outcome of NATO's withdrawal, no one, including the Taliban itself, foresaw the speed at which that happened.

Our main effort in the period of the first half of last year was trying to avoid a Taliban takeover and trying to secure a better outcome, perhaps some kind of negotiated power sharing, but in parallel we worked up our contingency plans, including looking at an alternative way of having a diplomatic presence, and planning with the MoD for a military evacuation.

From April onwards, we hardened up our advice to British nationals. We put in place plans to draw down the ~~embassy~~ Embassy should we need to. We worked intensively with the Ministry of Defence and others on wider evacuation planning, including, for example, securing premises outside the airport for processing people and making sure that we had a hub in the Gulf so that we could rotate aircraft quickly. Those are things that no other country planned beforehand to do.

All of that said, this was one of the most complex and challenging crises that either the FCO beforehand or the FCDO, as it was then, have ever faced. We managed to evacuate 15,000 people against an original planning assumption of 6,000. That is more than any other country apart from the US. I salute the bravery of the British military, who alongside their US colleagues ensured the security of the airport, together with diplomatic colleagues and the Border Force, which did that.

Lord Teverson: I am sure the committee would absolutely agree with those comments.

Sir Philip Barton: All of us wished we could have evacuated more people. We evacuated 15,000, and since then we have helped more than 4,000 people to leave Afghanistan. The new Afghan ~~e~~Citizens ~~R~~resettlement ~~S~~scheme will be open soon for expressions of interest.

As with all major crises, there clearly were lessons for the ~~D~~department to learn. I ensured that we put in place a proper exercise to do that once the immediate crisis phase was over, to look at the systems and structures and the ways of working for the FCDO, to make sure that we have the right crisis response capability going forward. It spoke to 70



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people one to one and did 50 group interviews. It had over 200 responses to a survey and produced a very thorough report.

As a result, we have new systems for the way we manage correspondence. We have looked at how best to have resilient leadership and how best to support the welfare of people working in crisis situations. We have refreshed our crisis training skills across the [Department](#). As we spoke about earlier, we are putting in place a single IT system to make information sharing easier.

We want to make absolutely sure that we embed the lessons that we learned throughout that review process. I have asked our [Audit and Risk Assurance](#) committee, chaired by a [Non-Executive Director](#), to look at that in the [Autumn](#) and to hold us to account, and we will look again in the departmental board at the end of the year at whether we have implemented all these things.

If you look at our preparations and response to Russia's invasion of the Ukraine, we absolutely made sure that the relevant lessons from that experience, and indeed the lessons when we looked back at the review after the Salisbury response, were embedded in the way in which we approached the invasion of Ukraine in February.

Lord Teverson: Thank you for that. One thing that particularly struck me from a bureaucratic point of view—I do not know the FCDO at all well, although I have occasionally interfaced with it—is that I always think of it as a [Department](#) that must be at the top of the game for administration. I do not mean in just a bureaucratic sense but in getting things done, tying things up and being clear, as one has to, in diplomacy.

Yet this report seemed to say that the decision-making and the recording of that fell apart. Are you saying now that that is fine, as illustrated perhaps by what has happened in Ukraine? What is your estimate of who is still in Afghanistan who we should have brought out, and are you working with the Home Office to make sure that still happens? Where are we on that? Clearly, there is a concern that, with the very real issues in Ukraine, our remaining responsibilities in Afghanistan will easily get forgotten, and one would hope that the FCDO would be the organisation to make sure that that was not the case.

Sir Philip Barton: I do not have in front of me numbers to answer that question. However, the Government have said that all those who were called forward but did not manage to leave Kabul at the time of the evacuation still have the right to come to the UK, and we are enabling that. There will be the new resettlement schemes which the Home Secretary has announced in Parliament. As I say, expressions of interest in the first phase of that are about to be opened up.

In the first year, it will include, for example—to your point about people we have an obligation to—the British Council and GardaWorld, the company providing security for the [Embassy](#), as well as some of the



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alumni of the Chevening scholarship programme, who will be included in the year one process. Then there are years two and three of the overall scheme, which, as I say, is run by the Home Office.

The Chair: I will now open the questioning more widely.

Q31 **Lord Anderson of Swansea:** Philip, I return to and build on the question posed by Baroness Rawlings on culture. My own experience, and I exaggerate that a little, is that the motivation and job satisfaction of those who chose to join the FO, FCO or FCDO are very different from those who joined DfID. I joined the old Foreign Office in 1960, a very long time ago, and there was a much different motivation in DfID, as the subsequent career paths of the two were different.

To what extent will the now merged Department recognise this difference of culture, of approach, of motivation? Will some members of the FCDO, if they choose, spend their career mostly on development? Obviously, the job description is very different. They will liaise more with pressure groups in the field. They will have a substantial budget to deal with. I recall that friends in the old FCO thought of DfID as having money pouring out of its ears when the FCO was very tightly controlled. Will those who choose to go mainly along the DfID or the ODA path be expected to spend at least part of their time on traditional diplomatic matters? What are their prospects of rising to the top in the most prestigious Embassies, be it Washington, Paris, Bonn, et cetera?

Sir Philip Barton: The first thing to say on culture is that, after the merger was announced and before we started, we looked at some of the countries that had done something similar—in particular, Australia and Canada. From that, we learned that culture is absolutely crucial. You have to be deliberate about it, you cannot leave it to chance, and it takes a long time. It certainly takes longer than a year and a half.

Lord Anderson of Swansea: It is a devolvment.

Sir Philip Barton: To your question on the difference, the key similarity is that both Departments were full of very mission-driven people who wanted to make a difference in the world, and I think that is a fantastic foundation. We are building a new culture for a new Department. In a Department the size of either legacy Department, let alone the merged one, you will never have a single culture in any event. You will have different parts of it that feel a bit different because they are doing different kinds of work. There is a slightly different culture in our consular work, which is our key public service doing public service delivery face to face. It has a slightly different feel and culture to it from perhaps a part of the ex-FCO you will recognise—writing international security policy papers, for example. You will always have differences, but at the core I think we have a good plan in place, in a deliberate way, to build a single culture

For the development people, absolutely, and Juliet described the way we want to build and sustain career pathways for development experts. It is



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still absolutely open for people who come into the ~~d~~Department because they want to do great development work, either in the UK or around the world, to use their expertise and have that as a career.

We already have, and had started to have before the merger, some very senior people from a development background in senior diplomatic posts. Our ~~high~~ High ~~C~~ommissioner to Nigeria is probably the most senior example, in due course to be replaced by another development expert. Increasingly, and interestingly, we are seeing more ~~heads~~ Heads of ~~mission~~ Mission, either ~~high~~ High ~~commissioners~~ Commissioners or ~~ambassadors~~ Ambassadors, being appointed in the merged ~~D~~epartment. It is not just in African countries where there is a big development effort; it is more broadly now. Over time, whether in 10, 15 or 20 years we will see such an ~~A~~mbassador from Washington I am not sure, but it is absolutely possible that people will have career opportunities that were not so available to them when it was the single Department for International Development.

Lord Anderson of Swansea: A large part of the work of a ~~h~~High ~~C~~ommissioner in Nigeria is related to development, and traditionally there have been relatively few African specialists in the FCDO. Do you not see a contradiction in culture and motivation between the two? Do you think you can bridge that gap?

Sir Philip Barton: I do. Juliet, do you want to say a bit more about what we are doing on building the culture and the process we are going through?

Juliet Chua: Absolutely. I think culture is a dynamic and nuanced process. To Sir Philip's description, every ~~post~~ Post will have a slightly different culture and will be made up of different combinations of government departments on that ~~post~~ Post, working for a single ~~head~~ Head of ~~M~~ission.

Our process for building a single culture is very much to work right across the organisation. It is not something that you can do top down. We have run a process from before the ~~D~~epartment was started by talking to staff about what they wanted the culture to be. What came through very strongly was an appetite from the former ~~D~~FID side to make sure that we retained some of that deep expertise and programmatic knowledge, the understanding of place, alongside the FCO skills of agility, being able to move fast, some of that insight, and bringing the two things together.

Essentially, very early on we wrote a statement about how we work and we have used that to facilitate a whole series of conversations across the organisation. Some 7,000 people have now been in different combinations of those conversations. It will take time to build a new culture, but I believe there are very clear pathways through for a range of different types of skills and experience for the new organisation because of the complexity and range of what we do. There will be both development specialists and experts—if you look at the ~~economics~~



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Economics director Director post in our new structure—as well as very clear growth in some of our other areas of expertise. I think what you are seeing is an organisation with a whole range of opportunities for staff.

Q32 **Lord Stirrup:** Sir Philip, this sort of merger is a hugely complex undertaking, so there is a considerable burden of proof on those proposing to do such a thing to show not just in advance but post facto that it was worth it, and that the benefits clearly substantially outweigh the costs. How is the FCDO undertaking this ongoing cost-benefit analysis? How is it tracking and recording the net savings over time? How is it demonstrating the benefits that have flowed from it, not just in some smoother personnel processes but in outcomes in the real world that are patently substantially better than could have been achieved by two ministries working together with the best cross-departmental working practices? What can we look at in five years' time that will allow us to say, "Oh yes, this was clearly worth it"?

Sir Philip Barton: We have put in place a formal process to capture the benefits of the transformation into a single Department that the merger has been about. Behind that is the Integrated Revue, which, as you know, sets out the Government's international policy. That is one area.

Secondly, are we delivering more on the objectives ascribed to us through our leadership role at home and overseas? We are tracking the individual benefits using a methodology against key performance indicators. We have a portfolio under our transformation programme around what we are trying to achieve.

Savings were never the purpose of the merger. It was not about trying to save money. As you would expect in any government dDepartment, we have the usual range of efficiencies from our Spending Revue Settlement, but those are not because of the merger. The merger was never driven by saving money. As I said right at the beginning of this hearing, the intent was always to be more coherent and more impactful in the UK's international effort.

Lord Stirrup: It is not entirely clear to me that an assessment of performance against your performance objectives will necessarily demonstrate that the outcome in terms of overall effect was better than would have been achieved under the previous organisational structure. I think that is what has to be tracked and has to be demonstrated; not just that you have met your objectives, but that the outcomes are better than we would have had with the continued existence of DffID.

One of the particular characteristics of DffID was its requirement to interface with a great many non-governmental organisations in order to create the necessary effect in the real world. To what extent are you measuring and tracking the effectiveness of your interactions with those organisations, and the way they feel about your performance and the way they react to the new combined organisation?



Sir Philip Barton: We have regular sessions here in the UK with a whole range of development stakeholders, for want of a better phrase, but then a big part is done around the world, led by our missions, or, when it is about multilaterals, in places such as Geneva and New York, depending on where they are located. There has been a dialogue all the way through on the policy issues on the development side and the UK-specific priorities. Clearly, there is an intense process now, and we have agreed and published the international strategy to use that as a platform for our dialogue in the next phase of those relationships. So it is across the board.

Q33 **Lord Campbell of Pittenweem:** I should begin by announcing that I have an interest as an ambassador for the HALO Trust, which, as you know, is engaged in mine and IED clearance in various countries, but in particular in Afghanistan, and, rather unusually, with the agreement of the Taliban, it has continued its efforts there.

I am not sure I have understood—I am sure it is a question of comprehension—precisely what kind of handle you have on the number of people who, in more favourable circumstances, might have qualified for being brought to the United Kingdom. You explained, I think, that 6,000 was the target and 15,000 was the achievement, and we would all want to signal our admiration for that, but there are a lot of colourful stories in the newspapers about the position of a number of people who certainly expected that they might be brought to Britain and have not been, and are now in hiding—on occasion at risk of their lives, it would appear. Do we have any real sense of how many we are talking about?

Sir Philip Barton: Just to be clear, the 6,000 I mentioned was the planning assumption.

Lord Campbell of Pittenweem: You exceeded that and brought in 15,000, which is a very considerable achievement, and I acknowledge that, but I am worried about those who are left behind.

Sir Philip Barton: It is worth recording that there are a number of different schemes. There is the ARAP scheme, run principally by the Ministry of Defence, which was about people who were directly employed by the UK. In the evacuation phase, groups of people were given permission to come to the UK with leave outside the Immigration Rules, which is a Home Secretary discretion. There is now a new [Resettlement Scheme](#) which the Home Secretary has announced. I do not think we could give the exact figure in a really clear way. It is the same answer as to the question earlier, frankly. I am happy to write to you with the details of the different schemes and the numbers involved. Each scheme looks at individuals and whether they meet a set of criteria. So, to answer your question, I do not think there is a global figure.

Lord Campbell of Pittenweem: Would not this committee and perhaps the public want to know how many people were left behind so that we can form some kind of view as to whether the admirable success going



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from 6,000 to 15,000 did all that has been claimed for it?

Sir Philip Barton: I absolutely understand the desire to seek the answer to the 15,000 people out of how many overall. The challenge is being clear about what we mean by “left behind” and who is counted in that category. As I say, there were different schemes and criteria against which individuals were assessed. It is quite hard to say whether X or Y was someone who was, to use your words, left behind. I absolutely understand why you are asking the question and the desire to know the answer. I am just not sure we can put a figure on it.

Lord Campbell of Pittenweem: Does not some kind of assessment of the numbers have some reference to the resources that we might be putting in to bringing people back?

Sir Philip Barton: With your permission, Chair, I will write to you with the details of what we can say on this. I think we can say something, but I do not think we will be able to come back with a hard number. I think we can set out what we do know under the different categories.

The Chair: That would be helpful, Sir Philip. As you will appreciate, we do not just see the distressing reports in the press about people who are in hiding, some of whom allegedly have been killed waiting for rescue. We also get direct contact from very well-known groups whose opinion we can trust about severe circumstances in which people are fearful for their lives, and who have given service to this country over several years prior to the Taliban taking over the Administration.

Lord Campbell of Pittenweem: I have one last question. My colleague referred to the so-called trenchant terms of the report of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the other place, which called upon you to consider your position. Have you considered your position?

Sir Philip Barton: I am getting on with my job. I was asked to lead a [Department](#). It is a privilege to do that. I started on 2 September 2020 as the new [Department](#) was created, and I am determined to make a success of it.

Lord Campbell of Pittenweem: That is something of an echo of language we have heard elsewhere, is it not? Thank you.

The Chair: I could not possibly comment.

Q34 **Baroness Sugg:** We spoke earlier about the challenges to the merger which the cuts to 0.7% brought about. We know that the costs for the first 12 months of hosting Ukrainian refugees, and indeed Afghan refugees here in the UK, can be allocated to ODA—granted, not from the FCDO. But, according to recent Written Question Answers, that will come under the 0.5% ceiling, and as the FCDO is spender, and indeed the saver of last resort, no doubt you will have to take this into account when you are putting together your budget. Do you have an estimate of what the cost will be, and do you think that will lead to another round of cuts



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by the FCDO to its programming?

Sir Philip Barton: We have allocated out all the budget that was given to us from the spending review outcome. We do not know what pressure there might be later in the year. As you will recall, there are other things that we might have expected, either in our pot of ODA or in the part kept by the Treasury, which may or may not materialise, which might produce some savings in other directions. That will happen later in the year and we do not know yet. We have been sure to allocate out the money given to the FCDO as ODA, and people are getting on with the relevant programming and decision-making around that.

Baroness Sugg: I understand that you are going to publish before the Recess the budget allocations from the Department spending decisions. Does that mean we will be able to track this as we approach the year end? Obviously, DFID had a very good reputation for being transparent, and it would be great to get some reassurance that we will be able to see the same from the FCDO, and understand what has been allocated, and what has to be unallocated, if that is indeed what happens.

Sir Philip Barton: The plan is to publish our annual accounts before the Summer Recess and for those to include the forward allocations.

Q35 **Baroness Fall:** I want to go back to the point that Lord Stirrup touched on, which is the wider strategic value of the merger. I am still not absolutely convinced about what question we were solving by the merger. Is it a professionalisation of the service question, an accountability question, or a strategic direction question in order to have more holistic, joined-up strategy for foreign policy in the wider sense of the word?

If it is a strategic answer, how does that fit with the National Security Council? The idea behind the National Security Council, which was set up under David Cameron when I served at No. 10, was to bring all those different voices to the table. When we look at the new trade deals we are putting together, they push our foreign policy in a certain direction sometimes. There are climate issues, energy and security, and now a huge military challenge in Ukraine, which suggests the need for possibly bigger military spending. So, back to my original question: what are you trying to achieve, and are we achieving it?

Sir Philip Barton: Basically, it is your last framing of strategy, coherence and impact that was the main driver. It is about how we can be organised in a way that allows our international effort to achieve more. It was, in a sense, part of the thinking behind the Integrated Review, with the key word there being "integration".

On your point about whether we are achieving this, I will illustrate that with one area on the humanitarian side. DFID had a very strong record on humanitarian effort and put significant resources into great partnerships with relevant people, whether that was the World Food Programme, delivery partners or others. As a merged department, what



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we have done, I think more effectively, relates to access to humanitarian relief and the political influence you need to help with the drivers of the causes of the humanitarian crisis, for example in Tigray. What is the political influence that we can use through our diplomacy? That is just one example of where, in some of the direst circumstances around the world, we are being more impactful and achieving more by doing diplomacy and development together.

Baroness Fall: Political will is strengthened from the merger, possibly, but one of the things that used to worry lots of people about the DFFID budget was the sense that there was a lot of money. How did they know it was being spent well? Was it professional? Was there waste? Was it sent into channels that were corrupt? Now, with the merger, we perhaps have more oversight of the strategy, but there is an uncomfortable sense that it is less transparent and less accountable, partly because we do not have Ministers popping up telling us what is going on. How do we solve that?

Sir Philip Barton: Overall, the systems and mechanisms that DFFID had in place remain broadly in place. We have obviously had a look at them to make sure that they are fit for purpose for the new Ddepartment, but the anti-fraud measures and all the sorts of controls and safeguards that were there remain.

On the transparency question, we are absolutely determined to be transparent. DFFID had a great track record. The FCO had a reasonable track record. In some areas of our work, there are challenges in being completely open, given the environment or programmes in which some of our partners are working. There are sometimes reasons for us being less transparent, but overall we are maintaining our publication on DevTracker programmes and our annual returns to the SIDS. All the things that were there before about transparency over where development spending is going as a Ddepartment remain in place. Juliet, is there any more to say on this?

Juliet Chua: I think it is worth saying that our programme operating framework, which is essentially the set of rules that governs how we spend our development budget, has developed over a long period in DFFID. It was brought into the merger and set in place from very early on, and is being applied right across our spend. That brings with it some of those assurances on, as you say, fiduciary risk. We have made sure that safeguarding is absolutely central to the way the Ddepartment and, indeed, the systems operate and the way in which we report on our individual programmes through DevTracker. The learning from DFFID being brought into the new Ddepartment was absolutely critical.

Q36 **Lord Boateng:** This committee has been concerned for some time, Sir Philip, about the situation in Cameroon and the Aanglophone/Ffrancophone dispute and its impact upon the people of that country. We have a trade agreement with Cameroon. We have a substantial humanitarian programme with Cameroon and for Cameroon.



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We are involved in a political peace process in Cameroon that appears to have stalled. Can you explain to us how the merged [D](#)department is, as a result of the merger, better equipped to deal with the situation in Cameroon, and what the prospects are of us seeing any improvement whatever in the lot of ordinary people who are the victims of the ongoing humanitarian crisis in that country?

Sir Philip Barton: Organisationally, the [head-Head](#) of [M](#)mission is now the single senior British figure speaking for the totality of effort. In the past, that would not have been the case; they would have been speaking for our diplomatic effort but not for our development effort. Organisationally, I think we have much clearer UK leadership, both in Cameroon and elsewhere. Underneath that is a single plan looking at the totality of the UK effort, setting out what we are trying to do and how the different things we can bring to bear fit together and work. That makes us more coherent in our overall approach. That is how we have more impact.

That said, I recognise the very difficult situation there and the very severe challenges, but, organisationally, we are in a position to have a more coherent impact in the way in which we do our work.

Lord Boateng: We may be in a position to do that, but there has been absolutely no impact, no change whatever, on the ground for the past three years. In fact, if anything, the situation has deteriorated. I am still at a loss to understand how the [D](#)department is operating to make a difference on the ground. The whole point of an organisational restructuring is to be able to demonstrate to the taxpayer, to the people who are paying and to the people who care, how Britain's influence is being brought to bear.

Have you used our trade influence? If so, how? Have you used the fact that we are spending millions of pounds as a result of the humanitarian crisis caused by this conflict to change anything on the ground at all? Biya, the President of that country, continues to do what he has been doing for many, many years, which is to terrorise his people, and to create a situation in Cameroon that, frankly, is a scandal and that is still showing no sign of being in any way impacted upon by anything that is happening in this country or indeed anywhere else.

Sir Philip Barton: I accept that the situation in Cameroon is very difficult, and we will carry on our efforts. You are right to describe the situation in that way, but I would not make that a test of whether or not the [D](#)department is succeeding.

Q37 **Lord Alton of Liverpool:** I apologise for going out in the course of your evidence, but I was presenting a Private Member's Bill at its First Reading. It is relevant to the question I am going to ask you, because it is a Bill that will head in your [D](#)department's direction. It is on the determination of genocide. I suppose I should mention that I have a non-financial interest as a patron of the Coalition for Genocide Response.



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I want to ask you about how policy is made around this question. You will know that as recently as on Tuesday your Minister here, Lord Goldsmith of Richmond, in responding to a question on Nigeria was asked about genocide. He gave the usual Foreign Office reply that it was a matter for the courts, knowing that of course there is no procedure in this country for the High Court, for instance, to deal with this matter, and there is no real route into the International Criminal Court because of the vetoes, the blocks and so on that are invariably put in its path. On the one hand, you have that situation.

Take another situation in Xinjiang, where a million Uighurs are being held in camps, and where not just the Secretary of State in the United States, Antony Blinken, but our own Foreign Secretary, Elizabeth Truss, has said there is a genocide under way. Yet your own [Department](#) has heard this and says there is not.

How is policy made? I recently met with other parliamentarians who, like me, have been sanctioned by the Chinese Communist Party—Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws, Sir Iain Duncan Smith, Nusrat Ghani, Tom Tugendhat and Tim Loughton. We met with Elizabeth Truss and with the Prime Minister, and they agreed that this was a circular argument that needed to be dealt with. They said that it would be dealt with and that the policy would be remade. This circular argument is like a scene out of “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest”. You cannot have the Secretary of State on one hand saying that there is a genocide, and officials and other Ministers getting up and saying, “We can’t comment on these matters. Only the courts can do it”.

How is policy made, Sir Philip? You will see that I am exasperated by this. You will have read our own committee’s report on China, trade and security, where Charles Parton, for instance, appeared before us as a witness and said that there is a genocide. You will have read the Commons Foreign Affairs Committee report that says there is a genocide. Yet we get rebuffed all the time whenever we raise these matters with officials.

Sir Philip Barton: As officials, in the case of genocide, this will include advice from departmental lawyers as well as policy officials, who will provide the Foreign Secretary and other Ministers of the day—and, ultimately, the Prime Minister, where merited—with advice on these sorts of questions. I am sure Lord Goldsmith was reflecting the current position and the departmental advice he was given in answering the question you referred to.

Lord Alton of Liverpool: He was reflecting advice, but surely that is not the point of my question. What are you doing contradicting the Secretary of State? Why are you not working with the assurance that was given by the Prime Minister and by the Foreign Secretary that this policy would be addressed?

Sir Philip Barton: I do not think we are acting, and we certainly would never intentionally act, in contradiction to our Ministers on the issue in



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hand. There will be advice on these matters, and in the end it is for Ministers to decide, not officials.

Lord Alton of Liverpool: Sir Philip, are you telling me that you are satisfied that we meet our duties under the 1948 [Convention on the Crime of Genocide](#), which requires us to predict, to prevent, to protect, and to punish? Are we doing any of those things in somewhere like Tigray? Are we doing that in these countries around the world where clearly genocide or atrocity crimes or crimes against humanity are under way?

Sir Philip Barton: You mentioned Tigray, and we have been doing a lot there. I described earlier the efforts we have been making—for example, to make sure that there is access to humanitarian relief, and the efforts we have made, including through our [High Commissioner](#), to make sure that there is some sort of political process, with the prospect at least of a pause in the conflict to improve prospects. We are absolutely trying to get at the root causes of the conflict.

Lord Alton of Liverpool: There is no evidence to show that you have been doing that in Tigray. I chair the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Eritrea. We have been taking evidence on this for a year and a half. Some 2 million people have been displaced and, through starvation as a weapon of war, Tigray has been ground into the earth, people have died, and the blockades have prevented medicines and food from reaching places like hospitals. That is a war crime. What are we doing about it?

Sir Philip Barton: We absolutely have been working with parties to try to help bring about a ceasefire and an end to the conflict, including working closely with others in the international community, and we have been taking up the sorts of things you mentioned with those responsible.

Lord Alton of Liverpool: How will the Secretary of State's assurance that the policy will be remade be delivered? Thank you, Lord Chair.

Q38 **Lord Anderson of Swansea:** I turn from the lofty principles of my good friend Lord Boateng to money. Traditionally, [Ambassadors](#) have relatively small budgets and very little expertise in the budget process. By contrast, the head of the [DFID](#) office would probably have quite a large budget to oversee and would need a different sort of expertise. How has that now changed after the merger? What is the training now available to the new man or woman who reaches the top? Is that adequate?

Sir Philip Barton: I will let Juliet explain how the process works. We have put in place training for our [Heads of Mission](#), which, in the process of receiving significant sums of ODA, is underpinned by development experts. The development experts would sometimes have been head of the [DFID](#) country office. Sometimes there has been a change in the individual doing that, but it is not that the [Ambassador or head of Mission](#) is left on their own to do it themselves. They



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absolutely have underpinning expertise. Juliet, do you want to say a bit more about that?

Juliet Chua: We have a delegated authority regime in which budgets of different sizes are delegated through to [hH](#)eads of [Mm](#)ission. When they are making individual decisions about a programme, they will need to make sure that they are drawing on the right expertise. We talked earlier about the programme operating framework that sets the requirements and standards for programmes of a certain size that come to the investment committee, which I will chair with other development experts around the table, to scrutinise those programmes, and to advise and support the [Hh](#)ead of [Mm](#)ission to make decisions on specific, particularly large programming. In addition, they will have a country board around them, making decisions about the portfolio of investment they will make within their country budget against their overall country plan. So we will make sure they have the capacity to—

Lord Anderson of Swansea: The new-style [Aa](#)mbassador surely needs good financial training at least to ask the right questions. Has their training been boosted as a result of the merger?

Juliet Chua: We do a [hH](#)ead of [Mm](#)ission course when [heads-Heads](#) of [mM](#)ission go overseas, and we make sure that it has content that meets the full range of different requirements. Heads of [mM](#)ission jobs are broad and varied, and, particularly for [Hh](#)eads of [Mm](#)ission roles with a significant development component, part of the process to assess that they will be able to do it will draw on experience they may have of programming and spending, making sure that they can draw on financial training where they need it, as well as having good financial business partners, and to draw on their expertise to make sure that they are making good decisions.

The Chair: Thank you for your answers today. We look forward to receiving further information from you. You will have heard not only the interest but the passion with which the members of this committee study and pursue issues that are relevant to your [Dd](#)epartment.

Lord Stirrup, in particular, asked: what is the value added? That is what we are trying to seek during this short inquiry. The value added still has to reflect the value itself. Lord Alton's intervention took us to the heart of a conundrum in the system we have in this country. That is: who makes the policy, who delivers it, and how is that done? We need more transparency about the link between officials and Ministers. If, as Lord Alton said, we have Ministers saying one thing about a crucial issue, the fact that there is genocide under way in Xinjiang—as, indeed, I would suggest, too—yet the advice coming from officials is that Ministers should not be saying that, we have a conundrum that needs to be solved; otherwise there will not be value from the FCDO as it now is, because it will not be believed as an organisation. I feel passionately about that, of course, as a fan of the FCDO—the FCO, as it was, and of [Df](#)ID—and as a fan I want it to work, and I want it to work better than even those who



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support it feel it may be doing just at this minute.

We realise that this is against a background of the implications of finances. I listened to and heard very carefully references to monies that are coming through next year, particularly with regard to IT development. If the two [De](#)partments, as were, cannot function properly through IT now, this minute, I understand the difficulties they may face. I appreciate that we will come back to this issue when we can see more clearly where the monies have landed, particularly after, we hope, a return to the normal 0.7% of GNI. Thank you very much, Sir Philip and Juliet Chua.