

Foreign Affairs Committee

Oral evidence: Xinjiang detention camps, HC 800

Tuesday 27 April 2021

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Members present: Tom Tugendhat (Chair); Chris Bryant; Neil Coyle; Alicia Kearns; Stewart Malcolm McDonald; Bob Seely; Henry Smith; Graham Stringer.

Questions 231-338

Witnesses

I: Rt Hon Nigel Adams MP, Minister for Asia, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office; Rupert Ainley, Interim Director, North East Asia and China, FCDO; Paul Williams, Director, Open Societies and Human Rights, FCDO.

[Written evidence from witnesses](#)



Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Nigel Adams, Rupert Ainley and Paul Williams.

Q231 **Chair:** Welcome to this afternoon's session of the Foreign Affairs Committee. We are talking about Xinjiang and the abuses we have seen in that province over recent years. This afternoon we have with us Minister Adams to answer for the Government. Minister Adams, welcome. Would you mind briefly introducing yourself, and then your team?

Nigel Adams: My name is Nigel Adams and I am the FCDO Minister for Asia.

Paul Williams: I am Paul Williams, the new director for open societies and human rights in the FCDO.

Rupert Ainley: Good afternoon. I am Rupert Ainley, the interim director for north-east Asia and China in the FCDO.

Q232 **Chair:** Thanks all for joining us. We have all seen extensive reports of identity-based persecution in Xinjiang, and we have seen it compounded over many years. This is not something that is a surprise to any of us—and probably even less so to you than it is to those of us who have not got other forms of intelligence and collection that could inform us. Why has the Government only recently started to take action?

Nigel Adams: I do not accept that entirely. I think you will see that the Department has been on this problem since 2017. Our initial focus has been on building diplomatic pressure on China to change course and, importantly, building the evidence base that has led us to the actions that we have recently taken. So an awful lot of work has been going on in the last four years on the problems and the human rights violations in Xinjiang.

Q233 **Chair:** I appreciate that you are the Minister for China, not the Minister for Human Rights, so there are many areas here that are not normally under your brief, but I am grateful that you are here covering this because this is not just about human rights; it is also about geopolitics and the relationship with China more broadly. When the Government says, as it has, that it will hold China to account for these crimes—these serious human rights abuses and indeed what the House declared to be genocide only last week—what is the Government actually going to do? How is that going to really impact on China?

Nigel Adams: You have seen, really, since the 12 January announcement that the Foreign Secretary made, the four core areas of specific guidance, building on guidance that was already out there. For example, there is guidance for companies trading with organisations that may have connections with Xinjiang. There has been a lot of work, with two years of engagement from officials and the Secretary of State for International Trade. We already have a strong export control regime, but you saw a further announcement on export controls. Obviously, again, DIT is the lead



on that particular policy, but this is specifically about export controls as they apply to the situation in Xinjiang. We want to ensure that British businesses in particular are very alive to and aware of the issues and the forced labour evidence that has been brought forward, and we want to make sure that there are financial penalties for those who fail to comply with the transparency measures.

We are also doing the same in terms of public procurement rules, ensuring that across Government suppliers are excluded where there is sufficient evidence of human rights violations in their supply chains. Those are just some of the measures from the 12 January announcement that will have an impact. Of course, since then we have done lots of work at the UN, which you will be aware of. You will be aware of the March sanctions, where we acted alongside 29 other countries—countries that amount to a third of global GDP; that is not an insignificant move. I think we have led on this particular issue, but I do stress that this work goes as far back as 2017.

Q234 Henry Smith: Welcome, Minister. Is the Government's vision for the future UK-China relationship feasible? How can we simultaneously cooperate in certain areas and say that we need more action on atrocities as serious as those occurring in Xinjiang?

Nigel Adams: I do think it is realistic and achievable. The IR recognises that there is systemic challenge presented by China that requires a robust diplomatic framework for our relationship, and we need to be able to manage disagreements and defend our values, but also preserve space for co-operation where our interests align, such as on climate change challenges and on global health challenges, as we have just seen.

It is achievable, and we will invest in enhanced China-facing capabilities, through which we will get a better understanding of China and its people.

Q235 Henry Smith: In a situation where the Government had to choose between a trade deal and human rights, what would take precedence?

Nigel Adams: It is not an either/or situation. We have been calling out the human rights violations from day one. We have led and brought together. We have spent most of our time building a caucus of countries to support us in statements at the UN, culminating in the sanctions alongside 29 other countries. It is not an either/or: we will call out human rights violations. That is why the Foreign Secretary made the announcement that he did on 12 January, on those four issues I spoke about a few moments ago.

As far as I am aware, there is no plan at all to have any sort of free trade agreement with China. If you are saying to me—I know you are not—that we should not be doing business with China, that really is for the birds. It is the second-largest economy in the world. In 2020, I think—I will be corrected if I get this wrong—the thick end of £80 billion-worth of trade was done between China and the UK. That is a significant amount of trade.



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Thousands of jobs in the UK depend on Chinese investment. But that does not stop us taking the action that we have done when we see blatant human rights abuses.

Q236 Henry Smith: I appreciate that you are saying that it is not an either/or, but would future talks be discontinued if the evidence of further atrocities and crimes came to light? At what point in that either/or do the Government draw a line in terms of what is acceptable for having trade talks versus reports of possible atrocities?

Nigel Adams: I am certainly not aware of any formal trade talks between the UK Government and China, in terms of the possibility of a free trade agreement, as we have recently signed with Japan. With the Trade Bill passing a few weeks ago, there are measures where, clearly, if evidence of genocide, for example, is put forward by a Committee—it may very well be this one—then of course Parliament will get an opportunity to debate that and pass a motion, but there are no plans for a formal free trade agreement with China.

Q237 Graham Stringer: You said that our interests are aligned with China on climate change. We are putting the cost of energy up in this country, which is one of the fundamentals to the growth of an economy. That is one of our climate change policies—energy will get more expensive. China is building literally hundreds of coal-fired power stations. They are treated as a developing country. They are putting masses of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, and they are making their economy more efficient. How are our interests aligned there? Aren't we giving them a blank cheque?

Nigel Adams: I don't think so. President Xi has made his statement on climate, which we very much welcome. We use every diplomatic opportunity to remind China and other countries. My job as Minister for Asia is principally around south-east Asia. Every single conversation I have with one of my counterparts or an ambassador, reminds these countries to be as ambitious in terms of its NDC target, for example. We are chairing COP this year, so it is a really important issue for the UK Government. I think there is every opportunity; every conversation we have, we raise this particular issue.

Q238 Graham Stringer: President Xi's statements do not save a microgram of carbon dioxide, do they? They are just increasing the amount of carbon dioxide and putting our economy in a less efficient position in relation to China. He might make statements, but that is neither influencing the amount of carbon dioxide nor putting pressure on them to do something about the Uyghurs. Do you think our policies in respect of trying to reduce the exploitation of the Uyghurs and the genocide of the Uyghurs are effective?

Nigel Adams: I do think there has been some impact. I think we have moved from a situation where China initially denied that the camps existed, not too long ago. There was a shift when evidence was coming



forward. Some of that evidence, the UK Government funded. We helped fund the ASPI report; everybody will remember when that was published. That evidence building, which we have been doing since 2017, has really pushed China into a position where they now admit that these camps do exist. That is a huge shift in China taking responsibility for what is going on. We are continuing to build that evidence; we constantly work at that. We have diplomats who go to Xinjiang regularly, alongside representatives from other countries. So I do think there has been some impact. They do not like a light being shone on their activities.

Q239 Graham Stringer: They do not like the truth.

Nigel Adams: No, they do not. They do not like the light shone on their activities. I think that is reflected in the reaction and the way they came after colleagues and entities—the Chairman knows all about this.

Graham Stringer: I think he is very proud.

Nigel Adams: Indeed. Our sanctions are fully backed up legally. They are properly put together, alongside 29 other countries, and the Chinese reacted within 10 days with effectively a trumped-up press statement. So I do think they are having an impact and if you take that alongside the other work we are doing in terms of working with business—again, the export control review with specific reference to Xinjiang, of course that is going to take some time to come through. The Home Office is working on financial penalties for failing to comply with transparency measures. It is not an overnight thing you can solve, obviously, but I take your point.

Q240 Graham Stringer: Let me just try two other things, and then I will finish on this point. The Chinese Government are objective about what people do. There are a set of statements that are not always true, but they look very hard at what any country is doing. Don't you think it would have more impact if we got Huawei out of the 2G, 3G and 4G networks more quickly, and paid for Ericsson to come in? Don't you think they would take notice of, what will be great propaganda for the Chinese state, the 2022 winter Olympics? I am not saying that the Government have it within their power to instruct a boycott because we are not an authoritarian country, but those games could be labelled as the "genocide games" by this Government, or other actions could be taken. Can't we see more in those two areas?

Nigel Adams: I do take your point. I am not in a position to comment too much on Huawei—that is a different Department's decision. They did take the action to get those bits of technology out of the core network, and it is going to take a little time to do that. On the Olympics, the Prime Minister was quite clear, the Government is not in the business of issuing boycotts. As you say, we are not an authoritarian government. It is for the British Olympic Association, and there are IOC rules that need to be taken into account, but it is very much, and correctly so, left to the sporting bodies.



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Graham Stringer: I agree with that. One of Margaret Thatcher's few defeats was when she tried to get a boycott of the Moscow Olympics. Wouldn't it be good to label those Olympic games something that brought the world's attention to plight of the Uyghurs? I suggest genocide games, but with all the creativity there is in your Department, Minister, there must be other things that could be said that would bring that to people's attention.

Nigel Adams: Mr Stringer, I am a big fan of yours, but I do not think you will get the Minister for Asia to provide a label for the winter Olympic games—that certainly might make the newspapers. It is a matter for the sporting authorities, and rightly so, as you said, but others may very well label those games.

Q241 **Bob Seely:** Minister, you say that we are not looking to do a trade deal with China. Is that the line that has been pushed by some of your colleagues? The reason I say that is I am looking at an answer from Lord Grimstone on 1 February when he said that "we are pursuing increased bilateral trade" with China.

Nigel Adams: That is not a formal FTA, the likes of which we have seen the Secretary of State for DIT signing up virtually one every week since Brexit. No, that is not the position.

Q242 **Bob Seely:** On that point, you will rule out—the FCDO is against any specialised or increased trade deal with China, over and above WTO trading agreements?

Nigel Adams: What I am telling you is there are not any plans for a formal FTA with China. We want, of course, to continue our trade with China, and there are areas in which we want to build on it. The amount of jobs and revenue, as I said, was slightly down to just under £80 billion because of the pandemic, but those figures have been up as high as £93 billion, and it would have a huge impact if we were not trading with China.

Q243 **Bob Seely:** No one is talking about not trading with China. The question is about specialised arrangements. The FCDO will oppose a specialised trading deal with China if one was on the cards? There was talk about one being pushed by Lord Grimstone and others, who were very keen on the idea. You are saying that you are against that and would rule it out?

Nigel Adams: What I am saying is that Lord Grimstone is the Trade Minister and the question might be better addressed to him, unless Rupert has a bit more background on that.

Bob Seely: I am just asking if the FCDO would be against any specialised trade deal?

Rupert Ainley: There are no prospects, as the Minister has said, for a free trade agreement with China. We continue to work with China on a



positive economic relationship. The numbers speak for themselves—there was a study last year from Cambridge Econometrics that 100,000 jobs in the UK in trade, tourism and students are due to the UK-China relationship. There are lots of ways that it is beneficial for the national interest.

Q244 Bob Seely: Again, nobody is talking about trade with China. That is not the point, and just for the record, that trade is actually incredibly one-sided. We export something to China; China exports a great deal to this country. Nobody is saying, “We are not going to trade with China”,

but you are saying that we do not have any plans for a trade deal, and I am asking whether you would oppose one if it were on the cards. Does the FCDO have an opinion on whether you would be opposed to one, or are you just saying to me, “Well, nobody’s talking about it at the moment, so it’s not happening at the moment”? I get that. I am asking, if there were talk of it, what is the FCDO’s position, given the very significant abuse of human rights that China is conducting in its own country, as well as some pretty nasty bullying tactics outside it?

Rupert Ainley: I would say that both standing up for our values and human rights and increasing trade with China are in our national interest. In fact, getting access to the Chinese market and facilitating investment from China into the UK—which is important in all sorts of ways—in a way that is compliant with our security and values takes an awful lot of Government support and action, because of the nature of China’s economy. We will continue to support that sort of trade and beneficial investment when it is in our interests.

In terms of the hypothetical question that you are asking, as I say and as the Foreign Secretary has said in the House, there is no realistic possibility of a free trade agreement with China at the moment.

Q245 Bob Seely: Okay, but you are not willing to say that if China proposed one, you would turn it down. I am just curious.

Rupert Ainley: I think I have set out where we are.

Nigel Adams: We are focusing our efforts on trade deals with Australia, the US and New Zealand, and DIT is concentrating on accession to CPTPP, not China.

Q246 Bob Seely: Okay. Can I just talk about export controls? I think you referred to them as export controls; I cannot remember if the Foreign Secretary referred to it as import or export controls, but there are obviously controls in relation to Xinjiang. Where are we with this? We were—excuse my ignorance—promised import controls and significant controls to ensure that UK companies trading in China did not accidentally profit by the use of slave or forced labour, either relating to Xinjiang province itself or to Uyghurs who are being bused to factories to work under slave labour conditions elsewhere, producing goods under western brands. Where are we with those import controls?



Nigel Adams: The export control review is being conducted by DIT; that work is underway. I know that Rupert was chomping at the bit on this one, because he knows it inside out, but that work is there to ensure we are doing everything to prevent the export of goods that could contribute in any way to human rights violations or abuses. I know that DIT are going to be reporting back to Parliament when that review has been completed. I don't know if there is anything you want to add around that, Rupert.

Rupert Ainley: Just to clarify that in the 12 January statement from the Foreign Secretary, there were four measures, and the export control review was one of them. We did not talk about any import measures in that review, apart from those under the Modern Slavery Act, and the guidance that we gave to business about engaging with Xinjiang and the difficulties of doing so.

Q247 **Bob Seely:** Just a tiny additional question: do you think that the Modern Slavery Act—which was brilliant in its day—is still fit for purpose? There is a lot of criticism that it does not do enough—

Chair: Bob, can you lean forward and speak into the microphone? Otherwise, nobody else can hear you.

Bob Seely: I am so sorry; I do apologise. Do you think the Modern Slavery Act is still fit for purpose?

Nigel Adams: As you know, we were the first country out of the blocks with a Modern Slavery Act. The Home Office is working to beef it up; it is working as we speak, for example, to introduce the financial penalties that were announced in January. It will need primary legislation to bring that forward, which will be announced as soon as parliamentary time allows. A modern slavery forum, which will involve engaging with businesses, is being put together as well, so that will provide the information. Since the Modern Slavery Act came in, the Home Office has launched its own online modern slavery statement registry, which aims to ensure transparency that allows investors, civil society and consumers to scrutinise the actions of suppliers. I think it has been improved since the Act was brought in.

Q248 **Chair:** The line in January was “as soon as parliamentary time allows”. When will parliamentary time allow?

Nigel Adams: I think that that is a question for the business managers, Chairman. I cannot tell you an exact time, but I know that work is ongoing, and the line is still “when parliamentary time allows”.

Q249 **Chris Bryant:** Can I ask a couple of simple questions first? Is it your belief, Minister, that Uyghur children are being separated from their parents?

Nigel Adams: There is a whole host of evidence that has come forward—and also on sterilisation, which is horrific. In terms of detailed evidence, Paul or Rupert may very well have more information to furnish you with.



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Rupert Ainley: Mr Bryant, thank you for the question. As the Minister said, there is a whole range of different sorts of evidence. There are significant, very credible volumes on some issues; there are others where there are certain reports. On the Uyghur—

Q250 **Chris Bryant:** Can we just go back to my question then, please, which is a very simple one. It is really difficult to hear the officials, I am afraid, but it is a very simple question: do you believe that Uyghur children are being separated from their parents by the Chinese state?

Rupert Ainley: There are certainly very notable volumes of credible evidence on that from the human rights report and from an Amnesty International report that set this out.

Q251 **Chris Bryant:** So that's a yes.

Rupert Ainley: It's "Yes, there is a lot of credible evidence to that effect." The whole point is that it is very, very difficult to determine this categorically in China.

Q252 **Chris Bryant:** Minister, you referred to sterilisation. Do you believe that there is forced sterilisation preventing births among the Uyghur population?

Nigel Adams: There is certainly evidence that we have all seen that points to that being the case. The difficulty, as Rupert has pointed out, is proving that inside China, but there is plenty of evidence. Some of it is open source information, and some of it has come on the back of some reporting and evidence-gathering that we have helped to support.

Q253 **Chris Bryant:** You referred to the camps. Others have called them concentration camps; is that a term you would use?

Nigel Adams: I am not going to use those terms—I am not going to be drawn into using those terms. The camps are clearly something that is despicable. They are gross human rights violations. People being forced into areas, not allowed to leave, and re-educated—you could come up with a whole host of different words, but you will forgive me for not being drawn into using that particular phrase.

Q254 **Chris Bryant:** Do you think that they are causing serious bodily or mental harm to the Uyghur population?

Nigel Adams: Of course, if the evidence that we have seen—of course it is going to cause significant harm to any individual, from whatever ethnicity, if people are forcibly educated under those conditions.

Q255 **Chris Bryant:** And do you believe that members of the Uyghur population have been killed by the Chinese state?

Nigel Adams: There very well could be that evidence. Again, I will have to refer to Rupert; I apologise for doing so, but he does hold the pen on this. I am not necessarily the Minister for this particular area, but I will do my best—sorry, did Paul want to come in?



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Paul Williams: I was going to say—without trying to predict your next question, Mr Bryant—that you are probably going to cite the five indications in the genocide convention from 1948 and suggest that we should call this genocide, but you know that the Government’s position on that is that it is for a competent court to decide that. The other bit of the genocide convention is the “intent to destroy, in whole or in part” element. Apologies if that was not going to be your next question, but I thought that it might be.

Q256 **Chris Bryant:** It was going to be my next question, but I will ask the Minister, if it is okay with you. I simply do not understand why you just said yes to four elements of the definition of genocide in the genocide convention, and then you say you cannot say whether genocide is ongoing.

Nigel Adams: As you know, Mr Bryant, it has been a long-standing policy of UK Governments of all colours over many years that the definition of genocide is decided by a competent court. We debated this at great length last Thursday on the Floor of the House. It does not prevent us from taking action in respect of these serious violations. That is absolutely clear, and that is what we have done in the case of Xinjiang. We have led international efforts. We have built a caucus of countries to come together not just in statements, but in action.

When we brought forward our sanctions, and I know you were a very doughty champion of the sanctions regime, we did so in good company alongside 29 other countries. That takes a bit of time to build. Whether it is called genocide or not—the policy has been for many years that a court needs to decide that—it does not stop us taking action.

Q257 **Chris Bryant:** It is quite difficult to conceive of a court that could be competent, especially where the Government keep on making sure that no court can be competent: either the British Government or the Chinese Government.

Nigel Adams: Genocide has been proven in the past only twice.

Chris Bryant: Only in retrospect.

Nigel Adams: Yes. It is notoriously difficult to prove a case of genocide. It is obviously a crime. It is the most serious of crimes. Competent courts could include an international court or a national court that meets those international standards as well.

Q258 **Chris Bryant:** I find it frustrating. As you know, I respect you enormously, but I watch you talk about this and it feels as if you are being forced to eat tacks, because you know that there is something better that you would like to be able to say. Or am I being unfair to you?

Nigel Adams: You are never unfair to me, Mr Bryant. You have always been fair in all our exchanges. The policy has been for many, many years, as I say, through Governments of all colours that this determination needs



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to be done by a court. I will reiterate that it does not stop us taking action. The US have a different way of determining genocide. Under the Trump Administration, they actually said what was happening in Xinjiang was genocide. However, under the new regime, under the Biden Administration, they joined with us in the action that we took. Despite the US Administration having a different approach, and many other countries take the same approach as us on the determination, we still took action together, alongside 29 other countries.

Q259 Chris Bryant: Can I just take you through the United Nations processes and where we are at with building support within the UN? Do you think there is any further progress you can make there?

Nigel Adams: We have led the way. As far as we are concerned, we have taken a leading role in ensuring that international attention is pointed on these human rights abuses. We have seen our position supported by an increasing number of countries. It is an effective way to impose diplomatic cost on China, and also a reputational one. They protest very strongly, as you know. They are a P5 member and are able to veto certain actions, and they lobby hard against the action we take. We understand that that is difficult.

Using our diplomatic network, we managed to bring together 38 countries at the third committee in October 2020, up from 23 countries. There is always more, and through our mission there and through what the Foreign Secretary said at the UN, we will continue to use the UN as a vehicle to shine a light on these abuses.

Q260 Chris Bryant: Do you think it will be possible to call a special session on Xinjiang, either at the UN General Assembly or the Human Rights Council?

Nigel Adams: We rule nothing out, that is for sure.

Chris Bryant: Don't start with that one.

Nigel Adams: Well, we don't rule anything out; I am just making that case. We do not consider that the time is right yet to call a special session of the Human Rights Council. As I say, we do not rule it out. It is worth making the point that China, as I said before, receives significant support from other countries, so there are real obstacles in the way of being able to secure the outcome that we want. You need the support of, I think, a third of the membership to hold a special session, and a resolution would require a majority of those present. I think the Foreign Secretary said previously on this question that we do not want to go down a route that could hand China a public relations coup should it fail.

Q261 Chris Bryant: Finally from me on this, we are tilting towards the IndoPacific; I am not quite sure what that means, but we have used that phrase in Foreign Affairs Committee reports, and the Government have as well in "Global Britain". Do you think that that gains us any new allies



in this world, or does it mean that, in order to secure our tilt towards the Indo-Pacific, we will actually have to go silent on some of these human rights issues?

Nigel Adams: Not at all; that is certainly not the case. It is a long-term, integrated engagement with that region. We want to ensure that we safeguard and enhance economic and security interests, while at the same time ensuring that our values and our position on open societies are protected. It is certainly not an either/or.

Chris Bryant: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: We will come back to some of these questions in a moment, if we may, but I will now go straight to Alicia Kearns, who wanted to come in before she needs to care for her child.

Q262 **Alicia Kearns:** Thank you, Chair. I apologise, Minister, that I cannot remain for the full session. You mentioned just then in your answer to Chris the sanctions that we put in place. What is your assessment of the impact and effectiveness of those sanctions that we put in place?

Nigel Adams: I know Mr Bryant will be frustrated by the time it took to deliver these sanctions, but we worked incredibly hard to bring together 29 other countries. Acting in a singular way would certainly not have had the same impact as bringing together this coalition, if you like, of countries, which as I said previously amount to a third of total global GDP. That is not insignificant. Sanctions are effective when they are done together with the US, Canada and the EU. Working in concert with those really increases the reach and impact of the measures. We have seen the way that China has reacted. They do not like their reputation being tarnished. You can see that through their ill-thought out counter-sanctions that were announced 10 days later, which the Chair was a recipient of, which as far as we can see have no legal basis.

Q263 **Alicia Kearns:** On that point about China's retaliatory sanctions against the China Research Group and various Members of Parliament, you summoned the Chinese chargé d'affaires to the Foreign Office to answer your questions about this. What was the outcome of your conversation? Did China recognise the fact that these were clearly an assault on democracy and the values of our Parliament?

Nigel Adams: I do not think I can go into absolute detail; there are diplomatic rules around conversations. I summoned the chargé—they are between ambassadors at the moment, so he is the most senior official. Minister Yang is the most senior official. He was left in no uncertain terms with a strong and formal protest, and we will not tolerate attempts to silence those who are highlighting human rights violations, not least democratically elected politicians in this House. It is clearly something of a bit of a challenge for the Chinese to quite understand how a democracy works.



Q264 **Alicia Kearns:** Yesterday, the Foreign Secretary announced an expansion of the Magnitsky sanctions regime in the UK, which was enormously welcome. Many of us on this Committee have called for an extension to tackle kleptocracy and profiteering. There is no question but that there are individuals profiteering from the genocide in China. Although I am sure you will say you cannot comment, at least reassurances that the FCDO is looking at evidence around those who are essentially profiting from the cronyism around these human rights abuses would be very much welcomed by the Committee.

Nigel Adams: Absolutely. That is why our sanctions are done on a legal basis. We did them alongside other countries, to have a wider impact. Of course, we cannot speculate, but work is ongoing. We are constantly reviewing the sanctions regime. You saw the updated statement yesterday from the Foreign Secretary. We have a whole team who are looking after our global human rights sanctions regime, and that work will continue.

Q265 **Alicia Kearns:** You mentioned there the importance of working with our allies when we bring forward sanctions. Do you have a view on the reliability of our European partners when it comes to Xinjiang? Obviously, the EU signed a trade deal with China at the start of January, but yesterday a letter was leaked from von der Leyen saying that Beijing is going through an authoritarian shift and there are fundamental divergences. What has changed from January to now for the EU?

Nigel Adams: I know the EU had an agreement in December. What I would say is that the EU joined with us—all EU countries joined with us—in terms of our sanctions regime. Latterly, of course, 10 individuals and four entities in the EU have been the subject of retaliatory sanctions from China, so there has been a shift and a change, possibly, in position in that regard.

Q266 **Alicia Kearns:** A final two from me. Minister, when you look at the sanctions regime—we have the additions that were made yesterday around kleptocracy and cronyism—do you think that further extensions are needed to tackle situations such as Xinjiang, or do you think it now has the full breadth that it needs to be effective?

Nigel Adams: We are constantly evidence gathering, Ms Kearns. That work is ongoing. We are working with partners, and we are working through our network in China. Of course, we want to increase the caucus of countries that join with us as well. We will keep all potential listings under close review, but this is an ongoing piece of work, and I am rather proud of the work that we have done. Although it does not necessarily sit under my ministerial portfolio—I am the person who has to answer the questions in the Commons, whereas my colleague looks after this in the Lords—I am actually proud of the work that we have done since 2017 in ensuring not just that the evidence is being gathered, but that action is being taken. Of course, that work does continue.



Q267 **Alicia Kearns:** Fabulous. My final question is about work in-country. Obviously, China is not a conflict zone, but what is happening in Xinjiang is an atrocity—there is a genocide. What is post doing in Xinjiang and in country to support people? In countries such as Syria, we have done incredibly effective work around identifying the missing and evidence collection. No country in the world is as good at the collecting of evidence for security and justice bases and future prosecutions around this sort of work. In the past when I have raised this, Philip Barton has said that China is not a conflict zone, it is a difficult area to do work in and so on. We have found ways around this before, whether through open-source intelligence gathering or otherwise. What are posts doing to provide actual meaningful support to Uyghur individuals and Uyghur families, and to support the Uyghurs on the ground, who are facing extermination every single day?

Nigel Adams: That is a really good question. We have the human rights officers in post. They are conducting regular field visits to areas of key concern. That will give us a better understanding of the situation on the ground, and obviously we share those findings with partners in country. That, again, allows us to shine a light. We raise our concerns directly with the Chinese MFA, and we make clear our opposition and that of our partners, from the evidence that we gather in country. I don't know whether Rupert wants to add anything about the work that we are doing in country.

Rupert Ainley: I might just reinforce the point that it's incredibly difficult in China to do work with human rights defenders and activists—

Q268 **Chair:** Could there be a reason for that?

Rupert Ainley: It's because of the way the Chinese state operates.

Q269 **Chair:** Perhaps to hide human rights violations.

Rupert Ainley: Indeed. It has been very clear that China has obfuscated in response to everything that we have said and everything we have called out. So, that is incredibly difficult, but we do what we can. I won't go into all the details now, but we provide programme funding to gather evidence and to support organisations that stand up for rights in China. But in some ways, the more we say and the more we shine a light on those individuals, the more difficult it becomes for them, actually in the country. I hope you understand that. But we are constantly pushing.

I would also highlight that we have announced that the £0.9 million of ODA funding from the FCDO for China will be entirely focused on open societies and human rights, in the next financial year.

Alicia Kearns: Thank you. I reinforce the point that it's important the system doesn't just say no because it's difficult. This is fundamentally important, and security and justice are our unique specialty. Thank you, Minister; thank you, all. Apologies again that I have to leave shortly. Thank you, Chair.



Q270 **Chair:** Can I go back slightly and pick up where Mr Bryant left off, which was on the question of genocide? I understand, and you have made it very clear, why the Government is not going to use the word “genocide”. Would you describe the situation in Xinjiang province as “serious human rights violations”?

Nigel Adams: I think we have.

Q271 **Chair:** Okay. What do you think are the substantive differences, in the policy and the actions that we should be taking, between genocide and serious human rights violations? Should we let human rights violations stand and act only on genocide?

Nigel Adams: We are not standing by; we are taking—

Q272 **Chair:** No, indeed. I am just asking: as a policy basis, what is the gap?

Nigel Adams: I am not entirely sure of the thrust of the question. We are taking action. We have called them human rights violations. We have made clear our position on determination of genocide. As I said, the United States has called it a genocide—under a previous Administration. But they still take the same action that we have taken.

Q273 **Chair:** The answer I am looking for is this. If we would not do any form of trade deal with a genocidal state, which I think is Her Majesty’s Government’s policy, isn’t it, why would we not simply rule out a trade deal with a country that is committing serious human rights violations?

Nigel Adams: I think the Foreign Secretary has remarked on this. There are absolutely no prospects of a free trade agreement—

Q274 **Chair:** You keep using the term “free trade agreement” as though that is the only kind of trade agreement; there are many other types of trade agreement, as we know. I am trying to be more rounded than that.

Nigel Adams: Well, principally, it’s a decision for the Department for International Trade. I am not entirely sure how much clearer we need to be. We are not going to be doing a trade deal with China. We want to trade with China. We have to trade with China. There are literally thousands of jobs, in many of our constituencies, reliant on Chinese investment. We are reliant—and we had to co-operate, and we do cooperate, over issues where we have a mutual interest. Had we not been able to do trade with China during the global PPE crisis, we would not have been able to fix that issue, or the ventilator issue or issues like that. None of that prevents us from calling out the violations, as we have, and then taking action.

Q275 **Chair:** Can I just follow up? I understand what you are saying about the various ways in which we currently engage in commercial relationships with China, and I understand that in March last year we were very reliant on them, but do you think that China sells to us because of some sort of bonhomie—they have a good relationship with us and that is why they



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have a trade relationship with us—or do you think it is naked opportunism, much like, let's be honest, most commercial relationships?

Nigel Adams: It is the latter. They are a trading nation. They have done incredibly well, actually, if you look at the way they have turned their economy around. Of course, they are a trading nation, and they will want to sell to as many countries where they can provide their services and goods as they can.

Q276 **Chair:** Given that that is the case, do you think that we need a particular trading agreement—of any sort—with them?

Nigel Adams: I am not sure we do. We trade perfectly well with China where companies need their goods and services. We are enhancing protections to ensure that British businesses are alive to any potential human rights violations in their supply chains. That is ongoing work. A number of companies have come under the spotlight in that regard. We want co-operation on trade. If you look at the countries where, since the pandemic started, the UK has seen export growth, I may stand corrected by my officials, but I believe China is one of only two countries where there has been any growth. It is an important trading nation.

Rupert Ainley: I think I would also say that, in terms of our trade approach to China, echoing what the Minister said, it is about the growing middle class as well, in terms of how we are trying to sell to China. By 2030, the middle class in China will be bigger than those of the next 25 developing countries put together, and those are the people who buy UK goods and services. Also, the nature of the Chinese market means that Government support is incredibly important to our businesses that are trying to do business in China, and also to trying to bring down some of the market access barriers that exist and are in the way, whether nontariff barriers or licences. We have had some success in that over the last few years, though of course we urge the Chinese to open up and work on a level playing field according to the rules that we expect.

Q277 **Chair:** Do you think that is likely to happen? It does feel somewhat like we are feeding the crocodile in the hope that they will eat us last.

Rupert Ainley: I don't think it's about offering trade on the one hand and saying that we will take a certain stance on human rights on the other. As the Minister set out, we can do both at the same time, and we do. That is clearly the approach set out in the integrated review of our China strategy.

Q278 **Bob Seely:** What I am trying to get to—I do not know whether others are—is that there seems to be a lack of clarity and a lack of clear thinking and clear answers. Effectively, you are saying, "It is probably pretty awful what is happening in Xinjiang, but you would not actually want us to do anything real about it that may affect our economic relationships, and we mustn't offend China because that is such an important relationship." As Mr Stringer has shown, they are still building a new coal-fired power station every 10 days, they are still engaging in IP theft and they are now



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threatening Members of Parliament. As the Chair says, they trade with us because it is in their interest, not because they are nice people or because we need to be nice to them.

There seems to be a lot of muddle-headed thinking. We are not asking for a perfect situation, and we are not saying that you must not trade with China because of Xinjiang, because we are all grown-ups who understand the realities of life. It is just that we seem to be getting a lot of woolly thinking from the Foreign Office on this issue. For example, would you agree that, if the Government can stop any chance of any court adjudicating on genocide, you will not have to deal with it? That is what it looks like from here.

We know that it will not go to the International Court of Justice because China will block it, and thanks to the genocide amendment repeatedly, and sadly, failing to get through the House, the Government have blocked any attempt to use a court of law in the UK to make a decision on genocide. You are basically saying that, if you stop any attempt to actually get a genocide declared, you will not have to go to article 1 of the convention on the prevention of genocide, which places a legal duty on you to prevent and punish genocide whenever it occurs. That seems to be the issue. Sorry to put it bluntly. Any comment on that would be great.

Nigel Adams: In terms of the Trade Bill, I slightly disagree. This is not my area—it is a different Department—but if we ended up in a situation in which courts, rather than Parliament, determined this country's trade policy, we would be in a bad place. There would have been every opportunity for those coming from a different angle from you, Mr Seely, to potentially attempt to block us from doing trade deals with all sorts of different nations.

Q279 **Bob Seely:** But Nigel, that is exactly the opposite of what you said 20 minutes ago. You said that the only people who can really declare genocide are courts, but now you say that you would not want a court to declare genocide because then you might have to do something about it, which would affect our trade.

Nigel Adams: I did not say that. I said that it is for a competent court to decide genocide, but it is not for the courts to dictate our trade policy. That is why the Government agreed our amendment to the Trade Bill.

Q280 **Bob Seely:** But the genocide amendment would not have meant that the court was dictating trade; it would have meant that the court was going to declare a genocide, which the Government would then potentially have to do something about, or at least make a considered response to, and the issue would then go back to Parliament. Again, the problem is, if you are making it impossible—

You said yourself that genocide has only been declared twice. We now know why: if the Government make it impossible for genocide to be declared, you do not have to deal with the reality of genocide. Look, I



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totally get the fact that these are appallingly difficult subjects, especially when this is being done in one of the world's superpowers, but at least let us not get ourselves so morally complicit that we cannot actually articulate what these problems are. The fact is that the Government have made it almost impossible for genocide to be declared so that you do not have to deal with the reality of it. That seems to be the issue.

Nigel Adams: I do not accept that. We are sort of going around the houses a little bit on this. If Parliament makes a determination that a genocide is occurring— **Bob Seely:** As we did last week.

Nigel Adams: Absolutely. There was a motion, as there have been motions in other Parliaments; I think two other Parliaments have passed similar motions. Of course, all states have a legal obligation to prevent or take action in respect of alleged genocide within their own jurisdiction, but that does not stop us or prevent us from taking action. That is the key point. We have taken action. America has a different determination for genocide, but it is taking the same action that we are, and we will continue to take action on this. The idea that we are not taking action is slightly unfair.

Bob Seely: I get that. You are taking action—I completely see that—but you do not want to take action while bound by the moral and legal obligations of a genocide.

Q281 **Chair:** We are going to move on, because we are going around in circles a little bit. On the UN question, are you using the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, because this appears extremely similar to a race-based crime?

Nigel Adams: I am going to ask Rupert, who is the expert on the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, to answer this point.

Rupert Ainley: I completely understand why the focus is on CERD because it is actually one of the few human rights treaties that China has not opted out of, in terms of the complaints mechanism. There is this procedure for inter-state communication. China also has a reservation, which means that even if there is a determination from CERD, the issue cannot go to the International Court of Justice. There is an existing report out there that is actually very good and has eight recommendations in relation to Xinjiang. Our point is that we want China to respond to those existing recommendations. We think that, as the Minister said, having more countries speaking out has to be the root of this, because we need to build support through the multilateral system. That is our primary focus. The other thing I wanted to say...

The other thing I wanted to say that has not come up yet is that we have a very strong focus on asking the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit China, because we think that is the key point of accountability, and we want to keep pressure on China to accept that at the moment.



Q282 **Chair:** Are we using other points of leverage, including asking for greater access in the Wuhan case and supporting Australia in its examination of where coronavirus has come from? Are we using multiple points of pressure?

Rupert Ainley: Yes. Dealing with China, there are so many different angles that we have to try to come at it from. We use all different means to try to get China to be accountable for these issues. You have highlighted one issue there, but there are multiple ways that we engage with China and pressurise it behind the scenes as well.

Q283 **Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** Thank you, Minister and officials, for your answers so far. May I turn to some of the more domestic issues and what we do on technology and exports? The Government have been running, through DCMS, a guidance campaign on exports. One of the Twitter adverts that DCMS has put out asks people to consider if their tech could be used to violate human rights. The tweet says: "In China, advanced tech could be used in human rights violations. Make sure it's not yours. Click below to learn more." Have the efforts to block exports to repressive regimes where technology can be used in that way been successful?

Nigel Adams: As you rightly say, DCMS have been leading on that. I think it is important that they do and that they promote ethical development and the use of technology in that way, not just in the UK, but overseas. We are, I understand, aware of a number of Chinese technology companies that are potentially linked to violations taking place in Xinjiang on this issue. Again, I do not know either Rupert or Paul have more detail about the effectiveness of the current export controls in place on the tech side?

Rupert Ainley: Thank you for the question, Mr McDonald. That is why we are undertaking this export control review specifically in relation to Xinjiang: because it offers the opportunity to look at exactly what we should be controlling in the Xinjiang case, and that would include technology as well.

The DCMS campaign started in November. It explicitly includes measures and advice in relation to Xinjiang, and issues around doing due diligence in Xinjiang. There is a lot of work going on in Government on tech, including in response to the integrated review, which, of course, put science, technology and innovation at the heart of what we are doing, as well as resilience for the UK. It is all bound up in those issues, I think.

Q284 **Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** Is it changing business activity?

Rupert Ainley: Certainly our discussions with business show that they are much more aware of the risks. The International Trade Secretary has held two roundtables since January to discuss the issues in China, particularly in Xinjiang, and they have responded really positively and want to take action to understand the reputational and ethical risks that exist.

Q285 **Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** Is there evidence that it is changing business activity?

Rupert Ainley: The campaign is still relatively new—it launched in November. We have seen that our evidence gathering in relation to Xinjiang does change behaviour. For example, in response to the ASPI report last year, which the Minister referenced, a number of companies have ended relationships with the suppliers, including indirect relationships, as a result of some of the reports that we have funded. So yes, I think it is changing behaviour, from all the conversations we have been having over a long period of time.

Q286 **Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** Minister, may I ask whether one such Chinese-linked company—I think that was the phrase you used—would be Huawei?

Nigel Adams: I am not specifically aware of that company being referenced in the terms of your original question, no.

Q287 **Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** Do the Government still consider Huawei a threat to UK national security?

Nigel Adams: DCMS and the Government have made their position on Huawei and on its technology within the core network very clear. That was taken after lots of work done by various Departments across Government, so they have made their position very clear on Huawei.

Q288 **Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** On 14 July 2020, the DCMS Secretary said, of the decision you mentioned, that that “decision has been made in the national security interests of this nation”. So that has not changed?

Nigel Adams: I assume not. Absolutely.

Q289 **Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** Why are they so good at employing former government officials and Crown servants?

Nigel Adams: Huawei?

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: Yes.

Nigel Adams: You will have to forgive me, Mr McDonald, I am not familiar with the employee list of Chinese telecommunications companies or their HR policy.

Q290 **Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** I will go through some for you. It is not their HR policy that I am concerned about; it is Government policy.

Let us take Lord John Browne, the former non-executive director of the Cabinet Office board. He is a former UK chairman of Huawei, up until 8 September last year.

Sir Andrew Cahn is a current non-executive director. He is a former, extremely long-serving and senior civil servant, who was the chief executive of UKTI. He is now a non-executive director at Huawei UK and a former chair of its UK advisory board.



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The current Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London—a representative of the Crown, no less—is a member of the Huawei board.

John Suffolk, a former chief information officer appointed by David Cameron, is currently the head of global cyber-security for Huawei.

What is Government policy on all those extremely senior former Government and Crown servants going off to work for a company that the Government consider to be a threat to national security?

Nigel Adams: Clearly, that is a matter for those individuals. I don't know any of them—I think I have heard of Lord Browne, who was involved in the energy sector, if it is the same Lord Browne, but none of the others. I presume if they have held positions and are about to accept appointments, they will go through the due process. That might well fall under the auspices of the ACOBA regime.

Q291 **Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** Do you think, for example, that it is a good thing that the UK Government's former chief information officer serves as the head of cyber-security for a company that the Government consider to be a threat to UK national security? That strikes me as a bad thing; it must strike you as a bad thing.

Nigel Adams: Well, of course, but it is a matter for that individual. It is a matter for—

Q292 **Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** So the Government are completely hands off as far as that is concerned—you can always take the individual out of it—

Nigel Adams: I am afraid, Mr McDonald, I do not know the regime for former Government officials. I know that there is the ACOBA process: if I were to stop being a Minister and wanted to take up an appointment, I would have to get that cleared. I am unaware whether there is a regime for those individuals, but we can certainly find out and drop you a line¹ to confirm it—but I am not aware of the regime.

Q293 **Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** Are there any plans to audit this stuff? How do the Government—at the risk of sounding a bit Orwellian or even CCP-like—keep tabs on those former, extremely senior officials in government and Crown servants going off to work for companies that the Government consider a threat to national security and an arm of an authoritarian regime that Parliament believes to be committing genocide?

Nigel Adams: Again, you will understand that, as geographical Minister for Asia, this is not an area that comes under my competency, but I am more than happy to find out via the relevant Department and to get an answer to your question.

¹ See letter from witness: [Correspondence from Minister Adams following his appearance before the Committee on 27 April 2021 \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/communications-and-digital-communications/witnesses/witness-statement-nigel-adams-27-april-2021).



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Q294 **Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** Do you think we need legislation on this sort of stuff, Minister?

Nigel Adams: Again, I will get the information that you require, Mr McDonald. It is not within my remit or anywhere near close to being within my remit with my role, but we will try our best to get that information for you.

Q295 **Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** The problem I have with this, and how it looks to me—it looks a bit like Russia all over again and the ISC report. You will remember the ISC report; I know that Russia is not in your geographical portfolio. As the ISC report made clear, we do a lot around Europe and around the world, in countries like Georgia and Ukraine, to counter Russia's threat, but at the same time, at home, we have become—the UK has a reputation as being a safe place for dodgy Russian money. It just strikes me that a similar picture is starting to present itself, where we can talk hard words on the Uyghurs, Hong Kong, Taiwan or whatever else it might be, but there is a revolving door, is there not, between the UK Government, former Crown servants and a company that is an arm of the Chinese Communist party and that the Government considers is a threat to national security? It strikes me that the Minister who is responsible for that part of the world might have a view on such a revolving door.

Nigel Adams: As I say, it is not within my portfolio. There very well might be a process—I am just telling you I am unaware of what that process is at the current time—for Government officials and those that have held Crown appointments, before they go off and get employed by companies, foreign or otherwise. I will find out for you; I can't give you an answer if I don't know it.

Q296 **Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** Minister, you're a straight-talking guy. You have heard other people say that people like you because you tend to be a straight-talking guy. Do you think it's any accident that these types of people have been recruited by Huawei? Does it not strike you as something that it is pretty obvious should be dealt with extremely seriously to prevent it from happening in the future? Would that not make your job as the Minister responsible for that part of the world slightly easier?

Nigel Adams: You make a very fair point, and I know where you're coming from on it, but as I say, in the absence of knowledge of what the process is for clearances for officials before they get appointed to such companies, it's—I appreciate you want to keep pushing on this particular question. I will do my utmost to ensure I get the correct information for you, so that the Committee has an opportunity to analyse it once I've been able to determine it.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: Thank you.



Q297 Neil Coyle: In an earlier comment, Minister, you mentioned that one of the reasons for tameness on this issue was Chinese economic growth. But bearing it in mind that some of that economic growth is from atrocities in Xinjiang contributing to cotton production or involving human hair in beauty products, for example, is this approach, combined with the comments earlier about the failure to allow a legal decision to be taken, a green light to other countries to commit atrocities, because the UK would look to do business with those that have economic growth?

Nigel Adams: I don't think that's fair, Mr Coyle. That is why the action we have taken, based on the evidence that we have helped gather—that is why we are doing all the work that we are, in terms of supply chains. They are incredibly complex things, global supply chains. For example, if you have cotton produced in Xinjiang being mixed with cotton from somewhere else in the chain or beyond, being made into a T-shirt in Vietnam, for example, and being exported to a wholesale market in Europe, you get a sense of how difficult it is and the challenges that there would be at the border, for example, identifying whether the goods have been manufactured with forced labour. It is very complicated.

However, we are in a position where we will take the necessary action, and this is what we have done. I think it has been acknowledged that it is robust action, not just in terms of the advice that we are giving to businesses who may trade in that region, but also in terms of the work Rupert referred to in the export control measures, culminating in the sanctions. I am not entirely sure your interpretation is completely fair.

Q298 Neil Coyle: The Minister mentioned problems with trade at the borders. This is a Government that seems to specialise in that, frankly. Another reason you gave earlier for the timidity around the potential for a special session of the Human Rights Council was the risk of awarding a PR coup to the People's Republic of China. What is the strategy for tackling the People's Republic's influence and over-representation at the UN?

Nigel Adams: Do you mind speaking up? I didn't quite catch that.

Neil Coyle: Sorry, Minister. I am also having sound difficulties. You mentioned previously that one of the reasons you were nervous about pushing for a Human Rights Council special meeting was the risk of a PR coup for the People's Republic, so what is the UK Government's strategy for tackling the influence and over-representation of China on UN agencies?

Nigel Adams: You're right to say that China does lobby vociferously within the UN, with other countries, and very often will help command a counter statement where we have led on a particular statement around Xinjiang. They receive significant support in that regard, and it does limit the scope of some of the multilateral action that we can take with the human rights bodies, so, yes, we are very alive to that challenge.



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Paul Williams: We are trying to work through those multilateral bodies where we can and there is evidence that we have been doing that for the last few years. As I think we mentioned earlier in the session, it was the UK that led the first two formal statements in the UN in 2019 and 2020, and the number of people supporting the statements that we and others have been making has grown. A key plank of our strategy is to try to build the caucus of countries that sees the human rights violations that we have been talking about in this session and is willing to call them out.

Another plank of doing that, as I think Mr Ainley mentioned earlier, is the call that the Foreign Secretary and the Minister have made to try to get the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, into China and into the region so that she can report back to the members of the Human Rights Council and the wider international community on what she sees there.

We are trying to work to build up a caucus of countries on this, and what we did with the sanctions last month shows evidence of precisely that, with 29 countries joining us on that.

Nigel Adams: Just to build on Mr Williams's point there, that consistent calling for access for Michelle Bachelet to get into Xinjiang is having some effect. I understand there are talks going on directly with China in that regard. I hope that will bear some fruit.

Q299 **Neil Coyle:** You hope. Moving on, what is the UK Government's position on refoulment of Uyghurs to China?

Nigel Adams: There are concerning reports about Uyghurs in various other third countries, for example, where they are coming under pressure. I have met with representatives of the Uyghur community here. We are aware of cases where China are pressurising other countries for their return. We regularly reiterate our position and call on countries to respect the obligation of not forcing individuals to return to the country where there are fundamentally sound reasons for believing that those individuals would be in danger.

Q300 **Neil Coyle:** You are telling those countries you are meeting that you believe they could be in violation of international law.

Nigel Adams: It would be a breach of international legal instruments, depending on whether that relevant third party is a party to them, obviously—the 1951 refugee convention, for example. Paul is the expert on this, if he wants to elaborate. Absolutely we are aware of the problem, Mr Coyle, and where there is opportunity, we remind other countries of their obligations. We use our diplomatic network to do that. We have intervened at senior levels with Governments, on behalf of Uyghurs who have been at risk of—

Q301 **Neil Coyle:** Minister, it may just be the term you are using, but where there are opportunities or the Government is creating opportunities,



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because obviously some of the countries under pressure are Commonwealth countries like Pakistan or other countries within your portfolio of Asia, like Thailand, and Cambodia, which I think was one of the ones on the brief for this session—

Rupert Ainley: If I may add something, we have a very strong diplomatic strategy in relation to the Uyghurs and Xinjiang through our diplomatic network, and our posts are fully aware of these risks. As the Minister said, we have actually intervened in certain cases, with positive results where we have taken action, and we will continue to do so. Our diplomatic network is really aware of the importance of doing this.

Q302 **Neil Coyle:** I think the UK Government deserves credit for some of the action with Hong Kong and British national overseas status, but what further support is the Government planning for members of the Uyghur diaspora? Are there any plans to offer, for example, fast-track asylum processes for the UK?

Nigel Adams: We are taking steps to support the Uyghur community. We want to send a clear message to the Uyghurs in the UK that we support their situation, their culture, their history and their religion, of course. The Home Office clearly leads on matters of this nature. We are very alive to them. As I said previously, I have spoken to members of the Uyghur community personally, so I fully understand some of the pressure they are coming under. Of course, we speak regularly, as you have seen with the BNO offer that you referenced, with the Home Office, and there is absolutely no reason why we would not do the same in this case.

Q303 **Neil Coyle:** So would you be able to give a guarantee that no Uyghur from Xinjiang who is seeking asylum in the UK will be deported to China?

Nigel Adams: I think we made that clear in not forcing people to return to a country where there are grounds for believing that they could be in danger.

Rupert Ainley: And obviously our asylum policy is that each case is taken on its individual merits, so that we don't politicise cases. The Home Office has very clear guidance about the risks for Uyghurs in China, which are taken into account when asylum cases are heard, and that is publicly available; it is being updated again at the moment to take account of the latest evidence. So, if a Uyghur were to claim asylum, that would be taken through the usual asylum process.

Neil Coyle: So it could take more than a year. That is hardly a reassurance. Thanks, Chair.

Chair: Chris Bryant, if you are still there, you wanted to come back in.

Q304 **Chris Bryant:** I am still here. I want to go back to this question. It feels sometimes to us as if the Government wants to be good, but ends up in an amoral position, because it's facing in two directions at the same time. One is wanting to be pulled towards engagement and trade, which we



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hope might open up better opportunities for ourselves and for the Chinese people, but at the same time we are wanting to assert the historical liberties and freedoms that we have always relied on in the UK. Is that a difference of view between the Foreign Office and Downing Street?

Nigel Adams: I don't believe that to be the case. They are not two separate issues—we have been very clear. I think the evidence is there. We have taken action. We have been gathering evidence, and we continue to gather evidence. We are constantly calling for the Human Rights Commissioner to get access. We have built that caucus of support—we have grown the caucus of support internationally, using the UN as a vehicle. We have introduced sanctions. It is not an either/or, Mr Bryant. We are very clear. At the same time, of course, China is an incredibly important market for us and trading partner.

Q305 **Chris Bryant:** I think you've just done it again on the facing both ways in one paragraph. That is the anxiety I think we have. It was reported earlier in the year that the Foreign Secretary was poised and ready to introduce a suite of new Magnitsky-style sanctions—in relation to both Hong Kong and Xinjiang province—against Chinese state officials, but that Downing Street overruled that. Is that true or false?

Nigel Adams: You wouldn't expect me to comment on press speculation. The Foreign Secretary and the Department receive evidence on individuals. He has made a call for evidence on individuals, and that work continues, but I am certainly not going to comment either way on press speculation.

Q306 **Chris Bryant:** Would you prefer us to have done it earlier?

Nigel Adams: The sanctions that we announced?

Chris Bryant: Yes.

Nigel Adams: I think you've got to do them properly. I keep using the word "caucus", but to get 29 other countries alongside us takes some time. Not only do you have to make sure you have all your legal ducks in a row; you all have to agree. You have to get 30 countries to agree to the designations, the individuals and the entities. This takes time. It is not something that you can do quickly. I take my hat off to the work you have done on this, Mr Bryant, but it takes time to get it right. I think we have got it right, and the fact that 30 countries agreed on the designations, the individuals and the organisations, and to see the reaction from China, means it was the right thing do.

Q307 **Chris Bryant:** When the Foreign Secretary was on the Back Benches and was instrumental in making sure that we ended up with a campaign for Magnitsky-style sanctions, he felt that it was very important that we had a parliamentary process for helping the Government come to a determination. Would you welcome that?



Nigel Adams: There is nothing stopping parliamentarians putting forward evidence and recommendations to the Department, so I think that system does work. Bear in mind that when we put forward these sanctions, we want to work in concert with partners as well. I'm not sure whether that particular process would be the correct vehicle, but parliamentarians are very welcome to participate and put evidence forward.

Q308 **Chris Bryant:** I wonder whether it wouldn't be more valuable to Government for there to be a proper parliamentary process that is more formalised, perhaps through a Committee of both Houses or an all-party parliamentary group. Otherwise, the danger is that we keep on just tabling UQs. You get dragged to the House and say, "It would be inappropriate to speculate." I think I have heard you say those words more frequently than any words other than, "Can I have a fag?"

Nigel Adams: When I go home after facing you across the Chamber, I ask my wife what is for dinner and she says, "It would be inappropriate to speculate, Nigel," because she has heard the phrase so many times.

Q309 **Chris Bryant:** But you take the point?

Nigel Adams: I do.

Q310 **Chris Bryant:** It feels as though it weakens the Government's hand every time you have to do that.

Nigel Adams: No, but it is true—it is inappropriate to speculate on future potential designations.

Q311 **Chris Bryant:** Final question from me about the "deep freeze" sphere. We have heard from various other countries that sometimes, when they have been forceful and unapologetic in their comments on human rights abuses or other abuses such as intellectual property abuses, China has effectively put them in the diplomatic deep freeze. I understand why that might feel difficult, but I wonder whether it does any harm, because trade with all those countries at every stage when people have been in the deep freeze seems to have gone up rather than down.

Nigel Adams: The reality is that China takes a different view of the world from many other countries. They are an authoritarian state. They have very different values from us, but we want to have a mature and positive relationship with China. If you have a relationship that is, as best as you can, based on mutual respect and trust, there is scope for positive engagement. On seeking to be frozen out by China, I think I know what you are referring to in terms of a previous Government or Administration under which trade might well have gone up. I think that makes the point that these are two very different issues.

Chris Bryant: Thank you.

Chair: Bob, did you want to come in?



Q312 Bob Seely: Briefly, to follow up a couple of things that Chris was saying. It is blindingly obvious that there are tensions because I hear it from Ministers. There are clearly tensions between Lord Grimstone, the Foreign Office and people who want to take a more forthright approach, not only on human rights, but on authoritarian states such as China. Rather than deny that or say that everyone is acting harmoniously, it would make for a much more beneficial session if there was greater candour.

We know there are difficult and complex trade-offs here between trying to do the right thing and acting with others. The Government want to act and are doing some quite good stuff. I fully realise that, but it is clear that you are desperate to avoid declarations of genocide. I am articulating the idea that more candour from you and a discussion—there are some significant and incredibly difficult grey areas and moral quandaries here—would make for a better session for us, and it would be more valuable for you if we could discuss that thinking in public. Do you agree with that?

Nigel Adams: I certainly agree that it would make a much better session for you if I were to sit here and say we are at each other's throats across Departments on China. It would make a great session.

Q313 Bob Seely: No, that is not what I am saying. You are saying that there is a consistent policy towards China—it has not moved, your policy now is as it was a couple of years ago, and everyone is acting harmoniously. There isn't a debate.

Nigel Adams: It is our responsibility in the FCDO to make sure we have a robust diplomatic framework for this relationship, and that in turn allows us to manage disagreements that we have, but of course we will continue to defend our values and promote them. There should be space left for cooperation where our interests lie.

Q314 Bob Seely: Fair enough. On the example of Australia, as opposed to, for example, New Zealand, last week New Zealand said that it was rather nervous about Five Eyes talking about moral issues, despite the fact that New Zealand is led by a feminist Prime Minister and one of the things we are looking at with the Uyghurs is the appalling things being done to women. The Australians are taking a very different and much more robust approach. Are you confident that we will be standing shoulder to shoulder with Australia? It is very important that close allies stand up to China and that we do not seek to distance ourselves from them, but say to the Chinese, "We agree with the Australians, and we are at one with the Australians on this." If we allow division, they will play us off against each other. Do you accept that?

Nigel Adams: We do stand shoulder to shoulder with our Five Eyes partners. It is for New Zealand and Australia to determine their own policy towards China, just as it is for us to have our own approach in the UK. It is absolutely rooted in our values and interests. Like New Zealand, we want to build a broad coalition of countries to ensure that China is held to its



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international commitments. The New Zealand Foreign Affairs Minister confirmed that New Zealand was not hesitant at all about the Five Eyes relationship.

Q315 **Bob Seely:** Is there somebody in the Foreign Office thinking, “We don’t want to do what the Australians are doing because then the Chinese will start getting at us. Let’s take a softer approach,” or are we thinking, “Actually, we need to stand together with the Australians”? The Australians have been very robust about Wuhan and about the Uyghurs, and they are doing really good work because of that.

Nigel Adams: The Australians took an approach of acting, if you like, unilaterally. On our sanctions regime, for example, we have taken a collaborative approach with international partners, but we both believe very strongly that China should be held to account for its international responsibilities. I do not think there is much if any light between either of our partners in that regard.

Q316 **Bob Seely:** You seem more nervous about upsetting the Chinese than the Australians are.

Nigel Adams: Well, having summoned the chargé the other week following the actions taken against the Chairman, I was not nervous at all about ensuring that the message was landed very robustly.

Q317 **Chair:** Can I tidy up with a few questions we are looking at on atrocity prevention? Various experts have told the Committee—the Committee has been looking at this for a while—about a national cross-Government atrocity prevention strategy that is distinct from our conflict prevention strategy. Why has no such strategy yet been implemented?

Nigel Adams: I think the whole approach to atrocity prevention—forgive me, this is not my competency as it sits with the Human Rights Minister, but it is embedded through all our work. We are absolutely committed to mass atrocity prevention and the UN principle of the responsibility to protect. As I say, we are committed to a cross-Government, integrated approach via the IR, which you will have seen. Paul is the director responsible for this particular policy area, so I am sure he is quite happy to come in here.

Paul Williams: As the Minister says, we are strong supporters of the UN framework of responsibility to protect, introduced in 2005, as I recall. In fact, we part-fund some of the central forums on this, such as the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect and the UN Joint Office. But work on atrocity prevention, I think rightly, is mainstreamed across all our work in the FCDO such that while there is a central desk officer for this, it is the responsibility of individual country teams and posts to look at the risks of atrocities in their areas.

You might say that, given the term is atrocity prevention, we try to look upstream at these things, but, as the Minister said, we are now drawing down from the integrated review, which was published recently, and that



integrated review set up a new office for conflict stabilisation and mediation. That is one of the things we are now working up. The other thing I would add is that we obviously look continually at whether we can strengthen our atrocity prevention approaches, and one thing we are thinking about in particular is how the merger of DFID and the FCO to form the FCDO can help us with that. If we are looking at, for example, upstream information, using civil society organisations and NGOs is a new tool if you are from an FCO perspective. Ditto, if you are from a DFID perspective, you have the whole of posts for reporting, use of the UN structures and so on.

So, this is very important for us. We continually try to improve it, and now that the integrated review has been published and we have had the merger, we are looking further at how we can strengthen those structures.

Q318 Chair: Mr Williams, you talk about upstream prevention. I recognise that, and we know that about a third of modern atrocities take place outside conflict. Xinjiang is a classic example of that. What is it about the signs that we have been seeing for a number of years in Xinjiang that we missed? Why did we miss them?

Xinjiang is a classic example of that. What is it about the signs that we have been seeing for a number of years in Xinjiang that we missed? Why did we miss them? What are we going to do to ensure that we do not miss such indicators in the future?

Paul Williams: As the Minister said, we have been talking about Xinjiang for a number of years. We have been talking about it in the Human Rights Council since, I think, 2017.

In terms of upstream signs and prevention, some of the directorates that we have put in place under the FCDO will I hope help with that. My own, on open societies and human rights, brings together a much wider of spectrum of issues in that regard than either ex-DFID or ex-FCO had. I have mentioned the office for conflict stabilisation and mediation; we are now under the deputy political director and we have a structure that deals with sanctions, the UN Security Council and so on. That thematic approach is something that we can use to get better in our atrocity prevention work.

In particular, from my point of view, you mentioned that while the majority of atrocities tend to happen in conflicts—some are not—a lot of the causes of human rights violations, atrocities and conflict come from the same source, which is marginalisation of parts of society, freedom of assembly, freedom of the media and those kinds of things. In pulling those things together, I hope that in future we will be able to be better at seeing the signs and trying to act upstream.

Q319 Chair: May we ask about the post in Beijing? I hasten to add that this is not at all a criticism of Caroline Wilson and her team, who are doing a fantastic job in extraordinary circumstances. What specific actions are



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being done by post to support Xinjiang or to report on it, or to support Uyghur Muslims or Uyghur communities outside Xinjiang?

Nigel Adams: Caroline is extraordinary and a brilliant ambassador for the UK. It is a very difficult posting for anyone who goes there, and it has been a fairly torrid year for all our staff—thick-sided, some 700 staff over in China.

Our human rights officers regularly do field visits in the areas where we have particular concerns. Caroline at every opportunity engages with the MFA, sometimes involuntarily, when she is summoned herself by the Chinese. She has regular contact and good channels.

On the Uyghur population in country, there are things that we can and are doing. You will forgive me if I do not go into too much detail on that—there is a potential risk to Uyghur population if they are seen to be supported. Similarly, there is a risk to our team if they are seen to be interfering.

Q320 **Chair:** It is clear that there is a lot to do in co-ordinating this action. How does the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office bring this together here in the UK?

Nigel Adams: In respect of what? International—

Chair: How do we manage it? What is the bureaucratic bit of the FCDO to bring together the Xinjiang management and the Uyghur rights management?

Nigel Adams: We have a team that specialises in human rights, which comes under Lord Ahmad and all officials within his teams. Paul is the specific director responsible in that area, and they lead on it. Of course, they then pull the levers of the rest of the Department, with our diplomatic network and everything else we are doing over there.

Q321 **Chair:** We have just seen cuts announced in aid money. Is that included in this, or is it separate, is the budget protected? How does that work?

Nigel Adams: The work that we do here is protected. We have said that we are reducing the amount of ODA that is spent in China by 95%, but every single pound of what is left is going to be spent on open societies and human rights work, such as the ASPI report, evidence gathering and all that sort of stuff.

Q322 **Chair:** Okay, so money spent on China is not necessarily money spent in China.

Nigel Adams: Well, evidence gathering and—

Q323 **Chair:** Sure, but for the ASPI report presumably that money went to Australia. I don't suppose that you paid a researcher in China to do that, did you?

Nigel Adams: No.



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Rupert Ainley: Might I just add something on the bureaucratic bit? As well as within the FCDO, actually this is a whole-of-Government effort on Xinjiang. From my directorate, we chair a cross-Government group with the Cabinet Office that looks specifically at the measures and issues that we should take in regard of Xinjiang. That is how we managed to come up with the measures in January, for example, because some of them are led by the Home Office, some of them are led by BEIS, some of them are led by DIT, and some of them are led by the FCDO. All of that comes under the cross-Government national security implementation group structure chaired by David Quarrey, the deputy national security adviser.

Q324 **Chair:** David will be more than aware of all of this from his work in Israel as well, so he is the perfect person to bring these sorts of things together and I am sure that he understands the tragedies with which we are dealing. When he sees this, is he able also to issue information, guidance and perhaps even direction to British businesses?

Rupert Ainley: David Quarrey himself?

Chair: The group that he chairs—through BEIS perhaps, or through DIT perhaps. Is it able to inform?

Rupert Ainley: Absolutely, and that is how we came up with the revised overseas business risk guidance that was issued in January. That also led to the further roundtables that the International Trade Secretary has been having with business. That is a whole stream of work that is flowing from this group.

Q325 **Chair:** And as part of that UK businesses are being warned that their ESG compliance, to put it politely, is in very grave danger if they find themselves doing business with Xinjiang businesses.

Rupert Ainley: Yes, the publicly available guidance is very clear on this point. As we say, we have followed up with discussions with business. There will be further discussion. The Home Secretary chairs a business against slavery forum later this year, which will be considering Xinjiang specifically and due diligence around Xinjiang. Business is responding, as I said earlier, in a very engaged way to all of the discussions that we are having.

Q326 **Chair:** I have one last question on this subject, then forgive me but I will come on to something slightly different, which I think I warned you about. Atrocity prevention and awareness training is clearly an issue not just for staff in Beijing but actually surrounding missions. Places like Ankara, I presume, should be aware of it, with the Uyghur community, and posts like Islamabad. Is there a budget for that training of UK staff?

Nigel Adams: Paul would be familiar with the budget.

Paul Williams: We have, as you may be aware, Chair, the International Academy. It used to be called the Diplomatic Academy. Now that we are the FCDO it is called the International Academy. There is a module there



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on conflict prevention and, as part of that, there is some training on atrocity prevention. We informed on that earlier this year.

Otherwise, individual posts and directorates can do training. I am aware that the post in Myanmar, for example, recently got an NGO, I believe, in to help with some training on atrocity prevention. While I am not aware of a specific budget beyond the training budgets ring-fenced for this, there are training opportunities out there and we try to promote them.

Q327 Chair: Okay. May I thank you all very much on this, and move on to a slightly separate topic, but one within your bailiwick? What we are seeing out of India at the moment is extremely concerning. I know that you have come to talk about Xinjiang, so please forgive me for hijacking this slightly, but given that you are the Minister for Asia the opportunity could not be passed by.

What we are seeing there is extremely concerning. Our support for India should be, without question, one of the most important priorities that this Government has. Can you please assure this Committee that the actions that you are taking are not only ongoing but will increase?

Nigel Adams: Absolutely. I am the Minister for Asia, although sadly I am not the Minister for India—that is Lord Ahmad again—but I am more than happy to answer your question. What we are seeing out of India is horrific. I was watching the news before coming over here. We have taken swift action. The assistance package that we have provided, funded by the FCDO, includes ventilators and oxygen concentrators, and the Government of India are going to be using that to provide assistance to those who are suffering terribly.

As of yesterday, we have delivered nine container loads of supplies to India, with almost 500 oxygen concentrators, ventilators and manual ventilators. They arrived in Delhi yesterday morning. Further shipments are going out this week, so that will continue. India is clearly facing a horrific crisis. There is some innovative equipment, like the oxygen concentrators, which can extract the air from outside and provide assistance to people who cannot get into a hospital—the hospital system is under a lot of pressure. We are doing an enormous amount, and we will continue to do so. The whole of the international community is coming together to support our Indian friends.

Q328 Chair: I spent a while on the phone this morning to my opposite number in the Indian Parliament, who was very grateful for the help given, but was pretty clear that they needed more help from us. He also raised questions that have come up from Indian officials in the past 48 to 72 hours about patents and the WHO. I know this is an open question, so perhaps it is something you might like to write about. Would lifting patents allow for a greater increase in the production of vaccines?

Nigel Adams: We can certainly come back to you on that². We will work alongside the relevant Departments and get you an answer. It is a fair



question, given the emergency that India is facing. Obviously, their own vaccine supply is going to be tight.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Q329 **Graham Stringer:** I would like to follow that and come back to China. Minister, can I ask you to look at the evidence that was given to the Science and Technology Committee by Professor Sarah—I have just forgotten her name, but she was responsible for the AstraZeneca vaccine? She gave an almost word-perfect answer about why dropping the patents would be very ineffective and would slow down vaccines. I know there are other views, but I would like you to read that.

Nigel Adams: We will certainly come back to the Committee with a proper response.

Q330 **Chair:** I hasten to add that I am not accusing; I am merely asking the question. I know that Bill Gates has spoken against it, but the Indian Government has spoken strongly in favour of it.

Nigel Adams: It is worth pointing out as well that we are a huge contributor to the COVAX regime, which has already delivered 90-odd million doses. The UK has committed over half a billion pounds to that, so we are doing our bit. We will certainly get back to you, Mr Stringer.

Q331 **Graham Stringer:** Coming back to China and the Uyghurs, there is obviously hard pressure that can be put on China, and there is moral pressure. What does the Foreign Office do to communicate with and get the support of different religious groups? The Jewish community in this country has been very loud on this issue. I think the Anglicans have been almost mute. The international Muslim community has not been as vociferous as one might expect. It is a line of pressure, and I wonder what efforts you have made to increase that moral religious pressure.

Nigel Adams: You are absolutely right that there is disappointment that some Muslim-majority countries have not stepped up on the international scene, as we would have liked—certainly, at the UN. However, we are speaking up and amplifying the measures that we are taking, and the China Research Group and other individuals and entities that are highlighting the violations and shining a light on the evidence are doing their bit as well. It is incumbent on all of us to amplify what is going on, and it is clearly for Governments and international partners to join together and take action. With sessions such as today, for example— I absolutely congratulate you for initiating this inquiry. I am sure that there is plenty of other stuff that you could be doing, but this is really important, ensuring that China is reminded of its international obligations and that the international community will not turn a blind eye to it.

² See letter from witness: [Correspondence from Minister Adams following his appearance before the Committee on 27 April 2021 \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/science-and-technology/committees/2021-22/witnesses/2021-22-04-27/witness-statement-nigel-adams-27-april-2021/).

Q332 **Graham Stringer:** Do you have channels open to the established Church in this country, in terms of getting more pressure from them?

Nigel Adams: I am sure we do; of course we do. We have our commissioners. We have a freedom of religion or belief envoy, who is fantastic and does a great job on this subject. There is huge cross-party interest in Parliament, as you know. We are implementing Bishop Truro's recommendations as well. I am not entirely sure whether I have a direct line upstairs myself.

Q333 **Graham Stringer:** This is my last question. Going back to the economic issues, I am sure that William Hague, David Cameron, George Osborne and the Opposition all believed that opening up trade with China would eventually liberalise some of their politics and attitudes to the world. That is clearly not a sustainable view anymore. China wants to control trade in their national interest; they do not conform to the World Trade Organisation's trading rules. The reason why Huawei got into this country was that they blatantly bought the contract in the first place. Now that it is clear that China aren't abiding by the rules and are not liberalising, how has that changed the Foreign Office's policies, because this is a fundamental change in view of how China trades?

Nigel Adams: We have to be realistic. We believe our vision of being able to co-operate on some fronts and calling them out on others is realistic. Having a constructive relationship on areas that are mutually beneficial is key, not least the trade aspect of it, given the amount of trade between the two. However, we recognise the challenges, especially on the multilateral level and the action we are trying to take; their being a P5 member makes it very difficult sometimes to get action done. We are alive to the challenges. I do not know if these chaps, who are the experts, have anything to add.

Rupert Ainley: I might just echo the point that Xi Jinping's and the CCP's current approach towards ruling China is clearly authoritarian, and the things that are being said, the action being taken and the sort of vision of the great rejuvenation of China that is being set up for the centenary of the founding of the PRC in 2049 is all in one direction, and it is not in a direction that is towards values that we would recognise. I think we are very clear about that.

Q334 **Bob Seely:** When did the FCDO come to that conclusion, out of interest? Clearly, it is an evolving position, but when did you realise things had changed, and that the change was likely to be permanent?

Rupert Ainley: As you said, it is evolving over time. There have been some clear markers along the way, including some of the party congresses that Xi Jinping has held. If you look back at 2017 and more recently, the tone and the idea of Xi Jinping's thought infusing everything has become clearer and clearer over the last, I would say, three or four years.

Q335 **Chair:** Do you think they'll make it to 2049?



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Rupert Ainley: Do I think who will make it?

Chair: The Chinese Communist party.

Rupert Ainley: Sadly, I do not have that crystal ball. It would make our policy making a lot easier if I knew exactly where Xi Jinping and the Communist party would be in 2049.

Q336 **Chair:** Do you think that abolishing term limits, getting generals to swear allegiance in public and cracking down on internal dissent speak of weakness or strength?

Rupert Ainley: There is clearly a vision that the Communist party has for China, and they are cranking lots of handles in order to squeeze. That is what they are doing. You see that when you read the Mandarin literature or the circulars that they send around. That is the thought that is being imbued across China.

Q337 **Chair:** Forgive me, but it is just that, when I see people who are so afraid of a transfer of power that they realise that they have to hang on to power even unto death, it does not speak to me of an organisation that is confident that it can survive a turn of the wheel, and it does not suggest to me that that is a person who is confident that he can quietly retire to a hotel in Macau or whatever. It speaks to me of somebody who is terrified that the moment he gives up the power he has as chairman of the military committee he will be murdered by one of the relatives of the people he has murdered over the last few years.

Rupert Ainley: If China was more open, we would be able to have much more insight into those sort of workings and understandings of what might happen and what people might be thinking.

Q338 **Chair:** He certainly made quite a lot of enemies in his first few years, did he not, murdering quite a lot of his rivals. I do not think that that is a secret; I think you can agree with that relatively easily.

Rupert Ainley: China has become more authoritarian under his rule. There have been lots of things with which we disagree. There have been various clampdowns, which I think we have called out throughout this time.

Chair: Okay; I think that is a relatively soft way of describing state murder. Thank you very much indeed, Minister, for coming this afternoon and for helping to answer our questions on Xinjiang. I am very grateful to Mr Williams and Mr Ainley for coming as well.