



Select Committee on International Relations and Defence

Corrected oral evidence: One-off evidence session with Dominic Raab MP, First Secretary of State and Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs

Tuesday 27 April 2021

11.30 am

Watch the meeting

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

Evidence Session No. 1

Virtual Proceeding

Questions 1 - 34

Witness

I: Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP, First Secretary of State and Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs.

USE OF THE TRANSCRIPT

1. This is a corrected transcript of evidence taken in public and webcast on www.parliamentlive.tv.

Examination of witness

Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP.

Q1 **The Chair:** Good morning. I welcome to this meeting of the International Relations and Defence Committee in the House of Lords the right honourable Dominic Raab, Foreign Secretary and First Secretary of State. I remind members to declare any relevant interests before asking their questions.

Foreign Secretary, thank you for joining us today and for being generous with your time. This committee has put on the record its opposition to the Government's decision not to meet its statutory commitment to spend 0.7% of gross national income on official development assistance. We have seen your Written Ministerial Statement, of course, on ODA, and it is rather disappointing that so little detail was provided on how the cuts will fall. We hope that you will be in a position now to provide more information to this committee on the 2021 to 2022 allocations than you were able to give at the International Development Committee last week. It is, after all, only right that Parliament should be provided with the data on how cuts to ODA will fall on individual countries and programmes before next year so we have the opportunity to scrutinise the executive.

On that basis, my question is as follows. In your WMS you set out the following regional allocations for bilateral ODA for 2021 to 2022: Africa, around 50%; the Indo-Pacific, around 32%; and 18% for the rest of the world. You told the IDC that you could not provide the figures for individual countries as this work was ongoing at the time. Therefore, could you please set out the criteria by which you are determining the cuts to individual countries' allocations? What criteria will be used, for example, to determine the amount each receives within the overall percentage that you have given? Will the amount received by each country be based on a proportion of the overall budget it received in 2020-21, on whether the country is prioritised in the Integrated Review, on the level of development of a country, or perhaps on the impact of cuts on the recipient country?

Dominic Raab: Thank you very much. It is a great pleasure to be before your committee again. I hugely appreciate the work that you do and I certainly embrace the opportunity to answer questions.

Let me answer the transparency question first and then the question about criteria for the firmed-up allocations. In the normal course of events, the country allocations are published via the statistics on international development process. The problem with that is that ordinarily that is published in the subsequent year. I felt, given a decision of this momentous nature—I recognise the significance—that we ought to proceed more transparently. Equally, just to give a broader sense, the use of DevTracker and the subsequent estimates will provide firmer figures.

We have had to take this decision, as I have explained, as a matter of exceptional financial necessity, because we face the worst economic

contraction in 300 years and we have double the budget deficit compared to what we saw at the peak of the financial crisis. Forgive me for gently pushing back, but the Written Ministerial Statement, which you kindly referred to, sets out the thematic allocations at the start of a financial year in a way that is pretty much unprecedented in terms of transparency, but I certainly agree that that is warranted.

In terms of how we decide, you mention a range of factors. All those are relevant, but the seven key priorities that I tasked the department with, right now and looking forward for this year, in order to avoid a salami-slicing approach based on X%, or previous allocations as you said, are: climate and biodiversity; COVID and global health security; girls' education; science and research; open societies in conflict; humanitarian assistance; and, finally, trade, particularly its developmental aspects.

The regional allocations you have cited are partly because the spend changes in year, but also because we are currently in the process of finalising the country plans for different departments. That is where we are right now.

The single most important thing I would say is that the IR and the strategic thrust that you have seen in the IR—I am sure we will get a chance to talk about it—is probably the strongest strategic guide. My overall emphasis has been on doing this strategically rather than, if you like, just salami slicing X% off in the round.

The Chair: Just going back to something that was raised in the International Development Committee last week, I noted that you declined to say that there would be an impact assessment for the cuts that are going to be imposed country to country. Is that something you will reconsider and perhaps be able to produce?

Dominic Raab: We always assess very carefully the impact of all the savings, and indeed the investments, that we make. One of the advantages we have with the FCDO as a result of the merger is mainstreaming the empirical rigour that I think DfID rightly brings to the new department. We carried out an equalities impact assessment, which looked at our bilateral country spending and, as I mentioned when I was in the IDC, it showed no evidence that programmes targeting those with protected characteristics were more likely to be reduced.

We constantly assess the impact that it has and, of course, that is an iterative process throughout the year, given what is happening on the ground.

Q2 **The Chair:** Thank you. Before I hand over to Baroness Sugg, Foreign Secretary, you mentioned the Integrated Review and we debated that in the House of Lords last week. One of the speakers was Lord McDonald, the predecessor of Sir Philip Barton as Permanent Under-Secretary at the FCDO. It is a pleasure to work with him there. He spoke in support of the merger of the FCO and DfID, but then added, and I quote him: "I hope that, before long, trade will fall under the authority of the Foreign

Secretary". Is that what you hope for too?

Dominic Raab: It just shows you what a forward-leaning Permanent Secretary Sir Simon was. Can I just put on record to the committee my gratitude for the brilliant work he did, not to mention his lifetime career's service in the Foreign Office? He was a great support to me personally, and he brought huge expertise and wisdom as well as good humour and wit, and it is important to put that on record.

The Prime Minister has been very clear that one of the things we want to do is make sure that the Trade Commissioners that we have in different countries are accountable to posts. I work hand in glove with DIT and the Trade Secretary, Liz Truss. A good example of that is Project Defend, our supply-chain vulnerabilities project, which I have been presiding over, or chairing, with DIT. There is no plan to integrate DIT into the FCDO.

One of the things that came out of the Integrated Review process, for which we had something like nine ministerial meetings, is that there is definitely a case for integration. How much of that needs to be through machinery of government changes and how much of it needs sharper cross-Whitehall workings is a much more moot point. But the work that the new National Security Adviser is doing, and the configuration of the NSC¹ and more generally the across-Whitehall arrangements, has already taken us on leaps and bounds. I am perhaps not quite as far ahead as my previous Permanent Secretary.

Q3 Baroness Sugg: Good morning, Foreign Secretary. Thanks for joining us today. As the Chair said, it was quite difficult from the WMS to get the detail of exactly what has been cut because of the new way in which the information has been displayed, and the lack of the thematic detail makes it difficult to compare to previous years.

One area we did have clarity on was girls' education. Even though that was one of the seven priority areas, because of the scale of the UK ODA cuts even that priority has seen a cut of around 40% if you look at the average annual spend of the last four years.

My specific question is on cuts to sexual and reproductive health spending. As you know, this has long been a cause that the UK has championed around the world and a really important part of keeping girls in school for that 12 years of quality education. I understand that the UK's flagship programme on this, the Women's Integrated Sexual Health programme, or WISH, will be closed and that there will be deep cuts the reproductive health supplies partnership, meaning an overall cut to SRHR² in the region of 70% to 80%. Do you recognise that figure, and are you able to provide the detail of the budget allocated to sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as spending on gender equality programmes? You mentioned the equalities impact assessment you carried out. Would it be possible to share that with the committee?

¹ The National Security Council

² Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Dominic Raab: Can I first put on record my gratitude to you as a stand-out Minister in the department? As you know, I was sorry to see you go and understood the principled stance that you took, but I want to say what a pleasure and a privilege it was to work with you.

On girls' education, as you know—you have dealt with this before—there is always some shifting in-year. Girls' education is one of our strategic priorities, and I have been keen to safeguard it as much as possible. It is fair to say that there is no area, unless it is legally binding, which is entirely immune from the savings we have had to make. I think that just comes with the territory. Equally, I can tell you that the contribution that we will make to the GPE,³ for example, given that we are co-hosting the summit, will be a material increase. I will not set it out precisely now, but it will be a material increase.

We will look at the precise allocation that we make for the total year in-year. That is why I make the point again that it is quite rare that this amount of detail, or this headline detail, is provided at the start of the financial year, because things are often so fluid. I do not recognise the numbers that you mentioned in relation to sexual and reproductive health. It is a very important area, and we want to try to preserve as much as we can. I do try to take a strategic view rather than just take 20% or whatever it may be off each programme, but we are not in a position yet to firm up on the precise numbers.

I mentioned in response to the Chair how we will firm up on all the numbers as we move forward. That is where we are at this stage. I appreciate that it leaves some areas unanswered.

You asked about the equalities impact assessment. I will look to see whether it is standard practice to publish that. Obviously if it is, I want to do so. If there are reasons why not, I want to consider them very carefully.

Q4 **Baroness Sugg:** Thank you for your kind words. It is great to hear about the UK pledge to GPE. I look forward to hearing that. I know they are asking for \$600 million over five years in order to get to that \$5 billion target for the summit in June. I look forward to hearing that.

I will move on to legislation. In your Statement to the House back in November, you said that you would need to bring forward legislation in due course. Then, back in January at the IDC, you confirmed the clear limits on the Government's ability to depart from 0.7% under the terms of the 2015 Act, and that you would inform Parliament in due course about how you intend to proceed.

Could you update us on your plans to introduce legislation to make sure that the Government are acting in accordance with its statutory obligations?

³ The Global Partnership for Education

Dominic Raab: Absolutely. As you know, the position that we have set out is that we intend to return to 0.7% when the fiscal situation allows. There has been some debate about whether we should set tests and criteria for that. The reality is that all the usual fiscal and economic principles will apply, but I do think we need the ability to look at it in the round because of the exceptional circumstances and financial impact that we have had.

We are acting in line with the International Development Act 2015, which explicitly envisages circumstances in which the 0.7% target is not met. Of course, there is a limit to that scope, so I am looking very carefully at the issue and will inform the House precisely how we intend to proceed in due course. I will not pre-empt that here, because I want to say it once properly.

Baroness Sugg: Understood. Thank you. I have been five months since the announcement, so obviously there are many parliamentarians who are keen to understand what is happening.

Can I just follow up on the specifics? You referred to the extraordinary circumstances that the Act includes. Do you agree that if the 0.7% commitment is not met for more than one year, primary legislation is definitely needed?

I am not sure what your answer will be to this question, but would it be possible to share the legal advice that you based your original statement on and any change to that advice that you have received since?

Dominic Raab: I do not think, in answer to the first question, that it is quite as straightjacketed as that, but certainly it is fair to say that there are limits, and temporal limits, set out in the Act. As you well know, as a former Minister of some renown, the Government do not regularly share their legal advice. There will be different views and plenty of legal experts in your committee and across both Houses on quite what is required. We do not regularly publish legal advice, and certainly not all the different conversations we have. There is good reason for that: we want to be able to have thorough and candid discussions, which I know you availed yourself of when you were such a fine Minister in the department.

Baroness Sugg: Thank you very much, Foreign Secretary. I look forward to hearing the update on that legislation in due course.

Q5 **Baroness Blackstone:** I will begin, Foreign Secretary, by asking you how the UK military support for the Saudi-led coalition is contributing to ending the conflict in Yemen.

Dominic Raab: The reality is that there is a conflict there and there are at least two different sides. A combination of means is required to bring that conflict to an end. Ultimately, we think that it requires a political track. Martin Griffiths, the UN Special Envoy, has done an exceptional job. We are obviously all too conscious of the humanitarian plight. That is why we have pledged £87 million to Yemen for this financial year. I

should just say that that is a floor, not a ceiling. That will do a huge amount of good.

Ultimately, however, the military conflict needs to be brought to an end, and I do not think we can be naive in relation to the Houthis, because the single principal objection and obstacle at the moment to resolving this conflict, which has been dreadful for the people of Yemen, is the ongoing military endeavours of the Houthi rebels. I would say that it requires a combination of the coalition efforts but with the door clearly wide open to the peace process which the UN is seeking to pioneer and which we are fully supportive of.

Q6 **Baroness Blackstone:** How is UK policy on Yemen co-ordinated between departments? Do you believe that ongoing support for the Saudi-led coalition on the one hand, and the provision of humanitarian aid and relief attempts to broker a diplomatic solution on the other, represents a coherent and truly integrated strategy?

Dominic Raab: Yes. In fact, I think you have put it rather well. They are the various strands of the holistic strategic picture. We cannot wish away the recent Houthi attack on Saudi Arabia. Equally, we certainly cannot turn a blind eye to the humanitarian effort. Where we want to get to is alleviating the worst of the humanitarian suffering and bring the Houthis to the table. That will require the combination of a reality check on what they can achieve through force of arms, with the political route open to them, and a smart and holistic strategic peace process, which I think Martin Griffiths is seeking to press. If you took any of those elements out of the picture, it would be lopsided. It would be wholly naive to think that the Houthis will somehow come to the table without some element of force.

Q7 **Baroness Blackstone:** Given the priority for humanitarian assistance, which you mentioned earlier, what assessment has your department made of the impact of halving aid for Yemen in a population where around 5 million people are apparently facing or are close to facing famine conditions? Perhaps in telling us this you could say what we are stopping, which we have been doing up to now, as a result of these costs.

Dominic Raab: No one wants to be in the position of having to make savings, of course, particularly not if you work in this field, as we all do. I would just urge you to take some context into account here. Year in, year out we have been one of the top donors, and this year we will remain the fifth largest global donor of ODA and humanitarian aid to the conflict in Yemen. That is critically important.

The money that we are putting in this year will feed 240,000 of the most vulnerable Yemenis every single month. It will support 400 healthcare clinics. It will provide clean water for 1.6 million people. But obviously there is a burden-sharing approach internationally. I have the statistics here, and the UK has been in the top five every year since 2015 and we remain in the top five for 2021.

Q8 **Lord Campbell of Pittenweem:** Good morning, Foreign Secretary, and

welcome. What is the policy rationale for the decision to increase the United Kingdom nuclear stockpile to “no more than 260 warheads”, and to reduce the level of transparency on the operational stockpile? In particular, what assessment have the Government made of these decisions against their obligations under Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty—or, if you like, what sort of welcome do you think the United Kingdom will get if the tentative Review Conference takes place in August of this year?

Dominic Raab: We are clearly, as you would expect, compliant with our legal obligations. The Integrated Review looks at this strategically and in the round. You will remember from your many years’ interest in foreign policy and defence that the Government have long-standing policy to commit to maintaining a minimum credible deterrence and an independent nuclear deterrent.

The decision to increase the stockpile reflects the risk matrix that we face, given all that we are seeing around the world and the proliferation concerns. We have the smallest nuclear arsenal of the P5. The 260-warheads figure is a ceiling not a target and, as always, we have retained a degree of uncertainty, notwithstanding the extra transparency we provided in relation to this number. We have always retained a degree of uncertainty on the nature and scale of our response to any set of circumstances, because that is an important piece and element of the defence posture.

In relation to the NPT Review Conference, we are working with all our partners to build the trust and the confidence necessary for multilateral disarmament as opposed to unilateral disarmament. We continue to press for that, including bringing the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and various other strands of the international architecture. We are working to build consensus, including in the P5—the permanent five members of the UN Security Council—and we are seeking to use our G7 presidency for that aim. I believe that those things are entirely consistent.

The only thing that has changed is the risk matrix around us. The strategic requirement to maintain a minimum credible independent deterrent has been a long-standing UK government policy.

Q9 **Lord Campbell of Pittenweem:** Could I take you up on the question of the deterrent? A minimum deterrent has previously been described as a capability to inflict damage on any adversary which that adversary would be unwilling to sustain. Leaping out of the Integrated Review is a reference to war fighting. War fighting was part of the doctrine of flexible response, which was from the Cold War. Are we to infer that the British Government are considering acquiring a war fighting capability? That would certainly take us back 30 or 40 years.

Dominic Raab: I am not quite sure what the war fighting capability you refer to would constitute. The combination of the IR and the statement

which the Prime Minister and the Defence Secretary have made about the increase in security investment demonstrates two things.

There is a baseline of our security capability that we need to retain. That includes conventional forces, and the minimum credible nuclear deterrent. But there is also the huge amount of work that has been done to tackle all the asymmetric threats and the new threats from cyber and the use of technology. A huge amount of detail has been published on that.

I do not think that the threat harks back to the Cold War. It is a novel threat and a hybrid threat from a combination of hostile state activity and new technology that can be acquired, used and perverted by hostile states and non-state actors. Frankly, we have one of the most strategic approaches to this, certainly in my lifetime, coupled with the resource required to make it a reality.

We cannot dislocate what we are doing in the defence realm from all the other stuff that we do as a force for good in the world. I was in Kenya and Ethiopia recently, and in Kenya I saw how our training of peacekeepers is going. I saw how we are helping to put out the IEDs that al-Shabaab used. That, again, as I said earlier, is a demonstration of the more integrated approach that we are taking to all our international priorities.

Lord Campbell of Pittenweem: Very quickly, are any of these additional warheads to be put on battlefield nuclear weapons?

Dominic Raab: You would not expect me to answer operational questions. We set out the approach at a strategic level, and we are very careful about what we say about the operational details.

Q10 **Lord Anderson of Swansea:** Foreign Secretary, before continuing with nuclear proliferation, may I congratulate you on your decision to extend the Magnitsky sanctions to corruption, which is consistent with the excellent work you did as a back-bencher some years ago?

Back to the Review Conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, this has been delayed until August. Presumably you do not expect any further slippage of the date. In the meantime, what preparations are we making, including consultations with the P5 partners and the President-designate?

Dominic Raab: Thank you for your kind words. I remember campaigning for this back in 2012. I think Lord Campbell may have supported the Magnitsky sanctions back-bench business debate that I brought before the House of Commons. It is one of those rare things in politics where you can see something at the outset, and I am delighted that we have not just applied it to human rights but to corruption.

In relation to the Review Conference, I do not have any further update. We would obviously like to see it go ahead. We want to see as much of the international agenda proceed this year as possible. COVID has meant

massive disruption, and there are obvious reasons for that, but just as we have to keep firing up the economy we have to keep the international initiative agenda flowing, not least with COP 26 and our G7 presidency.

In terms of the Review Conference, we continue to press for the multilateral steps that are required for disarmament. I mentioned the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, but I should add that we continue to progress with the successful negotiation on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament. We want to try to get the P5 in a position of consensus, so we are working very closely with the partners on that. As I said, our G7 presidency year is an opportunity to progress that.

Finally, you asked about engagement with President-designate Zlauginen. We are engaged with the President-designate, and we fully supported the initiatives to bring the nuclear weapon states and the non-nuclear weapon states into the consultations, including on expanding access to the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies.

I hope that gives you a flavour of the substantive process in the lead-up to the review conference.

Q11 **Lord Anderson of Swansea:** Thank you. In those pre-conference consultations, have you had any support for our decision to increase the nuclear stockpile? If so, from which countries? On the face of it, it is not within the spirit of Article 6 of the treaty on disarmament.

Dominic Raab: Sorry, I do not agree. We are clearly complying with our legal obligations. We have always said that we want to maintain a minimum credible nuclear deterrent. I personally believe very strongly in multilateral nuclear disarmament, but we need to be able to do it from a position of strength, not through unilateral multilateral disarmament. I am sure that not everyone welcomes the step, but our allies understand the strategic necessity that we are working to.

Q12 **Lord Stirrup:** Good morning, Foreign Secretary. In the committee's report on Afghanistan, we concluded that the withdrawal of foreign troops from that country before a peace settlement had been reached would undermine the Afghan government's leverage.

What is your assessment of the impact of the planned withdrawal of all troops by 11 September on the peace process? What do you think the long-term prospects would be for preventing Afghanistan from once again becoming a base for extremist terrorist groups, which was the strategic objective of coalition engagement in Afghanistan in the first place?

Dominic Raab: Thank you, Lord Stirrup. The US and NATO have announced that forces will leave Afghanistan by September—an extension of the May deadline. That reflects concerns, which I suspect you are echoing, about making sure that we draw down in an orderly and coordinated way.

I was in NATO a couple of weeks ago. I consulted on 14 April not just with NATO colleagues but with Secretary of State Blinken and Defense

Secretary Austin, and I would say there are three strategic areas of focus: ensuring through this period the security of the coalition forces out there: maintaining in a new way and as best we can the counterterrorism capability that we have in relation to Afghanistan—there will be challenges to that, you are right; and progressing the peace process, and trying to bring stability to the Afghan people by doing so.

You asked particularly about levers. You are right to point to the military lever, but equally important, I suspect, or certainly very significant, are the levers that we will have as we go through this process, such as the potential delisting and the potential sanctions relief, to give the Taliban and the other players a genuine choice to moderate, to build a more inclusive Government, to build up the Afghan security forces in a way that caters for the security risk that you rightly refer to. That is important, and we want to look very carefully at the positive levers that we have.

Lord Stirrup: Thank you. One of the major challenges to peace and political stability in Afghanistan is, and perhaps always has been, Pakistan's tacit and in some cases explicit support for the Taliban and for extremist groups operating in both countries. What is the UK able to do to counter such a dangerous situation?

Dominic Raab: If we look at Afghanistan over its history and its geographic context, the wider neighbours of Afghanistan have to be encouraged, cajoled, coaxed and required to come to the table. The approach that the US has taken, not just with NATO colleagues but with regional partners, will be critically important. The conversations and the engagement that we have with Pakistan will obviously be a central part of bringing the regional partners in to play an even more constructive and positive role as part of this settlement, based on what the US and NATO have announced.

Q13 **Lord Mendelsohn:** Thank you, Foreign Secretary, for giving us your time. I move on to Africa. Recently in your evidence to the International Development Committee you referred several times to an Africa strategy. When we undertook our review, we understood how some of the strategic elements of policy related to Africa, but we were not clear what was distinctive about an Africa strategy itself. We would therefore be very keen to understand whether there is a document that represents what you were talking about in the International Development Committee. Could you just summarise what was distinctive about the Africa strategy?

Dominic Raab: It is a very good question. Let me give you the pen picture beyond what is in the Integrated Review.

The UK has a unique comparative advantage. We are more liberal when it comes to trade than perhaps the EU. We do business with greater integrity than the Russians or the Chinese, and we have a force for good agenda, for everything from girls' education to support on climate change, which I think is unrivalled. That gives us clout, leverage and purchase in Africa.

There is a baseline humanitarian mission that the UK will always have, and humanitarian conflict is clearly an element of that. I would refer to two things that I think are particularly distinct. First, I think you have seen a much greater emphasis on East Africa and the Horn of Africa and our relations there. That reflects not just the humanitarian issues in some parts of East Africa but our historic ties and the strategic lens that we adopt. That is distinctive.

More generally, the integrated way in which we are bringing our trade, our ODA, our diplomatic and indeed our military assets together gives us the opportunity to forge longer-term sustainable partnerships. I hired the development economist, Stefan Dercon, when we did the merger, because I wanted to start thinking about ODA and development in a less siloed way that perhaps before. We are also thinking in terms of long-term sustainable win-win partnerships.

There is also a case for setting out a more compelling offer that is not necessarily in contest or competition with China but is more in the long-term interests of African and other countries, and can provide something that is safer, more stable and, frankly, more productive for the economies and communities affected than Belt and Road and other offers that they get from China, or indeed Russia, which is increasingly active.

Lord Mendelsohn: Thank you for that. In the Written Ministerial Statement, by my calculation—you will forgive me; I am essentially a businessman, so I went through it with a pen and calculator—it appears to show a cut of spend in Africa, during the lifetime of which the letter is in force, of around £3 billion. Do you agree that this is the scale of the cuts to Africa and, if not, what is the net figure that you see as a reduction in support for Africa?

Dominic Raab: I do not believe that is the correct figure. What we have said against the financial circumstances that I have laid out in some detail is that fully 50% of our country bilateral ODA will go to Africa. That will be £764 million in the year ahead, and we will focus more than half of this on East Africa—for example, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan. I was in Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan recently, and I am very concerned about the situation in Somalia. That is somewhere where I would like us to invigorate our focus, obviously working with other international partners.

Q14 **Lord Mendelsohn:** Foreign Secretary, I would be very interested and very keen to see your engagement with Africa. More recently, you also raised the prospect of ISIS developing in Africa as a serious and growing threat. We think that is a very important warning that you have placed. However, given the scale of cuts and the retreat on ODA, do we think that we are giving ISIS more opportunity to gain a foothold by reducing our ability to support these countries in supporting their communities and societies and building institutions?

Dominic Raab: It is a fair challenge. By the way, in East Africa I am more worried about al-Shabaab, but we ought to be careful about

whatever form these terrorist groups emerge. All I would say is that we are still spending £10 billion in 2021-22, and we are the third largest ODA donor in the G7 as a percentage of GNI. In 2021, we will be the third highest bilateral humanitarian donor country, based on the 2020 data for the OECD.⁴ We are putting in £400 million on girls' education and over £500 million on climate and biodiversity. We are doubling the average spend that we saw from between 2016 and 2020. We put in £500 million to COVAX, which has secured a billion doses for the vaccine for the most vulnerable countries around the world. I think we are doing things a bit differently, if I may say so.

One of the things that we obviously have to do—we should always strive to do this, but particularly given the financial pressures—is get more out of what we are putting in. We talked in the Integrated Review about tech and science. Look at what we have done with the vaccine—taking something from research and development through to what we are doing as a leading COVAX donor. That is a very exciting prospect. There are areas where we can do more with science and technology. After all, we led on initiatives to secure the first internationally approved Ebola vaccine. Our funding went towards the world's first anti-malarial drug. There is other stuff on crop resilience. One of the things we have secured is 4% of our ODA going on science and tech. If you look at development in the round in the way the IR is now encouraging us to do, there are exponential opportunities for growth in the future, notwithstanding the constraint of the fiscal conditions.

Q15 **Lord Boateng:** I declare my interest as chair of Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor, Chancellor of the University at Greenwich and former High Commissioner to South Africa.

Foreign Secretary, your visit to East Africa was widely welcomed. It was seen as a success and they look forward to seeing you in West Africa soon. I would like to ask you a couple of questions about the Government's strategic approach to Africa. You identified in that strategic approach the Sahel as one of the five shifts of priorities of UK foreign policy. Does the fact that there is only a passing reference to the region in the Integrated Review indicate that this region is now less of priority compared to East Africa or your partnerships with Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya and South Africa? Where are the UK's objectives in the Sahel, and how does UK ODA funding for the Sahel in 2021-22 compare to that for 2020-21?

Dominic Raab: Thank you. That is a very reasonable challenge. As I mentioned, the IR confirms our commitment to Africa. Fifty per cent of our ODA is going to Africa, but I have also indicated that, as well as the Indo-Pacific tilt, we will have a particular focus on East Africa. Even before the impact of COVID, there was the question of strategic focus and the right balance between being everywhere, and being spread too thin, and being in particular areas at the expense of others. We have looked at that in the strategic realm.

⁴ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

There is a clearly a UK comparative advantage in East Africa. We want to be the partner of choice in that region across all the stuff we are doing—trade, development, girls' education, climate resilience, sustainable development, COVID-19, the wider health challenges—and I mentioned what I consider to be global Britain's USP in East Africa, although it could apply more generally.

That does not mean that we are not very concerned; indeed, we intend to be very active in the Sahel. We are providing a whole range of support. We have 300 troops in Mali under MINUSMA. In relation to the Sahel, we are spending £9 million on stability and security in particular in 2020-21 through the CSSF, the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund. Since 2018, we have expanded our diplomatic presence in Mauritania, Niger and Chad for the first time.

Overall, notwithstanding the reduction in ODA, 50% of ODA, as I said, will go to Africa, and with significant humanitarian going to the region our total humanitarian funding between 2019 and 2021 stands at around £160 million. That is support to 6.5 million people in the various ways that it applies, from diseases to health and sanitation.

We do not apologise for taking a strategic lens, as we have done in the IR. We are also making a very tangible and important contribution in the Sahel.

Q16 Lord Boateng: Could we dig a little deeper, Foreign Secretary, into your interest in and concern about West Africa and stability and governance there? What is your assessment of the current situation in the anglophone regions of the Cameroon? What actions has the UK taken to encourage the government of Cameroon to respect human rights in the anglophone regions and to engage in talks to resolve the crisis, particularly in view of the fact that there are more than 500,000 displaced persons in that region, more than 300,000 in Cameroon itself, and another 300,000 forced out of it?

Dominic Raab: I have figures closer to 800,000 displaced and over 2 million in need of humanitarian support in Cameroon.

I totally share the concern. Humanitarian funding for Cameroon in 2020-21 was over £30 million⁵. There have been some positive steps to try to resolve the conflict. The first regional elections were in December 2020. But it is clear there is some way to go. I do not think anyone would be sanguine about the situation at the moment. We have had all sorts of ministerial contact, from the President downwards. Strategically, we want to see both the government of Cameroon and the separatists re-engage in a committed and dedicated way to the Swiss-led peace talks. A particular thing that we can do as the UK is to share our experiences of conflict resolution and peace talks with the Cameroonian government. It

⁵ The FCDO has since confirmed that total UK humanitarian funding for Cameroon in 2020/21 was £13.5 million, not £30 million.

is very clear that we also expect to see the perpetrators of serious human rights abuses held to account.

That feeds another innovation from the IR which my department is taking forward. We are setting up a conflict resolution, management and stabilisation centre to take all our USP from humanitarian aid, international law and dispute resolution and to look in a targeted way—not to reinvent the wheel—at where we can add value in peace processes around the world. Although not in relation to Cameroon, I am flying later today to Geneva for the 5+1 Cyprus talks. We want to support initiatives led by the UN to bring peace. We will do so in a targeted way. It is part of global Britain's USP to be a problem-solving nation in the world and a force for good.

Lord Boateng: Thank you, Foreign Secretary. In terms of where you can add value, your passion for and understanding of human rights law is well known. You referred to ministerial contact in relation to Cameroon. Have you spoken with President Biya? Have you engaged with France, which you know, and say in the Integrated Review, the UK has a deep and long-standing security and defence partnership with? Have you personally spoken to your French counterpart about the situation in Cameroon and what we might do together to help resolve it?

Dominic Raab: Yes. It is a good point. We would like to do more with the French in Africa. In fact, I would like to do more with the French and the Germans. There is an interesting USP for the E3 and maybe others.

We must be careful, because you may have noticed that we have just left the transition period. It is interesting—you will remember this—that there are tracks of endeavours that go on, notwithstanding some of the challenges with the EU and all the Brexit negotiations on the TCA.⁶ I hosted the E3 at Chevening. I have recently been out to NATO talking with the E3. In fact, we added the Italians and formed a quint with the US, in particular on Iran but also on some of the wider foreign policy pieces. Not least, given China's presence in Africa, there is a real case for a cluster of like-minded countries making a bespoke and compelling offer in the way I described in Africa. That would not be confined just to the East Africa tilt. That contact with the French is ongoing, and I have certainly raised it.

As for talking to the President of Cameroon, I will need to check. I cannot remember, for example, whether I met him at the Africa Investment Summit. Forgive me. At a ministerial level, we are actively engaged with Cameroon. Foreign policy is part science and part art, but when you see what is going on in Cameroon you cannot other than feel the heartstrings tugged. Inevitably we are setting out in the IR a paradigm, not a straitjacket. Of course we want to be actively involved in the desperate situation that we are seeing there.

Q17 **Baroness Fall:** Good morning, Foreign Secretary. I would like to declare

⁶ EU-UK Trade and Co-operation Agreement

my interest as a Senior Adviser at Brunswick.

In the Integrated Review, you described China as a “systemic competitor”. In which ways and in which domains is China a competitor? What do you mean by “systemic”?

Dominic Raab: That is a good question. Thank you, Baroness Fall. Let me give you some different elements and dimensions to that: the attack on open societies and democracies, the aggressive approach it takes to cyberspace, and intellectual property theft.

More generally, China is not just breaking the odd rule here and there. It wants to ransack, frankly, the international system or at least the Western construct that grew up in the aftermath of the Second World War and through to the end of the Cold War and was recalibrated after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet Union. China’s aim is nothing short of that. It is certainly systemic in the sense that it is at it consistently and in a determined way. You can see that not just on issues like the South China Sea but on Belt and Road and in the way it approaches the multilateral system.

The new Biden Administration have made it clear that they will not allow a vacuum to be created in the multilateral system. That is incredibly important. We can want to revise and reform various bits of the international architecture. I am certainly not naive about any of that. In fact, I regard myself as an ardent international reformer. But we need to be careful not to leave a vacuum there.

It is also important to say that while recognise China as a systemic competitor in some of the ways I have described, we also see the opportunities, elements and areas for constructive engagement. I could give a range. We have COP 26 this year. We will not shift the dial on climate change unless we can have a sensible dialogue with China. It is the biggest net emitter. It is also the biggest investor in renewables. The competition piece is important, but the strands of constructive dialogue are also important for an overarching balanced view of how we approach China.

Baroness Fall: Thank you, Foreign Secretary. That was interesting and leads me to ask you a bit more about our approach. You set out very well the various strands. We need to collaborate with China on climate change and we want its inward investment, as set out in the Integrated Review, yet we are careful to check that—and rightly so—in terms of infrastructure and national security. We send our ships to the South China Sea. You have been active on human rights. We have also talked about human rights concerns while not actually saying that it is a genocide. This is a sophisticated approach.

This is a process point but related to strategy. Who is bringing all these strands together with a holistic approach in government? Obviously there is the National Security Council, but is there a case for having a China hub or a subcommittee to oversee this, maybe under your direction?

Looking to the multilateral point, what is the best convening body for China on the global stage? Is it the G7? Is it Five Eyes? New Zealand is pushing back on that. What about the D10 group we heard a bit about at the beginning of the Biden Administration?

Dominic Raab: Thank you. There is already an organic structure, if you like. You are right to say that the ultimate decision-making body on all those foreign policy issues is the NSC under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. He takes that very seriously, as you would expect from a former Foreign Secretary. I am working with the new National Security Adviser on reinforcing its effectiveness.

At the same time we have, for example, a small ministerial group, which I chair, which has looked at Hong Kong and various other subset issues on China. Just to give you a sense of why that is effective and why you are right to call for it, what China has done in relation to Hong Kong is about in the midrange of our expectations from best to worst. It could have been worse. It could have been a lot better.

When I came in as Foreign Secretary, I worked with my ministerial colleagues, including the Home Secretary in particular but also Rob Jenrick, the Communities Secretary, pretty much for nine months before we made decisions in light of the national security legislation to prepare the ground so that we could make the offer to the BNOs and take other steps in relation to extradition and the extension of the arms embargo.

We also made sure that we did not just welcome or offer the BNOs⁷ to come here but that we had a community integration package. That experience is one you will remember from your time in Downing Street and one we have all had not just in the last 10 years but probably in the last 20 years and is about the importance of integration. We have managed that. From a heart and soul position as the child of an immigrant myself, I think we have done the right thing.

We also prepared for the practicalities of that effectively. As you will know, that comes from the slog of working together with colleagues. It may not be the number one issue on MHCLG's⁸ radar screen because it is trying to get housing numbers up, dealing with local authorities and all the rest of it, but the work of the Home Secretary and the Communities Secretary has been outstanding. The structures do matter and you are not making just a process point at all.

You also asked about how best to engage in China. I think of your father and his view at the end of the Cold War. I am sure he would recognise that now. The old constructs we had then will not be adequate. The Cold War constructs do not work. I do not like the suggestion that we are heading to some kind of new cold war with China. That is not accurate. It does not need to be a self-fulfilling prophesy. There are areas where we

⁷ British National (Overseas)

⁸ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

can engage with China that we could not possibly have done with the Soviet Union.

As the East rises in economic power and clout and the geopolitical plates shift, we have to try to break down the old barriers between the West and the so-called G77, or the non-aligned movement, and engage with many more countries outside the traditional Five Eyes, the EU and transatlantic spheres, as important as they are, baseline and bedrock, and engage more actively.

That is why the engagement with India and the Indo-Pacific is so important. I was in India before Christmas. The Prime Minister cannot go in person but has a virtual conference meeting with Prime Minister Modi. I was in Vietnam and Brunei. I have held two Foreign Ministers' meetings with ASEAN. We are progressing our bid for ASEAN dialogue partner status. You will also see Liz Truss working on CPTPP.⁹

These are all forums where we need to engage in different ways and in an agile way with partners of the region and to broaden the consensus that protects not just our interest but the small 'l' liberal values that promote stability and prosperity in that region. Frankly, we have to be broader and more agile with like-minded partners. Korea will be important. Singapore is important. I just got back from Indonesia. What Indonesia does within ASEAN is critically important. It is much underestimated, even if it has not produced clear results yet, how important Indonesia's activities are in relation to Myanmar within ASEAN.

We need to be smarter about all this, and understand I suppose, how many of these countries view these things. ASEAN will not blow out on a megaphone diplomatically the way the West will do. I am not suggesting that we should blunt our tools or dull our voice for a second, but there is an interesting complementarity between what we do and what ASEAN and those countries in the region do. We have to get better at syncing it.

Q18 Lord Teverson: Perhaps I could declare my interest. I am on the advisory board of UKRI COMPASS, a programme looking at Central Asia and former Soviet states, which unfortunately has been drastically cut.

First Secretary of State, I welcome very much in the Integrated Review the environmental, climate change and biodiversity themes that I know you feel are important. I welcome that strongly.

My questions continue from Baroness Fall's questions. What mechanisms for co-operation with old and new partners are the Government exploring in the context of the Indo-Pacific tilt which is so prominent in the review? That is probably extending the dialogue you have already had.

Dominic Raab: Thank you very much. COP President-designate Alok Sharma is doing a heroic job and the Prime Minister's leadership is paying off as we lead into this important year culminating with COP 26 in November. To give you the sense that the Foreign Office is pulling its

⁹ The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership

weight, Ministers alone—let alone officials—are probably doing one event or one engagement every day. That includes weekends. We are putting our shoulder to that wheel.

With any strategy, someone will always criticise if you include downticks. But let us be clear: if you do not have downticks to go with your upticks, you do not have a strategy and you do not have focus. Let us be honest with each other about that at the outset. We have singled out the Indo-Pacific tilt for all sorts of reasons. It is clear that there are growth opportunities for the future commercially and economically. That is not about belittling the importance of the EU market, but over the last 10 years exports to the EU have ebbed and flowed and have not dramatically increased. The export growth exponentially will be in the Indo-Pacific region.

Some of the challenges will be in the Indo-Pacific region because of the economic emergence, and of course the role China plays will be important. Also, we have huge historic ties there. There is scope for us to tap all those opportunities and be a force for good in managing some of those challenges.

If I were to take two or three things—if you like, my personal KPIs to establish ourselves—one is supporting Liz Truss on the CPTPP and the free trade agenda. A second is gaining ASEAN dialogue partner status because, although the vast majority of the public would probably not recognise its importance, it is a caucus to talk to them, listen from their point of view and to synchronise in the way I described in my answer to Baroness Fall.

A third is the relationship with India. We are excited about the scope for doing much more from trade to mobility to climate change. Prime Minister Modi is lyrical when it comes to climate change and the preservation of mother earth. That is probably the way he would put it more than me, but you get a sense of that. India has made some bold steps but could make further steps for sure. The defence and security co-operation we have with our Indian friends and partners is important.

Those are three areas. There are many others and of course relationships matter and it is not just transactional, particularly in that region. Those are three tangible things to watch in the next year.

Q19 Lord Teverson: Thank you. India will be quite the biggest challenge beyond China on climate change—for many good reasons, such as historic emissions.

Coming back to countries—I say “countries”, although one of those is debatable in the Indo-Pacific area—we had an evidence session yesterday in our China investigation. One recommendation made by one of our American witnesses was that we should help Taiwan more in terms of our work to make sure that we have a balanced relationship with China and that that particular relationship should be improved and strengthened. What are your views on that, given our One China policy?

Another nation you mentioned briefly was Vietnam, which is one of the strongest nations in South-East Asia. It has a varied relationship with China; it is strong on investment but wary of it on territorial and defence issues. It is strong and a potential ally, yet it is more centralised and more run by the Communist Party probably than China itself. What are your insights on those two areas?

Dominic Raab: Thank you, Lord Teverson. Particularly given some of the activities we have seen over the last few weeks, we are concerned that any activity in the region of Taiwan or in the Straits has a destabilising impact. We want to be mindful. Our long-standing position on Taiwan has not changed. People on both sides of the Taiwan Strait have to settle the Taiwan issue peacefully through constructive dialogue. We want to be careful at this point in time, particularly given some of those tensions we have seen, not to exacerbate them.

On Vietnam, I can be slightly more full-throated. I was in Hanoi last year. There are huge economic opportunities. The trajectory that Vietnam has been on and continues to go on has been striking. You described it quite well the care they are taking in crafting their foreign policy. I met with the Prime Minister, the Vice-Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and a range of others. We used that to plug the bilateral relationship, and there are common issues and values that we have with Vietnam, believe it or not, particularly on UNCLOS—the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea—which is an opportunity. We also used it to have the first UK-ASEAN Foreign Ministers' meeting. We did it virtually. There are exciting opportunities there that we will calibrate to the interests of Vietnam and what we will realistically be able and willing to do.

There has been an intellectual laziness, frankly, in foreign policy for a long period of time. People have talked only about the big blocks of China, the EU, the US and others. They are important and I would not want to belittle that at all, but there is also a cluster of small, medium and even large but not huge countries with which we have likeminded values and interests. We need to be more adept and agile to operate and collaborate with them in shapes and forms that suit the British national interest and adhere to our values. I am very interested in that piece.

On the D10, you will have noted that we have invited Australia, India and South Korea to the G7 as guests, which also gives you a sense of the way we are approaching things. They are critically important partners.

I could go on to talk about Singapore and Israel. We need to be smarter. Above all, in relation to the Indo-Pacific tilt, the relationships matter, so we will need to have a bit more stamina for that.

Q20 Lord Alton of Liverpool: I would like to declare an interest as patron for the Coalition for Genocide Response.

Foreign Secretary, thank you for engaging with the committee today. In answer to Baroness Fall, you described yourself as an "ardent international reformer". With the effectiveness and credibility of multilateral institutions causing increasing anxiety, what action has the

United Kingdom taken to increase the number of signatories—in particular, the US, China and Russia—to the Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes?

Why has the UK not supported the French proposal on regulating the veto, given that from Xinjiang to North Korea to Tigray the threatened use of the veto stops perpetrators of mass atrocities being brought to justice via the International Criminal Court? Is this an area where your ardour for international reform of institutions might be well deployed?

Dominic Raab: Lord Alton, you are a hero. I know you have been frustrated with your various legislative agenda in some respects, but you have shifted the dial and I pay tribute to you. I hope you welcome the steps we have taken on the Magnitsky sanctions on Xinjiang and the supply chain measures we have taken so that no business profit from that awful trade in either China or the UK.

On the Code of Conduct, there are a couple of initiatives at the moment. We are a signatory to the accountability, coherence and transparency code of conduct, which Liechtenstein is promoting. That allows all members of the Security Council, permanent and non-permanent, to make public commitments not to vote against credible resolutions intended to prevent mass human rights abuses. The separate French initiative is perfectly worthwhile, but it is focused only on a voluntary restraint on the use of the veto by permanent members. Our effort has been on the former, because we believe it is more inclusive and wide-reaching and therefore likely to have the most impact.

Q21 **Lord Alton of Liverpool:** Thank you very much for that response, Foreign Secretary. Without it sounding like a mutual admiration society, I would like to compliment you on the Magnitsky sanctions—I know through your engagement with Bill Browder how much you have personally been involved in putting your own stamp on it—and on what you said at the Human Rights Council of the UN about the industrial scale of the atrocities taking place against the Uighurs.

Last Thursday, the House of Commons followed the outgoing and incoming US Administrations, the Canadian parliament, the Dutch parliament and others in declaring what has been happening in Xinjiang to be a genocide. Is it licit for countries like ours to conduct business as usual with a state credibly accused of genocide? What kind of response should that bring? Is it your intention to accept the Commons declaration? If not, to break that circular argument about who determines what is a genocide—I see that President Biden has said that what happened to the Armenians in 1915 was a genocide—will you re-examine the proposal that you referred to a few moments ago to create a judicial route for genocide determination so that we can meet our duties under the 1948 convention on the crime of genocide?

Dominic Raab: I listened and read the *Hansard* with great interest, and I am pleased to see the House of Commons debating and deliberating

these issues. Indeed, Parliament should hold the executive to account on all these matters. That has been our position all along.

Our long-standing position is that a court should make judgments on genocide. Fundamentally, genocide creates obligation at the state level but is a war crime and is therefore a question of individual criminal accountability. Our courts can hold people to account. The UK authorities have conducted war crimes investigations in the past, and the ICC Act and other legislation allows for that.

I have no announcement to make on a change in our approach to wishing it to be through a determination by a court. The main reason is that it is difficult. There is a tendency for politicians—you exempted—for political reasons and for perfectly legitimate heartfelt reasons to want to label a conflict or set of human rights abuses as genocide when the technical definition is so exacting. I want to be careful about that. Otherwise, we would be pressed to label things as genocide left, right and centre. Often—not always—the term is used when it cannot be accounted for, particularly because of the *mens rea* requirement in the crime of genocide.

It cannot possibly be said that we are engaged in business as usual with China, given the Magnitsky sanctions and what we have done on supply chains. China certainly does not think that is the case. Most countries around the world—I respect the US position—have broadly followed the approach that we have taken, although no country, perhaps with one or two exceptions, has gone as far on supply chains and sanctions. We are trying to bring countries together. We managed to have the Americans, the Canadians and the Europeans with us when we announced the Magnitsky sanctions in relation to Xinjiang.

On Armenia, our long-standing position is that this is for the court to determine, but to be clear about it, the events of 1915-16 were a truly horrific and tragic episode in the history of the Armenian people. They must never be forgotten. The Government of the day condemned the massacres unequivocally, and we do today. We continue to hold that view.

Q22 Lord Alton of Liverpool: At one point, 3 million people died in those atrocities, Foreign Secretary, and it continues to play out even now in Nagorno-Karabakh, where Armenians feel that their lives are in peril.

Seven years ago, the UN commissioned an inquiry chaired by the Australian jurist Michael Kirby to look at the situation in North Korea. It concluded that crimes against humanity were taking place and 300,000 people were in prison camps there. It said that North Korea should be referred to the International Criminal Court for trial for crimes against humanity. The threat of a veto in the Security Council has meant that has never happened.

What prospect is there for upholding the rule of law if we cannot make these institutions work in the way that you rightly describe needs to happen?

Dominic Raab: I remember as a young bushy-tailed Foreign Office lawyer looking at this issue many years ago under the previous Government. There is an issue and a challenge around the permanent veto. Of course, in relation to the International Criminal Court, it is not just part of the UN's charter and status and institutional governance. It is part of the International Criminal Court statute that the Security Council can refer but the veto applies.

I would not be entirely in despair about this, although it is inconceivable that China would allow a referral. I remember helping to draft a speaking note for Jack Straw as Foreign Secretary to engage with Condoleezza Rice and persuade the US not to wield a veto in relation to the Security Council referral of Darfur to the ICC. That did go ahead.

I do not doubt that it is hard yards, and it brings us to the complex issue of UN reform. It is difficult. I recognise that without any doubt.

Lord Alton of Liverpool: Thank you for your candour.

Q23 **Baroness Rawlings:** Good afternoon, Foreign Secretary. Thank you very much for your time and for all your frankness. I declare an interest and involvement as I headed the Foreign Office observer to the second Duma election and wrote the Foreign Office report.

You have been robust with your remarks on Russia, clear and interesting, and yesterday in Parliament. What is the latest Government's assessment of the current changing actions on the border of Ukraine? What further steps will the Government take in support of Ukraine's territorial integrity?

Dominic Raab: Thank you very much. Thank you for the work you do, Baroness. Also, since you are beaming to us from beautiful Chevening, what an important job Colonel Mathewson and the team do there to keep it in such brilliant shape. We use it diplomatically. As well as a beautiful aesthetic set of surroundings, it is effective for the conduct of diplomacy. The team working under the trust there does an exceptional job, as I saw for myself this weekend.

On Russia and Ukraine, it is good news that there seems to be a step back from the brink, as we have heard recently, but we remain concerned about the intimidation and bullying of Ukraine and the pre-existing illegal annexation of elements of the Crimea. I was out in NATO for the Foreign Ministers meeting. We talked about that in NATO and in the quint that I described with the Americans, the E3 and the Italians.

Three things are important here in terms of the action we are taking. The first is to stand in total solidarity with the Ukrainians. That has to be more than just rhetoric; there has to be financial support, and the support we provide through Operational Orbital training Ukrainian troops.

The second is to call Russia to account for violations of its OSCE¹⁰ obligations in relation to troop build-up. The Russians still have not

answered the OSCE request for an account for their troop movements. That is an important institutional check that we need to be exerting to the maximum.

Ultimately, a range of sanctions is applied to Russia in relation to Ukraine. Currently 180 individuals and close to 50 entities are sanctioned in relation to the destabilisation in Crimea and Sevastopol in eastern Ukraine. Wider economic measures include sectors that are particularly important for Russia's finance, energy and defence sectors. There are other measures we take.

Those three things—the OSCE element, the support for Ukraine and clear and concerted sanctions not just by the UK alone but with our partners—are the three most important levers at this point in time.

Baroness Rawlings: Thank you very much and thank you for those kind words, which I will pass on.

Q24 **Lord Anderson of Swansea:** Brexit is done. The question now, surely, is how best to manage our new relationship with the EU. Some will press for Global Britain to reduce its formal and informal relationship to a minimum, or at least to be involved only in bilateral engagements such as with France on the Sahel and possibly with Germany. William Hague, however, has recently argued for a new special relationship post-Brexit with the EU.

Where do you stand? What institutional relationship do you foresee with the EU on foreign policy, security and defence?

Dominic Raab: Thank you very much. We have maintained the E3 dialogue throughout on Iran, Myanmar and various other issues. Sanctions are a good example, particularly human rights sanctions. We went first with Magnitsky sanctions and the EU has followed. Frankly, it matters most that we can co-ordinate and synchronise to maximum effect. We of course welcome other areas of collaboration and co-operation.

Global Britain does not wear any baggage about this. We want to turn the page. We want to make the TCA work. We want to collaborate and be an even better neighbour and ally. You can see that within NATO.

There is also some opportunity to do things in a bespoke and different way and in an even more powerful way. I was out in both Estonia and Norway recently. Our relationship with the Nordics and the Baltic three is incredibly important. I hope to host them at some point back in the UK, possibly at Chevening. On the security, defence and cyber side, particularly given Russia, that will be important.

I have already mentioned the E3, which has proved particularly important in relation to Iran.

We are looking at reinvigorating what we are doing with Spain. Funnily enough, I was up until God knows what time on New Year's Eve with my Spanish opposite number getting a resolution on how we will deal with Gibraltar in relation to the TCA. It has been a good fillip and a good springboard. We had a lot of good will and made a lot of progress. We want that bilateral relationship with Spain, well beyond the issue of Gibraltar to be in stronger shape. What more can we do?

I am an open book on this. I am excited by the opportunities. We do not wear any baggage in relation to the Brexit chapter. It is done. We have a free trade deal. We appreciate that it has been tough going on all sides. But if the scope, which should be there, and the good will, which should be there, for thinking about things in win-win terms is there, we will grasp it.

Lord Anderson of Swansea: Bilaterally, yes, E3, yes, but with the institutions to a minimum.

Dominic Raab: No, we do not need to be locked into the institutional infrastructure on the CFSP in some sort of bureaucratic way. I have spoken to Josep Borrell throughout. He is an important interlocutor. I have no limits on it. We have the ability to act in agile clusters both inside the European partners and outside. As I mentioned in relation to the Nordics, Europe is bigger than just the EU. I have no fetters on my appetite for constructive engagement to pursue the values and interests we share.

Q25 **Lord Boateng:** It is noteworthy, Foreign Secretary, that the first of your personal key performance indicators is the free trade agenda. A great sadness of my lifetime has been that Africa has continued to be seen largely through the lens of aid rather than trade. Africa now has an African continental free trade area based in Accra. The development part of your department has long prioritised trade facilitation and regional integration. The old European Union Economic Partnership Agreements never really promoted an integrated trading approach within Africa among its African partners.

How do you see the free trade agenda working out in terms of the priorities of your own department in line with your personal priorities?

Dominic Raab: Thank you, Lord Boateng. The IR sets out how important trade is, and the Foreign Office, as well as integrating with DfID and having more of a role on ODA and international issues more generally across Whitehall, must also go in to bat for the other elements of our foreign policy that do not necessarily sit in the Foreign Office. That is now true because we have organically joined with DfID to create the FCDO.

However, as I mentioned with regard to climate change and COP 26, Ministers are engaging every day. Since June last year, we have engaged with 140 countries on everything from NDCs¹¹ to climate finance. The same is true for trade. It helps that I have a strong professional

¹¹ Nationally determined contributions

relationship with Ms Truss, and I am conscious of the difficulty of doing these trade negotiations and the need to clear the ground, or get the barnacles off the boat, if you like, to allow the Trade Secretary and the DIT teams to engage sensibly on the economic value added by these trade agreements.

I spend a lot of time doing the helpful work for the Trade Secretary and DIT in clearing the ground and making sure that the trade agenda does not eclipse the strategic priorities, or vice versa. We are not blind to what can be done. The CPTPP, in economic, value-added and strategic terms, is an incredibly exciting opportunity.

I mentioned the three-point USP which the UK has in Africa: we are more liberal on free trade, we do business with greater integrity than some of our partners, and we have the force for good agenda. Hopefully, that gives you a sense of some renewed vigour. I spend probably a third to half of my time abroad doing the bidding of other departments. We have a role in convening and co-ordinating more than the typical diplomatic or even development business that sits within the direct remit of my department.

Q26 **Baroness Rawlings:** My supplementary is on a completely different area but it is important to us, Foreign Secretary. What are we doing to support the Jordanian royal family? They are our close allies and we have a long-standing and important relationship with the Hashemite dynasty.

Dominic Raab: Yes, Jordan is incredibly important. I have reached out to my Foreign Minister opposite number. We have expressed our solidarity. We engage regularly on everything from COVID to the Middle East peace process. That relationship is important. I am hoping to go there soon.

Q27 **Lord Stirrup:** Foreign Secretary, could I press you a little on the wider subject of Iran? The nuclear agreement, which we all regarded as so important, fell apart under the Trump Administration. There are moves to restore it now. What is your assessment of whether, desirable though that is, it is achievable in the current circumstances? The internal tussle between the reformists and the hardliners seems to be going in the direction of the latter, which is bad news for everybody and of course is tragic news for Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and her family. The wider issue in the region of some sort of modus vivendi between Iran and Saudi Arabia, which is crucial for peace and security throughout the Middle East, also seems to be on hold.

Do you have any optimism at all that we can move those particular strands of work forward to achieve some positive results?

Dominic Raab: We are working closely as a JCPOA¹² partner with the new US Administration, and I have been working closely with the E3 throughout. It matters what Russia and China say. We need to be agile in our ability to engage with partners across the board.

¹² The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

I will avoid giving you my level of optimism on a scale from one to 10, but there is clearly scope to do an agreement that returns Iran to full compliance with the JCPOA and provides an opportunity to address wider issues of concern including in the region. I will not give a running commentary on the discussions, but we have to go for it. There are two paths for Tehran: one that is further into economic and political isolation or a better route for the Iranian people. You are right in your characterisation of the different factions, but the constellation of where the balance lies can be judged one day from the next. You see a constant tension and you have to take a step back and have a bigger-picture view.

There is a chance. There is an opportunity before the Iranian presidential elections in June. We will know by then whether we have been successful. Clearly, the interest of both sides of this equation is in finding a route back to full compliance with the JCPOA and indeed in due course addressing the widely destabilising issues that Iran is responsible for.

I am sorry if that is too straightlaced an answer, but that is as much as I will be able to give you.

Q28 **Baroness Sugg:** Back to the ODA cuts. I am sure it has been a long and painful process for everyone involved to get to where you are now, particularly given the big savings that had to be found last year because of the contraction in GNI, but that has now settled.

Looking ahead to the rest of the year with these big events—the UK hosting the G7, COP 26 and the GPE—there may be further financial announcements about special drawing rights, further contributions to COVAX, further commitments on ICF and debt cancellation. Are you able to give any reassurance that those will be on top of 0.5%, or could we be in a position where we have to go back and find additional savings from countries and programmes to finance that spend?

Dominic Raab: Thank you. It has been difficult and the team at the FCDO have done an exceptional job. No one wants to be finding savings. You know the exceptional dedication and the expertise they bring. We have merged the department at the same time. We have had the SR, the IR and the merger, coupled with the shift to 0.5%. I want to record what a brilliant set of teams I have, in particular those on the ODA side. It has definitely been a challenge and I am proud of the character and the expertise in my teams.

In relation to the 0.5% target—or the 0.7% target—we aim to hit it. There is always some shifting around of funds depending on the operations and the demands as we go through. We want to retain all the legal commitments we have made and the multilateral institutions we have described, and they are built into the financial envelope we have announced. I cannot rule out any shift over the course of the financial year, but I wanted to set out the headline thematic spend to provide some certainty as we go through it.

I want to reaffirm that we are still the third largest ODA donor in the G7. Whether it is GPE or COP 26, we want to make sure with the £10 billion

we have that they are aligned to reinforcing our convening power and our policy, diplomatic and development objectives in an important year for the UK's leadership. Also, we care about the impact we have. It is about bringing the world together and having the maximum impact, whether it is on the COVAX AMC, on 40 million more girls in education, on 20 million more literate by the age of 10 or on shifting the dial on climate change.

I am confident that we will make the right decisions about the allocations as we go through this year. I cannot tell you the precise constellation now. But whether it is on DevTracker or whether it is in the supplementary estimates, we would never have been able at the start of the financial year to nail it down with that level of certainty. Indeed, we were not last year. In 2020, we originally found £2.9 billion of savings. In fact, it turned out to be just a bit over £1 billion because of the way that GNI responded. There is always a degree of fluidity in those figures.

Q29 Baroness Blackstone: I want to press you a bit further on COP 26. It is by far the most important international event this year, because it has such huge implications not just for the present but for the medium and longer term, and it requires worldwide buy-in. We know from previous international climate change conferences how difficult it has been to get involvement.

First, what kind of preparation are we doing to deal with the countries you might call the renegades like Brazil and Indonesia, particularly on biodiversity, Australia, which is one of our allies but has a lamentable record on targets for zero carbon, and of course India, which is still producing huge amounts of filthy lignite coal, even though it has committed to moving towards more renewables? What are we doing in advance of the conference to get these countries to buy in to its goals?

Secondly, how would you define success at the end of it, and what would you see as failure?

Dominic Raab: Thank you very much. First, I have to pay tribute to the Prime Minister for his leadership on this if we look back to the climate action summit and his convening powers and his passion for this. If we look since we have seen Korea, Japan and China come up with more ambitious NDCs. The Biden Administration coming back into the Paris Agreement is a gamechanger. The US-China approach is interesting not just on climate but on establishing a secure track for engagement on that important issue.

I see two fundamental issues that are key ingredients to success in November. One is ambitious NDCs both for 2050 and for 2030. We have seen good progress, but we need more, particularly from the big emitters.

The other element of the equation is what we do for the global south, because the politics of this is that it feels like the West got wealthy when we were burning carbon but is now telling everyone else that they cannot and is not leaving an economic ladder for them to climb up. For example, climate finance is absolutely critical and the leadership we are taking on

climate finance is hugely important. We doubled our contribution to the Green Climate Fund. That is one area where we have stepped up to the plate.

They are two of the key ingredients to a package that the whole world can rally around.

I do not want to be critical, but I did not like your characterisation of different countries around the world. If we start using that language, we will never get them on board. It has to be an inclusive agenda, however challenging some of those issues may be.

On the issue of deforestation, I have had three conversations with my Brazilian opposite number. We have to turn this into a conversation about the win-win of preserving the forests, harnessing green technology and creating jobs. That is how the politics of this plays out in the Amazonian region of Brazil, and there is an opportunity for that. It is the same thing in relation to sustainable commodities in a country like Indonesia, where I have just been. Prime Minister Modi at the climate action summit showed that he and India will approach this with a level of ambition.

Our job is to encourage the best instincts of all these countries and to create a dynamic. I am speaking to Foreign Ministers every day and to Heads of Government every week on this subject. We have to say, "Look at the leadership that X, Y and Z has shown. Now it's important that everyone steps up to the plate". That is the approach we are taking.

With many of those countries, unless we tackle the issues of climate change and adaptation and resilience, we will not get a hearing, because politically this feels different in some of those parts of the world than it does in the West with the politics we have domestically. If we want to be successful and effective, we have to recognise that.

Q30 **Baroness Fall:** I agree with your point about the China issue not being the same as the Soviet Cold War era, and I was interested in what you said about the agility of your foreign policy in relation to so many other countries in the world. I did wonder to what extent it is hard to avoid polarisation. We see countries like Australia standing up to China and getting blown around a bit. We see that approach from China with the Belt and Road and the way it uses economic might to push forward its agenda. To what extent will we be in a polarised world on this issue?

Dominic Raab: That is a great question. Of course, it is not just for the UK to decide. China has to think about how it wants to respond to that. There were some reflexive reactions that you just described and you were accurate about that. I do not sense that that is where the UK is with China, but ultimately it will be China's decision.

As I have always said to my interlocutors, there are some things that we will just have to do. We have to protect our intellectual properties and for the principles of free speech in our universities. We will stand up for human rights, particularly in Hong Kong and in other areas. It is in our DNA and it is what we say and what we do. We do that because China is

a growing, rising and leading member of the international community and with that leadership come responsibilities.

Equally, there are other opportunities and channels for co-operation in business and investment, climate change, technological innovation and other multilateral issues that we could look at. We need to be in a disposition that is clearly calibrated, constructive and positive where we can. It will not work for us just to roll over on the issues that matter to us whether from a strategic interest or from our values. That is the conversation we have.

In my experience, most personal relationships, from the personal ones to the geopolitical ones, have a degree of bandwidth to do that. Therefore, it is a sign of maturity in a relationship when you can do it. I can think of countries that were not best pleased when we imposed the Magnitsky sanctions, but on the other hand we always need to be able to do that. Our relationships are stronger if we can be candid when we disagree and not allow the entire relationship to be scuppered. That is the broad approach that we take. I tend to spell that out rather frankly and candidly not just to our Chinese interlocutors but to other countries with which we have similar challenges.

Q31 Lord Alton of Liverpool: Given the scale of persecution—I am thinking particularly of Rohingya Muslims and Uighur Muslims, the 250 million Christians identified in the Truro review as subject to persecutions in countries like China, which we have talked a lot about, the rise of anti-Semitism, and the commitments of both Boris Johnson and Jeremy Hunt to Article 18 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to Article 4 on freedom of religion or belief—I was surprised that it does not feature on your list of seven strategic concerns outlined to us earlier, Foreign Secretary. I wondered why. How will the cuts affect funding for the four projects?

Given your visit to Ethiopia, what have the blockages at the UN been in raising the horrific crimes, some of them religiously motivated, taking place in Mozambique and in Tigray, where 4 million are facing starvation, and the roles of both Ethiopia and Eritrea in fomenting those atrocities, with many countries simply looking away?

Dominic Raab: That is another good question. We have applied Magnitsky sanctions in relation to those persecuting the Rohingya as well as in Xinjiang. It is not quite right to say that we have not prioritised democracy and human rights. That is all encompassed with one of the seven priorities entitled "Open societies and conflict". With open societies, we think of human rights, democracy and good governance forming a bracket, if you like. We have four campaigns. I want the Foreign Office to be more of a campaigning organisation, and you can see that. For example, we have had both a judge and a prosecutor from Britain elected to the International Criminal Court. In history we have never had a situation like that. That was because we went out and sold the brilliant expertise and credentials of Joanna Korner, whom I knew when I was in The Hague.

On the open societies and the campaigning mode, there is freedom of religion or belief, a big campaign that we had a set of KPIs for; media freedom, which we did very much in tandem with the Canadians but is now ramping up and broadening its work protecting journalists who come under attack and encouraging countries to take on legal protections for their journalists; the Magnitsky sanctions on human rights and now corruption after yesterday; and a new mechanism that, again, the Canadians pioneered but we have been co-partnering on to call out the arbitrary detention of nationals. I made sure that it covered dual nationals as well for obvious reasons. I am particularly passionate about those campaigns on human rights.

You asked about Ethiopia. I was there in January. I saw Prime Minister Abiy. I went up to Gondar to see the humanitarian mission that reaches into Tigray. We are pressing on three key things. One is the humanitarian access, which following my visit has improved. It is still pitted in some respects, but they have gone from notification to a consent mechanism.

We will want to see the Ethiopian government's commitment to accountability for human rights abuses upheld. I will talk to Michelle Bachelet about that because the UN High Commission on Human Rights is also engaged.

Thirdly—and this is the key—Prime Minister Abiy has made clear his commitment to elections in Ethiopia and, when it is physically possible, in Tigray. As well as the removal of the Eritrean troops and all the other things we have discussed, it is important that there is an elected set of leaders locally or regionally in Tigray that the central Government can engage in dialogue with.

You were canny in the way you shoehorned quite a few questions into one, but hopefully I have answered as many of them as I could.

The Chair: Thank you, Foreign Secretary. David Alton is clever at doing just that, thank goodness, not necessarily when he is asking me the questions, though.

Q32 **Lord Mendelsohn:** Thank you. Foreign Secretary, I strongly sympathise with the conundrum of how to resurrect the JCPOA. Of course, many of the conditions—for example, those on Iran—have already exceeded the limits that were already in the agreement. It is an interesting conundrum of how to re-enter an arrangement and try to renegotiate it afterwards.

I noted in the Integrated Review that the UK Government's position on Iran has certainly started to acknowledge some of the issues in a country that now dominates four other countries in the Middle East. Of course, we had the report of Foreign Minister Zarif's comment that the debate for control is not moderate versus hard line but the hard-line Revolutionary Guard versus the hard-line Supreme Leader.

In that context, where we have a lot of issues that give us major concerns about how we manage our relationship and the international community's relationship with Iran, I want to get your view about our

other allies in the region, who have felt always shut out on this question, and how much more difficult that is becoming over the renegotiation of the JCPOA. How do we look to balance that with making sure that our allies in the Gulf, in Israel and in places like that feel we can adequately deal with their concerns as we try to manage the Iranian issue?

Dominic Raab: Thank you. The JCPOA is fairly straightforward. Iran needs to come back into full compliance. The shell of the agreement is set out there, but it is in systemic non-compliance. It is still there, though. In that sense, we have the framework set out. The key question is what it will take to get Iran back to full compliance.

You make good points about two elements. One is that we also need to address in this dialogue the wider destabilising activities that Iran is engaged in from Yemen to Iraq and the human rights record. That will include the approach Iran takes to our dual nationals and the nationals of other countries.

Finally, you asked about regional partners. This is important. I engage with everyone from my Saudi opposite number to my Israeli opposite number to make sure that the case for a deal and for Iran coming back to full compliance is powerfully understood and provides reassurance where that is necessary. In all the discussions that I have had, I have heard lots of critics, but I am not sure I have heard anyone come up with a better solution. Critics without alternatives do not tend to get things done in the end.

Q33 **Lord Anderson of Swansea:** Foreign Secretary, you are on your way to the Geneva conference on Cyprus and the tragic division of almost now 50 years. One can proceed in despair or with signs of hope. Is there any movement at all?

Dominic Raab: There is scope for solving this crisis and this long-standing dispute and conflict. I was in Cyprus a few weeks ago. I spoke to President Anastasiades, I spoke to the leader of the Turkish Cypriots, Ersin Tatar, and this week I have spoken to the UN Secretary-General. The UN is leading the talks. I will be going out shortly to support them.

There is a deal to be done, which is in both sides' material and strategic long-term interests and in particular in the interests of the young people on both sides of the divide in Cyprus. We have to put our shoulder to that wheel. The window of opportunity is there and we have to try to grasp it. But I do not have any illusions that it will be particularly easy.

Q34 **Baroness Sugg:** Will the FCDO maintain its commitment to spend at least 50% of ODA on fragile and conflict-affected states?

Dominic Raab: Let me get back to you. Let me write to you on that. I want to work out where the different allocations will fall. Let me give you a proper answer rather than some vacuous reassurance.

The Chair: Foreign Secretary, it is my pleasure to thank you very much indeed for responding to so many questions coming in rapid fire over a period of two hours. I know you can see from those questions not only

the interest the committee takes but the respect the members have for their role in holding the Government to account. You have enabled us to do our duty on that today, a duty which, as you have clearly seen, we have enjoyed, too. Foreign Secretary, we wish you every success in the work you do on behalf of this country around the world. Have a safe journey to Geneva and return and, thereafter, safe journeys when working on our behalf. Thank you.

Dominic Raab: Thank you very much.