



Political and Constitutional Reform Committee

Oral evidence: [Parliament's role in conflict decisions: an update](#) HC 649

Thursday 24 October 2013

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Members present: Mr Graham Allen (Chair), Paul Flynn, Fabian Hamilton, Mr Andrew Turner

Questions 22-46

Witness: **Rt Hon Lord Wallace of Saltaire**, Government Whip for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and House of Lords spokesperson for the Cabinet Office gave evidence.

Q22 Chair: William, it is really good to see you. Thank you so much for coming in today. We are very pleased to see you.

You will probably know that the Committee has had a long-running interest in this question of war powers and the division or, as I would prefer to call it, the partnership between the Executive and Parliament on how we best deal with the issue of what happens around the time of a conflict, or before or immediately after a conflict, and where Parliament fits into that. We have had a bit of practice over the last 10 years and I think we are close to a standard practice, and indeed some would argue we have a convention already. Those things are always tested, of course, when the convention breaks down or is not operated so we are still very keen to ensure that this is in writing in some shape or form. We are all open to offers in terms of where and when. That is essentially where we are coming from and we would like to talk to you about getting some sort of progress on that and some sort of way forward.

Would it be helpful to let you make an introduction? Would you like to say a few words to kick us off?

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: Only briefly to say that I am here with a Cabinet Office hat on. The Cabinet Office leads on this, in consultation with the FCO and the MOD as the main interested Departments, and a continuing discussion goes on across these three Departments. It helps that I also have an FCO hat. In the Lords, as you know, we have to be maids of all work. We continue to discuss, in the light of discussions in committees in both Houses and events such as the Syria intervention, which it seems to us has strengthened the convention and in that sense was a significant event in the evolution of relations between the Executive and the Legislature in this area.

Q23 Fabian Hamilton: Lord Wallace, you will be pleased to know that I am the only Yorkshire representative here today, but it is good to have Lord Wallace of Saltair with us. It is such a lovely place.

It was just 10 years ago, if my memory is correct, that the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, thought it was really important to consult Parliament on the possible conflict, the possible invasion of Iraq, which then subsequently took place. If I am not mistaken, that was the very first time that a Prime Minister felt it necessary to rely on a vote in Parliament, which the Whips told us was something that would not take place if it did not get a majority or if the majority of Labour MPs voted against it. Of course we know what happened, and you may agree that that has informed subsequent votes on conflict within the House of Commons and the House of Lords. In March 2011, the Foreign Secretary, William Hague, said that the Government would “enshrine in law for the future the necessity of consulting Parliament on military action”. What is the Government’s current view of that commitment?

Lord Wallace of Saltair: I was slightly frightened when I saw your call for evidence suggest that “since the Government has a clear, positive position on all this”. The Government has an evolving position. This Government, like its predecessor, has discovered as it goes into it that this is a great deal more complex than one thought. The definition of armed conflict and the deployment of forces has all sorts of ragged edges, questions of urgency and secrecy come in, and let me just remark on both Iraq and Syria. We are all conscious that the decision on Iraq was taken by a Parliament that did not have the full information and arguably could not have had the full intelligence information that the Government had. I was briefed by the Government. I was then my party’s defence spokesman in the Lords and was briefed alongside Ming Campbell. I did not accept what we were given and, as you know, my party voted against. The question of how full the information is, let alone the legal advice that can be given to Parliament, is always a difficult issue. When I wound up in the House of Lords for the Government on Syria, we decided to consult Parliament in a hurry and not all the information was available yet. I discovered at the end of the Lords debate that things I had said in the wind-up were news to a number of people on both sides of the Lords.

We are in the process of discovering we need a strong convention but how we actually interpret it, let alone how we legislate on it or whether we should legislate on it, is a large question. Legislation and judicial review go together and the Government has become much more sensitive about judicial review of military action.

Q24 Fabian Hamilton: So you don’t believe this Government would enshrine in law the necessity for consulting Parliament? That is what the Foreign Secretary said in March 2011.

Lord Wallace of Saltair: I understand that. The Cabinet Manual has been revised and will be revised again. I suspect your Committee will be considering whether or not you wish to have a parliamentary resolution on this. I think the Government will be very hesitant about going further. Having now read in detail different definitions of armed conflict, having read Philippe Sands’ evidence to you last time round on the range of different legal opinions you could get as to whether Government action was legal or not—I thought Philippe was extremely honest about that—I am rather strengthened in my view that this is a very complicated area. In particular, once one gets the legal dimension into it, we might be entering more of a morass than an area of certainty.

Q25 Fabian Hamilton: Philippe Sands was very helpful to us last week. In correspondence with the Chair of this Committee, back in February 2013, the Foreign Secretary said that the Government has commissioned work from a number of Departments to help reach agreement on the

way ahead. What work has been commissioned, from which Departments, and when is it expected to be completed?

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: From the three Departments I mentioned and of course from the Attorney-General's office, because the legal dimension is important on this. The next piece of work to emerge will be the Government's response to the Lords Constitution Committee report. I suspect that the next piece to emerge after that will be the Government's response to your Committee's report.

Q26 Fabian Hamilton: You have mentioned the three Departments. It is obvious which ones those are, but have there been cross-departmental meetings to co-ordinate the work that is being done on this?

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: Yes, most recently the day before yesterday when I was briefed by people from all three Departments for my appearance before your Committee.

Q27 Fabian Hamilton: That is good to know. As we said earlier, and we have discussed this already, it was William Hague who committed the Government to enshrining Parliament's role in conflict decisions in legislation. Various Government Ministers have given evidence since then to committees or answered questions in Parliament on this. Is there one particular Minister who has responsibility for this issue? Is it yourself?

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: The Deputy Prime Minister is responsible for constitutional issues broadly defined. One of the junior Commons Ministers in the Cabinet Office, now Greg Clark, has responsibility in Commons terms for constitutional issues. I am the all purpose, all singing and dancing Cabinet Office Minister in the Lords.

Q28 Fabian Hamilton: You dance very well. Is there a senior civil servant within the Cabinet Office who is responsible for co-ordinating the work between the various Government Departments who have an interest in this issue?

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: This comes under the National Security Secretariat.

Q29 Paul Flynn: The Deputy Prime Minister told us that there was no division within Government on the principle that Parliament should be consulted on conflict decisions but the difficulty was, and I am quoting him, "Enshrining a convention in a way that is strong and meaningful but nonetheless flexible enough to deal with what are, by definition, unpredictable circumstances". We are agreed with that. We all see the sense in that, but the message from it is, "Trust us, we are the Government". After Iraq and the Helmand decisions, there is a distinct lack of trust both in Parliament and in the country generally, which was the reason we had the splendid decision on Syria. The fear is that Governments will abuse any loophole like that. While we understand that there are very different conflicts and some might need urgent action, what really is required is something that strongly defines the supreme role of Parliament in taking decisions to send our troops to war. Have you any idea what particular areas are making it difficult for progress to be made?

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: It is partly the complexity of the spectrum of troop deployment. We have at the moment a troop deployment, which is the first British-Irish joint deployment, in Mali to train the Mali army, which is intended purely to be a training mission. I know that you have an active interest in what happened in Helmand. You will recall that Helmand was seen originally as a mission that was going to be regional reconstruction and post-conflict rebuilding. We did not know, we were not perhaps informed, and the military certainly were not aware of just how Helmand would turn from one sort of conflict into another.

If there is a clear and immediate kinetic aspect to a conflict, like bombing Benghazi or a missile strike on Syrian chemical weapons, you have a clear case, you know what you are doing, and Parliament has to be very clearly consulted. In the case of Benghazi, a question of urgency meant that Parliament was consulted after. With Syria was easier to do it before although, as I say, I think we hurried it too much for various reasons, thus Members of Parliament did not have time to consider the full implications or to learn about the full implications. One MP said to me late at night after the debate that he had just 24 hours before been sitting on his beach in the Mediterranean without having read newspapers for three weeks and he had not had a chance to catch up.

There are always problems, particularly when something arises urgently, but I do think that more and more often we are likely to be deploying troops to what we see as being conflict prevention exercises or post-conflict reconstruction exercises, often in international forces, so it will not be a purely British operation. I think what we are going to need then is an active dialogue with Parliament as to what we think we are doing and how far we are getting in perhaps more deeply. The sort of statements now being regularly made about Afghanistan, occasional debates, are part of the continuing dialogue. That is as important, it seems to me, as the formal resolution when you have a clear kinetic decision.

Q30 Paul Flynn: We appreciate that all these situations are unique. When the president of a country says he is going house to house to shoot the population, clearly urgent action is necessary, and when there are smaller events, in world terms, in Mali and Sierra Leone it is different. I take a different view to that of my colleague on what happened in 2003, Much attributed to Robin Cook's work a long time beforehand, we were only allowed to vote when the Prime Minister was certain what the result was going to be. We still have this everlasting wait for the Chilcot report. We still do not know what happened and we have not had an objective decision on it. I think that will further increase the need for some kind of enshrining of the convention in law. Are the Government actively pursuing this? You talk about policy evolving. We saw a remarkably rapid piece of evolution of policy yesterday afternoon in the space of half an hour between the Government on a different matter. Is there likely to be some way in which Parliament can have this enshrined in law; that if there is a conflict that is predictable, that is going ahead and not urgent, we will vote on it and that vote will determine the conduct of the country?

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: I don't know how far your Committee has looked at international comparisons and how other governments and parliaments handle this. By and large, other parliaments with a Westminster tradition—Australians, Canadians—have a similar position to the UK; consultation and approval, not legal basis. The Germans, for very obvious reasons, are absolutely the other end and have a very strict legal basis. That makes it very difficult for the Germans to take part in peacekeeping operations, let alone in the active conflict operations that I am sure you are most concerned with. If it would be helpful to share the Government's paper on international comparisons with this Committee, we would be glad to do so.

Chair: That would very helpful. Thank you.

Q31 Paul Flynn: We have suggested that the Government bring forward a draft detailed parliamentary resolution as an interim step of something to get the process going to enshrine Parliament's supreme role. Do you think the Government will be prepared to present this as an interim step?

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: I think the Government has now reached the point, after three and a half years, of not wanting to take the initiative to provide something in law that will be open to judicial

review. That is part of the problem that we face. You will be well aware of the growth in the course of Afghanistan of coroners courts looking at the details of whether or not troops were sent into action with the right equipment. The evidence you had the other week from those various lawyers, with the multiplicity of legal advice and opinion that they suggested different parties might be able to obtain, does also suggest that adding the possibility of judicial review of whether or not Government has acted according to the law that the Government had put on how decisions should be taken is one that we have grown increasingly nervous about.

Q32 Chair: I would just add to that that obviously a resolution of the House is not justiciable and would avoid that eventuality.

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: Understood.

Q33 Paul Flynn: There are other pressures when countries are on the verge of going to war. There is the famous hubris of prime ministers who behave in a very different way to when they are working on humdrum matters. There is the pressure from commercial organisations who profit from perpetual war. I raise this not to do with the present monarch, but the real power to go to war is not the Government's or Parliament's, it is the monarch's power, a royal prerogative. We have had previous monarchs who were mad and bad. We could possibly have them in the future, but we give them a power that really should be vested in Parliament so perhaps we should look at prerogative powers again. There was the previous Government's draft war powers resolution and a draft Bill published by the Public Administration Committee as a basis for formalising Parliament's role. Wouldn't it be a good step forward to use those to make progress?

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: I have looked at those and I have some hesitation. The definition of armed conflict is itself evolving as drones, missiles and other dimensions become much more important. To say troops on the ground, boots on the ground, is after all not now by any means the only definition of conflict so that is partly why we do not think those resolutions were entirely adequate. You and I might well agree that the problem of unbridled prime ministerial power is one that the British constitution has, in effect, suffered from. I am sure you would also agree with me that one of the answers to that is effective coalition government.

Chair: We were with you so far down that road and then you spoilt it.

Paul Flynn: That power was happily bridled on 29 August and may it happen again more frequently in future—the power of Prime Ministers.

Q34 Chair: Could I add to that point that if there are definitional difficulties around conflict, then clearly it is even more important to resolve them with Parliament and the Executive rather than leave them to be interpreted by a convention. If it is not clear to all of us, it can't be clear as a convention, so the convention suddenly becomes open to lots of differing interpretations. It is probably a strong argument to work this through very carefully together and get definitions that we can all agree with, which will stick in the difficult times not the easy times. They are obviously there when interpretation is required and I think that would be a very firm base for people to decide whether we go to conflict or report on a conflict that has taken place.

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: I think there has to be a continuing dialogue on this. British armed forces have not been actively involved in peacekeeping operations very much over the last 10 years because we have been so heavily committed first in Iraq and then in Afghanistan. I think it likely that as troops withdraw from the Afghan commitment we will be more actively engaged in conflict

prevention, post-conflict reconstruction, all of those sorts of activities. As we know, some are entirely without mishap. Others, as for example, the UN peacekeeping forces in Lebanon and in the Golan Heights, can end up with people being killed and having to defend themselves. I think it highly likely that British troops are likely to be engaged in providing logistical and transport support to African Union forces and others in Africa where the Ugandans or South Africans will be asked to go in. They will not have the planes or the intelligence or the command and control structures and others will have to provide them. So there will be a whole set of issues. It is unlikely that British troops will be operating alone without the forces of other countries in many of these. Drawing a nice neat thing that we say could hold for 10 years is not very easy.

Q35 Paul Flynn: There is an English obsession, which is reflected on today's papers with several EDMs about flags and national anthems. There is this extraordinary nationalism of the English who believe that our sacred mission is to punch above our weight, which means spending beyond our responsibilities and dying beyond our interests, as in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: Yes, but if we accept that the Americans are going to be playing less of a role in the security of Europe, we do not know what Russian policy towards the countries in between the European Union and Russia will be in the next few years, we know that instability in Africa and parts of the Middle East is likely to continue and may well bring surges of asylum seekers and migrants across the Mediterranean, there are a range of areas where we are likely, with our European allies, to be doing a number of activities that will be on the borders of policing and armed force. I had to dinner last night a very good German friend of mine who is close to the German Government, who was talking about the need for joint patrol boats in the Mediterranean. I am sure you understand the context of where she was coming from.

Q36 Paul Flynn: The Germans, unlike us, are not in the league table of being the fourth highest in the world on spending on armaments, proportionally. We are also the 14th highest on spending on welfare, yet where we do intend to cut? This is part of a tradition that we overspend on armaments. The result is if you have the armaments you are likely to use them and the result recently has been 625 British troops dying in vain.

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: I think there is rather a broader point here. There are currently 16 European security and defence policy operations under that heading. The British have small numbers of troops in 14 of them. They range from the Somali piracy operation to various others. I suspect that if we wanted to inform Parliament about all of these, not very many Members of Parliament would want to be informed. The question of scale and length and depth of commitment is also an important point.

Q37 Chair: I think, William, clearly a good arrangement could be made for Mr Flynn to be your next dinner companion. While I am trying to get something done on this war powers issue, perhaps I can press one point, which I think we are in agreement on really. Yes, this is a very difficult thing to do. It needs to be done very carefully, but we have had a number of examples where the current convention was created and tested almost literally in the heat of battle. I think what the Committee is suggesting is that rather than raise this issue again when emotions are running high, when there are political passions at play and lives are at risk, it is incumbent upon all of us—because I don't think there is a lot that separates us; I think we are talking about how we get the words right—that we do that job now. We do it in a timely way and we don't leave it undone for a moment when another unexpected event arises and suddenly we are going to pitch people into harm's way. I hope you will agree that it is incumbent upon us now to use our best efforts to try to resolve this in a cool, calculated way ahead of any conflict that takes place in the future, if we possibly can.

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: I agree with that. The Syria case was a significant development and your Committee might well want to reflect on the implications of that. You certainly might also wish to reflect on how Parliament would appropriately respond to, for example, a UN resolution asking for a multilateral peacekeeping force to manage post-conflict order in a conflict-ridden state in the Middle East or North Africa and how it would also manage with treaty obligations under NATO if a NATO situation came up. These are all likely, as I said, not to be purely British but to be multilateral or global decisions. Britain has not provided very many troops for UN peacekeeping operations. You may be aware that the Chinese currently have more troops in UN peacekeeping operations than the British. I think it likely that we may find ourselves doing more under a future Government, partly because we would have more spare troops available.

Q38 Mr Turner: It is interesting that until I joined this Committee I don't think I understood the difference between Acts of Parliament and resolutions and how important it is to recognise the difference. Are we judging the right things in the current process whereby the House of Commons is consulted on conflict decisions that could be formalised through a House of Commons resolution or standing order?

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: The question of consultation and approval is part of where we are here. The Government has talked about consulting Parliament wherever possible before troops are committed, the urgency question and the secrecy dimension of it being, of course, limiting factors. There will be naturally cases where if you are about to commit troops you don't want to have to explain to Parliament everything that you might be about to do because everyone else is listening in to what you say. The principle that Government should consult is clearly now established as a convention. What I am signalling to you is that I think it is equally important that Government should continue to consult throughout an operation. I do think that the quarterly statements on Afghanistan and a number of other developments like that are also an important part of this process.

You might wish to make comment on, for example, how Government would maintain a dialogue with the appropriate departmental committee, probably the Defence Committee, on plans, commitments and so on, about which I am often struck that Parliament is remarkably uninformed. I suspect there are probably no more than two or three MPs, for example, who are aware of which other European states flew missions over Libya with us. I am not aware that any MP has ever asked to know that or how closely the United Kingdom Government has been involved with the Nordic group in developing a European battle group on which there are currently discussions as to how it might be reshaped so that it could respond to mixed humanitarian and conflict prevention operations. Those are the sorts of areas where MPs have not yet been terribly interested in knowing what is going on. I think a dialogue with the Defence Committee would perhaps be a useful way forward.

Q39 Mr Turner: Is that because we, Members of Parliament, wish to remain uninformed, or is it that we have other things to do?

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: I hesitate to comment on MPs as a class. We all know you get elected by working on local and occasionally national issues and that there is a tendency for elected politicians who focus on international issues to lose the attention of their voters. There is not an enormous incentive to become a specialist on international affairs and defence unless you represent a constituency with a very large number of military bases.

Q40 Mr Turner: Is there a difference between an involvement by this Government, or any previous Government, of a defensive nature such as the Falklands or a similar enterprise in Gibraltar, if it were attacked by the Spaniards, where we would feel it was not necessary to have a vote? It would be something that automatically was done by the Government and you have to do it in three days, including calling Parliament back on a Saturday. Is it too important to put before the Parliament on what we are saying are most areas?

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: You will recall on the Falklands that the organisation of an expeditionary force began before Parliament was consulted. It had to, but since it was going to take a certain amount of time to organise it and to get there it fitted very well into the framework. If there were an attack on a particular British core interest where it was clear where the attack had come from and it was possible to make an immediate response, I can imagine a hypothetical situation in which the Government might decide to respond immediately and to consult Parliament as soon as possible afterwards. That is part of the urgency dimension of this. In the ultimate hypothetical, if there were a nuclear attack on the United Kingdom, it is highly unlikely that Parliament would be recalled to discuss whether or not the Government should respond. We hope that is an extremely hypothetical case but that is part of the spectrum. We all understand there are circumstances in which it is relatively easy to consult Parliament before and there are others in which, as in Benghazi, it may be felt that you need to make at least a limited intervention before you have time to recall Parliament.

Q41 Mr Turner: What information about the legality of a conflict decision does the Government think should be made available when Parliament considers these decisions?

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: It is a very strongly established convention that the advice given by the Attorney-General, which includes advice on interpretation of the law, contested areas where it might be open to challenge, for obvious reasons—that is what the Government’s in-house lawyers should be doing—should not be disclosed to Parliament. I think the evidence you had last week demonstrates some of the problems with interpretations of humanitarian law and international law. So the question is this legal under international law, which is increasingly the sort of question that people are now asking, is not at all an easy one for any lawyer to answer. I used to be a professor at the London School of Economics. I recall asking for advice on a particular international conflict from one of my colleagues in the law department and she began by saying, “I should warn you before we start to discuss it that I have provided legal opinions to both sides in this conflict”.

Q42 Mr Turner: What do you think of the proposal last week that we need a parliamentary committee or something like that that can obtain legal advice very quickly? That is Parliament not—

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: When I read that I thought Parliament is not a legal body. Parliament is a political body. It has lawyers within it and we all have lawyers we can consult. Philippe Sands happens to be an old friend of mine and I have consulted him informally on all sorts of occasions about various things. I am not sure that Parliament itself needs that formal legal counsel as you are suggesting, an alternative to the Attorney-General, who would be the parliamentary adviser on all of these things. That is my instinctive response. You may wish to suggest something different. That would be throwing another element into the debate.

I think we all have to recognise that future conflicts are going to be much more closely surrounded by legal argument, as indeed was the Bosnian intervention, the Kosovo intervention that took place without UN Security Council approval and was open to challenge under international law. The Russians play a very strong role on things that do not have UN Security Council approval. Given that we are going to have all of these legal arguments, and the responsibility to protect in

humanitarian law are even more difficult, it might be that you wish to have some formal legal approval but you will not get formal legal certainty and I think that is one of the reasons why we are all so worried about judicial review. Good lawyers can provide a whole range of legal opinions, depending on who asks them.

Q43 Mr Turner: It might be better for us to have our private connections rather than a formal committee?

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: That is my instinctive and unbriefed view, yes. It is not an expert view.

Mr Turner: Perhaps you would let us know?

Q44 Chair: If I may follow that up. Part of the difficulty there is if in supporting an action, particularly in voting for an action that subsequently is illegal, Members of Parliament themselves are complicit in breaking international law, or even arguably failing to resist subsequent actions that are regarded as criminal, as in war crimes committed as a result of that action. Colleagues have heard this. In the Iraq conflict I remember asking the Clerk for Parliament's legal view and being sent to the fellow who does health and safety and employment law who was absolutely bemused by my requests for an opinion on whether what we were doing was legal or not.

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: This may be a question that you might want to raise further in your report in that case, but we all know the difficulties of interpreting international law. One of the firmest conventions to which we have signed up is the convention that outlaws chemical weapons. Chemical weapons had been used in Syria. Parliament decided that that did not trigger the requirement for action to enforce the convention. This is not an easy area.

Q45 Chair: William, I think we have covered the field and I am not here to detain you until 12.00pm, because you very kindly agreed to allocate that time to us, but just a couple of final things. One is to repeat that it is better that we resolve our partnership around these very difficult issues of going to war or military action at a moment where we can be cool and considered rather than for this to become a political issue when there is a conflict at a future point. So I hope you share with me the view that it is incumbent upon us to put our shoulders to the wheel and find the words that can satisfy everybody.

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: I share that view. I very much see this as a partnership rather than a confrontation, but I hope that we all recognise that the phrase "boots on the ground" is now one that does not necessarily imply armed conflict. That is part of why we need to talk about dialogue as well as partnership. The sort of troop deployments that we will have in the future, some of which may, as Paul was remarking in an earlier session, lead to armed conflicts or higher levels of conflict than we had anticipated, is part of the world in which we are likely to be operating.

Q46 Chair: The second thing is just to reassure you that, having been with this issue for a long time and as Select Committee Chair listening to my colleagues on this issue for some considerable time, I have never heard a single member talk about this resolution in terms of training missions and peacekeeping. We are looking at the other end of the spectrum, which is the one that we are familiar with, for example in Iraq or Syria, and that is where the Committee's focus has been. My final point is about when we can bring this to a head and resolve it. I am not at all suggesting it is next week. However, we have been with this issue for quite a long time and we have had various people commit to various courses of action over the piece. There have been forms of words in the

documents produced under the auspices of the last Prime Minister. I can say, William, as you can gather from this morning, we are a very friendly bunch. The only time I have ever seen my colleagues get really annoyed and upset was over the Lobbying Bill when the Government failed to come up with a sensible response to us in over a year. They turned very ugly and it was a stomach-turning sight to see these gentle pussycats get really annoyed. I don't ever want to see that again. What I am saying, more seriously, is that I hope that we can conclude this within a reasonable timescale and I hope that you share that view.

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: The Government will look forward to your Committee's report and will respond to that, I hope in good time. I take your point about the good time required and let's continue on that basis.

Chair: Excellent. William, we look forward to further negotiation or interaction with you. If it is helpful for me or members of the Committee to talk to you informally, we would be absolutely delighted to do that. I think there is 98% agreement already in terms of where we need to go on here. With goodwill on both sides, the last couple of percentage points can be put to bed and we can deal with this issue to the satisfaction of people over many years to come, I hope. Thank you for your time. All the very best.