

Foreign Affairs Committee

Oral evidence: [The UK's Influence in the UN, HC 675](#)

Wednesday 7 February 2018

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Members present: Tom Tugendhat (Chair); Chris Bryant; Mike Gapes; Ian Murray; Royston Smith.

Questions 49-123

Witnesses

I: Lord Ahmad, Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the UN; Sir Iain Macleod KCMG, Legal Adviser, Foreign and Commonwealth Office; and Paul Williams, Director, Multilateral Policy, Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Lord Ahmad, Sir Iain Macleod KCMG and Paul Williams.

Chair: Welcome, Lord Ahmad, Sir Iain Mcleod and Paul Williams. Thank you very much for coming to the Foreign Affairs Committee this afternoon. We will start off sharply, if we may. Mike.

Q49 **Mike Gapes:** Good afternoon. What is your assessment of the United Kingdom's current influence in the UN Security Council?

Lord Ahmad: As you know, Mr Gapes, I took on the role as the Minister responsible back in the summer. We have led on some very powerful areas, notably some of the topical areas and areas of concern on the global stage: the ongoing situation in Syria, for example, and Burma, where we are the penholder. The UK continues to exert strong influence and strong leadership in respect of the UN Security Council. That is the position, which I have found from my own attendance at the Security Council: it is respected, and countries look towards the United Kingdom to continue to play a very forceful leadership role on the Security Council.

Q50 **Mike Gapes:** What about our influence in the General Assembly?

Lord Ahmad: Equally, the General Assembly and the Security Council in certain respects work hand in glove; in other respects, there are challenges posed by the different parts of the UN. We continue to have very strong relationships across the piece with all parts of the UN family. If you look at the 190-odd nations that are represented in the UN, through our team on the ground in New York, whom I meet regularly, we have very strong relationships with the PRs. Also, on a bilateral basis, for different countries, there are strong relations.

Looking forward, I am very keen to see how we can further strengthen our role in the context of the UN. For example, I am Minister of State for the Commonwealth as well, and we are all very much looking forward to the events in April, but we also need to strengthen our role to see how we can work more cohesively and with strength with some of our Commonwealth partners.

Q51 **Mike Gapes:** In the UN system, how do you measure our influence relative to other states? What metrics do you use to measure?

Lord Ahmad: There are various. I have alluded to some resolutions we have passed recently. Security Council resolution 2379, which was on Daesh accountability, was a powerful step forward in ensuring that the despicable organisation that is Daesh, and those who committed and were perpetrators of crimes, is held to account.

Also, on the issue of Burma, just briefly to talk you through it, at the time I took on the role there were closed sessions on the important issue and desperate plight of the Rohingya community. We have seen, because of UK leadership and influence, that position move on to where we were with



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the presidential statement and, also moving forward, in other parts of the UN—bodies such as the Human Rights Council.

In terms of specific metrics, the resolutions we have led on and, notwithstanding some of the questions that might follow on the ICJ, looking at the UK's position in terms of the positions that we hold within the UN family—we are very sizeable in our influence. That is reflective of Britain's contributions, but also of the respect the UN as an institution holds for UK appointees.

Q52 Mike Gapes: May I ask you about the UN Human Rights Council? We are on there until 2019, I understand. What is your assessment of the way in which it works?

Lord Ahmad: I have now attended formal sessions of the UN Human Rights Council. I think it serves a very important purpose. As Minister for Human Rights, I have seen how we can bring to the fore important issues that are impacting on the world, holding countries to account. Again, if I may be specific about certain work of the UN Human Rights Council, you will be aware of the universal periodic reviews that take place—in that context, there are 30 human rights priority countries that the UK has listed for various reasons.

I have made a specific point that those UPRs that take place, particularly of the 30 priority countries, reflect holding those states to account and what action they are taking on meeting their international obligations. The Human Rights Council, compared with other institutions of the UN, is relatively new, but we are seeing some real progress being made, and countries are paying great attention to the membership—their own membership and putting forward candidates for the Human Rights Council. Of course, we were delighted to be re-elected to the Human Rights Council.

Q53 Mike Gapes: May I ask you a specific question about another country that is on the Human Rights Council, which is Pakistan? I understand that it will be on the Human Rights Council until 2020. One of the issues that the United Nations is supposed to support is the democratic rights of poor people within a country. Pakistan has an election coming up in which a significant minority of the country are not able to vote, because in the Pakistani system you have to designate yourself as either Muslim or non-Muslim. Are you aware of the issue that I am going to raise?

Lord Ahmad: I am very aware.

Q54 Mike Gapes: The Ahmadis are Muslims, but Pakistan does not recognise them as Muslims. Therefore, they are expected to register themselves as non-Muslims, but won't. Surely, that is a human rights abuse, because Ahmadis are not able to take part in the democratic process. Do we raise that issue in the Human Rights Council? Do we do it bilaterally or do we just not do anything about it?

Lord Ahmad: Most recently and specifically on the Ahmadi Muslim community, Minister Field, who is the Minister for Asia, and I, as a human



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rights Minister, wrote directly to the Foreign Minister of Pakistan. When Mr Field visited Pakistan, he handed over that letter, which called out quite directly the discrimination against the Ahmadi Muslim community, and also the Christian community.

The issue raised of the persecution of the Ahmadi Muslim community goes back to the early '70s, when they were declared a non-Muslim minority. It is a straightforward act of discrimination in the electorate. On the specific issue of the discrimination of the community, if you read the UK's contribution and statement after the UPR for Pakistan, there is a specific mention made on that very specific issue, calling for full rights of all citizens.

It is not to judge who is Muslim and who is Christian, but it is ensuring that Pakistan puts credence to its constitution, which should guarantee the rights of all citizens irrespective of what their faith or religious belief may be. We are very vocal in condemning that—raising it both publicly and bilaterally—and we will continue to do so.

Q55 Mike Gapes: Thank you. You mentioned the International Court of Justice. For the first time since the Court was established in 1948, there will not be a British judge. Do you believe that that is a major blow to our country and our influence?

Lord Ahmad: First, for the record, I would like to say that our candidate was an excellent candidate. It is important to acknowledge that. Sir Christopher Greenwood served the ICJ in an impeccable manner. That is acknowledged not just by United Kingdom; as you will be aware, Mr Gapes, anyone who is elected to the ICJ does so in a sense of neutrality and ensures that justice prevails.

As the Minister for the UN, I was deeply disappointed that he was not re-elected. In terms of our influence on the ICJ, because the ICJ acts in a very independent manner, I think that it will continue to look at all cases in a very fair manner. Equally, the decision that we took to withdraw from the contested election was also based on our regard and deep respect for the institutions of the ICJ and the UN.

Therefore, not having a British judge is a loss not just for the United Kingdom but, because of the individual concerned—Sir Christopher and his impeccable record—it is a loss for the ICJ. However, we will continue to respect and work constructively with the ICJ in future matters.

Q56 Mike Gapes: Our Government put considerable effort into trying to get Sir Christopher's re-election. Why was that not successful?

Lord Ahmad: There are various reasons to consider. First, colleagues, including the Foreign Secretary and me, played an extensive role in the lobbying campaign. I am delighted that Sir Iain is here, because he very much accompanied Sir Christopher through various meetings and lobbying that he did directly as the candidate.



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If you look at the results and the different rounds of voting, our pledges were 20 shy of the total membership of the UN General Assembly. In the first round of voting, we received 147 votes. Under normal circumstances, that and the vote that we secured in the Security Council would have meant that he would have been re-elected.

The dynamic of the election changed just before we went into the formal process, as you will be aware, because the Indian candidate, who was eventually elected, declared very late. Until that point, the slate was a clear slate; it then became a contested election.

However, if you look at the different rounds of voting, the United Kingdom and the candidature and the candidate that we put forward held their own in the early rounds. There was also a strong feeling—there are various conventions at the UN that you will be aware of—that when the Indian candidate submitted his name, there would be, if anything, a run-off between him and the Lebanese candidate, because of the geographical way that these seats are allocated. However, because it is not a specific rule within the context of the ICJ election but a convention, it certainly ended up that, once the first few rounds of voting had finished, we were in a contested situation with the Indian candidate.

Q57 Mike Gapes: I have a final question and then others will come in. Would you interpret this as a major failure of British diplomacy?

Lord Ahmad: The short answer is no, but I will also be honest enough to say that I was deeply disappointed. We have strong relations in the UN; perhaps I can just illustrate that through giving an example. We had a very contested election with India; India is a strong partner of the United Kingdom, bilaterally and in the context of not just the UN, but the Commonwealth, and immediately, in the aftermath of that election, I was fortunate enough to visit India on issues of collaboration, and on the important issue of cyber-security. The relations in no sense were soured. On the contrary, the access I gained, not only to my counterpart but to both the Indian Foreign Minister and indeed the Prime Minister, demonstrated the deep respect and affection, if I can term it that way, that the Indians continue to have for the UK's position, both bilaterally and in the context of the UN.

Also, if you look at the elections that have taken place across the UN, we are not the only P5 member that has lost an election recently; France and Russia are two other examples of that. Again, I am being very candid and honest with you, and I think that when the General Assembly looks towards the P5 there is a sense of how other members, who are not permanent members of the Security Council, should be considered if alternatives are put forward. In the election itself, the Lebanese candidate was a very capable and able candidate, as all the candidates were, but he certainly gained tremendously from being the Lebanese permanent representative for 12 years, which also helps to build the relationships with some of the smaller states that are represented at the UN.



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The final point I will make, if I may, is that many countries—I certainly experience this as something valuable—committed to the UK. As I said, we had 170-odd pledges going into the first round. I think that many countries also take the view that that pledge holds true only for the first round. And subsequently, there were many representatives in the UN General Assembly who, because of their limited degree of available resource, were able to convey and communicate with their respective capitals to get instruction in subsequent rounds. I was there for the run-off votes with India that we had in the General Assembly and it is actually a pretty instant process. It is confidential—it is a secret ballot—so you don't quite know who is voting for whom. At the same time, however, the lobbying by both the Indians and ourselves was extensive. Nevertheless, the ultimate result was disappointing.

- Q58 **Chair:** It was quite striking speaking to Sir John Sawers about this. He talked about when Sir Christopher was first elected, and let's not forget that, despite his very impressive legal credentials, Sir Christopher was the legal adviser who gave the advice for the Iraq war for the United Kingdom, so was therefore initially extremely contentious. He was—he advised the Attorney General and it was certainly Sir Christopher who was instrumental in putting the Attorney General's words. What is quite striking is that, even despite that and despite it being very widely known—I can see you shaking your head, Sir Iain, but I am afraid it is extremely widely known and was very highly publicised before his election last time—Sir John didn't feel the need for any ministerial support to get him elected last time. It went through pretty much on the nod. It is a bit disappointing that despite massive ministerial support—according to the Foreign Secretary and Sir Alan—this didn't succeed.

Lord Ahmad: I agree with you, Mr Chairman. I have already articulated the fact that it's deeply disappointing that he is not there, but it's no reflection—I think there were various issues raised, including the matter you raised, but I don't believe that was an issue in this particular election. There were six good candidates.

- Q59 **Chair:** None of that takes anything away from the other candidates.

Lord Ahmad: Absolutely. I believe that Sir Christopher was right up there. He was one of the best candidates on the slate. We all put in the energy. From the summer, it was a regular feature of my bilateral visits in terms of the lobbying calls I was making, and directly during the UN General Assembly, for example. The Prime Minister led a six-strong ministerial contingent during the September UN General Assembly, and all the Ministers who attended—the Foreign Office Ministers and Minister Perry—had the issue of the ICJ very much as one of our key asks at all the bilaterals that were held during that week.

- Q60 **Ian Murray:** So why did it fail? You have talked about extensive ministerial involvement, including by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, and about Sir Christopher's impeccable record. You mentioned the P5, but France got their candidate elected in the first round.

Lord Ahmad: He was also the president.



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Q61 **Ian Murray:** Every single round, the UK's vote dropped. You have not told us why it failed.

Lord Ahmad: Actually, if you look at every single round, every country's vote subsequently was dropping. There were different dynamics at play. Clearly, as I said—

Q62 **Chair:** The rate of change was rather dramatic, according to our—

Lord Ahmad: In the last two rounds, when we went down below the threshold and went into the run-off with India—

Q63 **Chair:** But we were about at the bottom of the—

Lord Ahmad: We were second to last in the first round.

Q64 **Chair:** In the first round, and we were solidly last from then on.

Lord Ahmad: There was a shift, clearly. As I said, I believe from some of the voting figures that we saw that there was clearly support for both the Lebanese candidate and the Somali candidate from other parts of the African Union. We continued to lobby, and certainly the pledges we were receiving did not reflect or translate into the actual figures.

You talked about failure. Of course it is a disappointment that Sir Christopher was not elected. That is the bottom line: he did not get elected. The fact is, though, that there were different dynamics in play. I alluded earlier to the Lebanese candidate being someone who has been based at the UN for a long time. When you are at the General Assembly, there is a real relationship between the permanent representatives who are there, and for many of the smaller countries they do not always revert back to capital. Quite often, they are pretty autonomous in the votes that they cast. That was also an impact.

There was this sense of the P5 over ourselves. As I said earlier, the French and the Russians have lost recent elections as well. I think in the final run-off it was very much about how people perceived India, and the fact that they are a non-P5 member but a growing influence within the General Assembly. I had many exchanges over that weekend—both bilateral calls and lobbying. It underlines the importance we attached to this when we went into the run-off with India that, when I arrived in New York, I must have held about 80 bilaterals back to back, and we still—

Q65 **Ian Murray:** What were countries saying to you when they said they were not going to vote for the UK?

Lord Ahmad: They were not shying away from saying— We went into the final run-off with India with about 140 or 150 countries pledging support.

Q66 **Ian Murray:** Minister, finish this sentence for me: "I'm not voting for the UK candidate because..."

Lord Ahmad: "Because I'm voting for the Indian candidate."

Q67 **Ian Murray:** That's not an answer to the question.

Lord Ahmad: Well, that is what the reality was.

Q68 **Ian Murray:** For what reason?

Lord Ahmad: Both were very capable. I met the Indian candidate as well, and congratulations to him. I am sure this is not the first election—and it will not be the last—where people said they would vote for a particular individual but did not. You are all Members of Parliament, and I am sure when you stand on the doorstep people say they will vote for you—as someone who has done many an election, I know we often see the strength of that vote. Many of the people who said they were voting for us assured us they would continue to do so.

However, there is one point that I do feel played in. We were given some assurances right at the start of the process—the voting demonstrates that—and then our vote dropped. Countries did not, of course, stay true to the assurance they gave us for that first round of voting. They obviously did not stay solid in that support thereafter. That is a learning for us to put into play so that we square off the fact that if there are subsequent rounds of voting, we must ensure the strength of our vote for subsequent rounds. Clearly, the evidence suggests that did not happen.

Q69 **Ian Murray:** Has any country since given you reasons why they did not hold firm to the vote in subsequent rounds?

Lord Ahmad: No. Many have expressed deep regret that our candidate was not elected. They have also sent messages of great support to him personally, regretting that he was not elected, but no one has come to us directly and said, “This is the reason why we didn’t vote for you.”

Q70 **Ian Murray:** So of the 80 countries that voted for the UK in the first round but subsequently did not vote for the UK in the last round, not one of them has told you why?

Lord Ahmad: No. As I said, I am making an obvious assumption based on the fact that they voted in the run-off—

Q71 **Ian Murray:** Have you asked?

Lord Ahmad: We continue to ask, and they said we had a strong candidate.

Q72 **Ian Murray:** And nobody would tell you?

Lord Ahmad: As I said, some have said in conversations that they voted for the Indian candidate. They felt there were two credible candidates.

Q73 **Ian Murray:** Did you ask why?

Lord Ahmad: They present them both as credible candidates. Getting into a post-mortem, as I said, I don’t think it was anything to do with the candidate. The fact is that there were different factors interplaying. I think we can make an assessment that there were certain countries that went with other countries, because of their association through the UN and the



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fact that one was a permanent representative. Other countries aligned themselves because they were from that particular region.

I think there is also one other unfortunate element which perhaps was not considered. In response to Mr Gapes, I mentioned conventions of the UN. The Western European and Others convention—the WEOC—suggested very much that there would be two seats: one would be to the French, and one would be to the United Kingdom’s candidate. Unfortunately, that convention was not ultimately respected. I think there is a need to revisit such conventions and perhaps look at them in the light of what happened in the actual results.

Q74 Ian Murray: I do not want to labour this point, but if you don’t know why, how can you fix it for the future?

Lord Ahmad: I think we do look at our processes. Can they be improved?

Q75 Ian Murray: It’s not process, it’s the—

Lord Ahmad: Part of it is. For example, if I were to step back and say, “What could I personally, as a Minister, have done better and more effectively?”, one of the areas that I have certainly looked at, for high-profile elections such as these to the ICJ, is that it would be of benefit for the Minister responsible and the candidate, rather than lobbying at different times, to do so in unison. That sends a very strong message without having to spell it out. But when you are in a contested election with candidates of very good calibre, it is going to be a challenge. Those are things that we need to consider, but that doesn’t mean we don’t look at how we went about organising ourselves and lobbying. It would be arrogant to suggest that we could not have done better. There are always ways to improve processes and our methodology, and I am certainly focused on doing that.

Q76 Ian Murray: Did the Indian Prime Minister lobby on behalf of the Indian candidate?

Lord Ahmad: I have heard he did. As to the actual fact, in my exchange with Mr Modi, that is not something that he mentioned specifically to me.

Q77 Ian Murray: So you still don’t know why. Could you find out for us? In your next bilaterals, could you ask somebody why?

Lord Ahmad: I don’t know if that will be top of my agenda. The important thing now, if I may suggest, Mr Murray, is that I have indicated I have a list of countries that I have lobbied—I know the Foreign Secretary was very much on the phone—and the Indians had their campaign. One thing that I would say again, to be very candid, is that when they declared late, I am sure they had a perspective that they needed to do more, because suddenly they were behind the curve in terms of the other candidates, and clearly they were successful.

Q78 Chair: Forgive me, but that is a slightly odd statement. If one starts a 100-metre race a few seconds after the first runners, of course one has to run faster, but the expectation will still be that the first runners will win



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the race.

Lord Ahmad: What I meant to say is that they certainly upped their game. As I said, our view, considering the convention that I pointed to and the assurances and pledges that we were getting, was that we were very confident that we would get Sir Christopher elected.

Q79 **Chair:** You spoke of the WEOC, which is quite understandable. Why did the French benefit from it when we did not?

Lord Ahmad: Again, the French candidate was also the president, which I think helped his position more than Sir Christopher's. I think that is one of the reasons why that came into play.

Q80 **Chair:** And of the other people who may have supported us, did the Americans support us?

Lord Ahmad: Yes, they did. They gave us an assurance.

Q81 **Ian Murray:** You don't know they did?

Lord Ahmad: Well, the thing is that it is a secret ballot. One hopes, in diplomacy, that if our closest ally says that they are supportive of us, they would do that—indeed, the Americans also lobbied on our behalf. They were very strong in their support in the Security Council.

One other thing, if I may say so, Mr Chairman, is, when we talk about losing support, I think there was not enough light thrown on it but in the Security Council itself—as you would have seen with the figures in the run-off with India—we not only held our own, but India lost one vote to an abstention. I think it was very clear there was a real stand-off between the General Assembly taking one view and the Security Council, including our colleagues on the Security Council, taking another viewpoint. That can be seen by the fact that there was very little movement, and the only movement was that one of the countries voting for India—India went from six to five. They actually lost one vote as opposed to us sustaining and retaining our nine votes throughout the different rounds of the election on the Security Council, which underlines, I would say again, the strength of our position within the Security Council.

Q82 **Chair:** Is there an argument, therefore, that we play too much on the Security Council and not on the General Assembly?

Lord Ahmad: As I said, I am the first to admit there are always better and more effective ways to do things. I am keen to explore and strengthen the position we have within the context of the Commonwealth, for example to see how we can strengthen our result. Nothing can be taken for granted, Mr Chairman, and I think one of the lessons we have certainly learned from all of this is you can have a very strong candidate and a very good campaign, but when you are in a contested election there are different reasons why people have voted as they did and clearly we need to continue to work hard on it and continue to do better next time. That said, if you look at the elections overall, within the context of the UN, I think over the last year or so, eight out of the 10 elections that have been



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held where we have had candidates put forward in various international bodies, we have actually won votes in elections. I think that most recently at the UN we were also delighted that two new Under-Secretaries-General have been appointed who are also British: Mark Lowcock and Alison Smale.

Q83 Chris Bryant: Were you personally surprised by the result?

Lord Ahmad: I was, Mr Bryant. I was visiting the Caribbean at that time. I was in Jamaica, I believe, just before. I was on a visit to the Caribbean and when I heard what the round of voting was, yes, I was surprised.

Q84 Chris Bryant: What seems odd to me is, you alluded to us as MPs and being involved in elections, and part of what we have to judge on the doorstep, always, is whether the person is telling you the truth—and then trying to seal the deal. That is the other part of lobbying. I just wonder whether maybe it would better always to have elected politicians doing this job.

Lord Ahmad: That is your opinion and that is for the Prime Minister to judge.

Q85 Chris Bryant: It is a genuine question—whether if you are not used to elections it is difficult to judge.

Lord Ahmad: I was not the only one. I have my fair share of experience of elections and standing for election. I stood effectively and successfully in local government as well. I am greatly honoured to be the Minister for the UN. I have sizeable experience of elections and on a personal level I would say I was not the only one lobbying. Indeed, my colleagues across the Foreign Office—I am the only Minister appointed from the House of Lords, and I think that is an important bridge to have between the two Houses when it comes to foreign policy.

Q86 Chris Bryant: You referred to the change in mood across the whole of the UN in relation to P5 membership, and that France and Russia have had difficulties as well. I just wonder how strong you think that is as a developing trend.

Lord Ahmad: I think there is a recognition—and we are supportive—that other countries, for example India and Brazil, to quote two, are very keen to see reforms at the UN Security Council. We are actually supportive of countries such as India and Brazil being members of the Security Council. We are also very much committed to Secretary-General Guterres's general reforms at the United Nations. I think what we are seeing there, Mr Bryant, is a changing shift. When we look at the world today, undoubtedly over the last 20 or 25 years, we have seen what was a very protectionist India, for example, emerging as an increasingly open India seeking to exert its influence on the global stage. Some of that very much is playing out at the UN.

Q87 Chris Bryant: So does that mean we should presume that in the future we are going to lose more of these?



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Lord Ahmad: No. I do not think anything could be presumed. What we have got to do is work harder. To quote you back what you said, you are absolutely right: we need to work harder on sealing the deal and ensuring that those pledges translate into actual votes. We need to work harder to ensure that that is done. I have already mentioned this once in answer to a question from Mr Murray, but the initial pledges we had to the subsequent votes that were cast in subsequent rounds did not hold. We need to ensure we square those pledges off and hold them for the full duration of every round of voting.

Q88 Chris Bryant: One of the pieces of evidence we heard yesterday was that Brexit has had a significant effect on our standing in those kinds of discussions because France brings the whole of the EU behind it, whereas Britain will no longer do so. Therefore, France plays a stronger role than we do in the P5, and will do so increasingly in the future. What is your estimate of that?

Lord Ahmad: I don't think Brexit was an issue in this election. It was not raised bilaterally with me or in any lobbying calls I made. That is reflective of the sentiment experienced by other colleagues at the Foreign Office. There is deep respect of the United Kingdom's position. As I have alluded to, the United Kingdom has been successful in elections to other institutions, and the regard for British officials within the UN underlines the fact that the members of the UN regard Britain as an important global player. Brexit should not be made an issue. Again—I am being very up front with you—it was not an issue that was raised bilaterally in any of the lobbying meetings that I and my colleagues held.

Q89 Chris Bryant: But that is my fear, in a way. What we heard yesterday was that there is so little clarity about the future direction of Britain's foreign policy and what Britain is about that other countries are saying, "Well, there's not much point in talking to Britain until they've sorted their act out. There's no point in being direct and honest with them because they sort of don't matter anymore."

Lord Ahmad: I would challenge that. Look at recent events, such as the bilateral meeting we just held with France—France is a member of the European Union and a P5 member, and we had a constructive meeting across various areas, including defence and development—and the recent bilateral meeting we held at the highest level with Poland. I mentioned our collaboration with India on cyber-security issues. The other week, the Prime Minister herself led a call for action on modern slavery, and many countries subscribed to it. Those examples all show that the UK continues to hold its own and strengthen its role across the globe, so I don't share your pessimism.

Q90 Chris Bryant: But you cited Syria as one of the key pieces of work we are doing in the United Nations, and that has been a manifest failure by Britain. People can't even tell us the truth about how they are going to vote on a judge.

Lord Ahmad: Well, I think they have conveyed it to us. What they haven't done is carry through their voting intention and the pledge they



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gave to us. I mentioned Syria in the context of the accountability of Daesh, and I am sure you will agree that what we have done in the UN in creating that accountability mechanism is vital to ensure the perpetrators of those heinous crimes are brought to account.

- Q91 **Chris Bryant:** I think the terrible situation facing Lebanon and the countries that have more refugees than their own nationals living in them, and the fact that millions of people are still displaced from their homes, are rather more substantial problems. The truth is that we have allowed Russia to dominate. If Russia chooses to act in Syria, something will happen. Britain is completely irrelevant.

Lord Ahmad: On your earlier point about Lebanon and the surrounding countries such as Turkey and Jordan, from a British perspective, in terms of the strength of Britain's role in the world, I am proud of the support we have lent to refugees. We continue to do that.

- Q92 **Royston Smith:** You said you do not want to do a post-mortem, but you made reference to how we do our business when we are fighting and trying to win elections. We endlessly have post-mortems about that. If we didn't, we would just do the same thing over and over again, which is the definition of madness—expecting a different result when you only do the same thing again. I would have thought that having a post-mortem about what happened and why people pledged their support but didn't follow through is key to any future vote we are involved in. Would you not agree that you should do some sort of post-mortem on what happened, almost individually? That is what we do. Otherwise, we are destined to repeat the same thing over and over again.

Lord Ahmad: I agree. Perhaps I was not clear about what I meant. Of course, we have already started conducting various internal reviews on what happened, in terms of spelling out specifically why someone did not vote for us. We will continue to lobby very hard in future elections, but you are right to raise the point that we have to look at process. I have asked the team—the team has gone away under instruction from the Foreign Secretary as well—to look at whether there are things that we can do more effectively in future right at the start of the process. I have also asked, for every single election running into 2025, about the process that we adopt across Whitehall on the elections that we will prioritise.

There are things that we can do better, and experience that I can put into play as a Minister who has served in different Departments. It should not just be the Foreign Office doing the lobbying, making the calls and having bilaterals; I think there should be a cross-Whitehall approach. Different Ministers from different Departments should be part of that. These are learnings that we are putting into place from the experience of the election. We are bitterly disappointed that our candidate was not elected.

You are quite right—forgive me if I was not clear about this—and I absolutely believe in ensuring that we conduct a full and thorough review to ensure that we learn. Clearly, notwithstanding the processes and lobbying that we did, the end result was not anything like what we



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wanted. The end result was that we did not get the British candidate elected. The question is: why? There were various reasons, which I have mentioned already, that were in play, regarding geographical alignment and association of candidates with the UN. I do not believe, and I stand by this, that that it is an indication that Britain suddenly has a declining influence at the UN, or in its global positioning, but I totally take on board the remarks that you have made.

- Q93 **Chair:** May I jump in? I welcome your statement about the review, and am extremely keen on the importance that you are placing on the outcome of this vote. As we move towards leaving the European Union and towards global Britain, which has been stated as the Government's policy on several occasions, although admittedly with little detail, we are talking about other multilateral institutions as areas in which the UK will continue to exercise, and hopefully increase, her influence around the world. I am very pleased to see nodding from your co-panellist, Paul Williams, the Multilateral Policy Director at the Foreign Office.

As we do so, understanding how our influence works, how it reaches, how it is not only conducted but seen to be conducted, and how it is received, seems essential. I also welcome your outreach to other Departments in making sure that it works. May I suggest that this would be a wonderful thing to do publicly? I would be very grateful if you could publish the review, or at least let the Committee see it, so that we can assist Her Majesty's Government in making sure that Parliament is fully behind the operations that the Government are seeking to achieve.

If we are to deliver increased global influence for the United Kingdom, playing that role together at various international bodies seems essential, particularly as members of our Committee, one of whom has literally just left to assist an international body, sit on parliamentary assemblies—the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the Council of Europe, and many other bodies. It seems essential that we therefore understand the review that you are conducting and are able to contribute.

Lord Ahmad: The intent is that the review itself—I am being very upfront with you—is an internal review for the Government to look at, to ensure that we look at the lessons learned and put them into play.

- Q94 **Chair:** Do we have to wait for BuzzFeed to get a copy of it then?

Lord Ahmad: If that does happen, it will be disappointing from a Foreign Office perspective. I am very much of the mindset that we need to look across Government. As I said, I have asked the team to look at forward appointments, not just for the next year but way beyond, to establish where our priorities are and to ensure that they are understood across Government; that the exercise we undertake thereafter in pursuit of them is also cross-Government; and that we have a ready pool of candidates to draw from who are effective and strong voices for Britain.

On the specific matter of the report, I know it will be disappointing to you, but at the moment it is very much an internal review. There is one very good reason for that. People are much more open with those who are



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involved with the process knowing that their views are being submitted in confidence. That is an important aspect to retain.

- Q95 **Chair:** The Committee would understand fully if the Foreign Office wished to make sure that the elements that were sensitive to individuals were redacted. I don't think the Committee would have any issue with that at all. But to have an idea of where the review found room for improvement would be extremely useful for Parliament's job in assisting the Government in making sure of the good governance of this country.

Lord Ahmad: I am certainly not dismissing your remarks, Mr Chairman. I shall certainly reflect upon them.

- Q96 **Chair:** We get little out of the Foreign Office as it is, so it would be very welcome.

Lord Ahmad: Mr Williams may wish to add to that.

Paul Williams: I take the point about individuals, Mr Chairman. I fully understand that. I hope that what we will do when reviewing how we did this election is also think about our own tactics—how we relate to the campaign, how we talk to other countries. I think that some of that could be instructive to other countries about how we do our campaigns and what is public, in a way that could undermine our ability—

Chair: I am fully cognisant that in various areas the tactics of a campaign can indeed assist in others. Frankly, there is an awful lot that isn't discreet or secret that I would have hoped the Foreign Office would feel able to share. I call Royston.

- Q97 **Royston Smith:** I am a Brexiteer, as we are all referred to these days. I think that the UK will prosper beyond being a member of the European Union, but I know that many of my colleagues disagree with that. I know that even though 17-odd million people voted to leave, there are many people who wish we hadn't taken that decision. That pervades through Government and Government Departments and people in general and from what you hear from parliamentarians and others in this country. You said that Brexit wasn't to blame for this vote, but if you don't know why people didn't vote for us, how can you say Brexit isn't to blame, hand on heart?

Lord Ahmad: I said that it was my feeling on the bilaterals and the conversations and exchanges that we had. With those, not once was the issue of Brexit directly raised. On the contrary, what I have found subsequently—I cite again the example of India, because that was the competitive element to this particular election—is that the reception and the forward-looking relationship with India is on a very positive footing. The reception that we have received on important issues that affect the global community and cyber-security is right up there. We are finding very strong collaboration. I think that indicates, certainly to me, that countries are very keen to work with us across a sphere of issues. Hand on heart, did anyone not vote for us without revealing to me that Brexit was the issue? I can only answer on what I was told or what was communicated to



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me. Not one country in one bilateral or one conversation that I had said that Brexit was an issue.

- Q98 **Royston Smith:** You talked earlier of building a Commonwealth caucus. Given the diversity of Commonwealth members, how do you intend to do that?

Lord Ahmad: There is a lot of strength. I am very passionate about the Commonwealth, because, taking a step back, if you have common systems, common languages, common legal systems and educational frameworks, that is a very strong base for continued working and strengthened working. I think the Commonwealth is desperately underleveraged. I know I am returning again for my third appearance before the Committee on the issue of the Commonwealth.

- Q99 **Chair:** You are always welcome.

Lord Ahmad: I very much look forward to the Committee and some of the suggestions that will be put forward during that session about working with the Commonwealth. I am very keen—it is in very early stages—to see how we can make that Commonwealth caucus work to good effect within the UN. There are many issues that will be on the Commonwealth agenda, such as girls' education and women's empowerment, the issue of cyber-security, and the strides that we are making tackling global health challenges such as malaria. They are reflective of common challenges across the Commonwealth. How we take that forwards within the context of the UN will be a powerful way forward to show how the Commonwealth areas of agreement, based on the common systems languages and processes we enjoy, can move forward. It is work in progress, but I am keen to strengthen that further.

- Q100 **Royston Smith:** How is that work in progress going?

Lord Ahmad: It is going well. We have a good relationship with the current Secretary-General—she is committed to it. It resonates very strongly with other countries that we have raised it with, including our key partners such as Australia, Canada and India. I feel very strongly that the Commonwealth family is desperately underleveraged, but the opportunities are huge. The best example I can give is of this great city of London. When I look around London and see the strength of the different Commonwealth diasporas, are we really utilising that strength effectively vis-à-vis issues of education and trade? The short answer is that there are huge opportunities ahead, and that is where I want a lot of our focus to be. We can also work across issues of agreement in the UN context.

- Q101 **Chris Bryant:** I want to throw a slight spanner in that works, which is that 95% of the Commonwealth's population live in countries where homosexuality is a criminal offence. They share that law because we gave it to them, but that is a bit of a challenge when some of the human rights that we would expect in this country are not shared in exactly the same way elsewhere.



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Lord Ahmad: I agree with your sentiment, Mr Bryant. It is a major challenge. That should not prevent us—nor does it prevent me—from raising those issues, as challenging as they may be.

Q102 **Chair:** Your momentum—

Chris Bryant: Is this a Labour party selection meeting?

Chair: I don't think any of us would be here if it were. Your memorandum says that the joint conference mechanism was being actively considered. By what process or on whose advice did you decide against triggering it?

Lord Ahmad: First, the context of the joint mechanism, which I became reasonably well versed in, somewhat surprised me once I learned how the system actually works. De facto, in a very quick summary, that is that the Security Council and the General Assembly agree that the mechanism should be invoked. Representatives are nominated from both bodies. If they fail to agree, it goes to the ICJ and the judges elect. I was interested to learn that ultimately, if there was still a stand-off, it is the oldest judge—by age, not by tenure—who would choose which judge would serve on that body. We certainly took soundings from some of the P5 members in the context of the Security Council, and it was our view that support for the mechanism would not be supported by others. We took a view on the importance of the institution of the ICJ, the workings of the UN and the time—I assure you, after sitting through several rounds of voting, that that takes a substantial amount of the UN's time. I believe that was the right decision.

Q103 **Chair:** Do they go through the votes one after the other?

Lord Ahmad: Yes, back to back. There are ballots, which get taken away and counted.

Q104 **Chair:** So there is no time for lobbying between them?

Lord Ahmad: I can assure you that I was up and down the various aisles trying to lobby through every particular round of voting. On a personal level, it was disappointing that we did not achieve the result we wanted. But that should not deter us. Would I do it again? Absolutely, because we need to lobby for every last vote that counts.

Q105 **Chair:** I am sure you will have seen the report in *The Times* a number of weeks ago about the possibility that France would withdraw her support. Were you aware of that at the time?

Lord Ahmad: Again, I can only comment on the evidence. The permanent representative of France was with me. I was speaking directly to him as we voted in the last round. He was looking at the votes, particularly in the context of what I talked about earlier—the Security Council—with a high degree of concern. That is my experience of my dealings with the permanent representative of the French Government to the UN.

Chair: If we are going to go on to P5 authority, do you want to start, Chris?



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Chris Bryant: I have pretty much done that. I think it was answered.

Chair: In that case, shall we talk a bit about its expansion?

Chris Bryant: I thought I asked that as well.

Chair: So long as you are happy.

Chris Bryant: I want to do the Chagos Islands.

Chair: Go for it.

Q106 **Chris Bryant:** On the Chagos Islands, was it inevitable that we were going to lose that vote as well?

Lord Ahmad: I think there is an historic legacy there, and I think what Mauritius presented to the General Assembly was based on the whole issue of colonisation and so on. The presentation from Mauritius, as regrettable as it is—we regret that they have taken it to the ICJ—is something that has historic reflections.

If I was to go back in history to that time, when there were agreements with the then Government of the day with Mauritius— We fully accept that the handling—the way the people of the islands were actually dealt with—could have been far better.

Q107 **Chris Bryant:** What era are you talking about now? Are you talking about the '60s or 2009?

Lord Ahmad: No, I am talking about the '60s. As you know, there is now no permanent right to abode on the islands. We have taken a view, and I have met directly with various representatives of the Chagossian community here in the UK and with Mauritius a number of times on this issue. The fact is that it is now going into that legal process at the ICJ, and we will present our credentials appropriately.

Going back to the vote that you alluded to, and whether our losing it was inevitable, I think the case that Mauritius made at that time was very much based on the issue of colonisation and decolonisation, which resonated with many members of the General Assembly.

Q108 **Chris Bryant:** Or colonialisation. I am sure that is true, but this is an instance in which we know how people voted—it was not a secret ballot—and we know that quite a lot of European countries abstained. I wonder why that was.

Lord Ahmad: Some of them abstained because of our lobbying that, if they were going to vote one way, they should abstain with us.

Paul Williams: Iain may know more, but I think it is quite interesting that there were quite a lot of abstentions in that General Assembly vote. Part of our argument about the vote was that it was not actually an appropriate issue for the ICJ to deal with. Some of the abstentions—"We are abstaining from this vote"—were probably a reflection of that view.



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Q109 Chris Bryant: In which case we might have been better making a different argument. I understand from what you said that we effectively encouraged people towards abstention, rather than to supporting us.

Paul Williams: We were asking people to support our position, obviously.

Q110 Chris Bryant: Which is to vote against?

Paul Williams: Which is to vote against, yes. Obviously, we did not get enough people to do that, but the point that there were a lot of abstentions—in other words, the no votes plus the abstentions—was a decent proportion of the General Assembly, which I think reflects the lots of lobbying we did on the issue.

Q111 Chris Bryant: I worry that, in the middle of all this, there is a battle going on about self-determination. We have sometimes used the argument of self-determination—particularly in relation to the Falklands—but we would not, for instance, say that Leeds could suddenly decide to make itself independent from the United Kingdom. We do not believe in self-determination fundamentally. Other countries have a completely different argument about that. We are then caught on the horns of having been a former colonial power, which seemed to be the emotion that dragged people. Is that fair?

Sir Iain Macleod: I think that is fair, but I still think that, looking at it from the other point of view, Mauritius got 90 votes, which is barely half the General Assembly. As I think Sir John Sawers and Lord Hannay said the other day, you would expect anything on colonisation in the UN General Assembly to be a pretty sure-fire winner. That is a win, but it is not a strong win, which I think reflects that there is a lot of hesitation—in that abstaining group, the non-voting group and the voting against group—about the way that Mauritius is putting this case to the ICJ. So, yes, we lost, and we probably expected to lose, but I think that—

Q112 Chris Bryant: “We probably expected to lose”?

Sir Iain Macleod: I think we would expect to lose that vote. It would be difficult to win it. We fought hard to win it, but given the context—I think this is what Sir John and Lord Hannay were saying to you yesterday—you would have had an uphill battle in the UN on a decolonisation issue, which is how it was portrayed. That does not necessarily mean we will lose in the ICJ, of course; we will fight very hard on the legal principle.

Chris Bryant: It would be helpful if we had another judge.

Lord Ahmad: He would have to recuse himself.

Q113 Chair: One of the areas we are coming to is the challenges in resourcing and getting influence on international organisations, of which the UN is obviously pre-eminent. How are you ensuring that the UK will not be crowded out of UN bodies as fast-growing economies continue to mature in stature and start funding their missions rather more fully than they have been doing for the best part of the past 70 years?



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Lord Ahmad: First, I talked earlier about our representation in the UN itself. To give you a sense of the P5 comparison for our role within the UN—these are UK appointees—the position of the P5 members regarding USG status within the UN is that the United States has six, we have five, France has three, Russia has two and China has one. Of the overall senior positions, if I can put it that way, from the grades of the Under-Secretary-General to P5, there are a tad under 2,998 positions at the UN, in the context of the P5, of which we hold 578. Again, that underlines the role we play. We are also bolstering some of our representations, within the UN context, of our own diplomatic service. We are increasing by nine positions, I believe, at both Geneva and New York.

As you will be aware, Mr Chairman, there is also a look at additional resources within our European missions to look to increase those. In the context of underlining the importance of our continued relationship with Europe post-Brexit, we have upgraded the seniority of many positions at the most senior levels—that is, the ambassadors—across Europe to reflect that importance.

There are challenges. Again, I am being open with you. Of course, there are always challenges on budgets, but I have seen the UN team at work at both Geneva and New York. They do an absolutely sterling job and I am delighted that we are increasing, albeit modestly, our headcounts in both Geneva and New York.

Q114 **Chair:** As you are increasing them, are you recognising the change in emphasis from the Security Council to the General Assembly in the UN?

Lord Ahmad: That is important learning. What we have discussed this afternoon reflects the importance of looking at how we work more effectively across the General Assembly. We have good relationships. As you will be aware, we have a new ambassador in Karen Pierce, who is well-established.

Chair: An extremely impressive individual—

Lord Ahmad: She was a political director, and she knows New York well. Once Karen Pierce has got her feet under the table, I will be going directly there early on and establishing even stronger relationships with the various permanent representatives of different countries. As I have alluded to, my strong personal view is that we need to do more work in the context of associations such as the Commonwealth.

Q115 **Chair:** As part of this increased emphasis, we are presumably going to seek to influence various areas more than others in the allocation of resources. Can you compare the ICJ, for example, with the International Law Commission or the Human Rights Council? Where would you put the influence?

Lord Ahmad: There are varying influences, and Sir Iain will comment on them. I have sat on one of those bodies: the Human Rights Council. It is challenging at times, but it serves a very practical purpose. Partly picking up on the points raised by other members, there is an opportunity to raise



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some of those more challenging issues on human rights, be they on LGBT rights or religious freedoms, and countries take it very seriously. They view the Human Rights Council as an international forum where they will be held to account. I am very much of the opinion, and have put it into practice, that every single review that we now do at the Human Rights Council calls out the discrimination that we see by those countries being reviewed.

Sir Iain Macleod: I agree with what was just said. As regards the ICJ and ILC, there is no doubt that the ICJ is the principal judicial organ of the UN. It is a prestigious organ. The fact that the UK is not on it is, without doubt, a blow—there is no question about that. The Court will be without a UK judge and without that influence. A lot of UK advocates appear before the Court, so it is not as if there is no influence from UK legal thinking. Some of the prominent advocates before the Court are British, so into the Court's thinking there will still be the arguments that come from the common law system and from the expertise of the UK legal system.

The ILC is a different kind of body. It formulates ideas for the future of the law in the way the Law Commission does here and its influence can be profound. We have an excellent candidate on the ILC, Sir Michael Wood, and we pay a lot of attention to the work of the ILC. We work with all our P5 colleagues that the other countries have elected. In the longer term development of the law, it is an important body, too.

Q116 **Chair:** So of the three, the ICJ is *primus inter pares*? The list of Human Rights Council members rather suggests that.

Sir Iain Macleod: That is probably right. It is the major UN organ.

Paul Williams: On our effort at the UN in future, I can confirm that when we are thinking about additional resource, we are thinking about that because of the General Assembly. In other parts of the UN—for example, in Geneva—in some parts of which we currently co-ordinate with the EU member states on positions, we are assuming that in future we will need to do more of that as the UK individually, and that will take some resource.

Also, on where we are looking at putting our effort, we are looking across all three so-called pillars of the United Nations. On peace and security, there is not much effect from Brexit, because the UK is a permanent member of the Security Council as the UK—nothing to do with the EU.

On development, as you will be aware, we have our 0.7% commitment. That is the major reason why we are the third highest contributor to the UN overall. On human rights, you mentioned the Human Rights Council. Among the P5, we have always been one of the most prominent countries to be engaged across all three pillars of the United Nations, and we will of course try to maintain that in future.

Q117 **Chair:** In the FCO's annual report, one of the roles of global Britain is to defend the international rules-based system. We seem to be coming back again and again to the fact that this is more of a blow. Forgive me as I



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keep returning to the same issue, but it constantly feels like more of a blow.

Lord Ahmad: It is a blow, undoubtedly. Not having a judge on the ICJ is, as I said, a blow for Britain. I also think it is a blow for other countries as well because of the record, particularly the record of our candidate when he served on the ICJ, and it is bitterly disappointing. As I said earlier, we need to ensure that, notwithstanding the disappointment, we continue on the initial point that you made, Mr Chairman, about the rules-based system.

Our commitment to the ICJ and to the different bodies of the UN again underlines our commitment to the international rules-based system. We will continue, as Mr Williams said, through all the key pillars, including the reform agenda that the Secretary-General has put forward, to be very supportive of the UN and its international organisations and bodies.

Q118 **Chair:** Unless there is anything further, I will finish off with one last thing. We attempted to get 15 people in as special rapporteurs in the last year. None was selected in 2017. We stood for the ACABQ, the budgetary committee, and we did not get on that. Do we intend to stand again in 2019? It is a bit odd, given how much of a contributing nation we are, that we do not have oversight of the UN's budget.

Paul Williams: On ACABQ, which is the advisory committee on budgetary affairs, we were on it until the end of 2016. We had been on it through two successive elections at that point: two three-year terms. It is normal for us to rotate off for a bit and another WEOG country—Western European and Others Group country—comes in. We have declared that we will run again in a couple of years' time. So we did not lose an election; we did not stand and we rotated off. But you raise an important point, Mr Chairman, because you are talking about elections we have won and lost in the last year to a year and a half. Of course, as the Minister said earlier, we lost the ICJ and we are very disappointed about that, but we have won a range of elections since the EU referendum vote—about seven or eight. Over the course of 2016 alone, I think we won nine or 10 elections. So it is not as if we are losing all elections; we are in fact winning the vast majority of elections.

That goes to your point about the rules-based system. Of course, the UN is a very broad collection of entities and specialised agencies, as well as the Secretariat, and we as the UK want to spread our influence across a whole range of those. In 2016, we won, for example, the International Law Commission, the International Labour Organisation head and the Human Rights Council—various different bits of the system.

Sir Iain Macleod: If I may, on the International Law Commission, that was in 2016, after the Brexit referendum. The French lost that vote. I take no pleasure in that at all, because they had an excellent candidate, but he did not come through. So it is not just us who takes blows from time to time in this area. There is a big challenge, certainly, but it is a challenge that we work with partner countries like France and the US to address.

Q119 **Chris Bryant:** Is UNESCO your responsibility as well? I presume it is.

Paul Williams: It is a DFID lead, but it is obviously part of—

Q120 **Chris Bryant:** UNESCO has been writing, worrying about this building. They are seriously considering what position they should adopt in relation to world heritage site status at the main conference next year. What plans do you have to ensure that their concerns are allayed?

Lord Ahmad: If I may, I will write to the Committee in that respect.

Chris Bryant: I thought that might be the case.

Q121 **Ian Murray:** Global Britain is a massive centrepiece of Government strategy, in which the FCO plays a key role. How often do you talk about global Britain in your bilaterals and at the UN?

Lord Ahmad: We talk regularly in bilaterals about—

Q122 **Chair:** May I stop you for a moment? What do you understand by the term “global Britain” and how do you talk about it?

Lord Ahmad: First, Global Britain is our position in the world—it is as simple as that. It is Britain and its role in the world, the position it has and the relationships it has. I think global Britain in itself—how it is demonstrably being seen today—is through the bilateral relationships we have, which are strong. Notwithstanding what I said earlier about the issues of Brexit, we have seen bilateral relationships with our European partners—recent meetings I mentioned with France and Poland—which underline the importance our European partners attach to the position of global Britain and what it means. There is our role in the development sphere as one of the major contributors and our proud commitment to 0.7%.

If you look at the UN, we remain its third largest contributor, and we remain dominant in terms of the influences we have on it and UN reform. And there is the context of the Commonwealth. I come back to the Commonwealth again, because it is also a huge opportunity to demonstrably show the different areas of global Britain, and the four priorities set within the context of the Commonwealth and the Heads of Government meeting—prosperity, sustainability, fairness and security are very much relevant to the world.

On security again, and global Britain, in terms of the leadership we provide, I am a former Minister for countering extremism—one of the recent initiatives we have taken internationally is through the Global Internet Forum. Our Prime Minister, Mrs May, led it and we partnered with both the French President and the Italian Prime Minister, who were there at the UN, bringing in the private sector and holding them to account, to take responsibility on fighting the scourge of extremism that we find is a global challenge. All this, in my view, is reflective of what global Britain is.

Q123 **Ian Murray:** Would you mind if we briefly played a little bit of role play? You are the Minister for the FCO at the UN—as you are. I am another



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country, and I say to you, "Minister, as the Government's representative at the UN, can you explain to me what Global Britain is?"

Lord Ahmad: I thought I just did that. I have articulated some of the pertinent issues and serious issues facing the world, whether on climate change, security, cyber, and development and girls' education. Those are priorities for Britain; they are priorities on a global stage and Britain is very much at the heart and centre of it.

Chair: Mr Murray, are you content?

Lord Ahmad: I thought that was how we voted in the House of Lords—content or not content.

Ian Murray: I am not content, but that is for a future report.

Chair: That is for your elevation.

Lord Ahmad: I am disappointed I was not able to convince you, Mr Murray.

Chair: Lord Ahmad, Mr Williams and Sir Iain, thank you very much for your time.