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Foreign Affairs Committee

A brave new Britain? The future of the UK's international policy

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The Foreign Affairs Committee

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Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Foreign Affairs Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 6106; the Committee's email address is fac@parliament.uk.

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Summary

Our world is one of worsening competition between countries. Deeper global interconnection, and the transformative impact of technological change, could offer unprecedented opportunities for nations to support one another. But international rivalry, a lack of consensus-building leadership, and a division of the world into competing visions and systems, seem set instead to make global challenges more abundant, more severe, and more difficult to resolve.

China and Russia have been adept at realising where their capacity for influence lies and harnessing the full spectrum of such capabilities. But the UK's international policy has been adrift. It has lacked a clear strategic vision, lacked confidence, and lacked coherent implementation.

The UK has good reason to be confident in the capabilities of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) to lead the coordination and implementation of 'Britain abroad'. And contributors around the world call on the UK to step up, do more, and play a more impactful role. It can be a problem-solving nation and one that opens opportunities for others. It can serve the British people and also the global good, but that demands an integrated strategy and deliberate prioritisation.

We recommend that the Government:

- (1) Does 'tilt to the Indo-Pacific', building off a strong partnership with Europe
- (2) Deepens strategic coordination between the Department for International Trade (DIT) and the FCDO
- (3) Deploys its mediation, conflict resolution, and atrocity prevention capabilities
- (4) Publishes a coherent, resourced 'soft power' strategy bringing together the UK's tools of influence, from law and education to training missions and trade
- (5) Convenes and catalyses negotiations to reform multilateral organisations
- (6) Acts with nimble coalitions of like-minded nations to counter threats and realise opportunities
- (7) Delivers on its commitment to prioritise the existential issues of climate change and global health security
- (8) Works with the world to agree regulations for frontier spheres such as cyberspace and outer space.

1 The challenge

1. “Frankly, I’m embarrassed that our generation has done this,” Zeid Ra’ad Al-Hussein, a former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, told us. “It is very difficult to sit with your young children and say to them, ‘Good luck to you. We will soon be passing on, in 20 or 30 years, and you will have to deal with this unbelievable state we are in.’”¹ Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, a Nobel Peace Laureate and former President of Liberia, saw “tragedies all over the world”:² a world that is “becoming a more dangerous place” (said Lord Hague of Richmond, former UK Foreign Secretary),³ “entering a very difficult time” (said Koji Tsuruoka, Japan’s former Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs),⁴ and will be a “world of instability, insecurity, and polarization” (said the International Committee of the Red Cross).⁵ Their views were part of the 80 written submissions and more than 100 pages of oral evidence gathered from around the world and published by our inquiry.⁶

2. **The Integrated Review is a timely and necessary response to a world characterised by ever-strengthening interconnection and rapid technological change.** Digital innovation and cheap travel have enabled people to visit, trade, support, enhance and understand one another more than ever. Nations, economies, markets and product chains are more intimately interconnected than ever before.⁷ With interconnectedness comes interdependence, for good and ill. Local challenges can quickly become international crises. These challenges can leave nations and individuals vulnerable to deliberate sabotage in ways that stop short of physical confrontation. Revolutionary factors, such as the expanding world of cyber, our lives online, and the development of algorithms, Artificial Intelligence, or machine-learning capacities have multiplied the power of a few individuals and companies that have innovated in this space. Those governments who wish not to intervene, for fear of constraining that innovation, risk becoming absent players in these frontier spaces. Those governments that seek to assert themselves over their own citizens or other nations now have, through such technologies, a much enhanced and potentially disruptive capacity to do so.

3. The prevailing sense of pessimism that characterised the contributions to our inquiry came in part from the immediate circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic. We do not yet know whether this will be a temporary or a more enduring phenomenon, but it has had a dramatic effect on global interconnection and halted global progress in many forms.⁸ In addition, climate change poses an existential threat to the way we live our lives. International bodies have thus far found it difficult to find solutions to these problems, but these profound challenges have laid bare an even more deep-seated problem:⁹ **the world is increasingly riven by global competition rather than cooperation.**

1 Dr Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein ([Q82](#))

2 Ellen Johnson Sirleaf ([Q62](#))

3 Lord Hague of Richmond ([Q21](#))

4 Koji Tsuruoka ([Q115](#))

5 International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) ([INR0063](#)) para 4

6 A full list of [oral-evidence transcripts](#) and of [published written evidence](#) is available on our website.

7 See, for example, Emma Sky ([INR0044](#)) para 1; Nick Witney (European Council on Foreign Relations) ([INR0031](#)); and the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Drones ([INR0054](#)) para 5.2

8 See, for example, assessments of the impact of Covid-19 in HALO Trust ([INR0041](#)) para 4.2; BOND ([INR0036](#)) para 4; Oxfam ([INR0052](#)) para 40; and the ICRC ([INR0063](#)) para 33

9 See descriptions of the global competition by Claus Grube ([INR0062](#)) para A7; Juan Manuel Santos ([Q98](#)); Dr Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein ([Q82](#)); the Mines Advisory Group ([INR0038](#)) para 8; and James Rogers (Henry Jackson Society) ([INR0050](#))

4. **In part, this global competition is driven by geo-political change.** Other regions of the world are rising to greater economic strength and international influence alongside that of 'the West'.¹⁰ **But this global competition is also a battle between competing visions and mindsets.** Autocracies are increasingly challenging the rules and norms that have, for decades, regulated international exchange. As competition intensifies, it will fall on democratic nations to uphold the central tenets of the rules-based international system, including democracy, human rights, and free trade. Many of our contributors urged the UK to articulate a clear place for universal values at the heart of its international policy,¹¹ more effectively to challenge 'revisionist' powers that seek to subvert the international system and weaken rights.¹² **And the global competition is increasingly one between different technical systems.** There is a trend towards 'our' systems code versus 'theirs', with declining interoperability.¹³ As countries are pressured to 'pick a side', the early decisions they take could soon become increasingly difficult to change and the sunk cost of new technology draws them down a path that encodes the values of one system into the heart of the economy.

5. **Such competition has stalled, and to some degree reversed, cooperation through multilateral organisations. The drive towards international arbitration is increasingly challenged by great power rivalry and influence projection. The world lacks consensus-building leadership. Global divides are widening, and there is a risk of the world's challenges becoming more abundant, more severe, and more difficult to resolve.** There has been a tendency in the past to leave such leadership to more powerful nations. But the United States and China have recently failed to play a global leadership role and have, in pursuit of their own self-interest, deliberately undermined efforts to reach multilateral agreements.¹⁴ That has left other states, those more dependent on structured cooperation than direct expressions of national will, needing to work together to reinforce the framework of global cooperation.

6. **An increasingly assertive and revisionist China has created geo-political friction with a more introspective United States. China and Russia, as leading authoritarian and revisionist powers, have also been more adept than their ideological rivals at realising where their capacity for international influence lies and harnessing the full spectrum of such capabilities.** This includes hybrid warfare and the spread of propaganda and disinformation abroad, aggressive industrial policies including hostile take-overs, money laundering, debt as a tool to force smaller states into compliance, and incremental gains

10 We heard, including through [our oral evidence](#), about the growing influence of South America, Africa, and the Indo-Pacific region.

11 See, for example, a readout from a meeting with King Abdullah II of Jordan in ([INR0078](#)) para 13; UN Women (UK) ([INR0088](#)); the Foreign Policy Centre ([INR0019](#)); Oxford Research Group ([INR0016](#)) Executive Summary; Anthony Salamone ([INR0066](#)) para 7; James Rogers, Henry Jackson Society ([INR0050](#)); Salam for Democracy and Human Rights ([INR0073](#)) para 20; and Paul Docherty and Kate Jones ([INR0045](#)) para 34, reflecting the views of the 34 diplomats participating in the Oxford University Diplomatic Studies Programme

12 See, for example, Samantha Power ([Q1](#)); Marietje Schaake ([Q53](#)); Dr Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein ([Q91](#)); Ellen Johnson Sirleaf ([Q58](#)); Oxfam ([INR0052](#)) para 16; Professor Michael Clarke ([INR0018](#)) Section 4; Institute of Commonwealth Studies ([INR0024](#)) Section 1

13 Ambassador-at-Large Professor Chan Heng Chee, from the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that "we are moving into a technology war" ([Q137](#))

14 See discussions of China's role by Samantha Power ([Q10](#) and [Q13](#)); Asoke Mukerji ([Q39](#)), Koji Tsuruoka ([Q121](#)), Sylvie-Agnès Bermann ([Q13](#)); and Dr Tim Summers ([INR0068](#)); and discussions of the role of the United States by Juan Manuel Santos ([Q98](#)), Marietje Schaake ([Q53](#)), Dr Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein ([Q78](#)), Bobby McDonagh ([INR0005](#)), Emma Sky ([INR0044](#)) para 2 and 3, and Professor Michael Clarke ([INR0018](#)) Section 4

in territory through challenging the administration and sovereignty of smaller nations.¹⁵ Although this strategy has brought short-term benefits for these countries, we believe it is ultimately self-defeating and unsustainable.

7. **The UK's own international policy has been adrift. It has lacked clarity.** More than four years after the soundbite was first used to encapsulate the UK's international role, and almost three years after our Committee first called for more clarity about its meaning and metrics, many of our contributors still told us that they did not know what Global Britain stood for.¹⁶

8. **It has also lacked confidence. Our contributors the world over were clear that the UK has recently appeared less ambitious and more absent in its global role.** They gave a variety of reasons, including a diminished profile during the UK's membership of the European Union,¹⁷ distraction by the process of leaving the EU,¹⁸ previous under-resourcing of its diplomatic service,¹⁹ or a more general de-prioritisation of some regions plus a reluctance against assertion in others.²⁰ But, whatever the explanation, the conclusion was strikingly unanimous:

- From the Pacific region of East Asia, Ambassador-at-Large Professor Chan Heng Chee, from the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said: "If I may be frank, I think Britain could step up its profile in the region."²¹
- From India, the country's former Ambassador to the UN, Asoke Mukerji, told us that "in the political and strategic sphere, there is a perception that the UK is not involved as much as it should be."²²

15 See, for example, discussions of Russia by Dr Andrew Foxall (Henry Jackson Society) ([INR0058](#)) para 3 and Nick Witney (European Council on Foreign Relations) ([INR0031](#)), and discussions of 'hybrid' by the HALO Trust ([INR0041](#)) para 4.1 and Hew Strachan ([INR0049](#))

16 See, for example, uncertainty about the meaning of Global Britain expressed by Paul Docherty and Kate Jones ([INR0045](#)) para 7 and para 9 (reporting the views of the 34 diplomats participating in the Oxford University Diplomatic Studies Programme); Dr William James ([INR0065](#)); Claus Grube ([INR0062](#)) para B1 and B10; Anthony Salamone ([INR0066](#)) para 4; the British Foreign Policy Group ([INR0071](#)) para 11; Dr Jonathan Gilmore ([INR0028](#)) Para 2.10; and Centre for Britain and Europe ([INR0039](#)) Section 2

17 See, for example, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf ([Q69](#)) and Ambassador-at-Large Professor Chan Heng Chee ([Q139](#))

18 See, for example, Asoke Mukerji ([Q42](#)) and a readout from a meeting with His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan in ([INR0078](#)) para 12

19 **Our Committee commissioned the Scrutiny Unit of the Committee Office in the House of Commons to analyse and present the recent statistics from the FCO and FCDO on resourcing, in Annex 1.** Several witnesses cited cuts to the funding and staff levels of what was the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) as a key factor behind the decline in the UK's global profile. See, for example, Bath's New Vision group ([INR00012](#)) 'FCO's resources and capabilities'; Professor Michael Clarke ([INR0018](#)) Section 6; Dr Robin Porter ([INR0030](#)) para 30; Dr Nicholas Wright ([INR0033](#)) para 21; BOND ([INR0036](#)) para 7; Emma Sky ([INR0044](#)) para 33; James Rogers ([INR0050](#)) 'The priorities for UK foreign policy strategy' para 2e; and the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Drones ([INR0054](#)) para 3.3. Figures published by the FCDO show that budget and staff numbers have recently increased, but also that a larger proportion of the Department's budget is now derived from Official Development Assistance (ODA) and therefore has restrictions in terms of what it can be spent on.

20 See, for example, Alexander Downer ([Q40](#)) and Juan Manuel Santos ([Q99](#)). More general comments about a diminished role by the UK were made by Dr Nicholas Wright ([INR0033](#)) para 12 and 13; the Centre for Britain and Europe ([INR0039](#)); and the Coalition for Genocide Response ([INR0064](#))

21 Chan Heng Chee ([Q134](#))

22 Asoke Mukerji ([Q52](#))

- Of South America,²³ former-President Juan Manuel Santos said: “Unfortunately, it has been neglected” by the UK, and that “the presence of the UK in Latin America has been extremely small. It should have been larger, and it can be larger.”²⁴
- From the Middle East, His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan suggested that the UK had been more inward looking due to the challenges of Covid-19 and Brexit.²⁵
- From Africa,²⁶ former-President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf suggested that the UK had “changed the intensity of its effort” and that “there was a change—perhaps a noticeable change—that in a way [the UK] had passed responsibility to others.”²⁷
- From Australia, the country’s former Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, said: “I think that over the past 30 years the UK has retreated and become a regional country. [...] there was a period of 17 years, including the nearly 12 years I was Foreign Minister, when no single British Foreign Secretary visited Australia. When I think back on that, it seems quite incredible.”²⁸
- Lord Hague of Richmond, the former UK Foreign Secretary, said that “the UK has to be prepared to launch initiatives and perhaps be a little bit more French in our approach—I never thought I would say that. They do not really hold back on coming up with a new initiative and presenting it to the rest of the world.”²⁹ The former French Ambassador to the UK, Sylvie Agnès Bermann, agreed that “it is true that [the UK does] not take so many initiatives [...] I think that the UK studies everything, every consequence. If you do not take risks, you do not play a role.”³⁰

9. **None of our contributors wanted the UK to stand back or keep quiet. All of them urged the UK to step up, do more, and play a more impactful role in the world. They highlighted the positive contribution that the UK could make to international relations, and the negative implications if it declined.** Bobby McDonagh, a former Ambassador from the Republic of Ireland to the UK, said that “British foreign policy should seek to regain fully its self-confidence.”³¹ Ellen Johnson Sirleaf warned that “we need the United Kingdom and the skills it has, based on its influence and historical relationship, to do more [...] the United Kingdom cannot retreat at this moment in time. It cannot retreat from the world.”³² Samantha Power, a former US Ambassador to the UN, agreed:

In a world where burden-sharing is indispensable, where the United States will not be the world’s policeman, it is important that there is a powerful, values-driven democracy that is willing to pull its weight—really to punch

23 See, for example, [oral evidence taken on 21 July 2020](#), HC 380 (2019–21) [Juan Manuel Santos] and the written contribution from Néstor Osorio Londoño ([INR0060](#))

24 Juan Manuel Santos ([Q99](#))

25 See a note of a meeting with His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan in ([INR0078](#)) para 12

26 See, for example, [oral evidence taken on 18 June 2020](#), HC 380 (2019–21) [Ellen Johnson Sirleaf]

27 Ellen Johnson Sirleaf ([Q69](#))

28 Alexander Downer ([Q40](#))

29 Lord Hague of Richmond ([Q22](#))

30 Sylvie-Agnès Bermann ([Q9](#))

31 Bobby McDonagh ([INR0005](#))

32 Ellen Johnson Sirleaf ([Q66](#))

above its weight—in the international system. [...] British diplomats and development professionals are involved in promoting all of those things in really singular ways.³³

10. **The UK has good reason to be confident in the capabilities of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), which were praised by contributors from around the world.** In a survey of British Council youth networks in a range of different countries, commissioned by our Committee in collaboration with others,³⁴ respondents overwhelmingly agreed that “the UK is an influential country in the world” and were clear that they saw the UK as having “the most influence in global affairs” through its diplomacy followed by its international aid. Samantha Power told us that “the diplomatic power of British public servants—foreign service—out in the field working alongside and in partnership with their development counterparts is a striking feature of the UK’s comparative advantage of its value add globally.”³⁵ Sylvie-Agnès Bermann described the UK’s diplomatic service as “this wonderful tool”,³⁶ while the City of London Corporation wrote of how “the British Embassy’ brands are powerful and widely respected.”³⁷

11. Our evidence noted the UK’s convening power.³⁸ **The UK has a strong capacity to use its memberships and influence to bring countries together in dialogue. Contributors also admired the UK as a pragmatic country whose thought leadership, and the legal drafting capabilities of the FCDO’s lawyers, can bring the world together through agreed, stable and predictable frameworks. The UK’s own adherence to such frameworks is of paramount importance to its international reputation.** It was an observation made, among others,³⁹ by Zeid Ra’ad Al-Hussein,⁴⁰ Ambassador Chan Heng Chee from Singapore,⁴¹ and Koji Tsuruoka from Japan who when, asked what the UK was good at, said:

In one word, I would say “quality”. Quality has many aspects. The legal capacity of the UK’s diplomats, lawyers and even political leadership is first class, if not top of the world. Many of the UN resolutions have been drafted by the UK’s diplomats in New York and London. Many of the important international treaties, including the framework of Bretton Woods, have been produced by the UK. This is because the UK has had, and I think continues to have, a long-term view of the global vision, and the ability to put that in writing and bring people on board, especially the Americans. This is a very high quality that we, meaning the world, need. No one else can do the same. This is something available only to the UK, and this will be the same for quite some time.⁴²

33 Samantha Power ([Q9](#) and [Q10](#)). Other calls for the UK to increase its international activity came from Claus Grube ([INR0062](#)) para B9; Alexander Downer ([Qq33 and 49](#)); Lord Hague of Richmond ([Q21](#)); Save the Children ([INR0014](#)) para 4.4; BOND ([INR0036](#)) para 4; and the HALO Trust ([INR0041](#)) para 5.3

34 Relevant findings and explanation for this survey by the British Council are contained in Annex 2

35 Samantha Power ([Q10](#))

36 Sylvie-Agnès Bermann ([Q13](#))

37 City of London Corporation ([INR0094](#)) para 10

38 See, for example, Lord Hague of Richmond ([Q21](#)) and Georgina Wright, Institute for Government ([INR0075](#)) para 1c

39 See, for example, Professor Robert McCorquodale ([INR0003](#)) para 5

40 Dr Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein ([Qq77 and 80](#))

41 Chan Heng Chee ([Q139](#))

42 Koji Tsuruoka ([Q118](#))

12. But the UK will have the greatest impact abroad if it uses its range of assets and capabilities coherently. It is unlikely that the merger of the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) will resolve the persistent problem that Britain abroad is less than the sum of its parts. The merger was announced on 16 June 2020,⁴³ completed in September, and assessed by our Committee in a dedicated report.⁴⁴ It was justified, in part, as giving coherence and adding impact to UK policy. The Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, said that the merger would “strengthen our position in an intensely competitive world.”⁴⁵ But the problem of incoherence extended beyond DFID. *BOND*, a network of more than 400 organisations working in international development and humanitarian aid, was one of our contributors to write that “the Government is not doing enough to ensure policy coherence in decision-making.”⁴⁶ The Foreign Policy Centre referred to “significant cultural roadblocks to achieving a whole-government approach to the UK’s international strategy”⁴⁷ while, even after the FCO-DFID merger, the Institute for Government warned that “more work needs to be done” to “decide what organisational changes are necessary at the heart of government to maximise the UK’s influence across the world.”⁴⁸ Dr Robin Porter, a Visiting Fellow at the University of Bristol, assessed that:

Other government departments in recent years have developed and pursued their own agendas for activity overseas, including the Ministry of Defence, DFID, Defra, and the various manifestations of the business arm of government—the DTI, UKTI, now BEIS etc. On occasion these [other government department] initiatives have been in conflict with those of the FCO, or have been carried out without the degree of sensitivity that successful diplomacy requires

and concluded that:

while other government departments may be involved in implementing that strategy, the formation of foreign policy advice to government should come from the FCO.⁴⁹

13. The Integrated Review must address a lack of clear strategic vision, a lack of confidence, and lack of coherent implementation that has undermined recent international policy by the UK. The Review should respond, and be seen to respond, to the consultation that it has undertaken and the challenge that a robust review requires. It should publish its evidence base transparently, showing that future policy has a broad and strong foundation. And, for Global Britain to be more than just a slogan, the Review must provide:

- i) **a clear articulation of the UK’s interests and values, and of their roles in a coherent strategy for the UK’s international policy**
- ii) **clear and limited priorities within designated timeframes**

43 HC Deb, 16 June 2020, [col 666](#) [Commons Chamber]

44 Foreign Affairs Committee, 2nd Report of Session 2019–21, [Merging Success: Bringing together the FCO and DFID](#), HC 525

45 HC Deb, 16 June 2020, [col 667](#) [Commons Chamber]

46 *BOND* ([INR0036](#)) para 13

47 The Foreign Policy Centre ([INR0019](#))

48 Georgina Wright, Institute for Government ([INR0075](#)) ‘Context’

49 Dr Robin Porter ([INR0030](#)) para 13

- iii) **meaningful and targeted resources with which to deliver**
- iv) **greater coherence and alignment among UK levers of influence, and therefore greater impact abroad**
- v) **an unambiguous leadership role for the diplomatic service. *The Government has committed to spend 0.7% of GNI on Official Development Assistance (ODA), and we agree with the Government that UK diplomats must play the leading role in coordinating how this money is spent. But we recommend that the resourcing of the UK's diplomatic service itself be directed by the UK's strategic needs and must not be skewed by the requirements of ODA eligibility.***

2 The UK's response

14. In this Chapter we recommend policy priorities for the Government to consider in response to global developments, to the past deficiencies in the UK's international policy, and to the key capabilities that the UK possesses on the world stage. Framing those priorities are five strategic narratives through which the UK can make a global contribution while serving the security, prosperity, and happiness of the British people. This is in response to the announcement by the Government that it wants to see the UK play the role of a 'problem-solving and burden sharing nation'.⁵⁰

- i) **The UK, like all countries, has limits to its resources and reach. Those pressures will be even greater during the challenging economic circumstances created by Covid-19. To avoid overstretch, and remain credible, its international policy must be based on limited and adequately resourced priorities.**
- ii) **Given the challenges that that the world will face, we agree with the Government that the UK has a contribution to make as a 'problem-solving and burden-sharing nation.'**
- iii) **The UK should also be an inclusive nation that opens opportunities for others. The Government should use the UK's convening power, its thought leadership, and its legal drafting skills, to establish a baseline for cooperation and exchange between nations and individuals that helps realise the benefits from technological innovation and global interconnection.**
- iv) **The UK should be a resilient state which recognises the changing nature of the threats we face at home and abroad and is able to match and counter them through the efforts of governmental and non-governmental actors. This will involve a co-ordinated, cross-Government approach with expanded investment in offensive and defensive capabilities, based on our national security assessment.**
- v) **The Government must do more to align the full spectrum of the UK's instruments for influence. A hybrid approach by the UK will achieve greater impact for serving the British people, countering our adversaries, and contributing to the world. Just as ambassadors lead in coordinating the UK's activity abroad, so should the FCDO lead in coordinating the UK's international policy within Whitehall.**

50 See, for example, the launch by the Government of the 'Integrated Review' in ['PM outlines new review to define Britain's place in the world'](#), Gov.uk, 26 February 2020; and Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) ([INR0082](#)) para 2

Regional prioritisation

15. We heard in particular how the Indo-Pacific region is gaining greater global gravity.⁵¹ The Government has announced a 'tilt to the Indo-Pacific' in the UK's international policy but is yet to provide details.⁵² Some of our contributors worried that a growing focus on the Indo-Pacific might draw attention and resources away from the UK's engagement with Europe.⁵³

- i) *We recommend that the Government publishes clear priorities and resources for the 'tilt to the Indo-Pacific', explaining what additional resources will be committed to the region, what regions or budgets they will be drawn from, and for what specific gain.*
- ii) **The UK cannot 'tilt' to the Indo-Pacific without a strong base in Europe: both are important to UK prosperity and security and reinforce each other. In particular, considering the clout that several European nations exercise in many international bodies, including the UN, the UK will need to find new ways of maintaining its strong ties with European capitals. We recommend that both Europe and the Indo-Pacific be priorities for the UK's international policy.**

Trade and the influence of the UK

16. We heard how important independent trade policy could become as an instrument of the UK's international influence.⁵⁴ Trade promotion is a declared priority of the UK Government.⁵⁵ But our contributors noted that this could carry implications for the UK's values (especially those of human rights)⁵⁶ and the UK's security (including in strategic sectors such as cutting-edge technologies),⁵⁷ risking incoherence or even contradiction. The Government announced on 16 June 2020 that the UK's Trade Commissioners would be brought under the control of its Heads of Mission abroad. But Alexander Downer (a

51 The influence of the Indo-Pacific region was noted by, among others, Koji Tsuruoka and Ambassador-at-Large Professor Chan Heng Chee in [oral evidence taken on 22 September 2020](#), HC 380 (2019–21); Alexander Downer, Asoke Mukerji, and Marietje Schaake in [oral evidence taken on 9 June 2020](#), HC 380 (2019–21); Alexander Downer in [\(INR0061\)](#); the Asia Foundation [\(INR0084\)](#); Dr Michito Tsuruoka [\(INR0091\)](#); Dr Yuichi Hosoya [\(INR0093\)](#); and Dr Tim Summers [\(INR0068\)](#)

52 On 2 September 2020, responding to an Urgent Question about the creation of the FCDO, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Secretary the Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP said that "our vision for a truly Global Britain will tilt, if you like, to the Indo-Pacific region" HC Deb, 2 September 2020, [col 201](#) [Commons Chamber]. Mr Raab also referred to a 'tilt to the Indo-Pacific' during [oral evidence taken on 6 October 2020](#), HC 253 (2019–20).

53 See, for example, Dr William James [\(INR0065\)](#) and Marietje Schaake [\(Q44\)](#). Other contributors who described the importance of Europe for the UK's foreign policy included Bobby McDonagh [\(INR0005\)](#); Claus Grube [\(INR0062\)](#); Anthony Salamone [\(INR0066\)](#) para 3; Matthew Bevington (UK in a Changing Europe) [\(INR0069\)](#); and Nick Witney (European Council on Foreign Relations) [\(INR0031\)](#).

54 See, for example, Alexander Downer [\(Q46\)](#); Marietje Schaake [\(Q44\)](#); Juan Manuel Santos [\(Q99\)](#); Chan Heng Chee [\(Qq127 and 143\)](#); Néstor Osorio Londoño [\(INR0060\)](#) para 12; and Salam for Democracy and Human Rights [\(INR0073\)](#) para 23

55 See, for example, the Prime Minister (the Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP) in oral evidence to the Liaison Committee on 16 September 2020, HC 744 (2019–21), [Q152](#)

56 The relationship between trade and human rights was discussed, among others, by Dr Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein [\(Q75\)](#); Alexander Downer [\(Q38\)](#); Marietje Schaake [\(Q44\)](#); Paul Docherty and Kate Jones [\(INR0045\)](#) para 37; Professor Robert McCorquodale [\(INR0003\)](#) para 20; and BOND [\(INR0036\)](#) para 14

57 The relationship between trade and security was discussed, among others, by Alexander Downer [\(Q56\)](#); Koji Tsuruoka [\(Q126\)](#); and Lord Hague of Richmond [\(Qq17 and 19\)](#)

former Australian Foreign Minister)⁵⁸ and Claus Grube (a former Danish Ambassador to the UK)⁵⁹ advised that the UK Government should go further, and spoke from their experience in their countries about the success of a merged Department combining trade promotion with diplomatic functions. **The UK intends to prioritise its promotion of trade, and trade policy has the capacity to become a significant aspect of the UK's international influence. But, if it is not coordinated with other UK priorities abroad, then the elevation of trade risks introducing further incoherence into the UK's international policy. We recommend that the Government delivers even deeper strategic coordination between the Department for International Trade (DIT) and the FCDO to ensure greater policy coherence and impact.**

Mediation, conflict resolution, and atrocity prevention

17. We heard broad calls for the UK to seek to prevent or resolve crises (in addition to being prepared to respond to them) by prioritising mediation, conflict resolution, and atrocity prevention.⁶⁰ The Foreign Secretary, the Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP, has said that this is being considered.⁶¹ The UK, as a convening power, can have a powerful role in countering abuses and atrocities, even when the world's most powerful states are the culprits. But, again, many of our contributors worried about policy incoherence. They called in particular for better coordination between the Ministry of Defence and the FCDO.⁶² **We recommend that, as part of its problem-solving and burden sharing role, the FCDO prioritises mediation, conflict resolution, and atrocity prevention. And we recommend that the Government equips the FCDO with an enhanced and institutionalised capability to coordinate with the Ministry of Defence in this space, to maximise the coherence and impact of the UK's contribution.**

The 'soft power' of the UK

18. We heard that soft power is an important part of the UK's global influence,⁶³ but that it requires a concerted strategy and suitable investment from the Government. The UK's comparative advantage here is at risk of being eroded by rival powers,⁶⁴ and by the financial threat from Covid-19. Institutions including the BBC World Service and British Council

58 Alexander Downer ([Q56](#))

59 Claus Grube ([INR0062](#)) paras C7 and C8

60 See, for example, a readout from a meeting with His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan, discussing the UK's mediating role, in ([INR0078](#)) paras 3 and 7; Juan Manuel Santos ([Qq106 and 107](#)); Alexander Downer ([INR0061](#)) para 18; Peace Direct ([INR0011](#)) paras 10 and 15iv; Bath's New Vision group ([INR00012](#)) para b5; Save the Children ([INR0014](#)) para 2.3; Ben Willis ([INR0020](#)) para 66 and 67; Mercy Corps ([INR0037](#)); Oxfam ([INR0052](#)) para 56; Saferworld ([INR0053](#)) paras 15 and 18; International Alert ([INR0059](#)) paras 3, 8 and 14; Veterans for Peace ([INR0067](#)) para 14 [repeating the Movement for the Abolition of War ([INR0010](#))]; the UN Association (UK) ([INR0086](#)) Para 22; and Protection Approaches (with the United Nations Association, UK) in [INR0087](#)

61 Mr Raab has said that "in the context of the Integrated Review, one of the powerful themes is the United Kingdom's role in the world being joined up, which is why we have brought DFID and the Foreign Office together, in solving disputes, managing conflict and holding the worst perpetrators of human rights abuses to account". HC Deb, 8 September 2020, [col 491](#) [Commons Chamber]

62 See, for example, Peace Direct ([INR0011](#)) para 10; Save the Children ([INR0014](#)) para 6.3; Ben Willis ([INR0020](#)) para 66; the HALO Trust ([INR0041](#)) paras 6.1 and 7.4; Saferworld ([INR0053](#)) para 14; International Alert ([INR0059](#)) para 37; The Coalition for Genocide Response ([INR0064](#)); Christian Blind Mission ([INR0076](#)) para 10

63 See, for example, Alexander Downer ([Q40](#)); Professor Michael Clarke ([INR0018](#)) Sections 7 and 8; Nick Witney (European Council on Foreign Relations) ([INR0031](#)); APPG on Drones ([INR0054](#)) para 3.3; and Dr Tim Summers ([INR0068](#))

64 See, for example, Emma Sky ([INR0044](#)); Professor Michael Clarke ([INR0018](#)) Section 11; British Council ([INR0040](#)); and BBC World Service ([INR0092](#))

need consistent support from the Government while protecting their independence. Cultural assets such as the UK's educational institutions, and the commercial capabilities of UK industry and innovation, are also key components of the UK's power to attract. The UK's markets and financial infrastructure are soft power tools that have rarely been deployed. Hard-assets have soft-power potential, including port calls or humanitarian relief by the UK military. **Soft power is key to the UK's international influence. It is about much more than culture: the way it is used by some nations suggests it is the entire capability of the state short of war, for others it is the power of attraction. The Government must not become complacent about the UK's advantages in this space, and the risk of their erosion. It should respond to the desire abroad for the UK to lead, and set a positive example, in new and innovative ways. We recommend that the Government publishes a coherent and credibly resourced soft power strategy. Given the range of contributors to UK soft power and the numbers of HMG Departments involved, we recommend that the Government gives an enhanced coordinating role to FCDO so that this strategy can be implemented in a cohesive and impactful way.**

Defending and reforming the rules-based international system

19. Voices from around the world called on the UK to defend the rules-based international system and its multinational organisations.⁶⁵ But there was also a broad view that many such organisations risked becoming outdated, discredited, irrelevant, or subverted solely to serve the agendas of individual nations.⁶⁶ **We recommend that the UK convene and catalyse negotiations to reform multinational organisations: seeking to maintain their relevance and their benefit for all rather than a few. Our Committee will examine this subject, and make more detailed recommendations, through its inquiry into 'The UK's role in strengthening multilateral organisations'.** Recognising that nation states are the point of popular accountability, and that they devolve power to other organisations, must be at the heart of reforming the international system.

Nimble networks of like-minded nations

20. Senior diplomats and leaders from around the world emphasised to us the importance of like-minded nations working together, within and beyond multinational organisations, to address challenges and create opportunities for exchange, and the unique capability that the UK has to bring such coalitions together.⁶⁷ **The UK should use its convening power and thought leadership to bring together nimble networks of like-minded nations by agreeing a baseline for cooperation between them. These coalitions would be open, issue-based, fleet-footed, overlapping, and even temporary: a 'vari-lateral' system.** Samantha Power, when explaining this idea, used the example of the international coalition to coordinate the response to the 2014 outbreak of Ebola in West Africa.⁶⁸ Such networks could be based on democratic values and could act as a counterweight to authoritarian

65 See, for example, Samantha Power (Q2); Koji Tsuruoka (Q119); Dr Nicholas Wright (INR0033) paras 1–4; ICRC (INR0063) para 11; Anthony Salamone (INR0066) para 7

66 Contributors who described the need to reform multilateral organisations included Asoke Mukerji (Qq46 and 53); Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Qq58 and 67); Juan Manuel Santos (Q98); the Foreign Policy Centre (INR0019); the ONE Campaign (INR0026); Emma Sky (INR0044) para 34; Paul Docherty and Kate Jones (on behalf of the Oxford University Diplomatic Studies Programme's 2019–20 intake) INR0045 para 32; Oxfam (INR0052) para 19 and 20; Claus Grube (INR0062) para A5; ICRC (INR0063) para 1; UN Association (UK) (INR0086) para 26

67 See, for example, Samantha Power (Qq1 and 6); Lord Hague of Richmond (Qq22 and 28); Alexander Downer (Q40); Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Q58); and Koji Tsuruoka (Q119)

68 Samantha Power (Q6)

states. They could be based on commercial values and open to all who agree to trade on agreed terms. They could be based on security, and open to all who face the same threats. Or, in the current climate, based on the need to cooperate on vaccine research and with consequent agreements to share the results and distribution. Whatever the issue, those who agree to the baseline should be welcomed into the relevant group.

Existential threats: climate change and global health security

21. The Prime Minister has declared the efforts to address global health security and climate change to be priorities for UK international policy, including through its hosting of the COP26 conference and its presidency of the G7 in 2021.⁶⁹ Our contributors emphasised that these are existential challenges where the UK can contribute to the global good by offering its thought leadership and convening power in response.⁷⁰ *We welcome the Government's commitment to make global health security and working to counter climate change priorities within the UK's international policy. Our Committee will examine these subject areas through its inquiries into 'Environmental diplomacy' and 'Global health security'.*

Opening opportunities in frontier spaces: cyberspace and outer space

22. Our contributors emphasised how the advance of technology would give 'frontier' spaces a capacity to benefit humanity but also, if left unregulated, to worsen challenges and become arenas for conflict.⁷¹ We heard, for example, about the dangers posed by increasingly sophisticated cyber-attacks, disinformation and misinformation, and the malicious use of advances in Artificial Intelligence or machine learning technologies. Contributors called for universal regulations to be agreed to address the 'lawlessness' around the use of such technologies. The Foreign Secretary suggested to us in March 2020 that such a priority was under consideration by the Government.⁷² In light of these developments, and the growing influence of technology companies within our economies, governance, and lives, *we recommend that:*

- i) *The UK use its convening power and thought leadership to seek agreement for regulations relating to frontier sectors such as emerging technologies, the cyber and space domains: mitigating threats by agreeing standards and allowing states instead to access opportunities for exchange, innovation, and mutual benefit.*
- ii) *The Government should establish diplomatic missions to the leading technology companies: achieving their cooperation in setting the rules*

69 Oral evidence to the Liaison Committee on 16 September 2020, HC 744 (2019–21), [Q152](#)

70 See, for example, emphasis on the need for a response to climate change by Juan Manuel Santos ([Q98](#)); Campaign Against Arms Trade (INR0015) paras 9 and 14; Mercy Corps ([INR0037](#)); Oxfam ([INR0052](#)) paras 11, 31, and 35; International Alert ([INR0059](#)) para 11; ICRC ([INR0063](#)) para 29; Dr Tim Summers ([INR0068](#)) 'Foreign policy strategy'; and British Foreign Policy Group ([INR0071](#)) para 14b; and descriptions of a role for the UK in global health security by Samantha Power ([Q9](#)); Ellen Johnson Sirleaf ([Q58](#)); and Juan Manuel Santos ([Q105](#))

71 See, for example, discussions of technology's role by Lord Hague of Richmond ([Q29](#)); Marietje Schaake ([Qq34 and Q45](#)); Asoke Mukerji ([Qq41 and 46](#)); and Chan Heng Chee ([Q137](#)). Samantha Power described "the wild, wild west of these new [...] wide-open, free-space technological platforms with no umpire and no referee" ([Qq2 and 3](#))

72 Oral evidence on 19 March 2020, HC 253 (2019–21) [Q59](#)

and standards for the development of new technology and outer space, and using the UK's values as well as its reputation for fair regulation to enhance international cooperation within these frontier spaces.

Conclusions and recommendations

The challenge

1. The Integrated Review is a timely and necessary response to a world characterised by ever-strengthening interconnection and rapid technological change. (Paragraph 2)
2. The world is increasingly riven by global competition rather than cooperation. (Paragraph 3)
3. In part, this global competition is driven by geo-political change. But this global competition is also a battle between competing visions and mindsets. And the global competition is increasingly one between different technical systems. (Paragraph 4)
4. Such competition has stalled, and to some degree reversed, cooperation through multilateral organisations. The drive towards international arbitration is increasingly challenged by great power rivalry and influence projection. The world lacks consensus-building leadership. Global divides are widening, and there is a risk of the world's challenges becoming more abundant, more severe, and more difficult to resolve. (Paragraph 5)
5. An increasingly assertive and revisionist China has created geo-political friction with a more introspective United States. China and Russia, as leading authoritarian and revisionist powers, have also been more adept than their ideological rivals at realising where their capacity for international influence lies and harnessing the full spectrum of such capabilities. (Paragraph 6)
6. The UK's own international policy has been adrift. It has lacked clarity. (Paragraph 7)
7. It has also lacked confidence. Our contributors the world over were clear that the UK has recently appeared less ambitious and more absent in its global role (Paragraph 8)
8. None of our contributors wanted the UK to stand back or keep quiet. All of them urged the UK to step up, do more, and play a more impactful role in the world. They highlighted the positive contribution that the UK could make to international relations, and the negative implications if it declined. (Paragraph 9)
9. The UK has good reason to be confident in the capabilities of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), which were praised by contributors from around the world. (Paragraph 10)
10. The UK has a strong capacity to use its memberships and influence to bring countries together in dialogue. Contributors also admired the UK as a pragmatic country whose thought leadership, and the legal drafting capabilities of the FCDO's lawyers, can bring the world together through agreed, stable and predictable frameworks. The UK's own adherence to such frameworks is of paramount importance to its international reputation. (Paragraph 11)
11. But the UK will have the greatest impact abroad if it uses its range of assets and capabilities coherently. It is unlikely that the merger of the Department for

International Development (DFID) and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) will resolve the persistent problem that Britain abroad is less than the sum of its parts. (Paragraph 12)

12. The Integrated Review must address a lack of clear strategic vision, a lack of confidence, and lack of coherent implementation that has undermined recent international policy by the UK. The Review should respond, and be seen to respond, to the consultation that it has undertaken and the challenge that a robust review requires. It should publish its evidence base transparently, showing that future policy has a broad and strong foundation. And, for Global Britain to be more than just a slogan, the Review must provide:
 - i) a clear articulation of the UK's interests and values, and of their roles in a coherent strategy for the UK's international policy
 - ii) clear and limited priorities within designated timeframes
 - iii) meaningful and targeted resources with which to deliver
 - iv) greater coherence and alignment among UK levers of influence, and therefore greater impact abroad
 - v) an unambiguous leadership role for the diplomatic service. ***The Government has committed to spend 0.7% of GNI on Official Development Assistance (ODA), and we agree with the Government that UK diplomats must play the leading role in coordinating how this money is spent. But we recommend that the resourcing of the UK's diplomatic service itself be directed by the UK's strategic needs and must not be skewed by the requirements of ODA eligibility.*** (Paragraph 13)

The UK's response

- i) The UK, like all countries, has limits to its resources and reach. Those pressures will be even greater during the challenging economic circumstances created by Covid-19. To avoid overstretch, and remain credible, its international policy must be based on limited and adequately resourced priorities.
- ii) Given the challenges that that the world will face, we agree with the Government that the UK has a contribution to make as a 'problem-solving and burden-sharing nation.'
- iii) The UK should also be an inclusive nation that opens opportunities for others. The Government should use the UK's convening power, its thought leadership, and its legal drafting skills, to establish a baseline for cooperation and exchange between nations and individuals that helps realise the benefits from technological innovation and global interconnection.
- iv) The UK should be a resilient state which recognises the changing nature of the threats we face at home and abroad and is able to match and counter them through the efforts of governmental and non-governmental actors.

This will involve a co-ordinated, cross-Government approach with expanded investment in offensive and defensive capabilities, based on our national security assessment.

- v) The Government must do more to align the full spectrum of the UK's instruments for influence. A hybrid approach by the UK will achieve greater impact for serving the British people, countering our adversaries, and contributing to the world. Just as ambassadors lead in coordinating the UK's activity abroad, so should the FCDO lead in coordinating the UK's international policy within Whitehall. (Paragraph 14)
 - i) *We recommend that the Government publishes clear priorities and resources for the 'tilt to the Indo-Pacific', explaining what additional resources will be committed to the region, what regions or budgets they will be drawn from, and for what specific gain.*
 - ii) The UK cannot 'tilt' to the Indo-Pacific without a strong base in Europe: both are important to UK prosperity and security and reinforce each other. In particular, considering the clout that several European nations exercise in many international bodies, including the UN, the UK will need to find new ways of maintaining its strong ties with European capitals. *We recommend that both Europe and the Indo-Pacific be priorities for the UK's international policy.* (Paragraph 15)
13. The UK intends to prioritise its promotion of trade, and trade policy has the capacity to become a significant aspect of the UK's international influence. But, if it is not coordinated with other UK priorities abroad, then the elevation of trade risks introducing further incoherence into the UK's international policy. ***We recommend that the Government delivers even deeper strategic coordination between the Department for International Trade (DIT) and the FCDO to ensure greater policy coherence and impact.*** (Paragraph 16)
 14. *We recommend that, as part of its problem-solving and burden sharing role, the FCDO prioritises mediation, conflict resolution, and atrocity prevention. And we recommend that the Government equips the FCDO with an enhanced and institutionalised capability to coordinate with the Ministry of Defence in this space, to maximise the coherence and impact of the UK's contribution.* (Paragraph 17)
 15. Soft power is key to the UK's international influence. It is about much more than culture: the way it is used by some nations suggests it is the entire capability of the state short of war, for others it is the power of attraction. The Government must not become complacent about the UK's advantages in this space, and the risk of their erosion. It should respond to the desire abroad for the UK to lead, and set a positive example, in new and innovative ways. *We recommend that the Government publishes a coherent and credibly resourced soft power strategy. Given the range of contributors to UK soft power and the numbers of HMG Departments involved, we recommend that the Government gives an enhanced coordinating role to FCDO so that this strategy can be implemented in a cohesive and impactful way.* (Paragraph 18)
 16. *We recommend that the UK convene and catalyse negotiations to reform multinational organisations: seeking to maintain their relevance and their benefit for all rather*

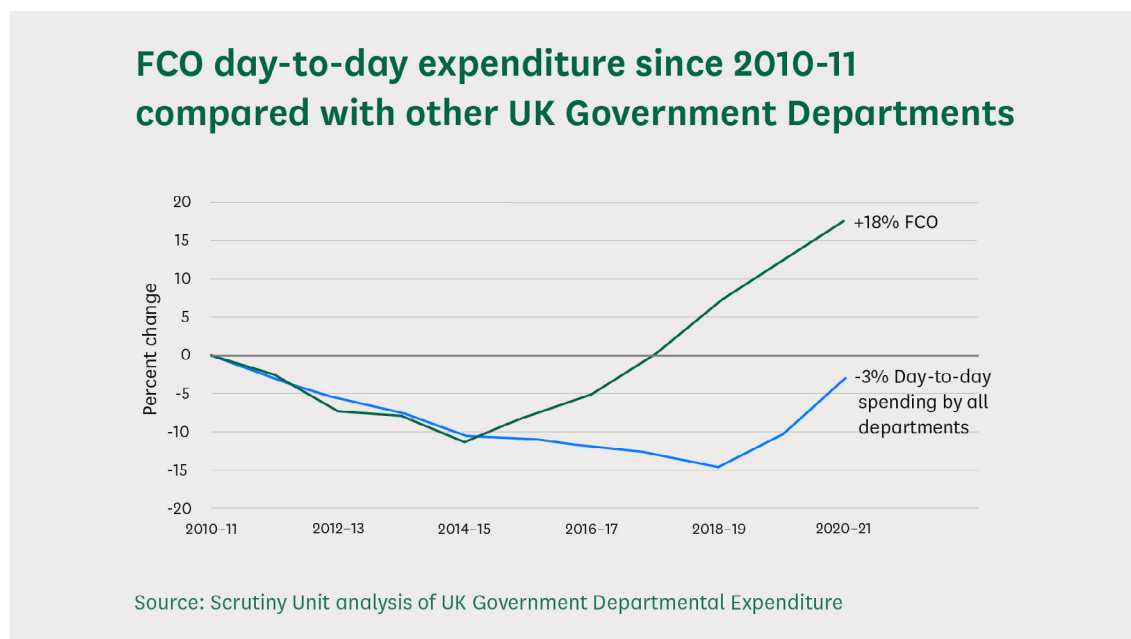
than a few. Our Committee will examine this subject, and make more detailed recommendations, through its inquiry into 'The UK's role in strengthening multilateral organisations'. (Paragraph 19)

17. *The UK should use its convening power and thought leadership to bring together nimble networks of like-minded nations by agreeing a baseline for cooperation between them. These coalitions would be open, issue-based, fleet-footed, overlapping, and even temporary: a 'vari-lateral' system. (Paragraph 20)*
18. *We welcome the Government's commitment to make global health security and working to counter climate change priorities within the UK's international policy. Our Committee will examine these subject areas through its inquiries into 'Environmental diplomacy' and 'Global health security'. (Paragraph 21)*
19. *We recommend that:*
 - i) *The UK use its convening power and thought leadership to seek agreement for regulations relating to frontier sectors such as emerging technologies, the cyber and space domains: mitigating threats by agreeing standards and allowing states instead to access opportunities for exchange, innovation, and mutual benefit.*
 - ii) *The Government should establish diplomatic missions to the leading technology companies: achieving their cooperation in setting the rules and standards for the development of new technology and outer space, and using the UK's values as well as its reputation for fair regulation to enhance international cooperation within these frontier spaces. (Paragraph 22)*

Annex 1: Analysis of FCDO resources by the House of Commons Scrutiny Unit

1) Some contributors to this inquiry cited reductions in the budget and staff numbers of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO, as it was before the 2020 merger with the Department for International Development (DFID) to form the FCDO) as the reason for a sense of diminished impact abroad. In line with most UK Government Departments, the FCO saw significant budget reductions between 2010–11 and 2015–16 in its Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (Resource DEL), which provides funding for the Department's day-to-day expenditure. However, following the 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union, and the subsequent emphasis on Global Britain, funding once again began to rise in real terms. Planned expenditure in 2020–21 is now 18% higher in real terms than in 2010–11, as set out in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: FCO day-to-day expenditure (Resource DEL) since 2010–11,⁷³ compared with other UK Government Departments

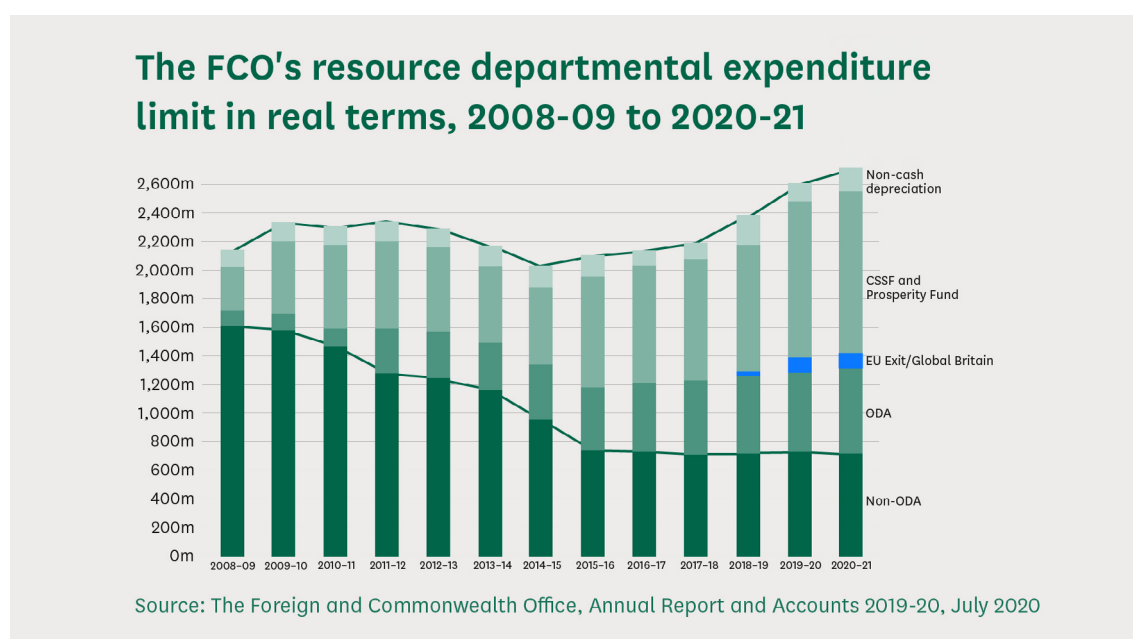


Source: Scrutiny Unit analysis of UK Government Departmental Expenditure

2) The Foreign & Commonwealth Office's 2019–20 Annual Report and Accounts provides a breakdown of the Department's budget, including plans for 2020–21.

⁷³ Figures are expressed in 2018–19 real-term prices using March 2020 GDP deflators. Figures for 2010–11 to 2019–20 are outturn, and 2020–21 figures are planned expenditure. Pre 2015–16 figures have removed funding attributed to the BBC World Service, which became independent of the FCO that year.

Figure 2: The Foreign & Commonwealth Office's Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit in Real Terms⁷⁴ 2008–09 to 2020–21



Source: [The Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Annual Report and Accounts 2019–20, July 2020](#)

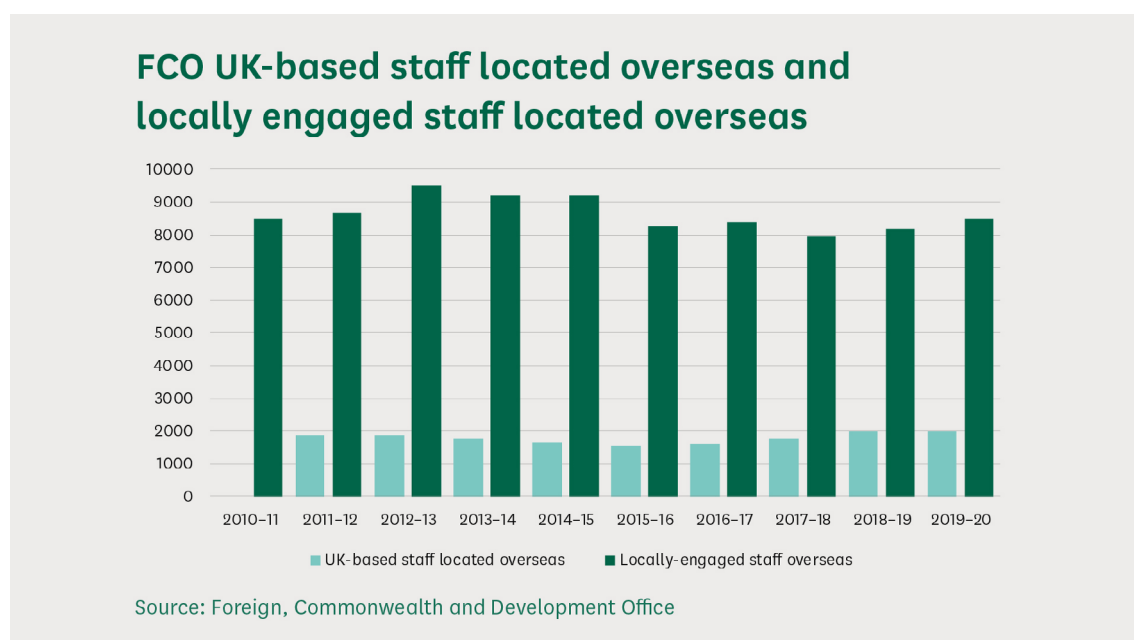
3) This shows that, although the overall Departmental budget has increased over time, this is driven to a large extent by increases in the cross-Whitehall Prosperity Fund (PF) and Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF); and a significant increase in the Department's Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget. The Department's non-ODA budget has approximately halved from over £1.4 billion in 2010–11 to around £700 million in 2019–20, in real terms.

4) In terms of staff resource, this is difficult to assess this over time as the way staff numbers are presented in the Department's accounts are not consistent year-on-year, and are in some cases approximate. Figure 3 sets out an estimate of the Department's headcount between 2010–11 and 2019–20. Total staff includes all staff based in the UK, based in the UK but located overseas, and locally engaged staff located overseas.

74 Figures show FCO Resource DEL in real terms (2019–20 prices), using GDP deflators at March 2020. This chart shows Parliamentary funding at the start of the year, not end-year outturn.

Figure 3: Foreign & Commonwealth Office staff located overseas

Financial Year	Total Staff ⁷⁵	UK-based staff located overseas ⁷⁶	Locally-engaged staff overseas ⁷⁷
2010–11	13,286	Figure unavailable	8,500
2011–12	13,261	1,876	8,685
2012–13	14,336	1,886	9,500
2013–14	13,809	1,751	9,200
2014–15	13,600	1,654	9,200
2015–16	12,563	1,546	8,268
2016–17	12,865	1,620	8,366
2017–18	12,537	1,745	7,946
2018–19	13,233	1,971	8,178
2019–20	13,751	1,972	8,488



Source: House of Commons Scrutiny Unit analysis of Foreign & Commonwealth Annual Report and Accounts 2010–11 to 2019–20

5) While the overall headcount of those employed by the Department has varied over time, after 2010 there was an initial downward trend in the number of UK-based staff located overseas. UK-based staff located on overseas missions fell 18% between 2011–12 and 2015–16 before beginning to increase again in line with additional expenditure associated with Global Britain and EU Exit. Locally engaged staff employed by the Department fell by 5% over the same period, and has remained at approximately the same level since. As of 2019–20 the number of locally engaged staff employed by the FCO has risen to a level roughly comparable with the number employed in 2010–11.

75 Figures before 2015–16 are approximate estimates, based on the number of staff located in the UK and the number of staff located overseas. Figures also include UKTI staff.

76 Calculated using the ratio of UK-based staff located overseas, and applying this ratio to the number of UK-based staff stated in the Annual Report and Accounts.

77 Figures before 2015–16 are approximate.

6) When looking at overseas staff numbers in the context of budget changes, it can be seen that while the Department's overall budget has now recovered in real terms from previous budget cuts, there are a number of reasons why this may not have translated into increased sense of "on the ground" presence. For example:

- The Department's budget only returned to 2010–11 levels in the financial year 2017–18, meaning that much of the recent budget increases have been making up for prior budget cuts. It can take time for increases in financial resource to be felt on the front-line due to time lags in funding being received and spent.
- The proportion of the FCO's funding that is allocated to Official Development Assistance (ODA) has increased since 2010. ODA used to make up a small proportion of the Department's overall expenditure, whereas it now spends approximately the same on ODA activity as it does on non-ODA activity. Designating expenditure as ODA means that it must meet the OECD definition of "government aid that promotes and specifically targets the economic development and welfare of developing countries",⁷⁸ which places restrictions on what that funding can be used for.

78 OECD, [Overseas Development Assistance](#), April 2019

Annex 2: Findings from an international survey by the British Council in partnership with the Foreign Affairs Committee

1) The British Council's research team conducted an online survey to gather insights from young, educated, and engaged citizens from around the world between 25 August and 15 September 2020. 1,486 people from 78 countries responded. The aim of the project was to better understand how the UK's international capabilities, policies and actions are perceived abroad. The survey questions were provided to the British Council by four Select Committees. The responses published here are those most pertinent to the inquiry by the Foreign Affairs Committee into 'the FCO and the Integrated Review.'

2) With limited time available for conducting the research prior to the conclusion of the UK's 'Integrated Review', the decision was undertaken to work with an opportunity sample that drew upon seven different British Council international alumni networks, including the Future Leaders Connect programme and Active Citizens. As such, respondents all had experience with the British Council and had previously agreed to be contacted for the purposes of research and further opportunities for cultural and educational exchange with the UK. Engagement with the British Council has a proven positive impact on wider perceptions of the UK and so the responses to the survey are likely to be more positive about the country than a random sample of the general population.

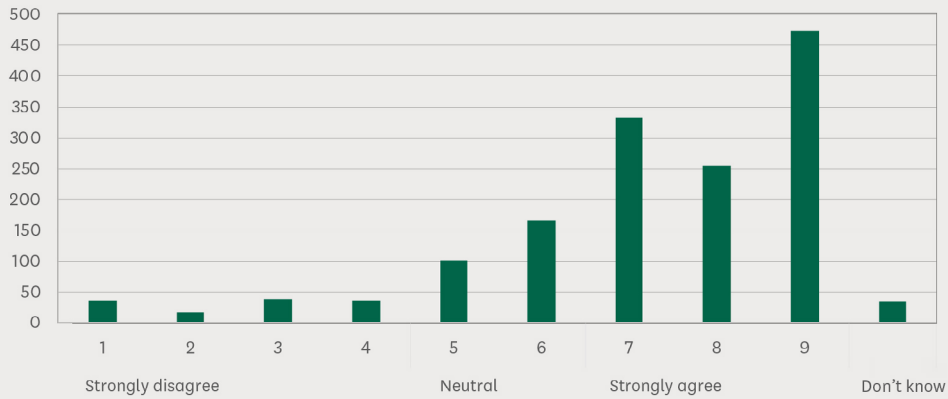
3) A large amount of responses to the survey were received from Nigeria (490). Where this impacted significantly on the results, the data is disaggregated and presented with and without Nigeria. The other countries with significant numbers of respondents were the UK (91), Kenya (86), Pakistan (78) and Vietnam (74). There were only 19 responses in total from EU member states. Where respondents haven't answered questions, we have reported this as an answer of 'don't know' as indicated in the questions.

4) Key findings included that:

- The UK is seen as a highly influential country in the world.
- Diplomacy and international aid are the areas the UK is seen as being most influential internationally.
- By significant majorities, respondents both viewed the relationship between their country and the UK as strong currently and would like to see it grow stronger in future.
- Respondents were split on how the UK's exit from the EU has changed their perceptions, with a wide range of views from strongly negative to strongly positive.
- A substantial majority of respondents saw the UK as prioritising human rights and democracy in its foreign policy. This was especially pronounced in responses from Commonwealth countries.

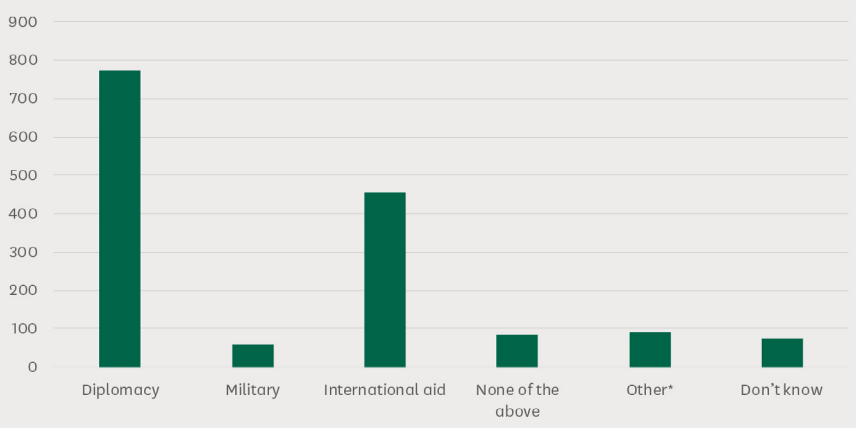
- China is ranked by 39% of respondents as their countries' "closest and best partner". The UK and USA are significantly behind on this metric, ranked first by 24% and 21% respectively. France was ranked first by 11% of respondents and Russia 4%.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
"The UK is an influential country in the world?" [1486 responses]**



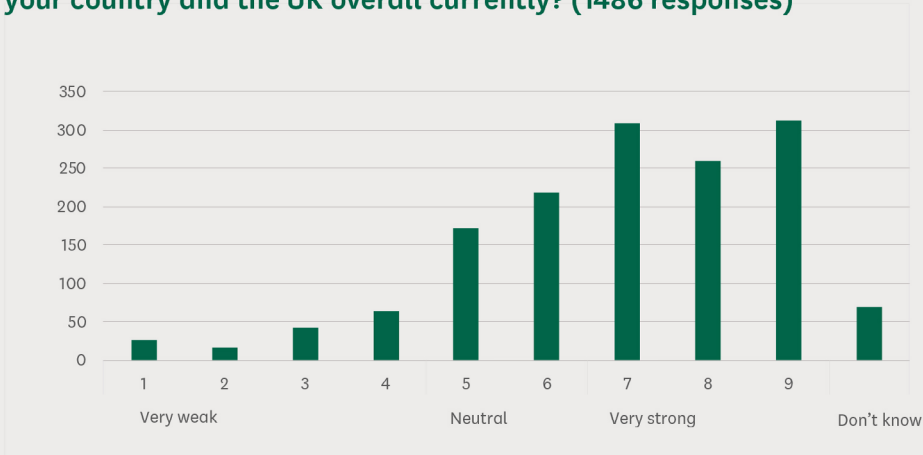
Source: British Council

**In which, if any, area do you see the UK as having
the most influence in global affairs? [1486 responses]**



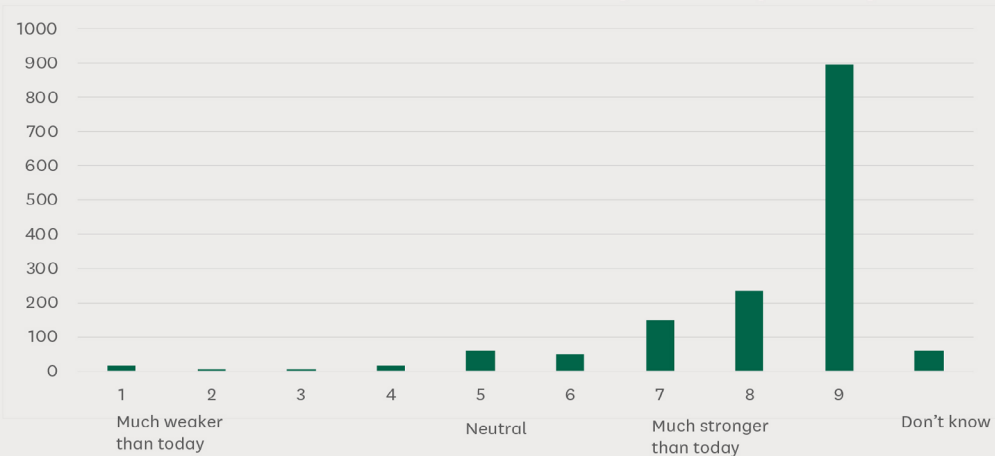
Source: British Council

What is your assessment of the strength of the relationship between your country and the UK overall currently? (1486 responses)



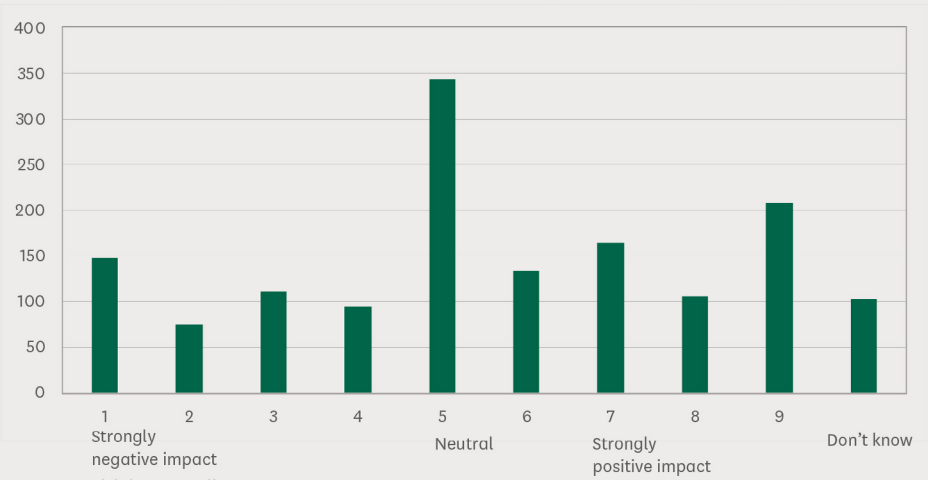
Source: British Council

How would you like the relationship between your country and the UK overall to be in the future? (1486 responses)



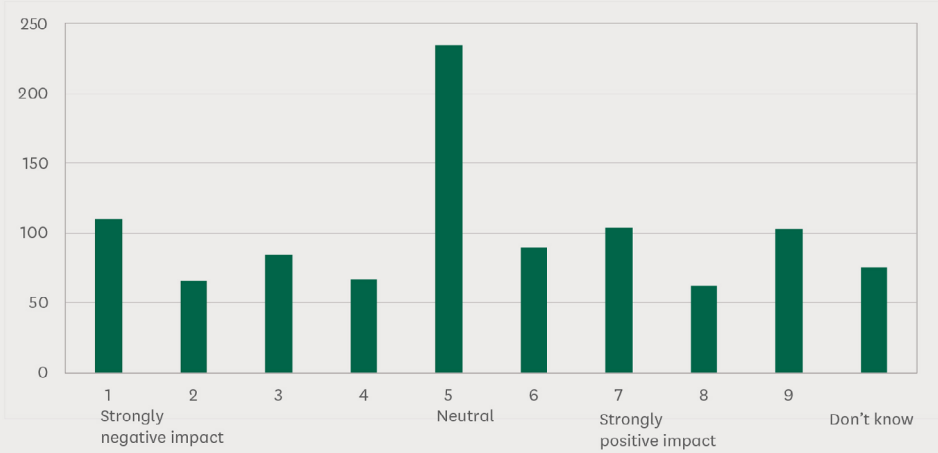
Source: British Council

To what extent, if at all, has the UK's exit from the European Union affected your view of the UK? (1486 responses)



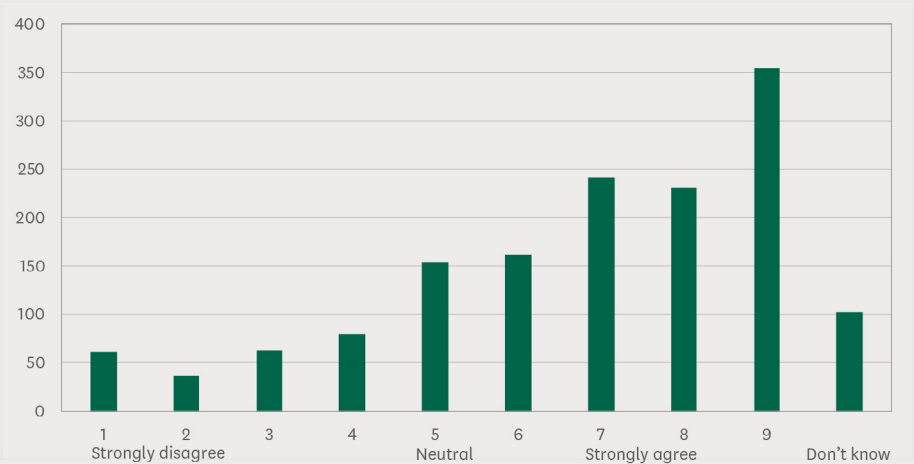
Source: British Council

To what extent, if at all, has the UK's exit from the European Union affected your view of the UK? (without Nigeria) (996 responses)



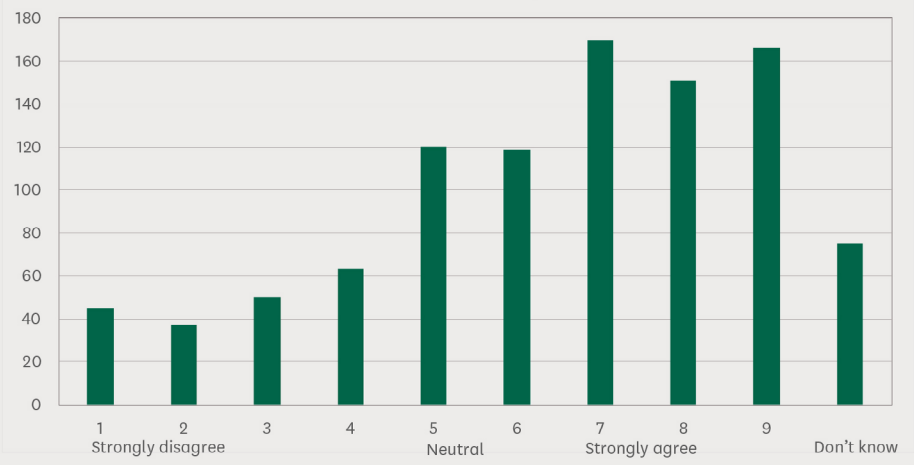
Source: British Council

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “The UK prioritises support for human rights and democracy in its foreign policy”? (1486 responses)



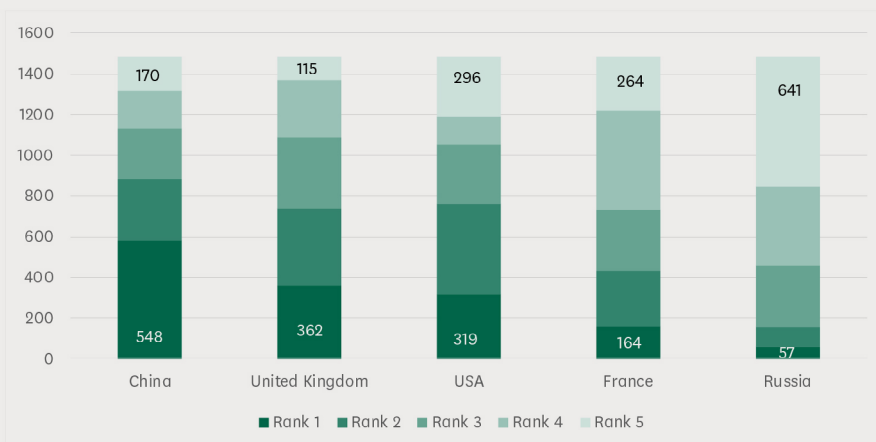
Source: British Council

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “The UK prioritises support for human rights and democracy in its foreign policy” (without Nigeria) (996 responses)



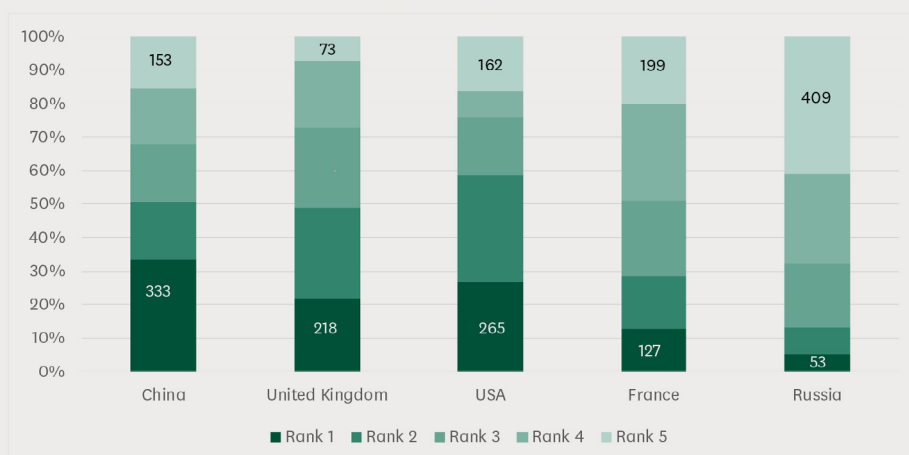
Source: British Council

Which of the following states would you consider your country's best and closest partners? [rank 1-5, with closest in rank 1] (1486 responses)



Source: British Council

Which of the following states would you consider your country's best and closest partners? [rank 1-5, with closest in rank 1] (without Nigeria) (996 responses)



Source: British Council

Formal minutes

Tuesday 13 October 2020

Members present:

Tom Tugendhat, in the Chair

Chris Bryant	Henry Smith
Alicia Kearns	Royston Smith
Andrew Rosindell	Graham Stringer
Bob Seely	

Draft Report (*A brave new Britain? The future of the UK's international policy*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 22 read and agreed to.

Papers were appended to the Report as Annexes 1 to 2.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Fourth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available (Standing Order No. 134).

[Adjourned till Tuesday 20 October at 1.45pm]

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Tuesday 19 May 2020

Samantha Power, former US Ambassador to the United Nations (2013–2017) [Q1–13](#)

Rt Hon Lord Hague of Richmond, former UK Foreign Secretary (2010–14) [Q14–32](#)

Tuesday 09 June 2020

Alexander Downer, former Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs (1996–2007); **Asoke Mukerji**, former Indian Ambassador to the United Nations (2013–15); **Marietje Schaake**, former Member of the European Parliament (2009–2019) [Q33–57](#)

Thursday 18 June 2020

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, former President of Liberia (2006–2018) [Q58–72](#)

Tuesday 21 July 2020

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (2014–18) [Q73–95](#)

Juan Manuel Santos, former President of Colombia (2010–18) [Q96–114](#)

Tuesday 22 September 2020

Koji Tsuruoka, Former Ambassador to the UK, former Japanese Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs [Q115–126](#)

Ambassador-at-Large Prof. Chan Heng Chee, Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Q127–144](#)

Tuesday 6 October 2020

Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs [Q121–250](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

INR numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 ActionAid UK (Ms Isabelle Younane, Senior Advocacy Manager) ([INR0022](#))
- 2 Adam Smith International (ASI) (Mr Jonathan Pell, Chief Executive Officer) ([INR0051](#))
- 3 All-Party Parliamentary Group on Drones (Ms. Aditi Gupta, Coordinator) ([INR0054](#))
- 4 The Asia Foundation ([INR0084](#))
- 5 Athena ([INR0070](#))
- 6 BBC World Service ([INR0092](#))
- 7 Bond (Paul Abernethy, Government Relations and Public Affairs Adviser) ([INR0036](#))
- 8 British Council (MR David Thompson, Head of Political Affairs) ([INR0040](#))
- 9 The British Foreign Policy Group ([INR0071](#))
- 10 Campaign against Arms Trade (Ann Feltham, Parliamentary Coordinator) ([INR0015](#))
- 11 CBM UK ([INR0076](#))
- 12 Centre for Britain and Europe (CBE), University of Surrey (Professor Amelia Hadfield, CBE Director, Head of Department of Politics, University of Surrey) ([INR0039](#))
- 13 Chatham House (Dr Tim Summers, Senior Consulting Fellow, Asia-Pacific programme) ([INR0068](#))
- 14 City of London Corporation ([INR0094](#))
- 15 Clarke, Professor Michael ([INR0018](#))
- 16 CND (Sara Medi Jones, Campaigner) ([INR0021](#))
- 17 Coalition for Genocide Response ([INR0064](#))
- 18 Committee, Committee Foreign Affairs ([INR0078](#))
- 19 Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) (Dr Serafin Pazos-Vidal, Head of Brussels Office) ([INR0006](#))
- 20 Cunliffe, Dr Emma and Stone, Professor Peter ([INR0034](#))
- 21 Dayant, Mr Alexandre and Pryke Mr Jonathan ([INR0077](#))
- 22 Diplomatic Studies Programme, University of Oxford ([INR0045](#))
- 23 Downer, UK foreign policy in Asia Alexander ([INR0061](#))
- 24 European Council on Foreign Relations (Nick Witney, Senior Policy Fellow) ([INR0031](#))
- 25 European Merchants (Anthony Salamone, Managing Director) ([INR0066](#))
- 26 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([INR0082](#))
- 27 The Foreign Policy Centre (Mr Adam Hug, Director) ([INR0019](#))
- 28 Foxall, Dr Andrew ([INR0058](#))
- 29 Francis, Diana, Gabriel, Jane and Glass, Gordon ([INR0012](#))
- 30 Gilmore, Dr Jonathan ([INR0028](#))
- 31 Grube, Mr Claus ([INR0062](#))

- 32 The HALO Trust (Mr Chris Loughran, Senior Policy & Advocacy Advisor) ([INR0041](#))
- 33 Harvard University (Dr William James, Postdoctoral Fellow) ([INR0065](#))
- 34 Independent Commission for Aid Impact ([INR0072](#))
- 35 Institute for Government (Miss Georgina Wright, Senior Researcher) ([INR0075](#))
- 36 Institute of Development Studies (Ms Sophie Robinson, External Affairs Officer) ([INR0023](#))
- 37 International Alert (Mr Julian Egan, Director of Advocacy & Communications) ([INR0059](#))
- 38 International Committee of the Red Cross (Ms Rachael Cox, Policy and Public Affairs Adviser) ([INR0063](#))
- 39 Jones, Sally ([INR0089](#))
- 40 Keatinge, Tom ([INR0046](#))
- 41 Keio University, Japan (Dr Michito Tsuruoka, Associate Professor Faculty of Policy Management) ([INR0091](#))
- 42 Keio University, Japan (Dr Yuichi Hosoya, Ph.D, Professor of International Politics, Faculty of Law) ([INR0093](#))
- 43 London, Mr James ([INR0085](#))
- 44 Malaria No More UK (Mr Ross Bailey, Senior Advocacy Manager) ([INR0025](#))
- 45 McCorquodale, Professor Robert ([INR0003](#))
- 46 McDonagh, Former Ambassador Bobby ([INR0005](#))
- 47 Mercy Corps (Miranda Hurst, Senior Policy and Advocacy Advisor) ([INR0037](#))
- 48 Mines Advisory Group (Michael Boyce, Humanitarian Policy Advisor) ([INR0038](#))
- 49 Molloy, Dr Sean ([INR0042](#))
- 50 Movement for the Abolition of War (Hilary Evans, Vice Chair) ([INR0010](#))
- 51 Oliver, Dr Timothy J. ([INR0017](#))
- 52 ONE Campaign (ONE Campaign Nasim Salad, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator) ([INR0026](#))
- 53 Onslow, Dr Sue ([INR0024](#))
- 54 Osorio Londoño, Ambassador NÃ©stor ([INR0060](#))
- 55 Oxfam GB (Mr Sam Nadel, Head of Government Relations) ([INR0052](#))
- 56 Oxford Research Group (Mr Liam Walpole, Research and Policy Officer) ([INR0016](#))
- 57 Peace Direct (Ms Rosemary Forest, Senior Advocacy Officer) ([INR0011](#))
- 58 Pierson, Dr Claire and Thomson, Dr Jennifer ([INR0009](#))
- 59 Policy@Manchester, University of Manchester (Professor Peter Lawler, Honorary member of university staff) ([INR0027](#))
- 60 Porter, Dr. Robin ([INR0030](#))
- 61 Protection Approaches, and United Nations Association - UK ([INR0087](#))
- 62 Roberts, Dr David B ([INR0013](#))
- 63 Rogers, Mr James ([INR0050](#))
- 64 Roy-Toole, Mr Christopher ([INR0001](#))

- 65 Saferworld (Lewis Brooks, UK Policy and Advocacy Coordinator) ([INR0053](#))
- 66 Salam for Democracy and Human Rights ([INR0073](#))
- 67 Save the Children (Liz Bradshaw, Senior Public Affairs Adviser) ([INR0014](#))
- 68 SecurityWomen ([INR0074](#))
- 69 SecurityWomen (Dr Juliet Colman, Director) ([INR0032](#))
- 70 Sikh Press Association ([INR0090](#))
- 71 Sky, Emma ([INR0044](#))
- 72 Strachan, Sir Hew ([INR0049](#))
- 73 Transparency International UK (Ms Rachel Davies, Head of Advocacy) ([INR0029](#))
- 74 UK in a Changing Europe (Matthew Bevington, Public policy and foreign affairs analyst) ([INR0069](#))
- 75 UN Women UK ([INR0088](#))
- 76 United Nations Association - UK ([INR0086](#))
- 77 Veterans for Peace (VfP) ([INR0067](#))
- 78 Westminster Foundation for Democracy (Anthony Smith, CEO) ([INR0035](#))
- 79 Willis, Ben ([INR0020](#))
- 80 Wright, Dr Nicholas ([INR0033](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website. The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2019–21

First Report	Viral Immunity—The FCO's role in building a coalition against COVID-19: Government Response to the Committee's First Report	HC 239 (HC 449)
Second Report	Merging success: Bringing together the FCO and DFID	HC 525
Third Report	Flying Home: The FCO's consular response to the COVID-19 pandemic	HC 643
First Special Report	A cautious embrace: defending democracy in an age of autocracies: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report of Session 2019	HC 116
Second Special Report	"Media freedom is under attack": The FCO's defence of an endangered liberty: Government Response to the Committee's Twenty-First Report of Session 2017–19	HC 269
Third Special Report	Viral Immunity—The FCO's role in building a coalition against COVID-19: Government Response to the Committee's First Report	HC 449
Fourth Special Report	Global Britain and South America: Government Response to Committee's Twentieth Report of Session 2017–19	HC 669
Fifth Special Report	Responding to irregular migration: A diplomatic route: Government Response to Committee's First Report of Session 2019	HC 670
Sixth Special Report	Merging success: Bringing together the FCO and DFID : Government Response to Committee's Second Report	HC 809