



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

**The Rt Hon the Lord Cameron of
Chipping Norton**
Secretary of State for Foreign,
Commonwealth and Development Affairs

King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP
Chair of the Procedure Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

14 December 2023

Dear Karen,

Thank you for your letter of 29 November about Commons scrutiny of Secretaries of State in the House of Lords.

I respect the primacy of the House of Commons and agree with you on the importance of those who hold senior roles in the Cabinet being held to account by the elected chamber. As you know, there is a strong precedent for Members of the House of Lords from all parties serving in Cabinet: from Peter Carrington and Alec Douglas-Home to, more recently, Peter Mandelson, Andrew Adonis, David Frost and Nicky Morgan.

I will follow the precedent set by governments of different parties where a Cabinet post has been held by a member of the House of Lords. This approach includes giving regular evidence to House of Commons Select Committees. Indeed, I am looking forward to giving evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee before the Christmas recess and the International Development Committee in the New Year. My planned appearance in front of the European Scrutiny Committee earlier this week was unfortunately cancelled by the Committee but I look forward to appearing in the New Year.

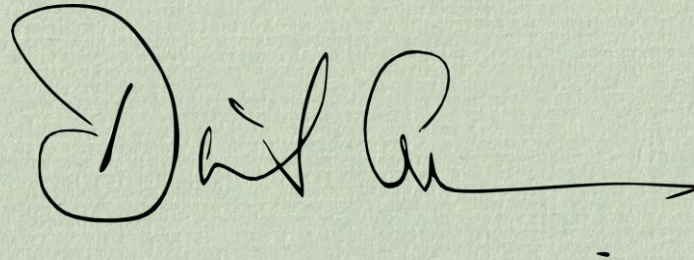
In the House of Lords, I have committed to the re-introduction of monthly Secretary of State questions. This question session was first introduced when Lord Mandelson joined the House of Lords as a senior Cabinet Minister. It consisted of a 30 minute oral question session for the Secretary of State alone, held roughly once per month on a Thursday. With my blessing, new procedures have been put in place to increase the number of questions to be asked in each session and lengthen time available accordingly. We have also moved the session from a Thursday to a Tuesday, so it takes place on a more prominent day of the week.

Departmental oral questions will, of course, continue in both the House of Commons and House of Lords. Andrew Mitchell will deputise for me in the Chamber of the House of Commons, making regular oral statements – including on live events, such as the situation in Israel and Gaza. Statements will be repeated in the Lords, as at present.

Written statements in both Houses will continue as normal and I plan to continue holding cross-party briefings for parliamentarians on topical issues.

His Majesty's Government is happy to consider other appropriate mechanisms so that Parliament is able to scrutinise fully the work of the FCDO, in full appreciation that any changes will be a matter on which both Houses of Parliament must agree.

Thank you again for your letter. I look forward to reading your report when published and will consider the proposals made carefully.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Cameron". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal tail extending to the right.