

Written evidence submitted by Mr Claus Grube (INR0062)

1. I thank the Committee for the opportunity to contribute to its examining of the integrated Foreign Policy Review.
2. I am a Danish National and the background for my submission of evidence is that of a diplomatic expert. After 45 years in the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs I retired in 2017 and are now working as senior advisor and board member in private business and public institutions in the U.K. and Denmark. My previous positions in the Danish Foreign Ministry has been largely linked to European and EU policy with postings as Counsellor in Paris (1988-1993), Ambassador, Permanent Representative to the EU (2000-2009) and Ambassador to the United Kingdom (2013-2017) as well as to general foreign policy and top-level management as Permanent Secretary of the Danish Foreign Ministry from 2009-2013.
3. As a foreign observer of British foreign policy and the FCO I will refrain from commenting on internal British politics, however I have the basic view that Foreign Policy cannot be seen as detached from Domestic policy, but is an integral part of it as an important instrument to pursue ones national interests and exert influence on international developments of relevance to ones country and society.
4. I express entirely my own views on a private basis, although draw on my previous professional experiences, within the limits of the confidentiality to which I am still bound.
5. My contribution will be in three main parts: the actual global challenges, UK's approach and cooperating with the U.K. in foreign policy and the role of the FCO seen from outside.
 - A. The global situation for international cooperation and its challenges.
 1. Looking back I cannot remember a time with so much global uncertainty, complex challenges and increased risks to our societies after a long period with important progress in democracy, peace, global growth, inequalities, sustainability and multilateral cooperation. All now being questioned by migration, the risk of terrorism, nationalistic populism, digitalisation and technological changes, trade protectionism, fake news, cybercrime, climate change and important partners questioning the value of the international rule based system and the universal values, which has been the cornerstones of all international policy for the last 70 years.
 2. All being illustrated and put under further strain by the global Covid-pandemic and the lack of preparedness as well as political capacity at national level to seek international solutions to the health challenges. The international handling of the development and distribution of a vaccine will be a test case for the future of international cooperation in this area. The global economic consequences of the Covid-pandemic will affect our future growth prospects and there will be a need for a international coordinated response in order to limit the dept and the impact of the recession for national economies as well as global trade. To what an extend it will happen still remains to be seen, although central banks and international financial institutions has been faster to react on an international scale than national governments, but the risk of more inward looking policies to protect

business and jobs is present leaving the prospects of the future growth contribution from international trade in dire straits.

3. The Covid-pandemic has also revealed our highly integrated and interdependent world notably in relation to our supply with goods, services, food and medicine. While many countries have reacted in a national and protective way and some even not just questioning the value of international health cooperation, but put WHO's functioning at risk at a crucial moment for the global response, not least for less developed countries capabilities.
4. The rise of China as an major economic and political global player challenges the role of the US as the dominant international power with the risk of increased tensions between the two, which forces many countries to reassess their policy in relation to both China and the US. By leaving the EU this will be even more challenging for a country like the UK with important interests at stake both bilaterally and multilaterally as a member of the UN Security Council, G7 and G20.
5. The present multilateral system is under pressure and many question it's future value. When one looks just on the number of multinational organisations created after WW2 and the Fall of the Iron curtain and located in Europe as the hotbed of conflicts for centuries and the ensuing longest period of peace, security and prosperity in our history, it becomes difficult if not impossible to imagine that a return to old fashion 19th Century power politics and rivalry, can be the answer. Instead of throwing the child out with the bathing water, reforms of the multilateral system should be considered to adapt it to the changing challenges and the shifting balance of global power.
6. In my view we have not encountered a more serious situation of numerous risks to our societies since WW2, which in my view calls for more international cooperation and a strengthening of the rule based multilateral system, which has served us well for more than 70 years.
7. But when some important powers seems inclined to pursue a nationalistic policy based on bilateral relations and old fashioned power politics by exporting national problems in a zero-sum game, the fundamental question is whether we are heading for a global situation of national competition for wealth, resources and technological dominance with increased risks of conflicts even outright wars, or whether the mere sum of international risks and challenges forces us into a new world order of international cooperation and reformed multilateral organisations?
8. I do not know the answer, but the strategic choices of a influential global player as the UK will be an important part of the answer.

B. UK's approach and cooperation with the U.K.

1. Seen on that background one cannot refrain from being puzzled by the UK's wish to deliberately withdraw from the EU, as one of the cornerstones of British foreign policy for the past nearly 45 years, in order to pursue a declared policy based on the undefined concept of "Global Britain", while at same time pursue a policy of national self-determination with regulatory and judicial autonomy. For my country Denmark, a close

partner and allied over many years in important international organisations like the EU, NATO and the UN, it raises important questions as to the future direction of UK's foreign policy. It has also created some uneasiness abroad, which should be addressed by the review, notably in relation to UK's future strategy and role in the global world.

2. Denmark has since WW2 highly valued and profited from a close bilateral relation going far beyond trade and economy deep into defence cooperation, military cooperation in international missions, security and sharing of intelligence as well as close cooperation based on many shared values within the sphere of multilateral cooperation, notably within NATO and the EU. Denmark has also worked closely with the U.K. within the UN in important areas like development assistance, the combat of poverty, sustainability and climate change, as some of the few countries committed to the 0,7% target. Denmark and the U.K. also worked closely together since the beginning of the 1950'es on the protection of humans rights, universal values and international law and order.
3. UK has always been seen by Denmark as a close, pragmatic and predictable international partner, which I must admit I have some difficulties in recognising today. This is not to say that our relations have not been without difficulties before, but that has mostly been due to UK's reluctance to sacrifice its own interests to those of it's allies and its tendency to look on smaller countries like Denmark as useful in promoting shared interests, but not as decisive partners. We have however never encountered a situation where shared basic values like free trade, liberalisations of markets, international law and order, the defence of human rights and multilateral cooperations has been put into question. I expect that to continue in the future.
4. The world of today is in many ways very different, more unpredictable and a more dangerous place than in 2016, when Brexit was decided.
5. The Transatlantic Alliance has and will remain a cornerstone in safeguarding our common security and economic freedom and can not be put into question. However with Brexit and the UK's apparent pivoting of its interest more towards the US the question arises whether UK in the future will see itself as a closer partner to the US than to the EU and align it's foreign policy accordingly or will attempt to maintain a role to the extent possible as an "honest broker" between the US and Europe within both EU and NATO, instead of the previous role as a "bridge", which seems difficult after Brexit? My wish is that the UK will see both the US and the EU as important foreign policy partners for the future and thereby continue to contribute to strengthen the Transatlantic Alliance.
6. There is no reason to hide that Brexit will be a major loss of political power for both the EU and the UK. It has therefore been a surprise to many EU countries that the UK do no longer see a future close CFSP cooperation with the EU as a priority. That should be reconsidered. The political risk is that it could, perhaps wrongly, be understood as an attempt to undermine the EU's common foreign and security policy to the detriment of notably smaller EU partners interests, who might fear the creation of a sort of "European Security Council" cooperation between UK France and Germany outside the EU CFSP cooperation.
7. Brexit demonstrated that the UK's policy of shifting bilateral focus away from European countries to notably Asian countries, with a reduced diplomatic footprint in many smaller

European countries, was not in UK's interest and had to some extent to be re-balanced after the referendum. With the tendency towards regionalisation of international trade, geographical distance will still play a role in future trade and economic relations as well as the sharing of common values and the safeguarding of our common security within NATO. UK should be more attentive to its bilateral relations with its closest European neighbours and to regional cooperation, like between the Nordics and the Baltic states. Germany foreign policy in my view is a good example of this approach.

8. The Arctic has for a long time been an area of close and peaceful cooperation between the 5 Arctic coastal states (US, Canada, Denmark, Norway and Russia) as well as within the Arctic Council, where other countries like Sweden, Finland, Iceland and China as well as the EU are participating too. However tensions in the Arctic are arising following prospects of new maritime routes as a consequence of global warming, a strengthened military presence of Russia and the global ambitions of China for presence and access to the area. Maybe it's the time for the UK to consider its future role in the Arctic cooperation too.
9. For an open economy, like my country Denmark, with active participation in the international work sharing on security, conflict solution and development, it is of great importance that the UK chooses to continue to work actively for global free trade, international law and order and the adaptation of the multilateral system to the challenges of the future. When the political mileage allows it after Brexit and the Covid-pandemic, I believe UK will be warmly welcomed back not only as an active player in the international community, but also as a initiator and leader when opportunities arise, in the search for international solutions to the many challenges and potential conflicts, which we only can solve efficiently by strong international cooperation.
10. I believe it would also be most helpful to better understand the future of UK foreign policy if the review could define what the term "Global Britain" actually means? What is the strategy behind it and by which instruments will it be pursued bilaterally and multilaterally?
11. That will probably also entail a review of UK's future relations with other important countries like US, China, Russia, India and Iran. Not just from a commercial view, but also in a strategic comprehensive way. It might as well be relevant to consider UK's future relations with countries in Africa and Latin America.
12. UK's commitments to important international cooperation like UN, WTO, WHO, NATO, The Paris accord on Climate change, disarmament and development could also be important elements for review in a situation, where the U.K. cannot any longer use the EU as a platform to project and strengthen its foreign policy as it has cleverly done for the past nearly 40 years.
13. In the world of tomorrow I believe the most valuable for any country will be to conduct a foreign policy based on coherent, consistent and stable policy lines, which makes it a predictable and valuable international partner.
14. Bismarck once claimed that an aggressive foreign policy was good for domestic policy. That might be, but history has taught us the hard way that it is bad for international cooperation and peaceful relations. Attitude and tone is important for creating the necessary trust

between international partners to obtain the win-win gains for all of close relations and cooperation. I hope that will be the hall mark for the execution of the future foreign policy of the U.K.

C. FCO and it's future seen by an outsider.

1. The FCO has always been admired as one of the worlds most efficient and professional foreign offices, equipped with dedicated, highly skilled diplomats, an extensive global network and a analytical capacity, which is second to none. As one former High Commissioner in London once remarked, the UK is a Morris Minor country with a Rolls Royce foreign office.
2. I am not sure that's still the case and in the future, where U.K. will not be able to automatically receive information and intelligence on global issues for free by the EEAS and CFSP network, the role and resources of the FCO to assist the Government in formulating and executing its future foreign policy might have to be reconsidered as part of the review.
3. Some of the challenges for the FCO are common for all Foreign offices in developed countries.
4. The role of Prime Ministers and other leading Ministers in international relations has greatly increased over many years, to the detriment of the Foreign Secretary and the department. Some of the foreign policy formulation has consequently moved away from FCO to the Cabinet Office and the National Security Council although based on input from FCO and with the FCO in a leading coordinating role for the execution. It has notably been visible in European policy and the implementation of Brexit.
5. The economic recession following the Financial crisis from 2008 lead to a political re-prioritisation and reduction of public expenditure, with cutbacks in the resources allocated to the Foreign Offices resulting in less staff and a reduced diplomatic network abroad both in number of missions and in staffing with more locally hired staff and fewer expatriated diplomats.
6. Compared to my own country FCO has not fared worse than other Foreign Offices on these accounts, but the FCO has two disadvantages compared to the Danish Foreign Ministry and a major future challenge.
7. In Denmark European policy, trade promotion and development assistance are integrated parts of the Danish Foreign Ministry, sometimes headed by several Ministers, sometimes not, but always served by one integrated service at home and abroad. I think the review should reconsider the possibility of transferring foreign trade relations and/or development assistance to the FCO and thereby enhancing its use of the synergies and resources of these important Government administrations for the execution of a coherent and consistent foreign policy. It would also avoid the risk of competition between parallel structures and doubling of resources to the detriment of efficiency and cost.

8. Modern trade is not about tariffs and quotas, but standards and level playing field requirements for competition and social protection, which often requires more in-depth knowledge of other countries policies. Trade promotion is often a question of open doors to decision makers, public diplomacy and to help your business fight protective measures, where the Diplomatic mission network is unique compared to any other public or private actor abroad.
9. International aid and development assistance has moved away from old fashioned projects towards bilateral policy and budgetary cooperation with developing countries focusing on poverty reduction, good governance and structural reforms notably in the poorest countries. Some countries have since the financial crisis increased focus on combining aid with trade, but in the future climate change mitigation and sustainability might be more important to assist the most vulnerable countries. By combining the FCO foreign policy machinery with the foreign aid and development assistance the impact and political value will be improved.
10. By leaving the EU and the EEAS, UK will be even more dependant on its own Foreign Service. Third countries in Bruxelles often have much larger Missions to the EU than the Member States for the simple reason that they have to spend more time and resources to obtain information and seek influence on the ongoing EU work on a day-to-day basis. A strengthening of the UK Mission to the EU will therefore be a must.
11. But the ambition of pursuing bilateral trade negotiations and closer relations with a number of countries and regional organisations globally will also mean the UK will have to strengthen its network and diplomatic footprint abroad. Some of the future challenges like cyber security, fake news and international terrorism will also demand a higher and different level of skills and resources to be able to analyse and advice correctly. Technology can off-set some of the classical diplomatic tools, but the core elements of broad personal networks and relations in a foreign country to all relevant influencers and decision makers cannot be replaced neither with locally hired staff nor a PC located in London.
12. Traditionally UK has been very efficiently coordinated internally between Departments in Whitehall on Foreign Policy and international issues. The role and responsibility of the FCO in that regard should be maintained.
13. In a more unpredictable and unstable world flexibility and the capability to rapidly adapt and react to changing circumstances will be even more important for the FCO. Mechanisms have to be in place to rapidly reallocate resources and manpower to the changing demands within a structure for crisis management. I think FCO diligently demonstrated its abilities in that respect during the repatriation of British citizens following the Covid lock do. However a more concerted international action in consular matters could probably have eased the burden for the FCO.
14. Finally a point on the way Foreign Policy is anchored in the British political system. As mentioned in my introduction foreign policy and domestic policy is two sides of the same coin and are mutually dependent on each other. Many countries like my own has therefore long departed from the classical view of Foreign Policy as a Government prerogative outside normal scrutiny and Parliamentary control. As many of the outside challenges of

our modern world directly affects our domestic policies the Foreign Policy review could be an opportunity to consider a modernisation of the way foreign policy is conducted in the U.K.

15. One way of doing so could be to introduce an ex-ante scrutiny by the Foreign Affairs Committee where the Foreign Secretary could present the Government line for debate behind closed doors before important decisions are taken. Another way - supplementary or alternatively - is to hold more public debates in Parliament on foreign policy issues. My experience is that this kind of political anchoring of important foreign policy decisions greatly strengthens the Government's hand before important international negotiations, increases transparency and leads to a better understanding of the complexity of modern foreign policy, its dilemmas and its importance in the public at large.
16. I thank again for the opportunity to give evidence to the Committee on this important issue also for close partners of the UK. As a long time friend your country I hope my modest contribution can be of inspiration in the Committee's work on UK's role in the global world of tomorrow and the development of the appropriate foreign policy to obtain its objectives.

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