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Foreign Affairs Committee

Global Security: UK-US Relations

Sixth Report of Session 2009–10

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written evidence*

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The Foreign Affairs Committee

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Conclusions and recommendations

The basis and nature of the UK-US relationship

1. We conclude that recent minor disagreements between the UK and US do not in any way threaten the underlying strength of the bilateral relationship. However, they do highlight the need for better understanding between the UK and US governments if the strength of the relationship is not to be eroded over the longer term. (Paragraph 30)
2. We conclude that in some cases the British media performs a valuable role in informing the public about the state of UK-US relations, but frequently it indulges in speculation about relations between the Prime Minister and the President. Important though personal relations at the highest level may be, they form only one aspect of the transatlantic relationship. (Paragraph 34)
3. We conclude that under the Obama administration there is a significantly greater degree of alignment with the UK on a number of key policy areas. However, as is perhaps inevitable, there remain some key areas of British interest where policies continue to diverge. In these areas the UK may work more effectively in harness with other countries, including its European partners. (Paragraph 38)
4. We conclude that the UK has an extremely close and valuable relationship with the US in specific areas of co-operation, for instance in the fields of intelligence and security; that the historic, trading and cultural links between the two countries are profound; and that the two countries share common values in their commitment to freedom, democracy and the rule of law. However, the use of the phrase ‘the special relationship’ in its historical sense, to describe the totality of the ever-evolving UK-US relationship, is potentially misleading, and we recommend that its use should be avoided. The overuse of the phrase by some politicians and many in the media serves simultaneously to de-value its meaning and to raise unrealistic expectations about the benefits the relationship can deliver to the UK. We further conclude that there is nothing wrong in acknowledging the undoubted truth that the UK has *a* special relationship with the US, as long as it is recognised that other countries do so also, including the regional neighbours of the US and its other key strategic allies and partners. (Paragraph 48)

UK-US military and defence co-operation

5. We conclude that stabilisation in Afghanistan does require provision of security, good governance, and a belief within the local population that international forces will outlast the insurgents. We further conclude, as we stated in our Report, *Global Security: Afghanistan and Pakistan*, that there can be no question of the international community abandoning Afghanistan, and that the need for the international community to convey publicly that it intends to outlast the insurgency and remain in Afghanistan until the Afghan authorities are able to take control of their own security, must be a primary objective. (Paragraph 55)

6. We conclude that reports of dissatisfaction with the capabilities of the British military amongst some middle-ranking and senior US officers must give cause for concern. However, we further conclude that, on the basis of the evidence we have received, these reports appears to be exaggerated in their substance. Notwithstanding this, the fact that these perceptions appear to exist at all remains disturbing, given the considerable effort that has been expended and the sacrifices that have been made by British armed forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. (Paragraph 69)
7. We are disappointed that despite promises to do so, the US Senate has not yet ratified the UK-US Defence Trade Cooperation Treaty. We conclude that its swift ratification is imperative and would bring a range of benefits to both countries, including the enhanced ability of British forces to work with their US counterparts in current and future joint operations. We recommend that the FCO should continue to press strongly its contacts in the Administration and Congress to make rapid progress with this matter. (Paragraph 73)
8. We conclude that the issues relating to rendition through Diego Garcia to which we have previously drawn attention raise disturbing questions about the uses to which US bases on British territory are put. We greatly regret the fact that there are considerable constraints upon the abilities of both the UK Government and Parliament to scrutinise and oversee many of the longstanding agreements which govern US use of British territory. We recommend that the Government should establish a comprehensive review of the current arrangements governing US military use of facilities within the UK and in British Overseas Territories, with a view to identifying shortcomings in the current system of scrutiny and oversight by the UK Government and Parliament, and report to Parliament on proposals to remedy these whilst having regard to the value of these facilities to the security of the UK. (Paragraph 79)
9. We conclude that the current financial climate has implications for the UK's future defence posture and its ability to sustain the level of military commitment in support of the US that it has demonstrated in recent years. We further conclude that it is likely that the extent of political influence which the UK has exercised on US decision-making as a consequence of its military commitments is likely also to diminish. (Paragraph 91)
10. We conclude that, in the short-term, the UK should continue to do all it can to assist the US in the areas where it is also in the UK's security interests to do so, most notably in relation to Afghanistan and Pakistan and in respect of reform of NATO. We further conclude that, in the longer term, the Government's foreign and security policy needs to be driven by the UK's national security obligations including those towards Britain's Overseas Territories, its NATO commitments and its security partnership with the US. (Paragraph 96)
11. We conclude that it is imperative that the forthcoming Strategic Defence Review should be foreign policy and defence commitments led and be preceded by an honest and frank debate about the UK's role in the world based on a realistic assessment of what the UK can, and should, offer and deliver. Only once these fundamental questions have been addressed can the long-term scope and nature of the UK's defence relationship with the US be determined. (Paragraph 101)

UK-US intelligence co-operation

12. We conclude that, despite some recent frictions, the field of intelligence co-operation is one of the areas where the UK-US relationship can rightly be described as 'special'. We further conclude that there can be no doubt that both the UK and US derive considerable benefits from this co-operation, especially in relation to counter-terrorism. (Paragraph 114)
13. We conclude that the decisions of the High Court to uphold the principle that intelligence material provided by one country to another remains confidential to the country which provided it, are to be welcomed. We further conclude that the Government should, in its response to our Report, set out its understanding of the implications of the recent Court of Appeal judgment for future UK-US intelligence co-operation. (Paragraph 125)

UK-US security co-operation

14. We conclude that the new US approach to Pakistan is to be welcomed and marks an important and long overdue recalibration of its relationship in an area which is of significant importance to both the UK and US. (Paragraph 130)

UK-US nuclear co-operation

15. We conclude that the goal of a nuclear weapons-free world is gathering more serious international political support than at any time since the end of the Cold War. We conclude that the Government's leadership on multilateral nuclear disarmament is to be commended. (Paragraph 146)

The FCO's US network

16. We conclude that the FCO's high reputation in the US is well-merited and that the FCO's diplomatic staff undertake valuable work in the UK's national interest through the US Network of Posts. Staff necessarily cover a wide remit in their attempts to exercise influence, and cover it well. (Paragraph 167)
17. We commend the FCO for its US public diplomacy work and conclude that the societal and educational links that it promotes add significantly to the overall effectiveness of the Department's operations in the US. (Paragraph 174)
18. As we concluded in our Report on the *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report 2008-09*, the FCO as a whole, like so many other public and private sector organisations, is facing very difficult decisions due to current budgetary constraints. We commend the FCO for the considerable resourcefulness it has shown in making required budgetary savings for this financial year following successive waves of real-term cuts to the FCO's budget by the Treasury. We further conclude that the severity of the spending cuts already being imposed, as evidenced by those being experienced by the US Network, let alone those which are still in the pipeline, gives us grounds for serious concern about the impact they will have on the FCO's future effectiveness in the US. (Paragraph 182)

19. We conclude that the FCO's US Network is facing unacceptable financial pressure due to a double whammy of Treasury imposed budget cuts and a depreciation in Sterling. Having previously shed fat and muscle, the FCO's US network is now being forced to cut into bone. We further conclude that additional cuts will diminish the FCO's ability to exercise influence in the US and have a knock-on effect on the UK's global standing. We recommend that in its response to this Report, the FCO provide us with an update on the current situation in relation to the US Network and its future plans with particular reference to the specific areas of concern we have raised in the Report and the minimum funding it considers necessary to effectively discharge its functions and obligations in the US. (Paragraph 183)

The British political approach to UK-US relations

20. We conclude that there are many lessons to be learned from the UK's political approach towards the US in respect of the Iraq War. We await with interest the conclusions of the Iraq Inquiry which has been investigating these issues in some detail. We conclude that the perception that the British Government was a subservient "poodle" to the US Administration leading up to the period of the invasion of Iraq and its aftermath is widespread both among the British public and overseas and that this perception, whatever its relation to reality, is deeply damaging to the reputation and interests of the UK. (Paragraph 192)
21. We note the evidence from our witnesses that British and European politicians have been over-optimistic about the extent of influence they have over the US. We recommend that the Government continues its informed and measured approach to the US whilst remaining mindful that the US is, and will continue to be, Britain's most important ally. (Paragraph 201)
22. We conclude that the Prime Minister/President relationship is an important aspect of the UK-US relationship. However, it is equally important to ensure that the UK does not conduct foreign policy on the basis of this relationship alone and that strong and enduring links are nurtured at wider Ministerial level and between Parliament and Congress. (Paragraph 207)
23. We conclude that there is cause for concern as to whether the apparent lack of focus on the US at the level of Minister of State in the FCO - which arises simply because of the sheer breadth of the relevant Minister of State's current portfolio - is appropriate given the importance of the UK-US bilateral relationship. This reinforces our view, which we have expressed in our recent Report on the FCO's last annual report, that the size of the FCO Ministerial team in the House of Commons should be increased. (Paragraph 209)

The future of the relationship

24. We conclude that the UK should not regard the US's more pragmatic approach to the UK as a threat to the relationship but rather as a timely opportunity both to re-assess its own approach to the US and to reflect current and future challenges. (Paragraph 215)

25. We conclude that the effects of globalisation, structural changes and shifts in geopolitical power will inevitably affect the UK-US relationship and that it is entirely logical for the US to pursue relationships with other partners who can provide support that the UK cannot. We further conclude that the UK has limited options in terms of how it can influence these structural changes other than to ensure that it has an appropriate foreign policy strategy in place which recognises both the challenges and opportunities created by this developing situation. (Paragraph 222)
26. We conclude that over the longer-term the UK is unlikely to be able to influence the US to the extent it has in the past. We further conclude, however, that in the short term the UK must capitalise upon the opportunities for influence which have arisen as a result of the greater alignment between the UK and US on a range of key policies. (Paragraph 230)
27. We conclude that the UK's relationship should be principally driven by the UK's national interests within individual policy areas. It needs to be characterised by a hard-headed political approach to the relationship and a realistic sense of the UK's limits. In a sense, the foreign policy approach we are advocating is in many ways similar to the more pragmatic tone which President Obama has adopted towards the UK. We believe that this is an issue that would be deserving of scrutiny by our successor Committee in the next Parliament. (Paragraph 240)
28. We conclude that the UK must continue to position itself closely alongside the US in the future, recognising the many mutual benefits which flow from close co-operation in particular areas. We further conclude that the UK needs to be less deferential and more willing to say no to the US on those issues where the two countries' interests and values diverge. (Paragraph 241)

1 Introduction

1. The Foreign Affairs Committee last inquired specifically into the topic of relations between the United Kingdom and the United States in 2001. Our predecessor Committee at that time decided that it would be appropriate to begin its work following the 2001 General Election by looking at the UK's most important bilateral relationship. The inquiry was rapidly overtaken by events. As the Committee stated in its subsequent Report, published in December 2001, "we could not have predicted in July [when we launched our inquiry] just how relevant to the UK's immediate foreign policy priorities our inquiry would become".¹ Al-Qaeda's 11 September attacks on the US were to have a profound effect on international relations and an equally significant impact on the UK's own foreign policy priorities.

2. Since 2001 the Committee has devoted much time and resources to scrutinising the many foreign policy facets of the so-called 'War against Terror' and a wide spectrum of issues relating to global security. In total, since 2001, the Committee has published thirteen reports on these themes, each of which has involved, to a greater or lesser degree, an examination of UK-US co-operation in specific areas and of the implications of US actions for UK foreign policy.²

3. Given the extent to which the UK's relationship with the US has influenced British foreign policy since 2001, we thought it fitting that our final major policy inquiry of the 2005–10 Parliament should be a re-assessment of the state of the UK's relationship with what the Government describes as its "most important bilateral ally",³ not least because since January 2009 the US Administration has been headed by a President with a very different global outlook to his predecessor.

Our inquiry: scope and focus

4. In July 2009 we announced the terms of reference for our inquiry. We stated that we would inquire into "the relationship between the UK and the US, and the implications this has on foreign policy". We said that we would welcome views on the following issues:

- the basis of the bilateral relationship between the UK and US;
- UK and US views on the nature and value of the bilateral relationship and the contribution of the UK-US foreign policy relationship to global security;

1 Foreign Affairs Committee, *British-US Relations*, Second Report, Session 2001–02, HC 327, 11 December 2001, para 6

2 Seventh Report of Session 2001–02, *Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism*, HC 384; Second Report of Session 2003–03, *Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism*, HC 196; Tenth Report of Session 2002–03, *Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism*, HC 405; Second Report of Session 2003–04, *Foreign Policy Aspects of the War Against Terrorism*, HC 81; Seventh Report of Session 2003–04, *Foreign Policy Aspects of the War Against Terrorism*, HC 441; Fourth Report of Session 2005–06, *Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism*, HC 573; Eighth Report of Session 2006–07, *Global Security: The Middle East*, HC 363; Second Report of Session 2007–08, *Global Security: Russia*, HC 51; Fifth Report of Session 2007–08, *Global Security: Iran*, HC 142; Tenth Report of Session 2007–08, *Global Security: Japan and Korea*, HC 449; Fourth Report of Session 2008–09, *Global Security: Non-Proliferation*, HC 222; Fifth Report of Session 2008–09, *Global Security: Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories*, HC 261; Eighth Report of Session 2008–09, *Global Security: Afghanistan and Pakistan*, HC 302

- the extent to which UK and US interests align in key foreign policy related areas including security, defence and intelligence co-operation;
- the extent to which the UK is able to influence US foreign policy and UK policy is influenced by the US under the Obama Administration;
- the extent to which ‘the special relationship’ still exists and the factors which determine this; and
- the implications of any changes in the nature of the bilateral relationship for British foreign policy.

5. Our inquiry coincided in its timing with the opening of the Iraq Inquiry chaired by Sir John Chilcot. This was officially launched on 30 July 2009, with the aim of identifying lessons that can be learned from the Iraq conflict.⁴ By its nature, the Iraq Inquiry inevitably touches on many aspects of the transatlantic relationship. Although our report makes reference to some of the evidence presented to that inquiry, and overlaps with it in some specific areas, it does not in any way seek to replicate the work that is being done by Sir John and his panel. We await the findings of the Iraq Inquiry with interest.

6. Given the extent of our previous scrutiny of individual policy areas and regions where the UK and US have co-operated in the field of global security, we have not inquired into each and every aspect of this co-operation. Nor is our Report intended to provide a comprehensive appraisal of US foreign policy priorities. That task has already been discharged by a range of experts and commentators on both sides of the Atlantic, and our focus must necessarily be upon US policy only insofar as it has implications for the work of the UK Government in general and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in particular. We have therefore chosen to concentrate in this Report on a number of key political and security-related aspects of UK-US co-operation, as a guide to how the transatlantic relationship is currently working.

Conduct of the inquiry

7. We held several oral evidence sessions during the inquiry. On 11 November 2009, we heard from Dr Robin Niblett, Chatham House, Dr Dana Allin, Institute of International Strategic Studies, Dr David Dunn, University of Birmingham, Lord William Wallace, Emeritus Professor of International Relations at the London School of Economics and Professor Malcolm Chalmers, Royal United Services Institute. Our questions focused on the political dimensions of the UK-US relationship as well as the extent of co-operation on military and intelligence matters. In our second evidence session, held on 2 December, we heard from three panels of witnesses: Nick Witney, European Council on Foreign Relations, provided evidence on the European aspects of transatlantic relations, while Stryker McGuire, *Newsweek*, and Justin Webb, BBC, offered testimony on the wide-ranging political and popular links between the UK and US. We gained insights into the UK’s diplomatic effort in the US from Sir Jeremy Greenstock GCMG, the former British Ambassador to the UN from 1998 to 2003, and Sir David Manning GCMG, CVO, who was

⁴ The Prime Minister announced on 15 July 2009 that an inquiry by a committee of Privy Counsellors would take place. More information on the Iraq Inquiry can be found at www.iraqinquiry.org.uk

British Ambassador to the US from 2003 to 2007. Our final evidence session, with Ivan Lewis MP, Minister of State at the FCO, was held on 16 December. We are grateful to all our witnesses, as well as to those who submitted written evidence during the inquiry. A full list of written evidence is appended to this Report.

8. Also, in October 2009 we visited New York and Washington DC in connection with our inquiry. The visit gave us insight into how the Obama Administration was settling in, and a clearer understanding of its foreign policy priorities and perspectives. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our interlocutors for their time, and to thank the staff in the FCO's Posts who facilitated our visit. A full list of the meetings we conducted during the visit can be found in the Annex. The work of the Posts is discussed in Chapter 4.

9. Our Report starts by examining the extent of the links between the UK and US and the much-debated question of the 'special relationship', before considering the extent of specific co-operation in a number of key areas. We then consider the role and activities of the FCO in the US. Further sections of the Report discuss the political approach that successive British Governments have adopted in their dealings with the US and what form the relationship may take in the future.

2 The basis and nature of the UK-US relationship

10. The roots of the bilateral relationship between the UK and US reach back into the 17th century, and the relationship has had high and low points ever since.⁵ During the 20th century, the UK-US relationship evolved gradually into something like its present form in the ten years following the end of the Second World War. Dr Robin Niblett of Chatham House has argued that there have been three main drivers of the relationship in the post-war period. Firstly, successive British Governments realised that they no longer had the capacity to protect or project British interests around the world, and acquiesced in the replacement of Britain by the United States as the world's dominant power. Secondly, the UK believed that the most direct threat to British and European security—that of Soviet military aggression and/or political subversion—could only be confronted if the United States were tightly woven into a transatlantic alliance whose principal focus was the defence of Europe and the broader Atlantic community. Finally, Dr Niblett believed that a “corollary and third driver of the special relationship was the mutual suspicion in Washington and London about a deepening of European political integration that could come at the expense of US engagement and influence in the Atlantic community”.⁶

11. As a result, throughout the period of the Cold War and beyond, Britain was one of the most stalwart of America's European allies, and the one best-placed to support the US within and outside the Atlantic area. This led to the building of an infrastructure of bilateral interaction in the fields of intelligence-sharing and nuclear and military co-operation that allowed each side to define the relationship as ‘special’ rather than just close.⁷ Echoing the view of a number of our witnesses, Frances Burwell, of the US-based think-tank the Atlantic Council, stated that during the second half of the 20th Century, the relationship between the US and the UK was one of the most influential partnerships in the global arena.⁸

Trade, finance and cultural links

12. Although defence, intelligence and nuclear co-operation continue in many respects to define the contemporary UK-US relationship (see below, Chapter 3), the origins of the relationship are considerably broader and are reflected in the shared history, shared values, language and interests of both countries. Today, the links remain broad and deep. UK-US ties can be found in many areas, from trade and business to popular culture. As Frances Burwell stated, “the fact that governments and publics can understand each other with minimal explanation, allows much closer cultural ties, resulting in a huge level of shared popular culture”.⁹ This wide range of links has resulted in a relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom which has been described as, “the densest

5 Ev 87

6 Ev 120

7 Ev 120

8 Ev 113

9 Ev 115

conducted between two sovereign states”,¹⁰ and has affected a broad swathe of the public in both countries.¹¹

13. Personal contacts remain strong, with tourism a key link: in 2008 almost 3 million Americans visited the UK while over 4.5 million Britons visited the US whether as tourists, to study or to do business. Over 47,000 US citizens enrolled in courses of study in the UK in 2008. In the same year, one in seven chief executives of FTSE 100 companies were reported to be American.¹² In addition, some 130,000 Americans live in the UK while an estimated 678,000 British citizens live in the US.¹³

14. Public opinion research also suggests that cultural similarities ensure that British and American citizens hold each other in higher regard than they do any other close ally.¹⁴ There is a mesh of personal interactions between government officials, between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and between foreign policy/security think tanks, forming links which are said to be as close as for any other US partner.¹⁵ Media links, too, are extensive, with British television programmes and formats becoming increasingly popular in the US.¹⁶ In the field of scientific collaboration, the US and the UK are each other’s most important research partners; 30% of the UK’s international collaborations are with the US, more than double any other country and 13% of the US’s are with the UK.¹⁷

15. On the issue of values, too, there remains strong alignment. There are of course well-documented differences, as Frances Burwell highlighted: “the support for the death penalty among the US public and acceptance of relatively unregulated gun ownership for example, and the British support for universal, state-provided health care are perhaps the clearest examples of a persistent and strong individualism in US societies and a greater emphasis in the UK on social welfare. Nevertheless, among all the European allies, the strongest similarities in terms of values are clearly with the British”.¹⁸

16. Some of the most important contemporary links, particularly from a British perspective, can be found in the fields of trade, finance and the economy. Frances Burwell believed that while New York and London were “sometimes portrayed as rival financial capitals, they actually represented two mutually dependent hubs—not just as cities, but as economic capitals of their nations—in an increasingly interconnected global economy”.¹⁹ In their written submission, Heather Conley and Reginald Dale, of the US-based think-tank the Center for Strategic & International Studies, argued that “New York and London

10 Ev 114

11 Ev 114

12 Ev 129

13 Ev 56

14 Ev 129

15 Ev 86

16 Q 117

17 Ev 70

18 Ev 114

19 Ev 115

are now so closely intertwined, both culturally and financially, that they are sometimes referred to as a single entity, ‘NyLon’.²⁰

17. The UK-US trading relationship is also strong. The US is the UK’s top export destination and is the leading destination for UK overseas investment. In 2007–08 UK goods exports to the US amounted to £34.7 billion (an increase of 8.3% over 2006–07), while the value of services exported totalled £36.2 billion.²¹ The US has consistently been the major single investor into the UK with American capital stocks in 2007 totalling nearly \$400 billion and creating employment for approximately 1 million people.²² In 2008–09, UKTI succeeded in attracting 621 (out of a total of 1,744) Foreign Direct Investment projects to the UK creating 12,888 new jobs in the process.²³ The UK is also the largest investor in the US (with a total investment stock of \$411 billion at the end of 2007), supporting almost 1 million jobs.²⁴

18. The scale of the recent financial crisis has also highlighted the importance of UK-US economic ties. Both countries have been affected by the vulnerability of banks and financial institutions to troubles in the US economy, and both have accepted the need for strong co-ordination between the US Federal Reserve and the Bank of England (as well as with the European Central Bank).²⁵ On the financial front, there has been close UK-US co-operation. One written submission stated that London’s role as “the number two global financial centre promotes the overall US-UK relationship”, and is particularly important as repair of the global financial system continues to sit high on the international agenda.²⁶ The FCO’s written submission pointed to the extent of the UK’s engagement with the US both bilaterally and in international fora such as the G20, where the UK has been keen to adopt a common approach to the global economic crisis and to secure a sustainable worldwide recovery.²⁷

Mutual benefits

19. Since we last reported on UK-US relations in 2001, global patterns of power have shifted considerably. In particular, the emergence of countries like China, India and Brazil as major economic and political powers, has challenged the long-standing pre-eminence of North America and Europe. However, the fact remains, as the FCO noted, that in spite of these changes the United States remains the world’s only superpower “economically, diplomatically and militarily”.²⁸ The US produces more than 23% of world GDP (according to World Bank figures for 2008), making it larger than that of any other country and almost three times larger than that of the second largest economy, Japan. Current forecasts

20 Ev 105; Ev 93

21 Ev 110

22 Q 163

23 Ev 118

24 Ev 46

25 Ev 115

26 Ev 84

27 Ev 59

28 Ev 71

suggest that, at its current levels of growth, China's GDP is unlikely to overtake that of the US for more than a decade.²⁹ The FCO also pointed out that the US combination of high spending on science and research, ready access to venture capital and its entrepreneurial business culture have given it, since the Second World War, a technological lead over other countries. The US is also unrivalled in its ability to wield military power and exercise political influence across the globe, and it remains a key member of the global system of multilateral institutions.³⁰

20. From a British perspective, therefore, the imperative to maintain a close relationship with the US is clear. As Dr Robin Niblett told us, "the US is the world's pre-eminent power; its engagement and decisions are vital to nearly all priorities for British foreign policy—from negotiations to combat climate change and to control nuclear non-proliferation to stabilizing Afghanistan. It is natural for British policy-makers to want to be as close to their US counterparts as possible and to try to influence their policy choices".³¹ Many other witnesses made similar points. Lord Hurd noted in his written evidence:

At the heart of the relationship lies a simple fact. British defence policy rests on the assumption that we will not fight a major war except in partnership with the United States. It follows that it is crucially in our interest to understand and influence American foreign policy. Moreover, our standing in the rest of the world will be shaped in part by the perceived extent of that influence.³²

21. For its part, it is arguable that the US also benefits from its relationship with the UK in a number of ways. Much of the evidence we received pointed to the added value that the UK provides in respect of defence and intelligence matters (this is examined in more detail in Chapter 3). British support for the US in multilateral fora has helped to allay charges of US unilateralism.³³ The UK remains an important US ally in NATO and in the UN Security Council. For instance, it has played an important role as a key US ally in attempts to contain Iran's nuclear programme, as well as joining the US as an advocate for open markets in the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation. As Dr David Dunn noted, the ability of the UK to advance common interests with the US is greatly valued in Washington.³⁴ We were told that the US looks to the UK for staunch support of US policies at the United Nations, that the US usually reciprocates and that co-operation at the UN is close.³⁵ The US is also said particularly to value UK engagement beyond Europe in difficult security situations where other allies are reluctant to become involved, and to continue to regard the UK as its partner of first choice outside East Asia, Francophone Africa, and Latin America.³⁶

29 Ev 56

30 Ev 56

31 Ev 119

32 Ev 83

33 Ev 105

34 Ev 129

35 Ev 85

36 Ev 84

Recent disagreements

22. As Lord Hurd commented in his written evidence, disagreements even between good allies “are inevitable”.³⁷ Nor are disagreements a new phenomenon; there is no doubt that differences have been evident as long as the UK-US relationship has existed. During the Cold War period, foreign policy differences were particularly marked at the time of the Suez crisis and over the issue of the Vietnam War. When we produced our last Report on British-US relations, in 2001, we identified a range of issues where there was marked divergence between the UK and US at that time. These include issues such as arms control, the International Criminal Court and the Kyoto Protocol.³⁸

23. Dr Niblett noted that British and US perceptions of the nature of certain international risks and the appropriate policy solutions are not always “in synch”. This was apparent during the George W. Bush Administration, when the US position on the Arab-Israeli conflict, on combating climate change and on some of the techniques that were used in pursuit in the global “War on Terror” ran counter to British approaches.³⁹

24. Tactical rifts are also an ongoing risk. Dr Niblett pointed to the unmasking of the plot to blow up transatlantic airliners in August 2006 which revealed important differences in British and US approaches to counter-terrorism. He also saw a “growing gap” between the extensive resources and troop levels which the US Administration can deploy in distant military theatres like Iraq and Afghanistan and the more limited resources available to Britain.⁴⁰

25. More recently, and during the course of our inquiry, a number of other UK-US disagreements have come to the fore. Prominent amongst these was the disagreement between the two countries over the release on 21 August 2009 by the Scottish Justice Minister, Kenny MacAskill MSP, on compassionate grounds, of the Lockerbie bomber, Abdelbaset Ali al-Megrahi. This decision caused considerable anger within the US. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton described it as “absolutely wrong”, while President Obama described it as a “mistake”. A letter from Robert Mueller, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to Mr MacAskill criticised him for failing to consult “partners in the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for the Lockerbie tragedy”.⁴¹ The recent legal judgments concerning the case of former Guantánamo detainee and British resident, Binyam Mohamed, which we discuss below (see paragraph 115), have also led to difficulties.

26. From a UK perspective, there have been concerns about actions taken by the US, for instance the decision to place four Guantánamo detainees in the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda without consulting Britain. We were told by US Administration officials during our visit to Washington in October 2009 that this had been a genuine error, and were assured that it would not happen again. There has also been considerable criticism of

37 Ev 83

38 Foreign Affairs Committee, Second Report of Session 2001–02, *British-US Relations*, HC 327, 11 December 2001

39 Ev 119

40 Ev 120

41 “Lockerbie bomber: Letter from FBI director Robert Mueller”, *Daily Telegraph*, 23 August 2009

the US both in Parliament and the press over the case of Gary Mackinnon, who recently lost his appeal in the House of Lords against extradition to the US on charges of hacking into US defence systems.⁴²

27. Another difference of approach emerged on 3 March 2010, following comments made by the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton during a visit to Argentina when she stated that the US would be willing to facilitate negotiations between the UK and Argentina over the Falkland Islands if called upon to do so. She is reported to have said “We would like to see Argentina and the UK sit down and resolve the issues between them in a peaceful and productive way”.⁴³ The longstanding position of the British Government on the Falklands was subsequently reiterated by the Foreign Secretary, David Miliband to the House: “The Government have made it clear that we have no doubt about the United Kingdom's sovereignty over the Falkland Islands. The principle of self-determination underlies that. There can be no negotiations on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands unless and until such a time as the Falkland islanders so wish it. They have made it clear that they have no such wish”.⁴⁴

28. Sir Jeremy Greenstock, the former Ambassador to the United Nations, told us that when the UK has disagreements with the United States in official business, “we play out those disagreements, we argue with the United States, in private. We tend not to argue in public unless public explanation is necessary or we are having a great row about something that cannot be kept out of the public domain”.⁴⁵

29. As Lord Hurd told us in his evidence, “if the substance of the relationship is in good heart, it is not necessary to worry about secondary though important arguments which blow up as storms crossing the Atlantic”.⁴⁶ Referring specifically to the disagreement over the release of Mr al-Megrahi, Lord Hurd argued that “disagreements properly handled do not go deep; they represent accurately a genuine difference of approach, illustrated in this [...] case by the different attitudes of the relatives of the victims of the bombing on each side of the Atlantic”.⁴⁷ Likewise, Heather Conley and Reginald Dale described the al-Megrahi affair as no more than “a short-term irritant”. They added that “senior US officials have assured their UK counterparts that the Lockerbie incident in no way endangers intelligence and security co-operation”.⁴⁸ This assessment echoes what we were told during our visit to the US in October 2009.

30. We conclude that recent minor disagreements between the UK and US do not in any way threaten the underlying strength of the bilateral relationship. However, they do highlight the need for better understanding between the UK and US governments if the strength of the relationship is not to be eroded over the longer term.

42 For discussion on this see, for example, Oral evidence taken before the Home Affairs Committee on 15 December 2009, HC 165, Q 97

43 “Clinton: US will help resolve Falklands oil row”, *The Guardian*, 2 March 2010

44 HC Deb, 2 Mar 2010, col 788

45 Q 127

46 Ev 83

47 Ev 83

48 Ev 106

The role of the British media

31. The British media are swift to report on any alleged fractures in the ‘special relationship’. For instance, in September 2009 there was much play made of claims that UK officials made five unsuccessful attempts to secure official talks with the US President when the UN General Assembly met in New York. The *Daily Telegraph* described how the Prime Minister had to “settle” for an informal discussion with President Obama after a climate change dinner at the UN, conducted as a 15 minute “walk and chat through the kitchen of the UN headquarters as both men left the building in Manhattan”.⁴⁹ President Obama’s decision to remove a bust of Winston Churchill from the Oval Office at the start of his Presidency led to similar angst on the part of some British broadsheets and tabloids. Commenting on the press outcry, an article in the US edition of *Newsweek* asked:

Has America’s even-tempered new President already ruffled feathers in the land that spawned Borat and Benny Hill? That’s certainly how the spiky British press responded after the White House sent back to the British Embassy a bust of Sir Winston Churchill that had occupied a cherished spot in President Bush’s Oval Office.

But the British press, as is its wont, smells a snub. *The Telegraph* speculated that British diplomats’ pulse rates would soar, while *The Times* of London wondered if a shadow had been cast over the special US–UK relationship. A spokesperson for the British Embassy, though, threw cold tea on the notion, pointing out British politician David Miliband was the first foreign minister to meet with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.⁵⁰

32. The response in the White House to the fallout in the British media appeared to be one of mild bemusement, as Justin Webb of the BBC told us:

I was speaking to [an] Administration official about the bust of Churchill and the way in which it was rather unceremoniously taken in a taxi to the British Embassy, and the fallout, particularly in the British press. He said, “We thought it was Eisenhower. They all look the same to us”.⁵¹

33. Our witnesses were uniformly of the view that the British media’s pre-occupation with personal relations between the two countries’ leaders and the state of the ‘special relationship’ is frequently at the expense of coverage of the more substantive aspects of the relationship.⁵² Professor Michael Clarke argues that “there is too much political capital [...] invested by UK observers, and by the British media in general, in the personal chemistry between US President and British Prime Minister”.⁵³ Sir Jeremy Greenstock told us that “the degree to which the press fixate over this is reminiscent of Snow White saying ‘Mirror,

49 “Barack Obama rebuffs Gordon Brown as ‘special relationship’ sinks to new low”, *Daily Telegraph*, 23 September 2009

50 Kate Connelly, “Busted: The Churchill Flap”, *Newsweek*, 21 February 2009

51 Q 99

52 Q 170

53 Ev 139

mirror, on the wall, who is fairest of them all?”⁵⁴ Sir Jeremy also argued that press coverage was too personalised, often consisting of “silly spasms”.⁵⁵ Summing up the views of most of our witnesses, Lord Hurd told us that “the press are always keen to exaggerate the nature of UK-US differences; this is a cost which has to be borne as calmly as possible”.⁵⁶

34. We conclude that in some cases the British media performs a valuable role in informing the public about the state of UK-US relations, but frequently it indulges in speculation about relations between the Prime Minister and the President. Important though personal relations at the highest level may be, they form only one aspect of the transatlantic relationship.

Foreign policy alignment

35. The importance that the UK attaches to its relationship with the US is stated clearly in the FCO’s written submission, which claimed that the UK’s ability to achieve its international objectives will be “immeasurably greater” if the UK’s objectives are shared with the US.⁵⁷ As a result of the more multilateral approach adopted by President Obama, UK and US views now seem to converge on a greater range of issues than under the previous US Administration.⁵⁸ The FCO’s written evidence set out in detail the respective approaches of the UK and US on a range of issues, and the extent of co-operation on Afghanistan and Pakistan, Iran, the Middle East Peace Process, counter-terrorism, NATO, nuclear issues, climate security, international fora, arms control, non-proliferation, defence, intelligence, the UN, and global and trade policy issues, as well as on policies in relation to a host of individual countries. We are grateful to the FCO for providing this comprehensive assessment which we have published in full. The FCO’s written submission also stated:

All countries have national interests which are particular to them and not shared with others. The UK and US are no exception. But to a very great extent we also have shared interests in combating violent extremism around the world, and addressing the poverty, ignorance and conflict which underlies it; in promoting good governance; in supporting development and economic growth to the benefit of the world’s poorest countries.⁵⁹

36. Robert Hunter, a former US Ambassador to NATO, told us in his written submission that “in most areas, US and UK foreign policies have been compatible, to a consistency the US finds with no other major European country. Despite the improvement of Franco-American relations (and France’s renewed full integration in NATO’s integrated military structure), the US still looks to the UK as its ‘first partner’, at least in security terms, even

54 Q 11

55 Q 11 [Dr Allin]

56 Ev 83

57 Ev 57

58 Ev 105

59 Ev 57

though at least outside of the current global economic downturn—the US looks more to Germany as a leading economic partner and to the EU overall in economic relations”.⁶⁰

37. Notwithstanding the recent increase in alignment between the UK and US, areas of divergence continue to exist on a number of issues. As Dr Robin Niblett told us, this is most obvious “in dealing with the reassertion of Russian power, instability in North and Sub-Saharan Africa, the need to find a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the rise of China’s power in East Asia”. He noted that in many of these areas of foreign policy, “the UK hews closer to the view of other EU Member States than it does to current US approaches”.⁶¹ He stated that on these issues, “Britain will be hard-pushed either to convince the US to alter its policy approach or to build a transatlantic consensus for action”.⁶² President Obama has declared himself the first “Pacific” President.⁶³

38. We conclude that under the Obama administration there is a significantly greater degree of alignment with the UK on a number of key policy areas. However, as is perhaps inevitable, there remain some key areas of British interest where policies continue to diverge. In these areas the UK may work more effectively in harness with other countries, including its European partners.

Still ‘special’?

39. Official Government statements from both the UK and the US maintain that the ‘special relationship’ is in good health. Senior politicians on both sides of the Atlantic seem obliged to deploy the phrase whenever they refer to UK-US relations. For instance, during her visit to London in October 2009, Hillary Clinton spoke of the “historic importance of the special relationship between our two nations”, before extending that description to her relations with the Prime Minister.⁶⁴ During our October 2009 visit to Washington DC, many of our American interlocutors mentioned, unprompted, the ‘special relationship’. When the Prime Minister visited Washington in March 2009, the President’s official statement used a variant on the phrase, talking of “a special partnership”.⁶⁵ In oral evidence we were told that US ambassadors to the UK “tend to love it [the phrase, ‘special relationship’] because it gives them something to talk about, basically, 365 days of the year”.⁶⁶ However, many of our witnesses argued that official US rhetoric masks a more complex reality. Lord Hurd cautioned that:

the survival and success of the partnership depends on the usefulness of Britain to the United States as an efficient ally. We are sometimes deceived on this point by the

60 Ev 85

61 Ev 119

62 Ev 122

63 Remarks by President Barack Obama at Suntory Hall, Tokyo, Japan, 14 November 2009

64 “Hillary Clinton meets Gordon Brown amid mounting tensions over Iran”, *The Times*, 12 October 2009

65 Statement by the Press Secretary on an Upcoming Working Visit to Washington by Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom, *White House Press Office*, 21 February 2009

66 Q 94 [Mr McGuire]

courtesy of the Americans in their appearing to regard the Anglo-American partnership as crucial to the United States when in fact it is not.⁶⁷

40. Much of the evidence we have received suggests that it would be more appropriate to use the phrase ‘special relationship’ in relation to specific areas of UK-US co-operation, in relation to nuclear, intelligence, counter-terrorism, security and military matters, than in relation to the totality of UK-US relations.⁶⁸ (We examine the extent of co-operation in these specific areas in more detail in Chapter 3.) Professor Michael Clarke of RUSI argued that, when the context does not emphasise these elements, or when they are not utilised successfully, it is difficult to discern in Washington’s eyes what is ‘special’ about the UK.⁶⁹

41. Dr Robin Niblett considered that many of the “drivers” that gave rise to the special relationship no longer exist, not least the threat of Soviet domination and the fear in the US that a unified Europe might pose a serious challenge and threat to US interests. In his view, a shift in US perspective away from the UK has been under way for some time, “certainly since the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the Clinton Administration”.⁷⁰ He told us that although tactical co-operation on defence and intelligence remain strong, at a strategic level the Obama Administration was now conducting its diplomatic relations on multiple levels simultaneously, and not all of these levels contained the UK as a key US partner”.⁷¹

42. There may be, as Nick Witney told us, advantages in literally speaking the same language because it makes it easier to converse, exchange ideas and act as a sounding board, but he and others were of the view that the UK no longer has “the particular advantage that we have liked to believe we have”.⁷² Indeed, it is clear that the US views its relationship with the UK as one of a growing number of ‘special’ relationships, which extend to, for instance, Israel, Canada, Mexico, China and Japan.⁷³ As Stryker McGuire told us: “China and Japan now own 47% of US Treasury securities. They basically have their hand around the neck of the dollar”.⁷⁴

43. There is an asymmetry in mutual awareness between the US and UK which means that the phrase ‘special relationship’ does not have the same resonance with the American public as it does in the UK. Indeed, it is not a phrase that would likely to be used by most Americans. Heather Conley and Reginald Dale told us that “the phrase ‘special relationship’, although commonplace in British political and media circles, is seldom used by Americans outside a small core policy group in Washington, DC”.⁷⁵ Interestingly, nor do British officials use the term ‘special relationship’ any longer, as Sir Jeremy Greenstock told us. He explained:

67 Ev 83

68 Ev 139; Ev 120

69 Ev 139

70 Ev 120

71 Ev 119

72 Q 55 [Mr Witney]

73 For example, Q 116 [Mr McGuire]

74 Q 116 [Mr McGuire]

75 Ev 105

We might have to respond to it in public if it is thrown at us by Americans, but we don't regard it as special: we regard [the relationship] as an asset that has to be nurtured and worked at, and the access to the United States in terms of politicians, officials and Members of Congress has to be earned because we're bringing something to the table. That is the way we think and work. We do not think it is special unless we are introducing substance to make it special.⁷⁶

44. Justin Webb of the BBC told us that within the current US Administration there is “a level of real frustration and eye-raising at what they perceive as the obsession of the Brits with their relationship with the Americans”. He stated:

In preparation for coming to see you, I asked someone in the White House to take a minute or so with a senior Administration official the other day and have a quick word on the current feeling. He said that he had 30 seconds: the Administration official said, “Get out of my room. I'm sick of that subject. You're all mad”. There is a sense in the Obama press office that we obsess about this.⁷⁷

This was not a view that was shared by Ivan Lewis, the Minister of State who, when asked whether he believed that senior US officials think that the UK is obsessed with the ‘special relationship’, simply replied “No”.⁷⁸

45. It is unsurprising that some office holders in the US Administration think the UK has what Justin Webb describes as “a neuralgia” about ‘the special relationship’,⁷⁹ given that in the UK the omission of the words ‘special relationship’ at a high level political meeting, whether deliberate or not, can be enough to generate what Stryker McGuire described as much “hand-wringing” on the part of many British media commentators who appear to fear, and regularly forecast, the imminent demise of the ‘special relationship’.⁸⁰

46. Our witnesses were in agreement that while the relationship is still special in some respects, the use of the phrase to cover every aspect of the bilateral relationship is outdated, or in the view of Dr Allin, a post-World War Two coinage which has now “almost become a fetish”.⁸¹ Stryker McGuire went further when he argued that “the last thing Britain needs is more talk about the special relationship”.⁸² He added that while the relationship is an important one, “the phrase and the way it's used by politicians, and even more so by the media, has caused [...] a problem [...]. The relationship is what it is and it has been what it is for quite some time”.⁸³ Others, like Dr Robin Niblett, emphasised the fact that the relationship cannot have the uniqueness that many in the UK expect it to have:

We wish it was unique; it is not unique, it is special. But where it is special—and it is likely to be a very important area for the next 10 to 20 years—where we can help each

76 Q 126

77 Q 99

78 Q 162

79 Q 94

80 Stryker McGuire, “An Island, Lost At Sea”, *Newsweek*, 23 February 2009

81 Q 14

82 Stryker McGuire, “Why put yourself through all this?”, *The Independent*, 5 March 2009

83 Q 104

other, is on counter-terrorism and that complex aspect of security that requires a sharing of information and intelligence. [...] That is in both our national interests.⁸⁴

47. Sir David Manning also concluded that “if the special relationship is hyped too much, expectations are exaggerated about what it can deliver and what to expect from it. [...] Sentiment can be used from time to time in support of a policy. I don’t think one should disguise the fact that warmth between the two countries can help us, but it is certainly not a policy in its own right”.⁸⁵

48. We conclude that the UK has an extremely close and valuable relationship with the US in specific areas of co-operation, for instance in the fields of intelligence and security; that the historic, trading and cultural links between the two countries are profound; and that the two countries share common values in their commitment to freedom, democracy and the rule of law. However, the use of the phrase ‘the special relationship’ in its historical sense, to describe the totality of the ever-evolving UK-US relationship, is potentially misleading, and we recommend that its use should be avoided. The overuse of the phrase by some politicians and many in the media serves simultaneously to de-value its meaning and to raise unrealistic expectations about the benefits the relationship can deliver to the UK. We further conclude that there is nothing wrong in acknowledging the undoubted truth that the UK has a special relationship with the US, as long as it is recognised that other countries do so also, including the regional neighbours of the US and its other key strategic allies and partners.

84 Q 14

85 Q 126

3 Key areas of co-operation

Military and defence co-operation

49. There is widespread agreement that the defence relationship between the UK and the US is a central plank of the wider bilateral relationship.⁸⁶ Since the end of the Cold War, the UK has provided the largest and, according to Professor William Wallace and Christopher Phillips, the “most effective” non-American contingent in three US-led extra-European conflicts⁸⁷: the two Iraq wars in 1991 and 2003 respectively, where British support for the US-led coalition was important both domestically in the US and internationally; and the intervention in Afghanistan since 2001, where UK support has been described as “instrumental to US policy” and where a UK withdrawal would have a significant impact on the US.⁸⁸

50. At a practical level, military liaison arrangements, individual secondments between American and British officers, planning at Central Command (CENTCOM) Headquarters in Tampa, Florida and information-sharing in general remain, according to Professor Clarke, “vigorous and intense”. He believed that the closest military relationships existed between the two navies and air forces, though ground forces less so.⁸⁹ Within the realm of Special Forces operations, Professor Clarke added that there was “good co-operation and unconfirmed evidence that in Iraq UK intelligence and Special Forces played key roles in the neutralisation of Al Qaeda-Iraq after 2006”.⁹⁰ British military and civilian officials have also had privileged access to US defence planning. Officials from the Ministry of Defence were embedded in the Pentagon team that conducted the 2005 US Quadrennial Defense Review, for the first time in such a process. Others are seconded to US naval headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia and to a number of research and development programmes across the United States.⁹¹

51. In the UK, the 1998 Strategic Defence Review acknowledged the importance and indeed centrality of the US to UK defence efforts. The subsequent 2003 Defence White Paper did likewise.⁹² The FCO too, told us that the UK’s national security depended on a uniquely close partnership with the US, both in NATO and bilaterally. Its submission continued: “at its heart, the relationship relies on sharing the burdens of nuclear deterrence, the benefits of intelligence and technology, and the risks of military operations. As a result, we have maintained an exceptional level of trust and understanding”.⁹³ One other consequence of note, as Professor Chalmers wrote in his written evidence, is that

86 Ev 108

87 William Wallace and Christopher Phillips, “Reassessing the special relationship”, *International Affairs* 85: 2 (2009) 263–284, p 267

88 Ev 85

89 Ev 139

90 Ev 139

91 William Wallace and Christopher Phillips, p 268

92 Ministry of Defence, “Delivering Security in a Changing World: Defence White Paper 2003”, Cm 6041-I, December 2003. See also “The defence plan: including the government’s expenditure plans, 2008–12”, Cm 7385 2008, June 2008

93 Ev 56

UK's current military capabilities are now "primarily designed to be used as contributions to collective operations, rather than in defence of uniquely national interests".⁹⁴ This was reaffirmed in the Government's Green Paper on the Strategic Defence Review, published on 3 February 2010, which stated that "no nation can hope to protect all aspects of national security by acting alone", and that "international partnerships will remain essential to our security, both membership of multilateral organisations—like NATO, the EU and the UN—and bilateral relationships, especially with the US".⁹⁵

Case study: Afghanistan

52. According to the FCO, there are few areas of contemporary foreign policy in which the UK and US co-operate as closely as in Afghanistan and Pakistan, whether in diplomatic, military or development terms. President Obama's re-calibrated strategy on Afghanistan showed "a high degree of convergence with the UK strategy presented to the House of Commons in December 2007".⁹⁶ Seventeen British personnel were embedded in US Central Command in late 2008 while it conducted a review of the coalition's strategy in Afghanistan.

53. On the ground, there is close co-ordination of UK and US resources through a wide range of structures. The FCO highlighted the existence of "UK and US military forces and civilian experts, including development and rule of law specialists, working with Afghan counterparts and other international partners to deliver our comprehensive approach on the ground in the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Lashkar Gah".⁹⁷ The FCO has also been working with the US as they develop their civilian plans, sharing UK experiences in Helmand and helping with national level development programmes, whilst also encouraging the US to align their assistance behind Afghan development priorities and strengthen the capacity of Afghan government institutions.

54. Military co-operation increased in 2009 as the UK and US conducted simultaneous and joint military operations in Helmand with a view to clearing the insurgency from major population centres to improve long-term security and create a safe environment for voters during the Presidential election in late August 2009.⁹⁸ As Professor Clarke's written submission made clear, UK forces in Afghanistan have been given status "by the appointment of a British 3-star general as Deputy Commander ISAF, and the new military constellation that sees Sir David Richards as Chief of the General Staff, General Nick Parker as the new DCOMISAF, the US General Stanley McChrystal as Commander ISAF, and General David Petraeus as CENTCOM commander".⁹⁹ In January 2010, the UK's then Ambassador to Kabul, Mark Sedwill, was appointed as NATO's new Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan, adding another senior British voice to NATO's machinery in Afghanistan. Professor Clarke added that "this promises a new effort to run the

94 Ev 108

95 Ministry of Defence, "The Defence Green Paper, 'Adaptability and Partnership: Issues for a Strategic Defence Review'", Cm 7794, February 2010

96 Ev 59

97 Ev 60

98 Ev 60

99 Ev 142

operation more genuinely from Kabul rather than from national capitals, with a greater focus on genuine counter-insurgency operations, and a clear mission in Helmand for British forces to deepen their hold on the central areas - Lashkar Gah, Babaji, Gereshk - to make the 'inkspot strategy' of counter-insurgency irreversible".¹⁰⁰ Below at paragraph 59, we discuss some of the challenges that the UK faces in respect of its military co-operation with the US in Afghanistan.

55. We conclude that stabilisation in Afghanistan does require provision of security, good governance, and a belief within the local population that international forces will outlast the insurgents. We further conclude, as we stated in our Report, *Global Security: Afghanistan and Pakistan*, that there can be no question of the international community abandoning Afghanistan, and that the need for the international community to convey publicly that it intends to outlast the insurgency and remain in Afghanistan until the Afghan authorities are able to take control of their own security, must be a primary objective.

Defence trade

56. The defence trade between the US and UK is worth approximately \$2.8 billion per year.¹⁰¹ Although the US sources a relatively small proportion of its defence equipment from overseas, the UK is the biggest offshore supplier to the US military and indeed the US is the second largest importer of UK defence goods, after Saudi Arabia.¹⁰² The US is also the Ministry of Defence's biggest supplier and a number of US companies now have a presence in the UK including Boeing, Honeywell, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, ITT, General Dynamics, Harris, Rockwell and Northrop Grumman. In the US, British companies such as BAE Systems, QinetiQ, Rolls-Royce, Cobham, Ultra and Martin Baker contribute in various ways to the US defence industrial base. UKTI argued that they have been "highly successful in meeting niche requirements in avionics, vehicle communications, military bridging, howitzers, and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) defence equipment".¹⁰³ In total, British companies employ around 117,000 people in virtually all of the 50 US states.¹⁰⁴ According to Professor Wallace and Christopher Phillips, "given the dominant size of the US defence market, and its technological lead, this is an immense advantage to British companies—and to the British Government, so long as the UK is committed to maintaining a substantial defence".¹⁰⁵

57. The UK and US are also partners in 22 collaborative equipment programmes, the most significant of which is the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) programme. This involves some 100 British companies, within which the UK is considered to be a 'Level One' privileged partner.

100 Ev 142

101 Ev 111

102 Ev 111

103 Ev 112

104 Ev 112

105 William Wallace and Christopher Phillips, p 268

Current challenges

58. Professor Chalmers argued that the Government's commitment to maintaining a position as the US's leading ally (previously in Iraq and now in Afghanistan) has been a driving force in recent decisions to commit forces to major operations. He added that this desire has also been a key driver in debates on how geographical responsibilities in theatres of operations have been shared, and on the extent to which the UK armed forces have been given operational autonomy over their area of responsibility.¹⁰⁶ The practical consequences of this were highlighted by Lord Walker, the Chief of the General Staff during the Iraq war, when he gave evidence to the Iraq Inquiry. He said that the MoD had several options available in terms of the contribution the UK could make to the military effort, but that ultimately the largest package, involving a large land force option, was chosen because the military felt this was important to their relations with the US military, and also because it would help army morale.¹⁰⁷ Professor Chalmers also argued that each of the UK's armed services have sought to maintain a high level of interoperability, as well as something close to what he describes as "qualitative parity", with their US counterparts, a task which has been made all the more difficult by rapid technological change.¹⁰⁸ As Professor Chalmers stated, "none of this is cheap".¹⁰⁹ We consider issues relating to defence spending in more detail below at paragraph 80.

US military perceptions of the British armed forces

59. Since we last reported on UK-US relations in 2001, the vast bulk of British military deployment in combat operations has been undertaken in support of US-led interventions, most notably in Iraq and Afghanistan. Given the desire of the UK to use its position as the US's leading military ally to allow it to exercise influence at an operational level and to punch above its weight internationally, US perceptions of the British armed forces are important.

60. In recent joint operations the UK has typically sought to send forces at least 15% the size of the US contingent,¹¹⁰ and, as we noted above at paragraph 54, has tried to ensure that British officers are appointed to second-in-command positions, as is currently the case in Afghanistan, thus ensuring British influence at an operational level.¹¹¹ As an example of the linkage between the scale of forces committed and the degree of influence exercised over decision-making, Professor Chalmers noted that the UK was the leading ISAF power on the ground in Helmand between 2006 and 2008, and as such had a commensurate share in shaping policy in that province. However, he added that "once the US began to deploy large forces to the province in 2009, the UK's ability to set the ISAF agenda in Helmand, and indeed in southern Afghanistan as a whole, began to decline".¹¹²

106 Ev 108

107 Ev 108

108 Ev 108

109 Ev 108

110 Ev 129

111 Ev 129

112 Ev 109

61. During the course of our inquiry, reports of apparent US military dissatisfaction with British tactics and equipment came to our attention.¹¹³ This issue was also raised in some of the written submissions we received. For instance, Heather Conley and Reginald Dale stated that defence co-operation has been “endangered by what Americans (and many British officers) see as the British Army’s poor performance in Basra, in Iraq, and by the Army’s lack of appropriate counter-insurgency equipment to fight in Afghanistan—due to the Brown Government’s decision not to provide additional resources”.¹¹⁴ Dr Dunn stated that “without an expansion of the Army and proper equipment including more helicopters, the UK will be continue to be viewed as a failing force of diminishing value to Washington”.¹¹⁵ Like many other commentators, he argued that British armed forces have been increasingly asked to do more and more with consistently fewer resources,¹¹⁶ and that this has had an impact on UK-US relations in a number of ways. He stated that in respect of Afghanistan, a view exists in the US that the British Army has been deployed in such a way and on such a scale that “it stands on the verge of strategic defeat, and that only with the surge of US combat troops to fight in Helmand and elsewhere will the situation be saved”. He added that “American criticism of this nature is not of the fighting skills of the British Army but of the way that they have been deployed, the resources they have had to do the job with and the subsequent limitations of role that this has implied”.¹¹⁷

62. We asked Professor Chalmers whether he attached any importance to the negative views that allegedly exist within the US defence establishment. He responded that he would attach importance to them and that they should be regarded “with due concern”. The UK has tried to follow recent developments in the US approach despite the fact that its resources were much more constrained. He added that in future the UK ought to be more wary about “taking on tasks that basically involve having the main responsibility for entire areas”, such as Basra or Helmand, and that “one of the implications for us when thinking about the future of our defence forces and future defence operations is whether we might be better taking on tasks that we are sure we can do or are more confident about in order to show the Americans that we will do what we promise”.¹¹⁸

63. Professor Chalmers told us that although the UK military remains one of the most powerful in Europe, “the resources in the country are such that we found ourselves very quickly overstretched in Helmand. Fortunately, the Americans are now there in great strength and are supporting us. We left ourselves vulnerable to that possibility by being prepared in the first place to say that we would take on such a difficult area by ourselves”.¹¹⁹

64. Professor Clarke argued that UK military contributions to the Afghan operation “have to overcome some legacy issues in the minds of many US military analysts and American

113 See for example, Rachel Sylvester, “Memo: don’t rely on the Brits during a battle”, *The Times*, 6 January 2009, Daniel Marston, “British Operations in Helmand Afghanistan”, *Small Wars Journal*, 13 September 2008

114 Ev 106

115 Ev 133

116 Ev 132

117 Ev 132

118 Q 29

119 Q 30

politicians”.¹²⁰ He told us that the British Operation in Basra between 2003 and 2009 is regarded as “a disappointment; successful in the early phase but unable to cope fully when the operation became something different.” He pointed to the fact that:

US military professionals well understand that UK forces have borne the overwhelming brunt of the fighting since 2006, but also understand that the UK’s contributions in Helmand, still less in Kandahar and Kabul, are too small to be left to do the job alone, now that ‘support for nation-building’ has turned into a small regional war.¹²¹

65. Professor Clarke believed it was vital for UK forces to overcome these “legacy issues” and re-establish their credibility in the minds of US military planners and politicians by prosecuting a successful counter-insurgency campaign in Helmand. The Coalition could not win the Afghan war only in Helmand, “but it can certainly lose it there if the present strategy is seen by the world not to prevail”.¹²²

66. In our August 2009 Report on *Global Security: Afghanistan and Pakistan*, we set out our assessment that British operations were beginning to produce dividends in Helmand. Subsequent testimony supports this,¹²³ and informally we have been told that the tremendous work which has been undertaken by British forces recently has gone a considerable way to overcoming the Basra legacy issues described by some of our witnesses. It is also worth noting that in his August 2009 Strategic Assessment of the situation in Afghanistan, the US Commander of ISAF, General Stanley McChrystal, stated that changes were required if the international mission in Afghanistan is to be successful. We note that many of the suggestions he made have been practised by the British task force in Helmand for over eighteen months and that the US is now co-operating with UK forces on this basis.¹²⁴ All of this information suggests that the view of US troops on the ground in Afghanistan is broadly supportive of the British armed forces. However, it remains unclear as to whether this view is replicated more widely in the US defence establishment.

67. Many of the senior interlocutors from the US Administration that we met during our visit to the US were adamant that senior officials in the Administration and the military were entirely supportive of the UK’s contribution in Afghanistan. Giving a military perspective, General Petraeus, the head of US Central Command, has also stated publicly that he has “always been impressed by the courage, capacity for independent action, skill and exceptional will of [British] soldiers”.¹²⁵ Regarding the UK forces deployed to Afghanistan he said: “British troops have been in a very tough place and they have done exceedingly well”.¹²⁶

120 Ev 142

121 Ev 142

122 Ev 142

123 See for example Professor Theo Farrell, “A Hope in Helmand”, *Guardian Unlimited*, 8 November 2009; Foreign Affairs Committee, *Global Security: Afghanistan and Pakistan*, Oral and written evidence, 24 February 2010, HC (2009-10) 398.

124 COMISAF Initial Assessment (Unclassified), re-produced in *Washington Post*, 21 September 2009

125 Ev 60

126 Ev 60

68. We asked Ivan Lewis, Minister of State at the FCO, for his views on this issue. He responded by saying that, “I think that the General Petraeuses of this world are rather respected figures, and maybe we should listen to them rather than to some unnamed, anonymous individuals—without being too disrespectful”.¹²⁷

69. We conclude that reports of dissatisfaction with the capabilities of the British military amongst some middle-ranking and senior US officers must give cause for concern. However, we further conclude that, on the basis of the evidence we have received, these reports appears to be exaggerated in their substance. Notwithstanding this, the fact that these perceptions appear to exist at all remains disturbing, given the considerable effort that has been expended and the sacrifices that have been made by British armed forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Defence trade co-operation and collaboration

70. In 2000, the US promised to grant the UK a waiver from its International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR). The waiver would have allowed the UK to acquire and make use of certain US military technologies without going through a long approval process for a licence. However, this waiver was not in the event granted, in part due to Congressional concerns that the UK had not strengthened its laws governing exports to third countries such as China.¹²⁸

71. In June 2007, President Bush and Prime Minister Blair signed a treaty that would end the need for a separate US export licence for each item of defence equipment and technology sent to the UK. The objectives of the UK-US Defence Trade Cooperation Treaty are to improve interoperability between the UK and US armed forces, support combined military or counter-terrorism operations, and reduce the current barriers to the exchange of defence goods, services, technical data and the sharing of classified information in support of co-operative defence research, development and production and in certain defence and security projects where the UK or the US is the end-user.¹²⁹ The Treaty has been the subject of ongoing inquiry by the Defence Committee.¹³⁰

72. Although the Treaty was ratified by the UK in early 2008, it has not yet entered into force because it remains subject to ratification by the US Senate. The FCO’s written submission stated that “the UK continues to work closely with the US Administration to prepare for ratification and subsequent implementation”.¹³¹ We raised our concerns about the delay in ratification in a number of meetings with relevant US interlocutors during our visit in October 2009. We were told that the Administration understood the importance of making progress in the Senate and remained fully committed to pushing ahead with ratification. However, despite strong expectations that the matter would be resolved in October 2009, this has not yet happened.

127 Q 193

128 See for example “US likely to approve trade treaties with Australia and UK this year”, *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, 29 May 2009.

129 *UK-US Defence Trade Co-operation Treaty*, Standard Note SN/IA/4381, House of Commons Library, 17 February 2009

130 See for example Third Report of Session 2007–08, *UK/US Defence Trade Cooperation Treaty*, HC 107, 11 December 2007.

131 Ev 65

73. We are disappointed that despite promises to do so, the US Senate has not yet ratified the UK-US Defence Trade Cooperation Treaty. We conclude that its swift ratification is imperative and would bring a range of benefits to both countries, including the enhanced ability of British forces to work with their US counterparts in current and future joint operations. We recommend that the FCO should continue to press strongly its contacts in the Administration and Congress to make rapid progress with this matter.

74. Other problems in the field of defence trade co-operation have been the subject of extensive comment by the Defence Committee and others.¹³² A frequent difficulty is that with regard to defence procurement in the American system, the Administration may propose but Congress, as keeper of the purse-strings, disposes. As Professor Clarke commented to us, “presidential favour only goes so far in day to day US politics”.¹³³ By way of example he cited the fact that despite support in the White House for the UK’s request to have full access to all software codes on the US Joint Strike Fighter Project, a project in which the UK has invested heavily in both financial and opportunity costs, there has been “little evidence of more than a strictly commercial approach on the part of the US Congress, still less the manufacturers”. He stated that when it comes to commercial defence interests “there is evidence of sympathy for UK positions but little practical effect”.¹³⁴

Accountability of US bases on British territory

75. The UK acts as the host for US military facilities within Britain and elsewhere. These include two major air bases at RAF Lakenheath and RAF Mildenhall in East Anglia, a forward operating base at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire, a US intercept and intelligence analysis station at RAF Menwith Hill in North Yorkshire, an intelligence analysis centre at RAF Molesworth in Cambridgeshire, and eight other small bases.¹³⁵ The US also has significant military installations in two British Overseas Territories, with communications and landing facilities at Ascension Island and a major naval base at Diego Garcia in the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT). According to Professor William Wallace and Christopher Phillips, “the United States benefits very considerably from the provision of these bases”, while “Britain benefits from this power projection to the extent that it shares US objectives”. Professor Wallace added that the countervailing costs to the UK are largely intangible but may be summarised as “the cession of sovereignty over British territory, within a framework where executive agreements largely beyond public or parliamentary accountability rest upon mutual trust between the British and American administrations”.¹³⁶ Referring to the arrangements in place for British oversight of US military bases in the UK, Professor Wallace stated that:

¹³² See for example Third Report of Session 2007–08, *UK/US Defence Trade Cooperation Treaty*, HC 107, 11 December 2007

¹³³ Ev 139

¹³⁴ Ev 139

¹³⁵ William Wallace and Christopher Phillips, p 271

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

[...] when the Americans upgraded the Fylingdales radar system, Her Majesty's Chief Scientific Adviser went to Washington to ask about the technical specifications of the upgraded radar, and he was not allowed to see classified material. That seems to me rather odd for a major installation on the sovereign territory of the United Kingdom.¹³⁷

76. Professor Wallace argued that there ought to be a form of parliamentary scrutiny of these bases beyond current arrangements which permit visits by the Intelligence and Security Committee, as well as full Government disclosure of the status and currency of lease arrangements entered into with the US.¹³⁸

77. In respect of Diego Garcia, Professor Wallace argued that the claim that the territory is under British command "is completely offset by the relatively junior nature of the attached squadron leader who is usually the only person there".¹³⁹ In previous Reports we have discussed issues relating to the US presence on Diego Garcia.¹⁴⁰ In the most recent of these, our 2009 review of the FCO's responsibilities for human rights, we expressed serious concern about the island's use by the US for the purposes of extraordinary rendition. We concluded that it was unacceptable that the Government had not taken steps to obtain the full details of the two individuals who were rendered through Diego Garcia and that the use of Diego Garcia for US rendition flights without the knowledge or consent of the British Government raised disquieting questions about the effectiveness of the Government's exercise of its responsibilities in relation to this territory. We further concluded that it was a matter of concern that many allegations continue to be made that the two acknowledged instances of rendition through BIOT do not represent the limit of the territory's use for this purpose, and we added that "it is extremely difficult for the British Government to assess the veracity of these allegations without active and candid co-operation from the US Administration". The Government did not accept our conclusions.¹⁴¹

78. Professor Chalmers told us:

The UK itself, as well as bases in Diego Garcia, Ascension Island and Cyprus, is very important to the United States. When we have discussions that are framed around the proposition that unless we do A, B or C we will threaten our relationship with the United States, we have to remember that those bases are really quite an important card for us, which we do not have to remind the Americans of. They know they are important to their interests, but it does mean that we can be a little more self-confident that the Americans are not going to take steps that are fundamentally against our interests, without there being consequences.¹⁴²

137 Q 35

138 Q 35

139 Q 33

140 Seventh Report of Session 2008–09, *Human Rights Annual Report 2008*, HC 557; Ninth Report of Session 2007–08, *Human Rights Annual Report 2007*, HC 533; Seventh Report of Session 2007–08, *Overseas Territories*, HC 147-I

141 Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Response of the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to Seventh Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 2008–09, Annual Report on Human Rights 2008*, Cm 7723, October 2009

142 Q 35

79. We conclude that the issues relating to rendition through Diego Garcia to which we have previously drawn attention raise disturbing questions about the uses to which US bases on British territory are put. We greatly regret the fact that there are considerable constraints upon the abilities of both the UK Government and Parliament to scrutinise and oversee many of the longstanding agreements which govern US use of British territory. We recommend that the Government should establish a comprehensive review of the current arrangements governing US military use of facilities within the UK and in British Overseas Territories, with a view to identifying shortcomings in the current system of scrutiny and oversight by the UK Government and Parliament, and report to Parliament on proposals to remedy these whilst having regard to the value of these facilities to the security of the UK.

Future challenges

80. The ability to fight alongside US forces is, in the view of many of our witnesses, one of the most important practical and tangible assets that the UK can offer the US in support of the UK-US bilateral relationship. In her written evidence, Frances Burwell considered that “across a broad spectrum of US opinion, from the military to policymakers to the public at large, Britain is seen as a country that has joined the United States in some very difficult and dangerous tasks”.¹⁴³ In return for providing the US with this assistance, the UK has harboured what Professor Wallace described as “expectations of influence”.¹⁴⁴ According to Nick Witney,

[In] the last major Defence White Paper [in] 2003, we are saying that the job of the British armed forces is to be sized and shaped so that we can make a chunky contribution to an American-led operation. That will get us to the table, so that we can be there when the decisions are taken (with the suppressed premise that they will therefore be better decisions).¹⁴⁵

81. This approach has had tactical consequences for the military as well as strategic implications for defence and foreign policy. Professor Chalmers noted that in respect of more challenging operations, the UK only envisaged committing its armed forces if the US is also doing so. Referring to British involvement in Afghanistan, he stated:

Despite claims that the operations were vital to the UK’s national interests, there was never any question of it being involved [...] without US military commitment. Nor, despite the government’s insistence on the threat that a Taliban-led Afghanistan would pose to the UK, is there now any realistic possibility that the UK would retain its armed forces in that country were the US to leave.¹⁴⁶

82. Many of our witnesses also highlighted what they perceived to be the cost to the UK of this ‘hug them close’ approach. Professor Wallace and Christopher Phillips argued that, “the costs over the preceding ten years of maintaining Britain’s position as America’s most

143 Ev 116

144 William Wallace and Christopher Phillips, p 267

145 Q 67 [Mr Witney]

146 Ev 108

loyal and effective ally, with a contribution to make in all major dimensions of conflict, have been high”. They added that the US drive towards network-enabled warfare and a steep rise in US defence procurement has left the UK “with a heavily overcommitted future procurement programme”.¹⁴⁷ In support of this argument, they referred to a study by RUSI, which estimated the British contribution to operations in Afghanistan in 2008 at 80% of the American effort in relation to population size and 110% in relation to GDP before concluding that “the parallel commitment to intervention and post-conflict occupation in Iraq has left British forces severely overstretched”.¹⁴⁸

83. There are many who question whether the UK can and should continue with this level of commitment and investment. Frances Burwell argued that the concurrent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq had revealed “the limitations of British military forces, as well as those of everyone else”, and she stated that “the stress of frequent deployments and the loss of lives and matériel in such operations has exacted a high price”. In her view, the increase in US military personnel in Afghanistan meant that US forces would increasingly dominate operations and as a consequence, “allies and partners may wonder whether their contributions [...] are making a real difference, beyond the immensely valuable political demonstration of allied unity”. She concluded that these pressures were likely to make the UK “less capable and less willing to be a significant partner in future military operations”.¹⁴⁹

84. Professor Clarke told us that under the present circumstances the UK could no longer maintain its existing force structure alongside open-ended military commitments.¹⁵⁰ Professor Chalmers argued that, simply because of the two countries’ respective sizes, the US was more important to the UK than the UK to the US, and that whether the UK was important in particular circumstances “often depends on what we bring to the table, whether it is the symbolic importance of being there [...], military capabilities or basing or whatever it might be”.¹⁵¹ Professor Wallace believed that as the US shifted its strategic focus away from Europe towards the projection of power in the Middle East and perhaps the Asia Pacific region, it would be more difficult for the UK to make corresponding military commitments unless “we have long-range transport and Oceanic naval deployment, and those things cost a lot of money”.¹⁵²

85. Many of our witnesses argued that cuts to the defence budget could lead to a decline in Britain’s international role and influence, and thus its ultimate utility to the United States. Dr Dunn told us that it was difficult to predict accurately the impact of defence spending cuts but warned that “they are likely to diminish British influence in Washington bilaterally”.¹⁵³

147 William Wallace and Christopher Phillips, p 268

148 Michael Codner, *The hard choices: twenty questions for British defence policy and national military strategy* (London: Royal United Services Institute, 2008), p 1 quoted in Wallace and Phillips, “Reassessing the special relationship”, *International Affairs* 85: 2 (2009) 263–284

149 Ev 116–117

150 Ev 141–142

151 Q 24

152 Q 26

153 Ev 133

86. For those who believe that defence spending must be maintained in order for the UK to retain its influence over the US, the financial prognosis for the Ministry of Defence is not encouraging. In a statement to the House on 3 February 2010, the Secretary of State for Defence said that “the forward defence programme faces real financial pressure. We will need to rebalance what we do in order to meet our priorities”.¹⁵⁴ A report by RUSI, published in January 2010, stated that “the growing costs of UK defence capabilities, combined with cuts in the Ministry of Defence (MoD) budget as a result of the nation’s fiscal crisis, will make it impossible to preserve current numbers of service personnel and front-line capabilities”. The report projected a fall in trained UK service personnel of around 20%: from 175,000 in 2010 to around 142,000 in 2016, arguing that this would be the probable result of an expected cut in the defence budget of around 10-15% in real terms, together with continuing real annual unit cost growth of between 1% and 2% for UK defence capabilities.¹⁵⁵ Dr Dunn believed that, “the result will be that something has to give. Whichever cuts are made will likely amount to a dramatic reduction in Britain’s traditional defence role, with wider foreign policy implications”.¹⁵⁶

Access and influence

87. Even if it were to be financially affordable, there are those who question whether the UK should continue to try to retain its status as the United States’ leading military ally, in the light of what they perceive to be questionable returns by way of increased access and influence. Nick Witney told us that the assumptions which he considered had underpinned recent UK defence and foreign policy, that the UK’s defence investment and commitment would result in an ability to influence the US, had been “tested to destruction, first through Iraq and now through Afghanistan. We cannot afford it. Even if we could, the Americans are not that interested, because they are so big and have so much power to bring to the table”.¹⁵⁷ He argued that the UK had to rid itself of “the illusion that we can act as a loyal first lieutenant” which will be “admitted to the inner councils of the American defence establishment and will be able to guide and steer them, because the experience of recent years has demonstrated that we can’t do that”.¹⁵⁸

88. Professor Wallace’s view was that although the UK might have had access, this had not necessarily equated to influence. He commented:

I was quite struck by those who told me that we have had people embedded in the analytical stage of the discussion of US policy towards Afghanistan, but that the Americans insisted on taking the embedded British officers out when they moved on to the strategy stage. That is access without influence. It is clearly going to be a question for anyone’s security review: where are our interests in this and how much are we going to spend in order to buy privileged access?¹⁵⁹

154 HC Deb 3 February 2010, col 303

155 Professor Malcolm Chalmers, “Capability Cost Trends: Implications for the Defence Review”, *Royal United Services Institute*, 12 January 2010

156 Ev 132

157 Q 67 [Mr Witney]

158 Q 88

159 Q 28

According to him, “The sentiment of a lot of people in and around the Ministry of Defence is that we need either to spend more on buying influence or accept that we have less than we would like.”¹⁶⁰

89. Some of our witnesses advocated a major re-think of the nature and extent of the UK’s defence links to the US. Professor Chalmers commented that as the time for a new UK Defence Review approached, “there is bound to be renewed scrutiny of whether the UK is getting an *adequate return* (in terms of influence on the US) in return for its defence efforts, and what this means for future defence priorities”.¹⁶¹ He argued that the UK should recognise that it could exert greatest influence over the US either when decisions to take military action were about to be taken, or when commitments to provide forces (or reinforcements) were being made. If the UK had reservations about how military operations may be conducted, or whether they should be conducted at all, it should be willing to make any military commitment dependent upon a satisfactory resolution of its concerns. Sometimes, he argued, the UK should be “willing to say no”.¹⁶²

90. Professor Chalmers said the UK needed to recognise that “when the US is fully engaged and determined to take military action, the views of allies are unlikely to count for much in its decision-making calculus”. The UK could often be more influential if it pursued an approach that was complementary to that of the US, rather than simply mirroring whatever current US priorities might be. In the cases of both Sierra Leone and Kosovo, “it was the UK’s willingness to take a lead in military action, or to plan for unilateral action, that was the key to its ability to help shape the strategic environment”.¹⁶³

91. We conclude that the current financial climate has implications for the UK’s future defence posture and its ability to sustain the level of military commitment in support of the US that it has demonstrated in recent years. We further conclude that it is likely that the extent of political influence which the UK has exercised on US decision-making as a consequence of its military commitments is likely also to diminish.

Niche and specialist capabilities

92. For some of our witnesses, one possible way of adjusting to decreased resources and providing “added value” in the UK-US defence relationship would be to focus the UK’s defence spend increasingly on more affordable “niche” capabilities¹⁶⁴ which, in turn, could result in greater political leverage. Professor Clarke argued that:

rather than try to maintain a force structure that looks essentially like US forces on a smaller scale—in effect a beauty contest to encourage US policy-makers and public to take the UK more seriously—the objective might instead be for the UK to be

160 Q 25

161 Ev 108

162 Ev 109

163 Ev 109

164 Ev 141

capable of taking on a particular role in a joint operation and doing it independently, reliably and without recourse to significant US help.¹⁶⁵

There were military niche and specialist capabilities which the UK possessed and which the US did not. These would help UK forces to “fit in” to a US battle plan for instance in the fields of maritime mine counter-measures, air-to-air refuelling, special forces reconnaissance and human intelligence assets. He noted that, in the past, the ability of UK forces to begin a battle alongside the Americans ‘on day one’ with roughly comparable equipment of all categories had been a matter of pride for British leaders. However, he cautioned that “the outcomes have not always been happy or rewarding for the British”. Professor Clarke’s conclusions are worth citing at length:

Better to be capable of doing a job in a US-led coalition, even if it is less prestigious and does not begin on day one, but be trusted to accomplish it well. This implies a more radical approach in reviewing UK defence to produce forces that might be significantly smaller but more genuinely transformative [...]. Genuinely transformative armed forces would also provide a model for other European allies and partners facing similar pressures. This would help reinforce a more assertive political leadership role for the UK in the transatlantic arena and provide a practical link between smaller European powers with limited but useful military forces, and a US that is likely to continue, even in austerity, to spend 10 times more than the UK on defence, 3 times the combined spending of EU countries on defence equipment and 6 times their combined spending on military research and development. The UK can gain more influence by pursuing flexible complementarity with a US force structure of this magnitude than being a pale imitation of it.¹⁶⁶

93. Professor Chalmers, likewise, argued that the Government should focus defence investment in “areas of national comparative advantage, where the gap in capabilities between the UK and US is less than that in overall military capability, and where a second centre of operational capability can accordingly bring greater influence”. Capabilities in which the UK could still claim to be relatively well-placed included special forces and intelligence services. However, comparative advantages “could often vanish remarkably quickly, given the US’s ability to innovate and its massively greater resources”. He added:

With the recent surge of doctrinal innovation in the US military, for example, the UK has now largely lost the comparative advantage in counter-insurgency that it had developed in Northern Ireland. In the coming period of defence austerity, it will be particularly important to be able to prioritise those areas where comparative advantage can be sustained, where necessary at the expense of those areas where this is not feasible.¹⁶⁷

94. We asked Ivan Lewis, Minister of State at the FCO, about areas where the UK was at a comparative advantage. In response, he pointed to the UK’s experience in engagement with local communities, arguing that, “Our troops have a tremendous track record in that

165 Ev 141

166 Ev 142

167 Ev 109

kind of local, community-based work. That does not suggest that the Americans don't or can't do that, but I know that our troops and forces are particularly respected internationally for that kind of work. I would argue that that is one example of where we add value. It is not just about military might".¹⁶⁸

95. Our witnesses identified other ways in which the UK could, at least in the short term, continue to be of assistance to the US. For instance, Professor Clarke proposed that the UK should continue to champion "drastic institutional reform" in NATO and in relation to the EU's machinery for European Security and Defence Policy. In his view, "The UK and US have a powerful mutual interest in addressing these problems; the Europeans have an equally powerful imperative to ensure that the US remains genuinely engaged with European security structures. Institutional sclerosis will only increase the long-term trend towards US engagement in European Security".¹⁶⁹ Others such as Robert Hunter argued that the UK should focus on close, bilateral co-ordination on security issues, including for NATO, and co-operation in trying to break down barriers between NATO and the EU.¹⁷⁰

96. We conclude that, in the short term, the UK should continue to do all it can to assist the US in the areas where it is also in the UK's security interests to do so, most notably in relation to Afghanistan and Pakistan and in respect of reform of NATO. We further conclude that, in the longer-term, the Government's foreign and security policy needs to be driven by the UK's national security obligations including those towards Britain's Overseas Territories, its NATO commitments and its security partnership with the US.

Strategic Defence Review

97. The last major Strategic Defence Review was conducted in 1998. On 3 February 2010, the Government published a Green Paper entitled *Adaptability and Partnership: Issues for the Strategic Defence Review*. It points to a number of the key questions that the Government believes the next Strategic Defence Review (due to take place in 2010) should address, some of which we have already discussed above. Many of the points raised in the Paper are relevant to our present inquiry into UK-US relations, including the crucial question of whether the UK's current international defence and security relationships should be re-balanced in the longer term and whether the UK should move towards greater integration of its forces with those of key allies and partners.

98. Gary Schmitt, from the US think-tank, Project for the New American Century, stated that there is a consensus that "the UK Government is facing a fundamental choice: should it build a military that can handle today's unconventional wars or attempt to sustain an increasingly thin semblance of a "do-everything" force?"¹⁷¹ He adds: "if those are the alternatives and a choice must be made, we should be clear: the 'special relationship' that binds Washington and London will not remain the same". He asks, "will the US be as interested in hearing from Whitehall if British forces are only capable of working side-by-side with Americans in a narrower defence arena? And, in turn, will Whitehall continue to

168 Q 185

169 Ev 143

170 Ev 86

171 Gary Schmitt, "Defence cuts reduce Britain's value as an ally", *Financial Times*, 19 July 2009

share a common strategic vision with Washington if its own interests are constrained by increasingly limited military capabilities?”¹⁷²

99. As Professor Chalmers told us, in light of recent UK experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, “there is a strong case for a thorough review of how the UK can maximise the national political and security benefits that it obtains from its defence investments”:

There is still a common tendency to articulate the need for the UK to spend more on defence in terms of national honour and a generic need to maintain a strong role in the world. This is often underpinned by an assumption that the UK must accept the burden imposed by the altruistic and internationalist nature of its foreign policy, which (it is argued) contrasts with the more self-interested policies of other major powers. Considerations of honour and responsibility indeed do have a place in foreign policy. Yet there is a danger that, if not anchored in a clear calculus of national benefits and interests, these sentiments can lead to policy approaches of doubtful utility and unacceptable costs.¹⁷³

100. Summing up much of the evidence presented to us, Mr Witney stated that the UK must now “think about our position in the world and what sort of operations we think we’ll be taking part in”.¹⁷⁴

101. We conclude that it is imperative that the forthcoming Strategic Defence Review should be foreign policy and defence commitments led and be preceded by an honest and frank debate about the UK’s role in the world based on a realistic assessment of what the UK can, and should, offer and deliver. Only once these fundamental questions have been addressed can the long-term scope and nature of the UK’s defence relationship with the US be determined.

From hard power to soft?

102. We asked our witnesses whether, in light of future defence spending cuts, it might be prudent to spend more on projecting the UK’s soft power through, for instance, the FCO where there may be better value for money in terms of influence gained. Some of our witnesses argued that the answer depended on the nature of the threat; clearly in response to a conventional military threat the US would require military assistance. However, as Professor Wallace told us, on the basis of a broader security agenda involving problems of immigration, climate change and counter-terrorism, any investment would not only be in the interests of the US, but in those of the UK too.¹⁷⁵ Professor Chalmers agreed that the Foreign Office offers “relatively good value for the amount of money spent” and that it may be prudent to give that “a relatively higher priority at the margins”.¹⁷⁶

103. We asked Ivan Lewis, Minister of State at the FCO, whether, in the future, the UK could be a more effective ally by focusing resources in the areas where the UK can provide

172 Gary Schmitt, “Defence cuts reduce Britain’s value as an ally”, *Financial Times*, 19 July 2009

173 Ev 107

174 Q 88

175 Q 37

176 Q 37

added value, for instance, in the diplomatic, intelligence and foreign policy fields. Mr Lewis conceded that we are all “increasingly aware of the link between security, governance and development, and therefore we need to look at that in terms of how we have a more strategic approach”.¹⁷⁷

Intelligence co-operation

104. Exchange of intelligence information between the US and UK agencies was greatly expanded during the Second World War as part of the wartime partnership between Britain’s Special Operations Executive and Secret Intelligence Service (SOE and SIS) and equivalent US agencies, which rapidly outgrew their British counterparts as they subsequently expanded to counter the perceived Soviet threat. Partly as a result of the Suez crisis—when London concealed intelligence from Washington and Washington retaliated by cutting co-operation—the UK was relegated to the role of junior partner that it has played ever since.¹⁷⁸

105. Under a 1947 agreement on signals intelligence (SIGINT), the UK has monitored Europe and the Middle East through its two bases in Cyprus and at GCHQ in Cheltenham and passes SIGINT to the US National Security Agency (NSA). Through its participation in the UKUSA Echelon network the UK has access to projects it could not afford alone, although the degree of integration of the SIGINT network with the NSA has raised questions about the operational independence of GCHQ from NSA.¹⁷⁹ The US collates much of its own European intelligence data from its UK-based SIGINT station at RAF Menwith Hill.¹⁸⁰ The situation in relation to human intelligence (HUMINT) gathered by the Security Service (MI5) and the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) is somewhat different, with both agencies retaining operational independence, despite close co-operation with their US counterparts.

106. The intelligence relationship between the UK and US was described to us by Dr Dunn as “second to none”.¹⁸¹ The FCO stated:

The UK has a long established and very close intelligence relationship with the US, which owes much to our historical and cultural links. The continuing high value of this relationship has been demonstrated on many occasions in recent years and on a wide variety of issues. We share many common objectives, including countering terrorism, drugs and serious crime. The closeness of this intelligence relationship allows us to extend our own national capabilities in ways that would not otherwise be possible and is invaluable.¹⁸²

107. Although the default UK position appears to be set to allow the automatic relay of human intelligence to the US, more selective reporting based on political considerations is

177 Q 188

178 William Wallace and Christopher Phillips, p 273

179 *Ibid.*

180 *Ibid.*

181 Ev 129

182 Ev 68

not uncommon. This was the case in relation to Northern Ireland in previous years, and in 2007 the Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) reported that the US approach to human rights and rendition since 9/11 had led to the UK agencies exercising “greater caution in working with the US, including withdrawing from some planned operations”.¹⁸³ In a chapter of its 2007 report headed *Implications for the Special Relationship*, the ISC commented: “The rendition programme has revealed aspects of the usually close UK/US relationship that are surprising and concerning. It has highlighted that the UK and US work under very different legal guidelines and ethical approaches.” The ISC concluded that, “it is to the credit of our Agencies that they have now managed to adapt their procedures to work round these problems and maintain the exchange of intelligence that is so critical to UK security”.¹⁸⁴ Professor Wallace commented that “few in the UK agencies today question the value of the intelligence relationship with the United States, even if they have reservations about some US methods”.¹⁸⁵

108. The US is said to benefit from the fact that the UK has sources in places that it does not and that some “foreign assets are more willing to talk to British intelligence rather than to the Americans for a variety of historical or other reasons”.¹⁸⁶ Dr Dunn highlighted British intelligence operations in relation to Libya’s programme of weapons of mass destruction and Iranian nuclear facilities near Qum,¹⁸⁷ suggesting that there was “added benefit in non-Americans bringing intelligence to the world’s attention”. He continued:

As well as intelligence collection there is also mutual benefit in shared analysis. The UK role here is prized second to none by the US. [...] Like the diplomatic service the very high quality of the intelligence services together with the world view that underpins their global role ensure that they have a disproportionate role with the US (and elsewhere) to both their size and budget, and to their counterpart operations.¹⁸⁸

109. Nevertheless, Professor Wallace told us that global patterns of information sharing, particularly in relation to signals intelligence were evolving and “a number of British personnel were talking about how much they now value the sharing of analysis with [...] European partners”. He added that likewise, “the Americans [...] when they are talking about the Middle East or East Asia, obviously find it more valuable to share with others who have more resources in those regions than we do”.¹⁸⁹

110. Since 2001, intelligence co-operation between the two countries has focused on counter-terrorism, as expressed in the US Homeland Defense Strategy and the UK’s CONTEST documents.¹⁹⁰ The FCO’s written submission stated that the US is the UK’s most important partner in protecting UK interests at home and that strategic and operational co-operation is close in a bid to deny Al-Qaeda and other extremists safe haven

183 Quoted in William Wallace and Christopher Phillips, p 274

184 Intelligence and Security Committee, *Rendition*, Cm 7171, July 2007, para 156 and Recommendation Z

185 William Wallace and Christopher Phillips, p 273

186 Ev 130

187 Ev 130

188 Ev 130

189 Q 40

190 Ev 143

in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen and elsewhere and to help these countries build their capacity to deal with terrorism.¹⁹¹

111. The FCO also stated that intelligence sharing and collaboration between the two countries on law enforcement takes place at every level and that the extent of this “far outstrips the level of interaction and co-operation with other nations”.¹⁹² Such collaboration is claimed to have led to the disruption of terrorist attacks in the UK and overseas, for example in Operation Overt.¹⁹³ Professor Clarke agreed that the relationship has been pursued in a “generally co-operative framework”, but told us that “this is not to say that mutual police co-operation has been particularly good, or that successive spy scandals in the UK have not damaged the credibility of the security services in the eyes of the US”.¹⁹⁴

112. Lord Hurd noted that “the Anglo-American intelligence partnership has proved durable in all weathers”.¹⁹⁵ Certainly, levels of trust are reported to be higher than those which exist in other allied relationships, but, according to Professor Clarke this does not mean that the relationship cannot be susceptible to damage. By way of example, he recalled that “in 2006 the British Prime Minister kept the US President fully briefed on the development of the ‘Bojinka II’ airline plot as it was developing, only to have the surveillance operation blown early, according to reliable accounts, from the top of the US hierarchy who saw the development of the emerging plot differently”.¹⁹⁶ There was also much publicity over remarks made by the former head of the UK Security Service, Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller, during a lecture in the House of Lords on 10 March 2010. She is reported to have said that it was only upon her retirement in 2007 that she discovered that the US had ‘waterboarded’ Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who is alleged to have organised the 9/11 attacks on the US. She stated that the US had been “very keen to conceal from us what was happening”.¹⁹⁷

113. More recently, UK-US intelligence co-operation came under scrutiny following the attempted suicide bomb attack allegedly by Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab on a plane bound for the US on 26 December 2009. There were allegations in the US media that the UK might not have acted sufficiently swiftly in passing on information to the US.¹⁹⁸ (It was also reported in the American press that “senior policymakers in the United States said the attempted suicide bomb [...] was further evidence that one of the biggest threats to US security came from Britain, where the capital has been dubbed “Londonistan” by critics”.¹⁹⁹) In a statement to the House on 5 January 2010, the Home Secretary asserted that no information had been either held by the UK or shared by the UK with the US that

191 Ev 61

192 Ev 61

193 Ev 61

194 Ev 138

195 Ev 83

196 Ev 138

197 “Ex-MI5 head: US concealed torture”, *Press Association*, 10 March 2010

198 See “White House accuses Downing Street of making ‘a mistake’ over intelligence claim”, *Daily Telegraph*, 5 January 2009.

199 “Americans blame Britain for rise of Islamic extremism”, *Daily Telegraph*, 30 December 2009

had indicated that Abdulmutallab was about to attempt a terrorist attack against the US. President Obama subsequently stated publicly that responsibility for intelligence failings in this instance lay within the US security establishment.

114. We conclude that, despite some recent frictions, the field of intelligence co-operation is one of the areas where the UK-US relationship can rightly be described as 'special'. We further conclude that there can be no doubt that both the UK and US derive considerable benefits from this co-operation, especially in relation to counter-terrorism.

Public disclosure of US intelligence material

115. There has been considerable public debate over whether a recent judicial decision may affect the UK-US intelligence relationship. In May 2008 the US charged Binyam Mohamed with terrorist offences. Mr Mohamed is an Ethiopian national who was arrested in Pakistan in 2002 and transferred to Guantánamo Bay in 2004 having spent time in detention in Morocco and Afghanistan. He alleges that he was tortured and that British officials were aware of and complicit in his treatment.

116. There has been much controversy over whether 42 US documents previously disclosed to Mr Mohamed's counsel should be made public. The Foreign Secretary told the House on 5 February 2009 that:

the disclosure of the intelligence documents at issue by order of our Courts against the wishes of the US authorities would indeed cause real and significant damage to the national security and international relations of this country. For the record, the United States authorities did not threaten to "break off" intelligence co-operation with the UK. What the United States said, and it appears in the open, public documents of this case, is that the disclosure of these documents by order of our Courts would be 'likely to result in serious damage to US national security and could harm existing intelligence information-sharing between our two governments'²⁰⁰

117. In May 2009 the Government continued to argue that the memoranda should not be disclosed, providing a letter from the Obama Administration that stated:

if it is determined that Her Majesty's Government is unable to protect information we provide to it, even if that inability is caused by your judicial system, we will necessarily have to review with the greatest care the sensitivity of information we can provide in future.²⁰¹

118. On 16 October 2009, the High Court ruled that some of the US intelligence documents containing details of the alleged torture of Binyam Mohamed could be released. The key document was a summary of abuse allegations that US intelligence officers shared with their counterparts in London. Lord Justice Thomas and Mr Justice Lloyd Jones ruled

200 HC Deb, 5 February 2009, col 989

201 "Obama intelligence threat over "torture" case", *The Times*, 14 May 2009

that the risk to national security was “not a serious one” and there was “overwhelming” public interest in disclosing the material.²⁰²

119. The Foreign Secretary subsequently announced that the Government would appeal against the judgment. He stated: “We have no objection to this material being published by the appropriate authorities, in this case the United States [...] What I do have a very deep objection to is the idea that a British court should publish American secrets - in the same way that I would have a deep objection if an American court started publishing British secrets”.²⁰³ A spokesperson for the US State Department said the US government was “not pleased” by the court’s decision.²⁰⁴ During our visit to the US in October 2009, several interlocutors expressed concern about the recent judicial developments and implied it might restrict the flow of intelligence from the US to the UK.

120. Giving oral evidence to us, the Minister of State, Ivan Lewis MP said:

We were given intelligence in confidence by an ally. It is very clear to us that, for whatever reason and in whatever circumstances, for us to release that into the public domain would be a breach of trust and confidence that could seriously damage our relationship not just with the United States, but with others who give us intelligence in confidence. The second issue is that, frankly, it is a responsibility of the United States if it wishes to make public its own intelligence. It is not our job to make public intelligence gained by another country.²⁰⁵

121. Witnesses were divided over this issue. Professor Wallace stated that over the past thirty years it had been commonplace that “more information is available in Washington than in London”. He alleged that “quite often highly confidential or secret information that we are holding in London is published in Washington. So I am doubtful about the basis for the Foreign Secretary’s case”.²⁰⁶ However, Professor Chalmers expressed a different view when he told us that his “instinct is that having the ability to exchange information with the United States on a confidential basis is actually rather important to the relationship. We have to take seriously the Foreign Secretary’s concern that if a precedent is established and extended in this area, less information will be shared”.²⁰⁷ He continued:

The issue is that, if the Americans are doing something very sensitive in, say, Afghanistan or Iran and are thinking about whether they want to discuss it with their British counterparts, they will want to know that they can discuss it frankly without it getting into the public domain through the British legal system. If there is not a reasonable degree of assurance about that, it will make them bite their tongue more than they have.²⁰⁸

202 “Ban on ‘torture documents’ lifted”, *BBC News*, 16 October 2009

203 *Ibid.*

204 *Ibid.*

205 Q 171

206 Q 42

207 Q 42

208 Q 43

122. On 10 February 2010, the Court of Appeal ruled that the seven paragraphs which had been redacted from the original judgment of the Divisional Court on 21 August 2008 should be published. It followed the disclosure by a US Court in December 2009 which included references to the treatment of Mr Mohamed covered in the seven paragraphs. In a statement to the House on 10 February 2010, the Foreign Secretary stated:

The Court of Appeal [...] ordered the publication of the seven paragraphs because in its view their contents were placed in to the public domain by a United States District Court. Without that disclosure, it is clear that the Court of Appeal would have upheld our appeal and overturned the fifth judgement of the Divisional Court.

The Court of Appeal was also clear that the judiciary should only overturn the view of the executive on matters of national security in the most exceptional circumstances. It states [...] that “it is integral to intelligence sharing that intelligence material provided by one country to another remains confidential to the country which provided it and that it will never be disclosed, directly or indirectly by the receiving country, without the permission of the provider of the information. This understanding is rigidly applied to the relationship between the UK and USA”.²⁰⁹

123. The Foreign Secretary added:

I am grateful for the consideration the Court of Appeal gave to the control principle. This principle, which states that intelligence belonging to another country should not be released without its agreement, underpins the flow of intelligence between the US and the UK. This unique intelligence sharing relationship is vital to national security in both our countries. [...] Crucially, [...] the Court has upheld the control principle today. The judgement describes that principle as integral to intelligence sharing.²¹⁰

124. The Foreign Secretary also stated that the Government would work “carefully with the US in the weeks ahead to discuss the judgment and its implications in the light of our shared goals and commitments”.²¹¹

125. We conclude that the decisions of the High Court to uphold the principle that intelligence material provided by one country to another remains confidential to the country which provided it, are to be welcomed. We further conclude that the Government should, in its response to our Report, set out its understanding of the implications of the recent Court of Appeal judgment for future UK-US intelligence co-operation.

Security co-operation

126. The FCO believes that both bilaterally and through partnership in international organisations, the UK-US relationship had made “an immense contribution to global security—throughout the Cold War, through our membership in NATO; and since, through our participation in international peacekeeping, stabilisation and enforcement

209 HC Deb, 10 February 2010, col 914

210 HC Deb, 10 February 2010, col 913

211 HC Deb, 10 February 2010, col 914

operations in the Balkans, the Middle East, Afghanistan and elsewhere”.²¹² In an article written for *The Times* in March 2009, the Prime Minister argued that “there is no international partnership in recent history that has served the world better than the special relationship between Britain and the United States”.²¹³ Hillary Clinton, the US Secretary of State, commented after meeting the Foreign Secretary in July 2009 that “our special relationship is a driver for greater peace, progress and prosperity, not only for our own people, but around the world”.²¹⁴

127. One example of the benefits that a joint UK-US approach can bring to a current international security concern can be seen in relation to piracy. The FCO told us that the UK and US have been “two of the key drivers behind the provision of effective counter-piracy military operations and wider efforts in the Gulf of Aden and the wider Indian Ocean” and that both have worked closely together on the political side of the counter-piracy effort, in the preparation of Security Council resolutions authorising and later renewing military counter-piracy operations, and finding ways to tackle financial flows related to piracy.²¹⁵ One other area where UK-US co-operation has been important can be seen in relation to Pakistan.

Case study: Pakistan

128. The arrival of President Obama in office led to the start of a markedly different approach to Pakistan and one which fell more in line with that which the UK Government has adopted in recent years. The US Administration’s recognition of Pakistan’s strategic importance vis-à-vis Afghanistan led to a significant step change in its engagement with Pakistan during the President’s first year in office. For some time, the UK has been working to persuade the US to bring its assistance closer in line with UK practices, including channelling funding through strategic long-term partnerships to tackle terrorism. The FCO stated that both the US and UK have encouraged Pakistan to go faster and further in its efforts to counter terrorist groups operating on its soil, including those that threaten India. The UK has also been working with the US to build the capacity of the Pakistani security services and both countries were instrumental in establishing the Friends of Democratic Pakistan (FoDP) group, designed to galvanise international political support for Pakistan’s long-term development and to help the Pakistani Government to tackle the security problems it faces.²¹⁶

129. In his written submission, Professor Clarke told us the future of Pakistan [...] “is a vital shared interest between London and Washington where the UK is even more the junior partner than in Afghanistan”.²¹⁷ In spite of the UK’s apparently junior status, Professor Clarke stated that there are some elements of policy towards Pakistan that “play to the UK’s comparative advantages”. Like the FCO, he believes that the UK can contribute to “both the military and political re-orientation of Pakistan’s armed forces in ways that the

212 Ev 57

213 “The special relationship is going global”, *Sunday Times*, 1 March 2009

214 Ev 57

215 Ev 152

216 Ev 60

217 Ev 142

US cannot, and without some of the stigma that attaches inside Pakistan to association with the US". In particular he points to the benefits of "making the best of the UK's natural links with Pakistan and its advantage as a European, as opposed to an American, voice could help address the acute problems of the sub-region in a way that binds Washington and London more closely together".²¹⁸

130. We conclude that the new US approach to Pakistan is to be welcomed and marks an important and long overdue recalibration of its relationship in an area which is of significant importance to both the UK and US.

Nuclear co-operation

131. During the Cold War, the UK's nuclear co-operation with the United States was considered to be at the heart of the 'special relationship'. This included the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement, the 1963 Polaris Sales Agreement (PSA) (subsequently amended for Trident), and the UK's use of the US nuclear test site in Nevada from 1962 to 1992. The co-operation also encompassed agreements for the United States to use bases in Britain, with the right to store nuclear weapons, and agreements for two bases in Yorkshire (Fylingdales and Menwith Hill) to be upgraded to support US missile defence plans.²¹⁹

132. In 1958, the UK and US signed the Mutual Defence Agreement (MDA). Although some of the appendices, amendments and Memoranda of Understanding remain classified, it is known that the agreement provides for extensive co-operation on nuclear warhead and reactor technologies, in particular the exchange of classified information concerning nuclear weapons to improve design, development and fabrication capability. The agreement also provides for the transfer of nuclear warhead-related materials. The agreement was renewed in 2004 for another ten years.²²⁰

133. The other major UK-US agreement in this field is the 1963 Polaris Sales Agreement (PSA) which allows the UK to acquire, support and operate the US Trident missile system. Originally signed to allow the UK to acquire the Polaris Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) system in the 1960s, it was amended in 1980 to facilitate purchase of the Trident I (C4) missile and again in 1982 to authorise purchase of the more advanced Trident II (D5) in place of the C4. In return, the UK agreed to formally assign its nuclear forces to the defence of NATO, except in an extreme national emergency, under the terms of the 1962 Nassau Agreement reached between President John F. Kennedy and Prime Minister Harold Macmillan to facilitate negotiation of the PSA.

134. Current nuclear co-operation takes the form of leasing arrangements of around 60 Trident II D5 missiles from the US for the UK's independent deterrent, and long-standing collaboration on the design of the W76 nuclear warhead carried on UK missiles.²²¹ In 2006 it was revealed that the US and the UK had been working jointly on a new 'Reliable Replacement Warhead' (RRW) that would modernise existing W76-style designs. In 2009

218 Ev 142

219 Ev 87

220 Ev 87

221 Ev 138 citing Michael Clarke, "Does my bomb look big in this? Britain's nuclear choices after Trident" *International Affairs*, 80(1), 2004, pp. 50-53.

it emerged that simulation testing at Aldermaston on dual axis hydrodynamics experiments had provided the US with scientific data it did not otherwise possess on this RRW programme.²²²

135. The level of co-operation between the two countries on highly sensitive military technology is, according to the written submission from Ian Kearns, “well above the norm, even for a close alliance relationship”. He quoted Admiral William Crowe, the former US Ambassador to London, who likened the UK-US nuclear relationship to that of an iceberg, “with a small tip of it sticking out, but beneath the water there is quite a bit of everyday business that goes on between our two governments in a fashion that’s unprecedented in the world.” Dr Kearns also commented that the personal bonds between the US/UK scientific and technical establishments were deeply rooted.²²³

136. Nick Witney told us that the UK’s leasing arrangement with the US in relation to Trident missiles was “highly cost-effective [...], so that’s clearly something to preserve”. However, he added that there could be a downside to the relationship and that this could bring opportunity costs:

Take the case of nuclear propulsion. Things may have changed in the six years since I was in the Ministry of Defence, but up to that point we’d actually had nothing out of the Americans of any use on nuclear propulsion since the original technical help back in the 1950s. What we had had, because of this technical debt, was an inhibition on being able to co-operate with the French in these areas.²²⁴

137. In its written submission the FCO reasserted the Government’s position that the UK nuclear deterrent was fully operationally independent and that the decision making, use and command and control of the system remained entirely sovereign to the UK. It explained that only the Prime Minister could authorise use of the system and that the UK’s nuclear warheads were designed and manufactured in the UK. Other elements of the system, such as the D5 Trident missile bodies, were procured from the US under the terms of the 1963 Polaris Sales Agreement, which was amended to cover Trident in 1982. The FCO claimed that this “procurement relationship does not undermine the independence of the deterrent, nor has the US ever sought to exploit it as a means to influence UK foreign policy”.²²⁵

138. Other witnesses argued that in practice the “independence” of the British nuclear deterrent was purely notional. The British Pugwash Group contended that without ongoing US support the UK would “very probably cease to be a nuclear weapon state” and that this “inevitably constrains the UK’s national security policies and actions insofar as they must not destabilise its relationship with the US for fear of dilution or even withdrawal of nuclear weapons co-operation”.²²⁶ The Pugwash Group added that “a more general consequence of the particularly close co-operation in these two areas has been that

222 Ev 138

223 Ev 101

224 Q 87 [Mr Witney]

225 Ev 88

226 Ev 88

the UK has felt constrained to support the United States in other areas of military activity, including interventionist activities in the Middle East, and in sharing the ‘burden’ of the conventional and nuclear defence of NATO”.²²⁷ The Group continued:

These ‘distorting’ effects of the ‘special relationship’ in these two key areas have meant that the UK has periodically been subject to criticism from other international players, and particularly from the European Community, for paying insufficient attention to the international policy objectives of its other partners.

139. This view was shared by the Acronym Institute which claimed that the extent of UK-US nuclear co-operation means that Britain must depend on the United States if it wishes to deploy nuclear weapons. The Institute argued that “this nuclear dependence has influenced and at times distorted UK foreign policy decisions. It has contributed to the reluctance of successive UK Governments to criticise US policy and actions, even where such actions appear to damage Britain’s long-term security interests”.²²⁸

140. We asked Professor Chalmers whether he agreed that the UK’s nuclear relationship with the US had affected, and continues to affect, the UK’s foreign policy choices. He acknowledged that it “constrains the exploration of other options, for example, in relation to France”, but added that “there are a number of different factors preventing the UK from going in a fundamentally different direction from the US [...] After all, it wasn’t long after the Nassau Agreement that Harold Wilson refused to go into Vietnam, despite American requests, and that didn’t have any impact on the nuclear relationship that I know of. One can exaggerate that. Clearly there are things at the margins that Americans could do if we cut up awkward in other areas, so it does increase a degree of interdependence”.²²⁹

141. The Obama Administration is currently undertaking a major Nuclear Posture Review, due to report in 2010.²³⁰ The FCO told us that it was fully engaged with the review process, including through high-level consultations and visits to ensure that “the UK’s equities both on nuclear deterrence and disarmament are well understood”.²³¹ That view was not necessarily shared by all of our witnesses. For instance, Robert Hunter stated that “Britain’s role in defence promotes influence in Washington”, but that, by contrast, “the British nuclear deterrent is largely ignored by the US”²³². Professor Chalmers likewise told us that the UK nuclear force was not very important for the US. While the UK would be consulted on the Nuclear Posture Review it would not have a great deal of input into it. He suggested that the UK might have more influence in discussions about the NATO Strategic Concept through a working group established by the NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, and of which former Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon is a member. The group is chaired by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and is examining the role of nuclear weapons in NATO’s future posture. He concluded that “the UK nuclear deterrent

227 Ev 88

228 Ev 123

229 Q 44

230 The 2009–2010 NPR will be the third formal review of U.S. nuclear strategy conducted since the end of the Cold War. The preceding reviews were conducted early in each of the Clinton and Bush administrations’ first terms.

231 Ev 63

232 Ev 84

is at present assigned to NATO, so there we have a structural position which we can use, but in relation to the US domestic Nuclear Posture Review, much less so”.²³³ Changes in the nature of the most imminent international threats had resulted in a reduction in the importance to the US of the British nuclear deterrent. During the Cold War the British deterrent has drawn “all sorts of attention and interest in Washington” but “now that the United States is much more concerned about Iran, South Asia, China and other potential threats outside Europe, we play a much smaller part in all those calculations”.²³⁴ Professor Chalmers added a caveat, that “we live now in a period in which nuclear confrontation and deterrence is less relevant in Europe. If we were to return to a period in which it became more important, consideration of the UK deterrent would rise in salience”.²³⁵

Case study: disarmament and non-proliferation

142. Strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), is a key United Kingdom foreign policy priority. The FCO stated that it had “long recognised that US leadership is essential if we are to achieve it”.²³⁶ One of the FCO’s security objectives in its relationship with the US is to “harness US capabilities and influence US policy to develop a shared approach to preventing states from acquiring WMD [weapons of mass destruction], to align more closely our positions on global nuclear disarmament”.²³⁷ (We have considered the background to current non-proliferation initiatives in detail in our June 2009 Report on *Global Security: Non-Proliferation*.²³⁸)

143. The Government has worked intensively in the United States and elsewhere over the last two years to make the case for an ambitious but balanced strengthening of the NPT’s three pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to advocate the long-term goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. In the FCO’s view, President Obama’s praise for the United Kingdom’s *Road to 2010* plan, published on 16 July 2009, demonstrates the complementarity of UK and US approaches.²³⁹

144. According to Ian Kearns, the UK has established a reputation in Washington as taking a lead on ‘responsible’ disarmament, as exemplified by the Arms Trade Treaty and the global nuclear disarmament agenda. He added that “now that President Obama has outlined his strategy on this, the UK will need to work hard to stay ahead of the game”, and also to influence the US.²⁴⁰ The UK has “a particular chance to be in the vanguard of moves towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in step with the Obama agenda on this issue”.²⁴¹ Although the Obama Administration has indicated it favours a return to a regime-based approach to nuclear non-proliferation, that is not necessarily a view that is

233 Q 45

234 Q 40

235 Q 44

236 Ev 66

237 Ev 59

238 Foreign Affairs Committee, Fourth Report of Session 2008–09, *Global Security: Non-Proliferation*, HC 222, 14 June 2009

239 Ev 66

240 Ev 100

241 Ev 100

shared throughout Congress or in the Washington policy community.²⁴² Professor Clarke argued that anything that the UK can do at the 2010 NPT Review conference “either to revitalise the grand bargain in the NPT between legal access to civil nuclear power and restrictions on nuclear weapons acquisition; or to help push strategic arms control among the nuclear weapons states, would make success more likely”. He urged that both of these aspirations, which are contained in the UK’s *Road to 2010* policy document, should “be pushed as vigorously as possible and in as transatlantic a context as possible to obtain greatest leverage”.²⁴³ A recent report in the *International Herald Tribune* which focused on the likely outcome of the United States Nuclear Posture Review suggested that the US would move to permanently reduce America’s arsenal by thousands of weapons but that it would reject proposals that the US declare it would never be the first to use nuclear weapons.²⁴⁴

145. The UK also has also been working closely with the US Government on Conventional Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) issues. UK experts are said to enjoy excellent working relationships with US officials on the many policy and technical aspects of the CTBT. Ian Kearns told us that it is important to consider how the UK could use the close relationship it has with the US to further the agenda promoted by President Obama in this area. He suggested that UK scientists could be encouraged to share expertise and opinion relevant to CTBT ratification concerns with colleagues and members of Congress in the United States, and the UK could fund and support a major Track II nuclear disarmament diplomacy initiative among representatives of the P-5, plus India, Israel and Pakistan. The US Administration is, he says “ambitious on this agenda but also heavily preoccupied with the recession, Afghanistan and healthcare reform; and while the President can outline his vision, his Administration is going to need all the help it can get on this agenda, particularly from America’s closest allies”.²⁴⁵ The impression that we ourselves gathered during our October 2009 visit to the US was that there is now a greater chance than in recent years of seeing progress made on the CTBT initiative, but that if this was to be successful, there would have to be considerable movement before the US mid-term elections in November 2010.

146. We conclude that the goal of a nuclear weapons-free world is gathering more serious international political support than at any time since the end of the Cold War. We conclude that the Government’s leadership on multilateral nuclear disarmament is to be commended.

242 Ev 143

243 Ev 143

244 “Obama to cut U.S. nuclear arsenal; New policy will push use of other defenses but doesn’t eliminate options”, *International Herald Tribune*, 2 March 2010

245 Ev 103

4 The FCO's work in the US

The US Network

147. The UK Network of diplomatic Posts in the US comprises one of the largest FCO operations in the world, as can be seen from the following table:

USA	FCO Staff	Total Staffing
Washington	248	417
US Network of Posts	169	
China		
Beijing	148	237
Shanghai	37	
Guangzhou	32.5	
Chongqing	19.5	
Japan		
Tokyo	144	170
Osaka	26	
Russia		
Moscow	162	187
Russia Network of Posts	25	
India		
New Delhi	310	505
India Network of Posts	195	
Iraq		
Baghdad	64	76
Basra	6	
Erbil	6	
Afghanistan		
Kabul	100	130
Lashkar Gah	30 (approx)	

148. Lord Hurd, referring to the UK as the “junior partner” of the US, commented in his written submission that “the US Congress, American think tanks and at any rate parts of the American media play a greater part in the forming of American policy than anything comparable here. The junior partner if he is to be effective has to cover a very wide waterfront”.²⁴⁶

149. Although the British Embassy in Washington DC is, in many respects, the public face of the UK in the US, a considerable amount of work, whether it is political, trade or consular, is undertaken in the FCO's ten subordinate Posts in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Orlando and San Francisco. Three of these posts—Chicago, Los Angeles and New York—process visa applications.²⁴⁷

150. The FCO's largest consular operation in the US is based in Washington where the North America Passport Production Centre is based. It deals with applicants from the US and Canada, and in the near future will be expanded to cover the rest of the Americas and

²⁴⁶ Ev 84

²⁴⁷ Ev 75

the Caribbean. In 2008–09, the Americas and Caribbean region issued over 52,000 of the 380,000 UK passports issued overseas. British nationals account for the second largest number of international travellers to enter the US after Canadians. A total of 4,565,000 British nationals arrived from the UK in 2008, an increase of 67,000 from 2007. The FCO's written submission explained in detail the work of the ten Consulates-General, supported by a network of Honorary Consuls, which provide assistance to British nationals. In 2008–09 alone, North America handled 1,972 assistance cases.²⁴⁸

151. The Posts in the US Network aim to be the British Government's eyes and ears in their regions. Part of their role is to develop relations with key local figures, including governors, state legislators, heads of Fortune 500 companies and university vice-chancellors. As the FCO explains in its written evidence, "no US president in the modern era has come from Washington DC [and] presidential candidates usually cut their political teeth in the regions".²⁴⁹ The Consulates try to build relations with them before they become national figures as well as developing links with large US businesses which are not generally based in or around Washington DC. The Consulates also play a role in fostering links between science and innovation bodies. The FCO argued that it was important to have this presence spread across the continental United States, not least because the country is simply too large to be covered effectively from Washington alone. The FCO noted that the US regions, within which the Consulates General are situated, were important centres for business, science and innovation, venture capitalism, tourism and higher education. It concluded that "without a local presence, we could not form the relationships we have with senior figures and key institutions in those fields, which we cultivate in order to promote Britain's interests".²⁵⁰

152. As well as promoting foreign policy objectives and providing consular services, the Network provides a platform for some eighteen other UK government departments and agencies, including the Ministry of Defence, the Home Office, the Serious and Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), UKTI, the Bank of England and the Department of Work and Pensions. As a consequence, the Network is engaged in almost all areas of public policy from public health to trade policy, from transport to immigration and civil liberties, from aid policy to financial services and banking, from welfare to education, and from drugs control to policing.²⁵¹

153. Sir Jeremy Greenstock, formerly British Ambassador to the United Nations, told us that the Network provided the British Government as a whole with a real understanding of American public opinion and that it was vital for the Embassy to have a good feel for what was going on outside the Washington Beltway:

That doesn't mean to say you have to cover every single base in the United States, but the British Embassy and its system have a huge reach in the United States. That is not

248 Ev 76

249 Ev 75

250 Ev 75

251 Ev 58

just commercial or a service to British citizens in the United States, but a very real aspect of the British ability to do business in the United States in every way.²⁵²

Influencing decisions

154. The FCO gave us some key priorities for its work in the US and for British relations with the US:

- **Economic:** promoting an open, high-growth global economy
- **Political:** building deep and lasting relationships with the Administration, the Congress, State Governors and their administrations, the Mayors of big cities and senior figures in the business community throughout the country in order to influence US policy in priority areas for HMG. Encouraging the US Administration to sign up to an ambitious post-2012 climate change treaty and the Congress to ratify it, and to strengthen UK/EU/US co-operation on energy issues.
- **Security:** co-ordinating all counter-terrorist activity and strengthening co-operation with the US in the prevention and management of conflict and instability in regions of key national interest to the UK, in particular Afghanistan/Pakistan, the Middle East, areas of conflict in Africa and in the European neighbourhood.²⁵³

155. The FCO has to operate in the US within a complex federal political system and foreign policy-making process.²⁵⁴ Sir David Manning, former British Ambassador to the US, emphasised to us the importance of recognising the differences between the US and British political structures. There was sometimes a tendency to think that “the United States is the UK on steroids; that it is just like us and that if you go across there and you talk to the White House and they say yes, that is the end of it”.²⁵⁵ Both Sir David and the FCO highlighted the fact that although the UK may “get a yes from the Administration, [...] we then have to work the Hill extraordinarily hard to try to get what we want”.²⁵⁶ For this to work, in Sir Jeremy Greenstock’s view, the FCO needs “sharp elbows”:

Americans do not do self-deprecation, so you better get up there, make your case and say why it is a really good one. [...] If you are going to get it heard, there is a lot of competition from within the American system itself, as well as certainly from other countries. Having access to the Hill, having access to the White House and having access to the media to make sure that you can get your message across to the whole of the United States through a network are all very important. It will not get any easier, particularly when the regime has changed in the United States. We now have a Democrat who is not familiar with us, so making such arguments again is very

252 Q 138

253 Ev 58

254 Ev 58

255 Q 128

256 Q 128

important. [...] [W]e have to have something important to say and something to offer on the big issues.²⁵⁷

Access and influence

156. For historical reasons, almost all the diplomatic transactions between the two governments are conducted by the British Embassy in Washington rather than the US Embassy in London.²⁵⁸ The effectiveness of the FCO's operation in the US, therefore, is of critical importance. We asked our witnesses for their views on the value of the FCO's US operation and its ability to protect and project British interests. A great number of our witnesses in response commented on the high regard in which the FCO's diplomats are held in the US.²⁵⁹ We also received evidence from a variety of US academics and think-tanks which suggested that the FCO is adept at gaining access to key US opinion formers. For instance, former US Ambassador Robert Hunter commented that:

The British Embassy in Washington has consistently had excellent access throughout the US government, as well as having one of the best information operations on Capitol Hill (it is one of the few foreign embassies whose role in managing relations with the US rivals that of the US embassy in the opposite capital).²⁶⁰

157. In a similar vein, Frances Burwell from the Atlantic Council stated that: "In Washington, British Embassy officials have access to US government officials with a regularity that is unmatched by other embassies",²⁶¹ while Ian Kearns of BASIC contended that "advice from the Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence, if not politicized, is said to be considered the best in the world by Washington".²⁶²

158. Lord Hurd commented that, "if the right brains are available and deployed the Embassy is able to penetrate the US decision-taking process high up stream at a fairly early stage of discussion within the Administration. If the necessary brains can be found and deployed, this gives Britain a considerable edge".²⁶³

159. Within the United Nations, the US is also said to value the tactical support that the UK is able to provide. By way of example, Sir Jeremy Greenstock told us:

The United States would want something in the Security Council, but the United States tends to walk around with quite heavy boots, and there are sensitive flowers in the United Nations [...]. The UK is a lot better at the tactical handling of other delegations and of language in drafting texts and tactical manoeuvring. [...]. The United States, which has to conduct policy formation and implementation in an even more public environment than this country, tends to be very sensitive about short-

257 Q 132

258 Ev 83

259 Ev 119; 120

260 Ev 86

261 Ev 115

262 Ev 101

263 Ev 83

term losses and presentational difficulties, whereas we get on with it. When we agree with the United States, we can be very helpful to it in that kind of subterranean tactical handling, which doesn't come out in public. The Americans appreciate that, because it brings them something they don't normally have. We of course gain from being on the coat tails of the immense power operation of the United States, which brings us into places that we wouldn't reach if we were just on our own and we wouldn't reach, frankly, if we were just with the European Union.²⁶⁴

160. When we asked our witnesses whether the access previously alluded to translated into influence, there was less consensus. The Government maintains that staff at the Washington Embassy and other British officials contributed to many of the reviews that the Obama Administration conducted immediately after entering office, particularly those on Afghanistan/Pakistan, nuclear disarmament and the Middle East.²⁶⁵ The FCO also highlighted the joint work undertaken by the Prime Minister and President Obama, and by their respective officials, ahead of the G20 summit in London in April 2009, and claims that the Government had established strong working links on climate change with the incoming Administration.²⁶⁶

161. We received a different perspective from some of our other witnesses. Dr Robin Niblett, for example, argued that historically it had been difficult for the UK to exercise influence over the US “even in the hey-day of US-UK relations”.²⁶⁷ He continued:

There is no doubt that British diplomats and certain Ministers and the Prime Minister have an intimate relationship and a more regular relationship than just about any other diplomats across the broad area. This gives them the opportunity to influence how the United States [...] thinks about a problem. [This] is where we can really make a difference. Sometimes, influencing how it thinks about a problem can lead us to influencing the decision, but we cannot assume that the former leads to the latter.²⁶⁸

162. Some of our witnesses argued that British influence varies depending on the policy area in question. For instance, Professor Clarke claimed that while strong and practical instances of UK/US co-operation could be seen in the fields of defence and intelligence, “it is harder to discern how this pays off in other, more general, fields of transatlantic diplomacy”.²⁶⁹ He argued that British officials regularly reported that they exerted subtle influences on both the substance and presentation of US security and foreign policy, but that hard evidence of these assertions is difficult to find.²⁷⁰

163. We asked Ivan Lewis, Minister of State at the FCO, to give examples of areas where the FCO had been able to influence US political views to the benefit of the UK. Mr Lewis

264 Q 134

265 Ev 57

266 Ev 57

267 Ev 121

268 Q 21

269 Ev 139

270 Ev 139

told us that the UK's stance on "matters such as Iran is taken very seriously by the Americans", and that the new Administration has taken "very seriously Britain's views on the Middle East Peace Process".²⁷¹ He also claimed that there were a number of examples where "we, as a result of the special relationship, can say that we have moved, or contributed toward moving, American policy".²⁷² Sir David Manning referred to the FCO's work on climate change that was undertaken during his tenure as British Ambassador in Washington:

When the then Prime Minister made it one of our G8 presidency objectives, this was not greeted with enormous enthusiasm in Washington, but it did not mean that we gave up because the Administration didn't necessarily like it. We, because of this network across the United States [...] were able to do quite a lot of work on climate change, for instance, in the states themselves. I think, probably, opinion changed pretty dramatically in the four years that I was there [...] I am not going to claim that that was because of the British Embassy, but I am quite sure that making a big effort across America to influence these opinion formers on climate change was worth it, and I think we probably contributed.²⁷³

164. Dr Robin Niblett acknowledged that the Administration may have been influenced on the issue of climate change by the British Government, but went on to argue that because of the nature of the US system of government and the need to gain the support of Congress it was unlikely that President Obama would be able to "deliver America on this". Referring to other foreign policy areas which are of importance to the UK, he continued:

On Afghanistan, we have been intimately involved, as I understand it, in the review process. But now the final decisions are going to be made. [...] [M]y sense is that President Obama is going to have to make a call based on all sorts of aspects, including US domestic politics, where our influence is going to have to step back.²⁷⁴

165. Sir David Manning told us:

The truth is we can go and talk to the Administration about any issue that we want to, if it matters to us and we want to discuss it with the Administration or on the Hill, we have access. We are very fortunate, and I think it is the case that we probably have as good access as anybody, and probably better than most. Access doesn't necessarily mean that what you ask for you are going to get, of course, and I think we need to be realistic about that. This is an unequal relationship in the sense that the United States is a global power. We are not; and one of the things that I think we have to be conscious of is that, on a lot of these issues, there's not much we can do by ourselves. But if we are successful at getting access and influencing the Americans, it may have an effect.²⁷⁵

271 Q 178

272 Q 178

273 Q 136

274 Q 21

275 Q 136

166. We asked witnesses what impact the creation of the European External Action (EEAS) Service would have on the UK's ability to influence. Our witnesses were in agreement that it was too early to provide a definitive answer, but they also agreed that there was no likelihood EU Member States would in any way downgrade their bilateral relations in Washington DC as a result of there being an EEAS presence in the city.²⁷⁶

167. We conclude that the FCO's high reputation in the US is well-merited and that the FCO's diplomatic staff undertake valuable work in the UK's national interest through the US Network of Posts. Staff necessarily cover a wide remit in their attempts to exercise influence, and cover it well.

Shaping American perceptions: the FCO and public diplomacy

168. The FCO told us that "to achieve our policy objectives in the United States we need to influence not just those who make decisions, but also those who shape the environment in which those decisions are made".²⁷⁷ The Department's overall aim in regard to public diplomacy is to "shape American perceptions of the UK as the US's partner of choice across a range of issues important to both countries", bearing in mind that "effective public diplomacy can be as much about shaping the discussion where ideas are formed and generated as it is about promoting already established policy viewpoints".²⁷⁸

169. In financial year 2009-10 the FCO focused on four priorities: the global economy; Afghanistan/Pakistan, the Middle East and climate change. The Department's submission provided some examples of the ways in which this work is carried out:

Our Consulate-General in Boston used the Prime Minister's drive for comprehensive reform of international institutions to engage the policy community at Harvard. [...] The Prime Minister called publicly for reform of the international institutions before an audience of international researchers, US policy-makers and Democrat strategists. The Prime Minister then invited Professors at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government (including advisers to the then Presidential candidates) to analyse a range of options for international institutional reform, and to report their findings before the next US Administration took office. As the late-2008 financial crisis developed, the Consulate-General worked with Harvard to focus these efforts on reform of international financial institutions, and on the planned G20 response at the London Summit (April 2009). Harvard Professors, and their graduate students, held online debates on the UK's London Summit website to discuss and promote their views. This work was in turn picked up [...] by traditional media. [...] Meanwhile the arrival of several key Harvard figures in President Obama's new Administration meant that the ideas generated in the university environment were transferred into the thinking of the new team in Washington.²⁷⁹

276 Q 49; Q 142

277 Ev 77

278 Q 78

279 Ev 78

170. The FCO in the US is also attempting to capitalise upon what it describes as “internet savvy” US audiences through its use of digital diplomacy.²⁸⁰ In addition to the UKinUSA.fco.gov.uk website, the FCO has a strong and active following on sites such as Twitter and Facebook. In the run-up to the Copenhagen summit on climate change, it ran a “100 days, 100 voices” campaign with a new video blog every day from a range of people interested in climate change, while encouraging others to submit their own videos and comments to the site. On Afghanistan, certain foreign policy blogs are highly influential in shaping and breaking stories and points of view that later gain traction in more mainstream media. The FCO has engaged these bloggers both in person for policy briefings, and by commenting on and linking to their blogs and participating in online debates. UK Ministers including the Foreign Secretary regularly engage with the US online foreign policy community during visits.²⁸¹

171. The FCO told us that it attaches importance to working closely with the US media at both a national and local level to try to secure positive coverage for UK policy priorities. Activities range from placing opinion and editorial pieces and securing coverage of important Ministerial and other speeches, to rebuttal where necessary (for example when faced with attacks on the NHS in some parts of the US media during the summer of 2009, during a period when President Obama’s proposed health reforms were dominating the US domestic agenda). The FCO also seems to benefit from Royal and Ministerial visits to the US. For instance, the New York Consulate-General used the opportunity of a visit by HRH Prince Harry to the city to draw attention to the UK’s and US’s shared endeavours in Iraq and Afghanistan. The visit generated some 2,500 press articles.²⁸²

172. We asked Ivan Lewis whether it was possible to define how successful these approaches have been in shaping American public perception on specific policy goals. Mr Lewis responded that, in relation to climate change, “arguably, Britain has played a very important role internally in the United States in helping to change the nature of the public debate about where America needs to stand on climate change”.²⁸³ He also used the example of the Middle East peace process, “where we have really pushed and pushed the argument for the urgency of a two-state solution. While we are all very concerned at the lack of progress in recent times, the fact that in a sense it is now conventional orthodoxy in America to believe that the only way forward is a two-state solution [...] is an important change”.²⁸⁴

173. The FCO’s desire to build networks of long-term influence for the UK in the USA is largely channelled through its investment in the Marshall Scholarship programme. Unlike other FCO-funded scholarship programmes which have been reduced in recent years, these have not been adversely affected. Under the programme, around 40 of the most talented US students each year are selected to study for Masters-level programmes at UK universities. The British Council is also heavily involved in fostering educational connections between the UK and US. Of the 47,000 Americans enrolled in courses in the

280 Ev 78

281 Ev 78

282 Ev 77

283 Q 168

284 Q 207

UK, 73% of them have interacted with British Council USA, primarily via its website. The British Council USA works directly with 80 UK universities through its ‘country partner’ programme—commissioning and providing market intelligence, and provides professional development programmes for over 150 visiting British teachers each year, supporting best practice exchange and school linking opportunities.²⁸⁵ Ivan Lewis told us that “a number of eminent people were part of the Marshall Scholarship programme, and that as a result of that they are often commentators in America about the importance of the relationship between our two countries”.²⁸⁶ In addition, a high proportion of the Obama Administration studied in the United Kingdom. Although Mr Lewis said he would like to see more investment in this area, he acknowledged that any such decision would “have to be taken in the context of tough financial decisions”.²⁸⁷

174. We commend the FCO for its US public diplomacy work and conclude that the societal and educational links that it promotes add significantly to the overall effectiveness of the Department’s operations in the US.

Financial constraints and their consequences for British national interests

175. During our visit to the US we received briefing on the implications for the US Network of Posts of the serious financial situation that the FCO finds itself in as a result of Treasury budget cuts and the removal of the Overseas Pricing Mechanism, which had previously helped to protect the FCO’s US budget from the vagaries of currency fluctuations. We comment in detail upon these matters in our annual Report on the FCO’s Departmental Annual Report.²⁸⁸

176. Although this is a problem which is affecting FCO Posts around the world, the US Network has been particularly badly affected, both because of its size and because it necessarily spends most of its budget in US Dollars. During our visit we were given detailed information about the measures the FCO has been forced to take to ensure that running costs were met across the Network, and the impact these have had on day-to-day activities. The scale of the cutbacks is very great. They have included (but are not limited to) a cessation of further programme spending for the rest of the financial year, redundancies of locally-engaged staff, asking staff to take unpaid leave, freezing recruitment, and the suspension of some employer pension payments. All non-core training has been cancelled, travel and entertainment budgets reduced and only urgent and essential maintenance work is to be conducted on the estate.

177. Our impression was that the measures are making the work of the UK’s Posts in the US considerably more difficult. As Sir David Manning, former Ambassador to Washington, told us, if the FCO has to decide on the number of people it has in US posts “according to the fluctuations of the exchange rate, we will certainly be in trouble”.²⁸⁹ He

285 Ev 79

286 Q 208

287 Q 208

288 Foreign Affairs Committee, Fifth Report of Session 2009-10, *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report 2008-09*, HC 145

289 Q 142

predicted that the UK's influence will shrink if key people are lost, particularly those who were working in areas of real interest to the US. Sir David argued that this was not only the case in the political and military fields but also in relation to individuals working in the fields of science, crime and international terrorism. He added that:

We have really got something to offer. If we are forced to continue closing our network across America, or cutting back in salami slices, so that it is almost a virtual network, we will find it very much harder to influence the Americans in the ways that we want. Then, if the European External Action Service is there building itself up, we will be leaving something of a vacuum.²⁹⁰

178. Many of those who gave evidence to our inquiry warned that further cuts could have a serious impact on the FCO's ability to pursue the UK's national interests. Dr Dunn stated that "pound for pound, you cannot get better value for money than spending money on diplomats in Washington [...]. The influence that Britain gets in terms of trade policy and pursuing the national interest from our skilled and highly regarded diplomatic service is extraordinary. To cut it back would be extraordinarily short-sighted".²⁹¹

179. The views of Heather Conley and Reginald Dale were equally trenchant. They argued that cutbacks in the UK's "Rolls Royce diplomatic service, still the envy of most other countries" would be a cause for concern in Washington, and could reduce Britain's weight in Washington more than in any other capital—not because of a reduced effectiveness at the British Embassy itself but because of "a wider scaling back of Britain's global clout".²⁹²

180. We asked Ivan Lewis about the impact of the removal of the Overseas Pricing Mechanism. Mr Lewis agreed that there has been a negative impact and that the FCO has been forced to make "difficult choices and we will have to make further difficult choices in the period ahead".²⁹³ He continued:

I am not sure that many British people would say at a time of financial hardship that cutting back on the odd reception is a bad thing for Governments to do when ordinary people are having to make difficult choices too. It is a difficult balancing act [...] All I can say to contextualise the matter without lessening its significance is that it is fairly usual in America, when seeking to reduce spend, to give staff unpaid leave. [...] But if we have budgetary, fiscal responsibility, we must find ways of exercising that responsibility and staying within the allocated budget. We ask people to make difficult choices.²⁹⁴

181. Commenting in December 2009 on the situation for the FCO across its entire range of operations, Sir Peter Ricketts, Permanent Under-Secretary, told us that, "we have been living on pretty thin rations for at least a couple of spending rounds, and we have,

290 Q 142

291 Q 22

292 Ev 106

293 Q 201

294 Q 207

therefore, cut fat and are having to prioritise our activities”.²⁹⁵ During the 2008-09 period the UK Mission to the UN cost £22,478,210 while costs for the Embassy in Washington amounted to £12,817,750.²⁹⁶ We asked Sir Peter whether the FCO had any flexibility to change the conduct of the British effort in the United States. He responded:

We have a degree of flexibility about the priority that we can give the US network over other parts of FCO work. For example, Ministers could decide that they wanted to devote more of the available money to the US and that money would have to come from somewhere else, which would imply that there would be less money for somewhere else. Therefore, we would have to do that as part of setting the budget for the next year.

Those are very difficult choices because, as I said, I think that we have already removed the excess. Therefore a decision to give more money to one part of the overseas network means a decision to take money away from somewhere else. There are no obvious candidates for that. So our flexibility is limited [...] if we are going to accept the current range of responsibilities that the FCO has.²⁹⁷

182. As we concluded in our Report on the *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report 2008-09*, the FCO as a whole, like so many other public and private sector organisations, is facing very difficult decisions due to current budgetary constraints. We commend the FCO for the considerable resourcefulness it has shown in making required budgetary savings for this financial year following successive waves of real-term cuts to the FCO’s budget by the Treasury. We further conclude that the severity of the spending cuts already being imposed, as evidenced by those being experienced by the US Network, let alone those which are still in the pipeline, gives us grounds for serious concern about the impact they will have on the FCO’s future effectiveness in the US.

183. We conclude that the FCO’s US Network is facing unacceptable financial pressure due to a double whammy of Treasury imposed budget cuts and a depreciation in Sterling. Having previously shed fat and muscle, the FCO’s US network is now being forced to cut into bone. We further conclude that additional cuts will diminish the FCO’s ability to exercise influence in the US and have a knock-on effect on the UK’s global standing. We recommend that in its response to this Report, the FCO provide us with an update on the current situation in relation to the US Network and its future plans with particular reference to the specific areas of concern we have raised in the Report and the minimum funding it considers necessary to effectively discharge its functions and obligations in the US.

²⁹⁵ Foreign Affairs Committee, Fifth Report of Session 2009–10, *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report 2008–09*, HC 145, Q 15

²⁹⁶ Committee of Public Accounts, Third Report of Session 2009–10, *Financial Management in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, HC 164, 17 December 2009

²⁹⁷ Foreign Affairs Committee, Fifth Report of Session 2009–10, *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report 2008–09*, HC 145, Q 17

5 The British political approach to UK-US relations

184. The FCO stated that its desire to preserve its relationship with the US does not mean that “British governments defer to the US when we occasionally disagree”. It also stated that the:

UK-US dialogue is based on mutual respect and candour which is rare between international partners, however close. The strength of the relationship lies in part in our ability to maintain a frank and open relationship with the United States even when we disagree. The UK’s ability to express a different view to that of the US, coming as it does from a close friend without a hidden agenda, is something which senior US officials tell us they find valuable.²⁹⁸

185. Notwithstanding these claims, a number of analysts have expressed concern about the way in which the British Government has viewed and approached its relationship with the US in recent years. Dr Robin Niblett highlighted what he considers is the “tendency of British politicians [to] continue to talk up in public the country’s overall ‘special relationship’ with the US” even although in his view “the gap between aspiration and reality [...] is becoming ever more awkward”.²⁹⁹ Professor Wallace and Christopher Phillips stated:

Many of those recently involved in the management of transatlantic relations in London see the tendency for British leaders to give way to sentiment (and to the glamour of Washington), while their American counterparts pursue underlying national interests, as the greatest imbalance in the relationship.³⁰⁰

186. Nick Witney commented that, for politicians, “there isn’t a better photo-op than in the Rose Garden or the White House”, while Stryker McGuire argued that for British prime ministers who are “encountering rough seas at home”, the ‘special relationship’ can be a “comfort blanket” providing “safe harbour” and offering “ego-boosting” properties.³⁰¹

187. A recurrent theme in much of the evidence we received was that the UK’s approach to the US could more appropriately be characterised as subservient rather than simply subordinate.³⁰² The accusation is not new. On a number of occasions since the end of the Cold War, Britain has been accused of failing to define its own agenda, and of passively following the US lead.³⁰³ During our current inquiry, the issue of the UK’s alleged undue deference towards the US achieved particular prominence in connection with the continuing debate over Tony Blair’s relationship with George W. Bush and the 2003 Iraq War.

298 Ev 57

299 Ev 122

300 Wallace and Phillips, “Reassessing the special relationship”, *International Affairs* 85: 2 (2009) 263–284

301 Stryker McGuire, “Why put yourself through all this?”, *The Independent*, 5 March 2009

302 Ev 83; Ev 102; Ev 126

303 Ev 100

188. Giving evidence to the Iraq Inquiry in February 2010, Tony Blair offered an insight into the nature of the relationship and his view of its purpose when he stated: “this is an alliance that we have with the United States of America. It is not a contract; it’s not, ‘You do this and we’ll do that’”.³⁰⁴ This partially echoes what were told by Sir David Manning - Mr Blair’s foreign policy adviser before the war—who told us, “I always took the view that essentially the relationship wasn’t about quid pro quos”. However, Sir David added: “If we wanted to do something, we should do it because it was in the national interest”.³⁰⁵

189. The Acronym Institute argued, “it will take some time to build a more positive view of the UK’s contributions and overcome the stigma of having been the Bush Administration’s poodle”.³⁰⁶ Dr Allin told us, the 2003 Iraq War was posed as a test of alliance solidarity, and, “according to the terms of the test, Britain passed and other European countries did not”. He adds that although this amounted to a short-term tactical gain for Britain, “the residue that it left was not positive”.³⁰⁷

190. In his written evidence, Lord Hurd argued that in its relationship with the US “Britain has the role of a junior partner, which is rarely easy”.³⁰⁸ He stated that neither Winston Churchill nor Margaret Thatcher was by nature or temperament a junior partner but they both learned reluctantly the art. He continued:

A junior partner cannot dictate the policy of the partnership; it may not even have a blocking power. The junior partner has however the right to ask questions, to press that these be fully considered and to insist on rational answers. [...] Tony Blair did not learn the art of the junior partner; he confused it with subservience. As Professor Strachan wrote in the August/September [2009] issue of *Survival* “a preference in favour of alliance obligations did not relieve London of the need to think through the best strategy to serve its own national interests, but was treated as though it did”.³⁰⁹

191. It should be emphasised that a view of British “subservience” was not held unanimously by our witnesses. Sir Jeremy Greenstock was able to recount to us instances in relation to Bosnia and Iraq which suggest that the UK was able to moderate the views of the US on a number of occasions,³¹⁰ and he noted that, aside from Iraq, the UK continued to hold very different approaches to the US on a broad range of issues. It is also worth noting, as Dr Dunn stated, that perceptions of the relationship are markedly different on the two sides of the Atlantic. In spite of subsequent reservations about the war, many Americans continued to hold Mr Blair in high regard and value the fact that Britain was their country’s ally in Iraq. Stryker McGuire told us that with regard to Iraq, Mr Blair “did end up looking subservient”. However, he added that “it is also worth noting that not only was Britain shoved aside in the run-up to the Iraq War and in the aftermath, but so was the

304 Rt Hon Tony Blair Transcript, *The Iraq Inquiry*, 29 January 2010

305 Q 127

306 Ev 126; see also Ev 80; Ev 136

307 Q 3

308 Ev 83

309 Ev 83

310 Q 127; Q136

State Department. It was the Defence Department and the White House that were basically running the show”.³¹¹

192. We conclude that there are many lessons to be learned from the UK’s political approach towards the US in respect of the Iraq War. We await with interest the conclusions of the Iraq Inquiry which has been investigating these issues in some detail. We conclude that the perception that the British Government was a subservient “poodle” to the US Administration leading up to the period of the invasion of Iraq and its aftermath is widespread both among the British public and overseas and that this perception, whatever its relation to reality, is deeply damaging to the reputation and interests of the UK.

193. We asked our witnesses to what extent the British Government’s approach to UK-US relationship has differed under the Prime Ministership of Gordon Brown from that under his predecessor. The evidence we received in response suggested that upon taking office Gordon Brown, a previously strong Atlanticist, realised the political value of using his first meeting with George W. Bush to demonstrate, not least to the British public, that his Government intended to distance itself to some degree from the Bush Administration.³¹² Referring to the meeting, which took place in August 2007, Dr Dunn told us “Brown was stiff [...] and, according to one American official present, ‘went out of his way to be unhelpful’”.³¹³ Although there was no direct criticism of President Bush or the US Administration, and the British Embassy in Washington was instructed to deny that any offence was meant or any policy difference was being signalled, Dr Dunn argued there were many indirect signals and “dog whistles” designed to show that Mr Brown’s approach was to be different from that of Mr Blair.³¹⁴

194. Dr Robin Niblett commented that in the first six months after he took office, the new Prime Minister tried to maintain a somewhat distant approach to President Bush. However, when the new leaderships in France and Germany made an effort to rebuild their relationships with a much more open, second-term George W. Bush, “suddenly Prime Minister Brown went back and talked about this being the closest relationship and one of the most special relationships”. Dr Niblett continued that “there was a sense of ‘Oh gosh, now we’re going to be pushed aside, so we have to compete our way back in’”. He contended that this, combined with the decision to draw down British forces from Basra in Iraq, led many senior US officials to question the extent of British commitment to the US. He adds: “I do not necessarily think that that is justified in terms of what physically happened, but the impression left towards the end of that period of the Bush Administration was of a UK that was not as reliable”.³¹⁵

195. It could be argued that, notwithstanding this deliberate retuning of the presentational aspects of the UK-US relationship, there was little substantive change in this period in terms of British policy, with the exception of Iraq where the Government announced a

311 Q 96 [Mr McGuire]

312 Q 4 [Dr Niblett]

313 Ev 134

314 Ev 134

315 Q 4

reduction in British involvement in Basra province. However, as Dr Dunn stated in his written evidence, even this policy change was “muted in both scale and purpose”. He noted that the Prime Minister “sought to compensate for it by announcing an increase of British troop numbers in Afghanistan to bring the total to 7,800. This appeared calculated to signal the Government’s political ambiguity in its support for Iraq in contrast to the ‘good war’ in Afghanistan; to demonstrate simultaneously that Britain is a good and loyal ally but that it doesn’t support this president in this war”.³¹⁶

196. Dr Dunn told us that as a result of the signals that the British Government sent to the US, the Bush Administration looked for other interlocutors in Europe, particularly the new administrations of Angela Merkel in Germany and of Nicolas Sarkozy in France, who were content to “fill the vacuum resulting from the decision by the Brown Administration to create distance”.³¹⁷

Other European approaches to the US

197. A recent study of relationships between individual European countries and the US concluded that treating the US with an excessive degree of deference has become a common habit in a range of EU countries. Giving oral evidence to us, Nick Witney, who was one of the authors of the study, explained, “it all goes back to the sense that without Uncle Sam, we’re all doomed, and that NATO is the bedrock of our security and the US are the ultimate guarantors of our security, as indeed was the case during the Cold War”.³¹⁸ His report stated:

European foreign and security policy establishments shy away from questions about what they actually want from transatlantic relations or about what strategies might best secure such objectives. [They] prefer to fetishise transatlantic relations, valuing closeness and harmony as ends in themselves, and seeking influence with Washington through various strategies of seduction or ingratiation.³¹⁹

198. It goes on to note that transatlantic relations often involve much talk of shared history and values, seeking to engage the US in a web of summitry, making token contributions to causes dear to American hearts and attempting to press for reward for past services.³²⁰ The danger, according to the report’s authors, is that Americans find such approaches “annoying rather than persuasive— and the problem with European deference towards the US is that it simply does not work”.³²¹ The report stated that “seen from Washington, there is something almost infantile about how European governments behave towards them— a combination of attention seeking and responsibility shirking”.³²² It claims that in the process European states consistently sell their own interests short and in the meantime,

316 Ev 134

317 Q 4

318 Q 59

319 Jeremy Shapiro and Nick Witney, “Towards a Post-American Europe: a power audit of EU-US relations”, *European Council on Foreign Relations*, November 2009, www.ecfr.eu

320 *Ibid.*

321 *Ibid.*

322 *Ibid.*

Americans find “European pretensions to play Athens to their Rome both patronising and frustrating [...]. They do not want lectures from Europe; they want practical help”.³²³

Unduly deferential?

199. A number of our witnesses suggested that British officials have tended to take a more hard-headed approach to relations with their US counterparts than British politicians. The former British Ambassador to the US, Sir David Manning, expressed what many regarded as the “officials” view when he stated:

The UK should not be subservient. I am quite clear about that, but I don’t like the idea of junior partnership, either, because it sounds as though we are tied to something in a junior role. The key is to work in partnership with the United States when our interests dictate—and they will in many areas although not necessarily on every occasion.³²⁴

200. In contrast, we were told that politicians often seem to be seduced by Washington’s power, glamour and corresponding photo opportunities. As Ian Kearns of the British American Security Information Council (BASIC) think-tank argued, this situation has led to dismay amongst officials over the “failure of UK leaders to think in terms of hard edged national interest rather than increasingly misguided appeals to sentiment”.³²⁵ Stryker McGuire told us that, “[British] politicians sometimes try to use the special relationship for their own ends in a way that US politicians do not need to. Tony Blair saw the special relationship as a way of perpetuating Britain’s greatness at a time when it was an important military power, but not a great one, and when it had geopolitical importance but had even more by attaching itself to the United States”.³²⁶

201. We note the evidence from our witnesses that British and European politicians have been over-optimistic about the extent of influence they have over the US. We recommend that the Government continues its informed and measured approach to the US whilst remaining mindful that the US is, and will continue to be, Britain’s most important ally.

Importance of personal relations

202. Of the many tiers of personal relations which exist in the UK-US relationship, public and media attention tends to focus most closely on that which exists between the British Prime Minister and the US President. This is partly a reflection of the fact that, as Stryker McGuire told us, “the links between London and Washington tend to be above the ambassadorial level”.³²⁷ Where personal meetings cannot be arranged between Prime Minister and President, video links are held and conversations conducted on a regular basis, a scenario which also reflects the fact that heads of Government are increasingly

323 Jeremy Shapiro and Nick Witney

324 Q 127

325 Ev 102

326 Q 93

327 Q 94

involved in business that would have previously been the preserve of diplomats. As Dr Niblett told us, “the personal chemistry is important. In a world [...] where more and more critical foreign policy decisions seem to centralise in the Executive branch, partly because of the media and the speed of reaction, you need to trust somebody and be able to go on instinct at times, as a leader at that pinnacle position. Not having a personal linkage and element and a sense of trust can be problematic”.³²⁸

203. In Justin Webb’s view, the top-level relationship also provides a way in which the UK can continue to “punch above its weight if there are relationships that work, as there have been on both sides of the political spectrum”.³²⁹ He continued: “people who know one another and understand the cut of their jib tend to get better access than people who do not. Americans can be terribly closed when it comes to access if they do not trust and like the people”.³³⁰ A good top-level relationship also arguably ensures a British voice is not overlooked in the inter-agency struggle that can, and frequently does, dominate US politics.

204. Inevitably, however, there are limitations to what the relationship can achieve in support of the broader bilateral relationship, not least because, as we noted above at paragraph 164, and, as Professor Clarke stated, “friendship between Downing Street and the White House when it manifestly exists does not necessarily translate into influence with Congress or with the plethora of US governmental agencies”.³³¹ In addition, as Dr Allin told us: “If you invest too much work and too many expectations in the personal relationship, you will simply be hostage to the personality of the American President”.³³²

205. Although often overshadowed by Prime Minister/Presidential relations, the second tier of the relationship, namely that which exists between the Foreign Secretary and the US Secretary of State, is also important, particularly during times of war or crisis, as Jack Straw’s relationship with both Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice showed. A number of our witnesses also remarked on the good relationship that exists between David Miliband and Hillary Clinton. It is argued that a strong bilateral relationship below the Prime Minister/Presidential level can also help to ensure that the views of the Foreign Office are heard and communicated to key opinion formers in the US. One of the criticisms often levelled at the Blair Government was that No. 10 listened more carefully to advice from the Cabinet Office and its Strategy Unit than the FCO and that as a result, key foreign policy decisions were not made with the benefit of expert foreign policy advice.³³³ Ivan Lewis told us that currently there was “a healthy relationship between No. 10 and the Foreign Office”, and that “the Foreign Office feels that it is an organisation that is empowered, enabled and respected to get on with job that it is charged with doing, but there will be big strategic

328 Q 16 [Dr Niblett]

329 Q 94

330 Q 94

331 Ev 139

332 Q 11

333 *British Foreign Policy since 1997*, Research Paper 08/56, House of Commons Library, 23 June 2008

national interest issues where it would be totally irresponsible of a Prime Minister not to want to have a very significant role”.³³⁴

206. Top-level personal relations are undoubtedly an important aspect of the UK’s bilateral relationship with the US. However, they remain only one aspect of it and the political legacy of the UK’s involvement in the Iraq War highlights the risks and problems that can arise when the relationship between the Prime Minister and President dominates and drives foreign policy decision-making. In addition, as Ian Kearns stated in his written evidence, to “treat the views of the current US Administration as a permanent feature of the landscape is to fail to acknowledge the obvious point that US politics is itself dynamic and cyclical”. He argues that “to simply agree with the United States in all circumstances is to agree to be buffeted by the prevailing political winds in Washington”.³³⁵

207. We conclude that the Prime Minister/President relationship is an important aspect of the UK-US relationship. However, it is equally important to ensure that the UK does not conduct foreign policy on the basis of this relationship alone and that strong and enduring links are nurtured at wider Ministerial level and between Parliament and Congress.

208. We note that the current Minister of State responsible for the US also covers a range of others policy areas, namely: counter-terrorism; counter-proliferation; South East Asia and Far East; North America; Middle East and North Africa; South Asia and Afghanistan; drugs and international crime; global and economic issues (excluding climate change); migration; and NATO.

209. We conclude that there is cause for concern as to whether the apparent lack of focus on the US at the level of Minister of State in the FCO - which arises simply because of the sheer breadth of the relevant Minister of State’s current portfolio - is appropriate given the importance of the UK-US bilateral relationship. This reinforces our view, which we have expressed in our recent Report on the FCO’s last annual report, that the size of the FCO Ministerial team in the House of Commons should be increased.

334 Q 155

335 Ev 104

6 The future of the relationship

The US view of the UK

210. President Obama's approach to foreign policy and his conscious decision to embrace a more multilateral approach to issues of global concern than that of his predecessor have been widely welcomed in the UK and further afield.³³⁶ However, it does not necessarily mean that greater policy alignment will result, in all instances, in greater UK influence over the US. According to Heather Conley and Reginald Dale "there is clear evidence that Europe (and thus Britain) is much less important to the Obama Administration than it was to previous US administrations, and the Obama Administration appears to be more interested in what it can get out of the special relationship than in the relationship itself".³³⁷ Whereas the Bush Administration's approach was arguably based largely on sentiment surrounding strong UK support after the 9/11 attacks, the Obama approach has been described in evidence as "more functional and instrumental".³³⁸ Indeed, most witnesses suggest that the current Obama Administration will be more pragmatic in its relations with individual allies and is looking to each of them to provide practical support, rather than counsel, on specific issues.

211. As the New American Foundation put it, the Obama approach is "all about putting a price on access and a price on the relationship".³³⁹ Supporters of this view cite the fact that the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton did not mention the UK-US relationship at all in her confirmation hearing statement, referring only to the UK in the broader context of relations with France, Germany and other European partners.³⁴⁰ In a subsequent speech in July 2009, she focused heavily on the Administration's intent to improve relations with major and emerging powers such as China, India, Russia and Brazil, as well as Turkey, Indonesia, and South Africa.

212. Professor Clarke told us that the, "essence of the US/UK relationship is that it is top and bottom with rather less in the middle. It is politically high level and atmospheric at the top, in the personal relations between leaders; very specific and practical in its base foundations, and somewhat difficult to discern in the week-in, week-out middle range of everyday diplomatic life". He added:

The rarefied atmospherics at the top of the relationship all revolve around the friendship, or lack of it, between the respective leaders. In the UK we take for granted that those relationships should be generally good. We are shocked and concerned when they are not; and baffled when they appear, as at present, to be somewhat neutral. Periodic anti-Americanism on the British Left, or the unpopularity of a

336 See for example, the data published by the German Marshall Fund's survey on *Transatlantic Trends 2009* published in September 2009. It shows that three in four (77%) respondents in the European Union and Turkey support President Obama's handling of international affairs compared to just one-in-five (19%) who approved of President Bush's foreign policy in 2008. www.transatlantictrends.org

337 Ev 106

338 Ev 140

339 "Will Barack Obama end Britain's special relationship with America?" *Daily Telegraph*, 28 February 2009

340 Statement of Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, Nominee for Secretary of State, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 13 January 2009, <http://foreign.senate.gov>

particular US Administration, does not significantly alter this underlying national perception.³⁴¹

213. As we noted earlier at paragraph 31, there are those in the US Administration who appear to be baffled and somewhat frustrated by what they see as the British obsession with the state of the ‘special relationship’. Many of our witnesses also commented on the related issue of President Obama’s supposed coolness towards the UK. Professor Clarke stated that behind official rhetoric about the ‘special relationship’, “at the UN General Assembly meeting in September, it was clear that Gordon Brown was not favoured by the Obama Administration” and that it is apparent that this Administration has at least a different emphasis in its attitude to the United Kingdom, if not a different approach overall”.³⁴² However, giving oral evidence to us, Dr Allin argued that it was not the case that Barack Obama did not like Gordon Brown, but rather, “that he is not sentimental in his relations with any of Europe’s leaders”.³⁴³

214. Sir David Manning pointed out that President Obama did not come to the post with the knowledge of Europe and the UK evident in his predecessors. As an American who grew up in Hawaii, whose foreign experience was of Indonesia, and who had a Kenyan father, it was unsurprising that President Obama does not have “sentimental reflexes” towards the UK.

215. We conclude that the UK should not regard the US’s more pragmatic approach to the UK as a threat to the relationship but rather as a timely opportunity both to reassess its own approach to the US and to reflect current and future challenges.

Drivers of change

The diffusion of global power

216. We asked our witnesses to explain what has been described as the current, “pragmatic” US approach. Several referred in the first instance to underlying structural changes in the international political system, which have been under way since 1989 but which accelerated after the attacks of 9/11 as the US’s focus moved away from European security to countering global threats.³⁴⁴ Dr Dunn commented that:

Europe is at peace, secure, prosperous, has a remarkably similar view of the world, its problems and their resolution, there is much less need for US political attention compared to many other states on many other issue areas. This does not mean that the US and UK are less close, but the relationship is less important than it was during the Cold War, or even the 1990s.³⁴⁵

341 Ev 138

342 Ev 140

343 Q 11

344 Ev 114; Ev 131

345 Ev 131

217. The close co-operation between the UK and US in Afghanistan and Iraq in the years following 2001 meant that these structural changes were partially masked, even if (as we discuss below at paragraph 222) in time they would come to affect the UK-US relationship.³⁴⁶ As Professor Clarke stated, “wars and conflict tend to emphasise the vitality of the relationship; periods of detente, global diplomacy and an orientation towards economic policy tend to disguise it”.³⁴⁷

218. Simultaneously, the growth in geopolitical power of the rising economies such as Brazil, Russia, India and China (the so called BRICs) demanded the US’s attention whilst also challenging US influence in some areas and arguably diminishing the importance of the UK and Europe to America’s wider diplomacy.³⁴⁸ Professor Clarke commented that the “dangers and opportunities presented by the Asian economies [...] and the natural economic asymmetry between American and Chinese economic needs”, suggest that the US would pay considerably more attention to East Asia and the Pacific arenas of economic and trade activity. He noted that China currently held 83% of the US trade deficit in non-oil goods, amounting to some \$800 billion, while the US was the dominant market for Chinese manufacturers - responsible for perhaps 50-60 million Chinese jobs. He continues, “and all this while China’s currency is kept undervalued by anything from 20–30%—a huge protectionist trade barrier operated by Beijing that infuriates Congress. These imbalances will not be righted quickly and suggest a volatile economic relationship that is probably structural”.³⁴⁹

219. Nick Witney told us that the long-term trend towards a more diffuse global power structure is one which the Obama Administration has “latched on to”, and in response it has adopted what it calls a multi-partner strategy to try to ensure the maintenance of US power.³⁵⁰ A recent example of this was the Copenhagen Summit on Climate Change in December 2009, where G2 (the US and China) power dynamics dominated the Summit’s outcomes.

Changing US demographics and Anglo-Americanism

220. At the US domestic level there are also dynamics at play which may reduce the importance of the UK to the US. It has been argued that although the UK’s role as the ‘mother country’ has been unique, and Caucasian and many other Americans as a whole continue to be remarkably Anglophile,³⁵¹ nonetheless as the proportion of Caucasians shrinks in the United States, the percentage of Americans with a natural affinity for Europe as a whole and for the ‘mother country’ in particular will diminish, progressively undermining the broader, civilizational foundations of the special relationship and British influence in America.³⁵² In other words, “Anglo-Americanism is in decline in terms of demography and relevance alongside this gradual shift away from a Euro-centric US

346 Ev 131

347 Ev 139

348 Ev 131

349 Ev 140

350 Q 47, see also Q 99 [Mr McGuire]

351 Ev 105

352 Ev 107

economic and political culture”.³⁵³ Justin Webb told us about the ongoing debate in US academia about “whether or not the Mayflower link—that sense of being, in essence, European and all the things that go with it in terms of the Protestant work ethic and the sense of what the nation is—is gradually disappearing, as waves of immigrants come from all sorts of exciting and interesting places from right around the world”. Mr Webb suggested that “the Obama generation, or those who regard themselves as Obama people, probably subscribe to the [...] view that America is just an incredible melting pot, and that the Mayflower is a long time ago. You can read about it, but it does not have any relevance today”.³⁵⁴ Many of our other witnesses made similar points, including Professor Clarke who concluded that “the internal dynamics of the United States’s own economy and its changing demographic structure also strongly suggest that west-coast and Hispanic concerns will tend to dominate east-coast and ex-European concerns in the minds of Congress and the US electorate”.³⁵⁵ The issue, according to Heather Conley and Reginald Dale was whether “in the race to get those all-important votes, the parties, both Republican and Democrat, slightly lose, in years to come, the attachment that at the moment, generally, America has to the idea that it is an English-speaking country”.³⁵⁶

221. Dr Niblett believed that there were other “more intangible” forces at work in the UK-US relationship from a US perspective: “a new generation of policy-makers are rising within American think tanks, businesses, law-firms and universities who look to Asia as much if not more than Europe for dynamic change within their areas of interest. European studies are in serious decline at America’s Ivy League institutions. And Anglo-Americanism is in decline in terms of demography and relevance alongside this gradual shift away from a Euro-centric US economic and political culture”.³⁵⁷ It is also worth pointing out that the UK itself is also changing and becoming more diverse as a result of migration and globalisation.

222. We conclude that the effects of globalisation, structural changes and shifts in geopolitical power will inevitably affect the UK-US relationship and that it is entirely logical for the US to pursue relationships with other partners who can provide support that the UK cannot. We further conclude that the UK has limited options in terms of how it can influence these structural changes other than to ensure that it has an appropriate foreign policy strategy in place which recognises both the challenges and opportunities created by this developing situation.

More, not less, Europe

223. Historically, part of the value of the UK for the US was seen to be its role as a potential guard against too much European integration.³⁵⁸ In the late 1990s the focus switched, with Tony Blair’s view that the UK could act as a bridge between Europe and the US. However, our witnesses were in agreement that the ‘bridge’ metaphor collapsed as a consequence of

353 Ev 121

354 Q 91 [Mr Webb]

355 Ev 140

356 Q 114

357 Ev 129

358 Q 12 [Dr Niblett]

the Iraq War, and that the current US Administration no longer sees the EU as a threat to be held at bay. Indeed, the US has moved to a point where it actively hopes that the EU will be able to develop a more integrated approach to foreign and security issues.

224. Many of our witnesses stressed the importance that the US attaches to the development of a more integrated EU that is capable of speaking with one voice on a range of foreign and security issues. Dr Dunn stated that “the Americans would like to see a more united, and expect a more united, Europe than we have”. He added that “primarily, they want a more engaged, more capable and more involved Europe. [...] There is a huge frustration that the division of Europe leads to the incapacity of Europe to act with one voice, one policy or any capability on the international stage”.³⁵⁹

Consequences for the UK

225. Many of our witnesses were in agreement that, in the longer term, the UK’s influence both globally and with the US looked set to decline. As Professor Clarke stated, “the Cold War was undoubtedly good for Britain’s influence in the world [but the] present environment of disparate power and great uncertainty does not provide as relatively cheap and easy a vehicle for British diplomacy as did NATO in the Cold War”.³⁶⁰ He argued that, “for the United Kingdom, the long-term perspective suggests that its natural influence with the United States will be diminished”.³⁶¹ Similarly, Heather Conley and Reginald Dale believed that the combination of structural changes which will shift the US focus away from Europe with reductions in the UK’s defence or diplomatic capabilities will, over the longer term signal an end to the UK’s “disproportionate influence in world affairs”. They expected such trends almost certainly to “reduce Britain’s weight in Washington more than in any other capital” and weaken the politico-military and intelligence elements of the relationship.³⁶² They accepted that “the civilizational bond will endure longer, but it will also gradually diminish as memories of World War II fade and anglophile Americans of European origin become less dominant in US society”. They add that:

President Barack Obama, who has little personal or cultural affinity with Europe, is the most prominent example of this inexorable trend. Although we believe that the US-UK relationship will in many ways remain ‘special’ for years to come, it is likely to become progressively less important to America.³⁶³

226. As we have already discussed, many of our witnesses believe that the UK-US relationship itself is already suffering from “diminished capabilities, especially in the UK capacity to keep up with US military power and with the limitations on UK influence within the European Union.”³⁶⁴ Ironically, given the UK’s support for international institutions, the re-engagement of the US Administration in multilateral institutions may also in time dilute the UK’s influence. Dr Robin Niblett’s view was that “the more that the

359 Q 12 [Dr Dunn]

360 Ev 140

361 Ev 140

362 Ev 105

363 Ev 105

364 Ev 113

US is focused on managing the shifting relations between the major powers in an emerging 'G-20 world' the harder it will be for the UK to find a durable perch within US conceptual thinking and decision-making". He noted that "US support for an increase in China's voting weight within the IMF at the recent G20 summit in Pittsburgh, most probably at the cost of Britain and other European members, may be a minor harbinger of the future".³⁶⁵

227. The counter-argument is that the Obama Administration's desire to break with the recent past in foreign policy may actually work in the UK's favour. Professor Clarke is one expert who takes this view. Although this might be uncomfortable for the UK in the short run, "in the long run it is likely to be an advantage to the UK since a more instrumental view of the partnership will tend to point up the practical value the UK can offer to the US, certainly in comparison with other European allies".³⁶⁶

228. Professor Clarke argued that the renewed interest of the US Administration in a European defence and security identity may also, paradoxically, work in the UK's favour: "when the US periodically shifts its focus to favour more integrative European approaches to security, the UK has tended to re-orientate itself to stay well within Washington's focal distance. On this occasion too, the UK will probably stand favourably compared with other European allies who, however enthusiastic some of the new Eastern members in particular might be on their US relationships, cannot deliver the practical value of the UK in most aspects of security and defence".³⁶⁷

229. In the short-term, there may also be advantages for the UK. As Nick Witney told us, most of President Obama's instincts and substantive policies are ones which, in principle, the United Kingdom supports.³⁶⁸ Sir Jeremy Greenstock believed that it was to the UK's advantage that President Obama is not "a sentimentalist but a multilateralist".³⁶⁹ He added:

I think that it is thoroughly healthy that we should have a President in the White House whose respect we have to earn. This is at the public level as well as at the level of confidential Government business, because that is the reality, and it always has been the reality. If it makes us sharper in a competitive sense, because we are not relying on sentiment and a playing field that is tilted slightly our way by history, values, sentiment and all the rest of it, we will perform better.³⁷⁰

230. We conclude that over the longer term the UK is unlikely to be able to influence the US to the extent it has in the past. We further conclude, however, that in the short-term the UK must capitalise upon the opportunities for influence which have arisen as a result of the greater alignment between the UK and US on a range of key policies.

365 Ev 121

366 Ev 141

367 Ev 141

368 Q 53

369 Q 129

370 Q 130

The UK's future approach to the US

231. Given the many pressures which bear down upon the UK-US relationship, how should the UK approach its relationship with the US in the future? In terms of the political relationship, it is the FCO's view that, "the UK is still regarded as one of the most reliable US partners".³⁷¹ It added that the Government did not "foresee any fundamental changes in the nature of the UK's bilateral relationship with the US" but recognised that it "is not and cannot be complacent about the working of the UK-US bilateral relationship or the broader transatlantic one".³⁷²

232. There is little doubt, as we discussed earlier, that the UK benefits in many ways from its relationship with the US. We noted the scale of the links between the two countries, ranging from trade, finance and economics, to culture and tourism, to the areas where practical co-operation in the military, intelligence and nuclear fields can rightly be regarded as special. It is inevitable that pressures, tensions and disagreements will arise in respect of all of these areas. Yet we are confident that the state of the relationship in each of these sectors is such that it will be possible to weather these pressures over the longer term, if the correct political approach is in place.

233. Many of the written submissions we received suggested that if the bilateral relationship is to continue to be of value to the UK, the UK's own approach needs to adapt to reflect more closely that of the Obama Administration. For instance, Dr Niblett advised that "this and future British governments should be as dispassionate in the way they approach their relations on matters of foreign policy with the US as the US has been with the UK".³⁷³ While the FCO believes that it has "a uniquely close relationship with the US [...]",³⁷⁴ Dr Niblett argued that it was vital that the UK does not "cling to the notion of an all-encompassing bilateral special relationship—the US cannot honour this broad a concept, whatever the rhetoric they choose (or feel obliged) to offer in support of the notion". He explained:

The United States can and does honour an intimate and even privileged bilateral relationship in specific areas (intelligence sharing and nuclear and military co-operation) and on specific policies (towards Afghanistan, for example). But there are limits to how far the US side of the relationship will reach.³⁷⁵

234. Ian Kearns argued that because of the shift in the US focus towards Asia, Britain needs to be more assertive in its relationship with the United States "through the varied channels at its disposal, rejecting a subservient role, but equally being aware of the limited power Britain can wield in a world characterized by shifting power balances".³⁷⁶ Many other witnesses offered similar views.

371 Ev 57

372 Ev 58

373 Ev 119

374 Ev 57

375 Ev 122

376 Ev 100

235. Rejecting a subservient approach should not however mean rejecting a close relationship with the US. We believe that the UK's relationship with the US will properly remain highly important in the years to come, and that it is right to attempt to exercise influence where this is in the UK's interests. In his written evidence, Professor Clarke described the strong consensus in UK policy circles that the country should still seek to "position itself" alongside the US as much as possible in the coming era. He noted that, "this is not, in itself, a strategy—many other choices are required in making strategic judgements over priorities, commitments, ways and means—but it is an important assumption that underlies the greater part of British thinking about its future in the world".³⁷⁷ For Ian Kearns, "There is an urgent need for UK policymakers to get beyond declarations on the importance of the relationship and to begin defining more clearly what the UK actually needs from it".³⁷⁸ To that end, he argued that the UK needed a "clearer and fully up to date statement of UK national interests to underpin policy and the approach to the relationship with the United States".³⁷⁹

236. The fact remains that the bilateral relationship with the US allows the UK to bring US power to British interests. However, in order to do this, the UK must be able to deliver what the US is looking for and deliver it well. As we have already discussed, there are many policy areas where the UK is already providing this support but in other areas it has led to overstretch in the UK and disappointment on the part of the US. For Dr Niblett the British Government needs to "focus on specific areas where it will invest its political effort and human and financial resources, alongside the United States, in order to achieve their common goals".³⁸⁰ As with the issue of defence, there is a strong argument to be made that the UK ought to be more focused in its global efforts, mindful of its strengths but also its limitations.

237. One of the areas many of our witnesses suggested the UK could provide added value was in relation to Europe. We have already discussed the fact that the US would like to see the development of a more integrated Europe. In the view of Jeremy Shapiro and Nick Witney, although "America hopes for a more unified and effective Europe, [...] hope is not the same as expectation". They explained:

Americans will be too busy to lose sleep over whether Europeans can rise to the implicit challenge of the offer of partnership. Americans will always find it difficult to resist the opportunities to divide Europe on specific issues, even as they accept that a unified Europe would be in their longer-term interest. [...] So determining how far the transatlantic relationship remains relevant in the new century—how far Europe can insert itself into the US-China relationship which Obama has declared will "shape the 21st century"—is largely down to the European side.³⁸¹

238. Thus there is scope for the UK to play a leading role in Europe which would in turn be of value to the US. There appeared to be a recognition of this already in the Government's

377 Ev 141

378 Ev 102

379 Ev 102

380 Q 129

381 Jeremy Shapiro and Nick Witney

recent Green Paper on the Strategic Defence Review. Announcing its publication in a statement to the House, the Defence Secretary Rt Hon Bob Ainsworth, said that “defence must improve its ability to work in partnership with our key allies and security institutions to make the most of our combined resources. Our alliances and partnerships will become increasingly important and will define how successful we will be in meeting the challenges that we face. We will strengthen our alliance with the United States if we strengthen our position in Europe”.³⁸²

239. Nick Witney suggested that many US officials would like to see the UK active “particularly in the defence and foreign policy fields, waking up some of [the] Europeans”,³⁸³ while Stryker McGuire stated that “Washington wants [...] London [to] play a role in Europe. America feels that that is in America’s interests because Americans prefer the British vision of Europe to the Franco-German vision of Europe, which they see as much more federal”.³⁸⁴ Many of our other witnesses also concurred with this view.

240. The evidence we have received suggests that the UK’s future approach to the US ought not to be driven by sentiment, or close personal relations, neither of which are likely to secure long-term influence or prove useful to the US. **We conclude that the UK’s relationship should be principally driven by the UK’s national interests within individual policy areas. It needs to be characterised by a hard-headed political approach to the relationship and a realistic sense of the UK’s limits. In a sense, the foreign policy approach we are advocating is in many ways similar to the more pragmatic tone which President Obama has adopted towards the UK. We believe that this is an issue that would be deserving of scrutiny by our successor Committee in the next Parliament.**

241. **We conclude that the UK must continue to position itself closely alongside the US in the future, recognising the many mutual benefits which flow from close co-operation in particular areas. We further conclude that the UK needs to be less deferential and more willing to say no to the US on those issues where the two countries’ interests and values diverge.**

382 HC Deb, 3 Feb 2010, col 304

383 Q 77

384 Q 101

Annex: Foreign Affairs Committee visit to the United States 26–30 October 2009

Participating Members

Mr Mike Gapes (Chairman), Sir Menzies Campbell, Mr Fabian Hamilton, Mr John Horam, Mr Eric Illsley, Mr Paul Keetch, Andrew Mackinlay, Mr Malcolm Moss, Sandra Osborne, Mr Greg Pope, Rt Hon Sir John Stanley, Ms Gisela Stuart

NEW YORK

Monday 26 October 2009

Briefing from Philip Parham, UK Deputy Permanent Representative, UK Mission to the United Nations in New York, and officials

Tuesday 27 October 2009

Meetings with:

Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Tony Banbury, Assistant-Secretary General for Field Support, United Nations

Mr Richard Barrett, Co-ordinator of the UN Al-Qaeda and Taliban Sanctions Monitoring Team, United Nations

Dr Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary-General, United Nations and Mr Vijay Nambier, Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary General, United Nations

Sir Alan Collins, British Consul-General, New York, and selected journalists and think-tanks

H.E. Konstantin Dolgov, Deputy Permanent Representative of Russia to the United Nations

H.E. Susan Rice, Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations

H.E. Gerard Araud, Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations

H.E. Mr Zhang Yesui, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations

WASHINGTON DC

Wednesday 28 October 2009

Briefing from Sir Nigel Sheinwald KCMG, HMA Washington DC, and officials

Meetings with:

Ellen Tauscher, Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, US Department of State

Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee: Subcommittee on Europe, US Senate

William J. Burns, Under Secretary for Political Affairs, US Department of State

Paul Jones, Deputy Director, Office of the Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, US Department of State

Joan Donoghue, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of the Legal Adviser, US Department of State

Kenneth Ward, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Verification, Compliance and Implementation, US Department of State

Thursday 29 October 2009

Meetings with:

Alexander Vershbow, Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs, Julianne Smith, Principal Director for Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia and Craig Mullaney, Principal Director for Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia, Department of Defense

Elizabeth Sherwood Randall, Senior Director for European Affairs, and Tobin Bradley, Director for NATO and Western European Affairs, National Security Council

Round table discussion at the Brookings Institution

Formal Minutes

Wednesday 17 March 2010

Members present:

Mike Gapes, in the Chair

Sir Menzies Campbell	Mr Malcolm Moss
Mr Fabian Hamilton	Sandra Osborne
Mr David Heathcoat-Amory	Mr Greg Pope
Mr John Horam	Mr Ken Purchase
Mr Eric Illsley	Sir John Stanley
Andrew Mackinlay	Ms Gisela Stuart

Draft Report (*Global Security: UK-US Relations*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

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

Paragraphs 1 to 24 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 25 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 26 and 27 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 28 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraph 29 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 30 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 31 to 33 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 34 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 35 and 36 read and agreed to.

Paragraphs 37 and 38 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 39 to 47 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 48 read, as follows:

We conclude that the UK has an extremely close and valuable relationship with the US in specific areas of co-operation, for instance in the fields of intelligence and security; that the historic, trading and cultural links between the two countries are profound; and that the two countries share common values in their commitment to freedom, democracy and the rule of law. However, we further conclude that it would be presumptuous for the UK to assert that it has a *unique* relationship with the US in any of these respects. For this reason the use of the phrase 'the special relationship' in its historical sense, to describe the totality of the ever evolving UK-US relationship, is potentially misleading, and we recommend that its use should be avoided. The overuse of the phrase by some politicians and many in the media serves simultaneously to devalue its meaning and to raise unrealistic expectations about the benefits the relationship can deliver to the UK. We further conclude that there is nothing wrong in acknowledging the undoubted truth that the UK has

a special relationship with the US, as long as it is recognised that other countries do so also, including the regional neighbours of the US and its other key strategic allies and partners.

Amendment proposed, in line 4, to leave out from “law.” to “We” in line 10. – (*Sir John Stanley.*)

Question put, That the Amendment be made.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 5	Noes, 7
Mr David Heathcoat-Amory	Sir Menzies Campbell
Andrew Mackinlay	Mr Fabian Hamilton
Mr Greg Pope	Mr John Horam
Sir John Stanley	Mr Eric Illsley
Ms Gisela Stuart	Mr Malcolm Moss
	Sandra Osborne
	Mr Ken Purchase

Another Amendment proposed, in line 4, to leave out from “However,” to “the use of the phrase” in line 6. – (*Mr John Horam.*)

Question put, That the Amendment be made.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 8	Noes, 4
Mr Fabian Hamilton	Sir Menzies Campbell
Mr John Horam	Mr David Heathcoat-Amory
Andrew Mackinlay	Mr Eric Illsley
Mr Malcolm Moss	Mr Ken Purchase
Sandra Osborne	
Mr Greg Pope	
Sir John Stanley	
Ms Gisela Stuart	

Another Amendment proposed, in line 10, to leave out from “UK.” to the end. – (*Mr John Horam*)

Question proposed, That the Amendment be made:– Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Paragraph, as amended, agreed to.

Paragraphs 49 to 54 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 55 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 56 to 78 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 79 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 80 to 90 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 91 read, as follows:

We conclude that the current financial climate has implications for the UK’s future defence posture and its ability to sustain the level of military commitment in support of the US that it has demonstrated in recent

years. We further conclude that it is likely that the extent of political influence which the UK has exercised on US decision-making as a consequence of its military commitments is likely also to diminish.

Amendment proposed, in line 1, to leave out from “posture” to the end of the paragraph, and add “We recommend that the Government in determining the future course of defence and security expenditure should give high priority to maintaining the strength of the UK/US relationship.”.—(*Sir John Stanley.*)

Question put, That the Amendment be made.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 6

Mr David Heathcoat-Amory
Andrew Mackinlay
Mr Malcolm Moss
Mr Greg Pope
Sir John Stanley
Ms Gisela Stuart

Noes, 6

Sir Menzies Campbell
Mr Fabian Hamilton
Mr John Horam
Mr Eric Illsley
Sandra Osborne
Mr Ken Purchase

Whereupon the Chair declared himself with the Noes.

Paragraph agreed to.

Paragraphs 92 to 95 agreed to.

Paragraph 96 read, as follows:

We conclude that, in the short-term, the UK should continue to do all it can to assist the US in the areas where it is also in the UK’s security interests to do so, most notably in relation to Afghanistan and Pakistan and in respect of reform of NATO. We further conclude that, in the longer term, the arguments in favour of British forces doing less in the future but doing it better by focusing on niche and specialist capabilities, and of adopting a defence posture that complements that of the US, are compelling in terms of optimising British influence with US policy-makers.

Amendment proposed, in line 3, to leave out from “longer term” to the end of the paragraph, and add “the Government’s foreign and security policy needs to be driven by the UK’s national security obligations including those towards Britain’s Overseas Territories, its NATO commitments and its security partnership with the US.”.—(*Sir John Stanley.*)

Question put, That the Amendment be made.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 9

Sir Menzies Campbell
Mr Fabian Hamilton
Mr David Heathcoat-Amory
Andrew Mackinlay
Mr Malcolm Moss
Mr Greg Pope
Mr Ken Purchase
Sir John Stanley
Ms Gisela Stuart

Noes, 1

Sandra Osborne

Paragraph, as amended, agreed to.

Paragraphs 97 to 100 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 101 read, as follows:

We conclude that it is imperative that the forthcoming Strategic Defence Review should be foreign policy led and be preceded by an honest and frank debate about the UK's role in the world based on a realistic assessment of what the UK can, and should, offer and deliver. Only once these fundamental questions have been addressed can the long-term scope and nature of the UK's defence relationship with the US be determined.

Amendment proposed, in line 1, after "policy" to insert "and defence commitments".—(*Sir John Stanley.*)

Question put, That the Amendment be made.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 7

Mr Fabian Hamilton
Mr David Heathcoat-Amory
Andrew Mackinlay
Mr Malcolm Moss
Mr Greg Pope
Sir John Stanley
Ms Gisela Stuart

Noes, 5

Sir Menzies Campbell
Mr John Horam
Mr Eric Illsley
Sandra Osborne
Mr Ken Purchase

Paragraph, as amended, agreed to.

Paragraphs 102 to 111 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 112 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 113 to 129 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 130 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 131 to 200 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 201 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 202 to 230 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 231 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 232 to 239 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 240 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 241 read, as follows:

We conclude that the UK must continue to position itself closely alongside the US in the future, recognising the many mutual benefits which flow from close co-operation in particular areas, and recognising too that in many (but not all) respects there is a commonality of values between the two countries, but also taking a clear-eyed view that its strategy for alignment should be based on a realistic sense of the UK's role in the world and its national interests. We further conclude that the UK needs to be less deferential and more willing to say no to the US on those issues where the two countries' interests and values diverge.

An Amendment made.

Another Amendment proposed, in line 5, to leave out from “interests” to the end of the paragraph.—(*Sir John Stanley.*)

Question put, That the Amendment be made.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 4

Mr Fabian Hamilton
Mr Greg Pope
Sir John Stanley
Ms Gisela Stuart

Noes, 6

Sir Menzies Campbell
Mr David Heathcoat-Amory
Mr John Horam
Mr Eric Illsley
Andrew Mackinlay
Mr Ken Purchase

Another Amendment proposed, to add at the end of the paragraph “We also note the substantial body of evidence that favours the UK strengthening its position in Europe, particularly since Europe is a means of inserting our interests into the US-China relationship which President Obama has said will shape the 21st century.”—(*Mr John Horam.*)

Question put, That the Amendment be made.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 2

Mr John Horam
Mr Ken Purchase

Noes, 7

Sir Menzies Campbell
Mr David Heathcoat-Amory
Mr Eric Illsley
Andrew Mackinlay
Mr Greg Pope
Sir John Stanley
Ms Gisela Stuart

Paragraph, as amended, agreed to.

Annex agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Sixth 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, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

Written evidence was ordered to be reported to the House for printing with the Report, together with written evidence reported and ordered to be published on 4 November, in the last session of Parliament, and 3 March.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 24 March at 4.00 pm.]

Witnesses

Wednesday 11 November 2009

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Dr. Dana Allin, Senior Fellow, International Institute for Strategic Studies, **Dr. David H. Dunn**, Reader in International Politics, University of Birmingham, and **Dr. Robin Niblett**, Director, Chatham House Ev 1

Professor Malcolm Chalmers, Royal United Services Institute, and **Lord Wallace of Saltaire**, Emeritus Professor of International Relations, London School of Economics Ev 10

Wednesday 2 December 2009

Nick Witney, European Council on Foreign Relations Ev 17

Stryker McGuire, Contributing Editor, *Newsweek*, and **Justin Webb**, Journalist, BBC Ev 24

Sir Jeremy Greenstock, GCMG, former British Ambassador to the UN, and **Sir David Manning**, GCMG, CVO, former British Ambassador to the United States Ev 33

Wednesday 16 December 2009

Mr Ivan Lewis MP, Minister of State, and **Mr John Rankin**, Director, Americas, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ev 43

List of written evidence

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2	UK Trade & Investment	Ev 109
3	Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy	Ev 122
4	British Pugwash Group	Ev 87
5	Mr Lee Bruce	Ev 79
6	Robert Budd	Ev 118
7	Frances G Burwell, Atlantic Council of the United States	Ev 113
8	Professor Malcolm Chalmers, Royal United Services Institute	Ev 108
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10	Reginald Dale and Heather Conley, Centre for Strategic & International Studies	Ev 105
11	Professor Norman Dombey, University of Sussex	Ev 144
12	Dr David H Dunn, University of Birmingham	Ev 128
13	Ambassador Robert E Hunter, RAND Corporation	Ev 84
14	Rt Hon Lord Hurd of Westwell CH CBE PC	Ev 82
15	Ian Kearns, British American Security Information Council	Ev 100
16	Dr Robin Niblett, Chatham House	Ev 119
17	Mr Andrew Tyrie MP, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Extraordinary Rendition	Ev 86

Oral evidence

Taken before the Foreign Affairs Committee on Wednesday 11 November 2009

Members present:

Mike Gapes in the Chair

Sir Menzies Campbell
Mr David Heathcoat-Amory
Mr John Horam
Mr Eric Illsley

Andrew Mackinlay
Mr Malcolm Moss
Sir John Stanley
Ms Gisela Stuart

Witnesses: **Dr Dana Allin**, Senior Fellow, International Institute for Strategic Studies, **Dr David H. Dunn**, Reader in International Politics, University of Birmingham,¹ and **Dr Robin Niblett**, Director, Chatham House,² gave evidence.

Q1 Chairman: This afternoon, we are taking evidence in our inquiry on Global Security: UK-US relations. Gentlemen, thank you for coming. Can we begin for the record with a brief introduction from each of you as to who you are and what you do?

Dr Niblett: I am Robin Niblett, Director of Chatham House. I took over at the beginning of 2007. Prior to that, I spent 10 years in Washington working at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Dr Allin: I am Dana Allin, Senior Fellow for US Foreign Policy and Transatlantic Affairs at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, where I have been for close to 12 years. I am also editor of our journal, *Survival*.

Dr Dunn: I am David Dunn. I lecture at the University of Birmingham in US Foreign and Security Policy and Diplomacy. I have been at Birmingham for 18 years. Before that, I taught at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. I have also spent a lot of time in Washington, as a NATO Fellow and a Fulbright Fellow.

Q2 Chairman: May I ask you to look back? What is the legacy for current UK-US relations of the previous relationship between our former Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and the United States leadership at the time?

Dr Niblett: I suppose that the legacy is a very close military engagement in Afghanistan—and, obviously, emerging from Iraq—so a level of military intimacy and shared experiences of suffering and some successes is an important backdrop to the overall relationship. I also think that the legacy is the failure of the idea of Britain as a bridge between Europe and America. We have closeness on the military side, but we have paid somewhat of a price in some of the objectives that Tony Blair had laid out for himself and the country at the time. I shall stop there, having given a couple of first ideas.

Chairman: We will pursue that in a little while. I call on your colleagues.

Dr Allin: I agree. On balance, it is a positive, none the less complicated legacy. It is very positive in the sense that, obviously the close emotional—I say this not pejoratively—moralistic relationship between Prime Minister Blair and President Bush was important in the way that the decisions to go to war were presented. Prime Minister Blair was a bridge. He had a close relationship with Bill Clinton, so he was a bridge from one ideological camp to another. He is much admired on the left in the United States as well as on the right. I should say centre left and centre right. At the end of the day, the central project in the minds of many Americans was discredited—the Iraq war. It is good to be close, but it is also good to be right.

Dr Dunn: I think that the legacy is very complicated. I offer the distinction between the legacy and policy, and the immediate legacy and perception. On policy terms, Blair put Atlantic relations on a very strong footing in many respects with his initiative on ESDP at St. Malo and his role in the Kosovo war in 1999. The joint operations in Iraq and Afghanistan put the relationship on a stronger footing bilaterally than had been the case previously, and that was true of his relationship with both Clinton and Bush. The perceptions are different on both sides of the Atlantic. If we talk to most Americans, they think that Tony Blair is fantastic. Even though many people were opposed to the war or have looked at it negatively since then, they value the fact that Britain was an ally in that war. Most people in America supported the war at the time, therefore the perceptions of America about the bilateral relationship as far as the Blair legacy is concerned is entirely positive. The special relationship or the UK-US relationship more broadly is primarily coming from here. By and large, our perceptions as a country are very different on whether we benefited from it. Americans look at you puzzled when you ask, “What about UK-US relations?” They say, “What do you mean? What is the problem? They are fantastic.” Here, it is a different story.

Q3 Chairman: Can I pursue the question of the bridge? It is shorthand. Dr Niblett, you said that it had not succeeded. Will you enlarge on that?

¹ Ev 128

² Ev 119

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Dr Niblett: In practical terms, it failed the most critical test, which was over the decision to go to war in Iraq. So the ability of Britain to be able to pull together where the United States was going with its decisions on that conflict and where certainly some—not all—the other major European countries such as France and Germany, in particular, were going was not successful. More importantly, the closeness that Tony Blair struck up with the United States and the Bush Administration, particularly in the post-9/11 context, and buying into the idea of a global war on terrorism, was not shared largely in other European capitals. The ability for Britain to say, “We can represent a European view to Washington. We can deliver European policy positions to Washington. We can interpret Washington back to Europe and perhaps modify somewhat the US position as a result of our influence” was the central active concept of a bridge. There is no point being a bridge if you are not trying to do something with it, but it struck me as not having succeeded.

Dr Allin: I agree entirely, and I assume that later we will be discussing aspects of the European-UK-US relationship. One reason that it failed was that there was a determination on the part of the US Administration to define this as a zero-sum competition because of French, German and other European opposition to the war. That was a conscious choice. It was not necessary to create loyalty to this war. There are examples from the Vietnam War, to which there was strong opposition throughout much of Europe, and the US Administration decided not to make it a test of alliance solidarity. But it was posed as a test of alliance solidarity, and, according to the terms of the test, Britain passed and other European countries did not. That was a short-term tactical gain for Britain, if you want to look at it in those terms, and the residue that it left was not positive. Now we have an Administration led by a President who thought that the war was a mistake, who I think is going to revert to a more traditionalist, I won't say that things have been up and down, but, on balance, the American position since World War Two has been to value the relationship with Britain for many things, not least its ability to be a bridge to continental Europe.

Chairman: Dr Dunn, do you want to add anything?

Dr Dunn: Yes indeed. The bridge is the metaphor: Britain can deliver Washington to Brussels and Brussels to Washington, as a link between the two, and the Iraq war is the example of how that policy failed. It failed partly because of the expectations set upon it. Britain did influence American foreign policy—Resolution 1441 was partly a consequence of British policy pushing the American Administration towards the diplomatic route. The action was put off as long as possible within the confines of the weather envelope, at British insistence. Other things were added to the policy, at British insistence, such as some of the effort towards a Middle Eastern peace process. In terms of the capacity to totally change American foreign policy, when all of Washington had a consensus on going to

war as part of its grand strategy, that is a big ask for British foreign policy. The question is partly one of expectations. I would also set the matter in context. British foreign policy failed, but so did most of the transatlantic relations. Germany's relationship with America failed fundamentally for the first time in the post-war period. France's relationship failed fundamentally as a consequence of its lack of influence. Sure, British foreign policy failed in terms of the bridge doing the job that it was supposed to do, but the context was one of total failure.

Dr Niblett: There is this idea that Britain could get something out of playing this mediating role, but personally I don't believe that was the main reason why Prime Minister Blair went for what he did—it was not to get something in return. But that was part of the narrative given to some of the European capitals, and this is where the Middle East peace process in particular was held up, as that would be the next step. This would be part of a bigger strategy for the Middle East. That is an area that definitely failed. We were not able to deliver that.

Q4 Chairman: We will come on to those issues later. Can I take you back to the question of personalities? Tony Blair ceased to be Prime Minister in mid-2007; then we had one and a half years of Gordon Brown, as the new Prime Minister, having to deal still with President Bush, both before and, for a period, after the presidential election; and now we have the Obama Administration, which we will come on to in a moment. In what ways was Gordon Brown's approach to the US different from that of Tony Blair? Did it have any positive or negative consequences?

Dr Dunn: I had a journal article in Chatham House's *International Affairs* which addressed that precise question, and I argued in that piece that the Brown Administration had sent a variety of very clear signals to the Bush Administration as an attempt to draw a line under the Blair Administration's approach to Washington and to create distance, and Washington was very clear in picking up those signals. Consequently, despite the substantive aspects of British and American co-operation in a whole variety of areas in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Bush Administration looked for other interlocutors in Europe, particularly the new Administrations of Angela Merkel in Germany and of Sarkozy in France, who have filled the vacuum resulting from the decision by the Brown Administration to create distance.

Dr Allin: I don't want to quarrel with the need or the fact of trying to signal distance, but if that was the case, the signals were fairly subtle, as they would have to be, given the fact that the Brown Government did not want, or could not want, a real breach. If I have a slight question about this, it is with the cause and effect. In the other three capitals—Washington, Paris and Berlin—there was a sense that they had looked into the abyss of the end of their transatlantic relations, and they did not like what they saw. There was a real effort in all three capitals to repair relations—that included the Bush Administration, too. It is possible that that was

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enabled by a slightly colder relationship with Britain, but I would not look at that in zero sum terms.

Dr Niblett: I think I agree with David. From a political standpoint, it struck me—I had been back in London for six months when this happened—that Prime Minister Brown felt that he had to demonstrate a level of separation and a difference of approach in his first trip to meet President Bush. I thought that the body signals were pretty clear of the awkwardness there. The problem was that there was a schizophrenia: in the first six months, we had a distancing or standing apart, but when the new leaderships came in in France and Germany and made an effort, as Dana said, to rebuild somewhat, relationships with a much more open, second-term George W. Bush, suddenly Prime Minister Brown went back and talked about this being the closest relationship and one of the most special relationships. There was a sense of “Oh gosh, now we’re going to be pushed aside, so we have to compete our way back in”. I don’t think that it looked particularly good, and we had the hangover at the time of the Basra period. What a lot of people in America remember from the end of the Iraq war is British forces drawing down, and maybe some sense of a loss of commitment. I do not necessarily think that that is necessarily justified in terms of what physically happened, but the impression left towards the end of that period of the Bush Administration was of a UK that was not as reliable.

Q5 Chairman: You are referring to Senator John McCain and others who made critical remarks at that time?

Dr Niblett: And a huge number of articles written around then in the newspapers and journals about Britain not being as reliable an ally in that period.

Chairman: Thank you. We shall move on to questions from John Horam.

Q6 Mr Horam: Coming on to the special relationship and the view about that from both sides of the Atlantic, Dr Niblett, you said in your written evidence to the Committee, which I read with great interest, that “the gap between aspiration and reality, however, is becoming ever more awkward”. Would you elaborate on that for the verbal record?

Dr Niblett: Yes, and I think that that was almost my concluding statement, so I would have to pull in a number of points, but I do not want to take up all the witness time. On the aspiration, it strikes me that from a British standpoint we are trying to do two things. We are trying to send a signal that we have a special relationship. We pass up no effort, diplomatically and almost in a public relations way, to try to demonstrate that it is there. We look for signals, we look for language—we almost demand the return in terms of comments from the Obama Administration. We also have to aspire to it, because in the end what the US does is enormously important to what we want to achieve in our own foreign policy. There is therefore both a PR dimension, which as you know from my testimony, I am critical of, and there is a reality that America is

very important, which I have to accept, and which I don’t dispute. From a US standpoint, however, we, as I said in my testimony, were very important in certain tactical areas—intelligence, military co-operation and nuclear; and we’re very important in the context of Afghanistan and Pakistan. I don’t mean to get too far ahead in where you’re going in the testimony, but the reality is that the US has many other things on its plate, in which we are not critical, but they are now critical for the United States. They include the G20 world as I call it, the rise of China, the rise of India, how to handle Russia, etc. Therefore, we have to recognise that the United States cannot be expected to keep coming over and calling us the most special relationship, as Secretary of State Clinton most recently had to do and as President Obama had to do on the margins of the UN General Assembly. They have a bigger and busier plate, and one that we are not constantly involved in in this G20 world. That would be the essence of what I meant by aspirational reality. It is a changed US reality, but it is almost harking back to an old UK aspiration.

Q7 Mr Horam: Following that up, another comment that we had, which is about the British approach to the relationship, from Professor Michael Clarke of the Royal United Services Institute, which you will be aware of, slightly echoes what you have just said. “British leaders should be wary of falling into a cosy bilateralism with US Presidents, attractive as that can seem, if it ultimately undermines multilateral approaches to global security challenges”. Then he said, “At a practical level the UK can further its interests by visibly taking a long-term lead in making European approaches to regional global security”. I don’t want to come to the Lisbon Treaty, which we are asking about later, but he specifically said that “the essential triangular relationship between Paris, Berlin and London” is where we should make our effort, as opposed to carrying on with saying all the things that we do say about the special relationship.

Dr Niblett: I am cautious, personally, about inferring from the difficulty of being a bridge and the realities of how I think the US-UK relationship has changed, which I believe it has, that we automatically have to expect a clear and constant position between Paris, Berlin and London on the big security challenges. I don’t think that A equals B. Think of some of the big questions, although on Iran we are working very well. That is the three plus the United States, so it is not that we’ve had to separate ourselves from the United States. Actually, as a foursome, plus others, we’re working as effectively as is possible in a very difficult situation. But if you take Russia, for example, I don’t see Britain, France and Germany necessarily being completely of the same view on how to deal with Russia.

Q8 Mr Horam: Why not? Why do you see a difference on Russia?

Dr Niblett: I happen to believe, as again I think I say in my written testimony, that Russia is a place about which the United States has quite a different view from many of its European partners. That doesn’t

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necessarily mean that we, as European partners, have the same view—in particular, Germany’s energy and trading relationship with Russia puts it in a very different thinking and strategic context from that of France, which does not depend nearly as much on Russia for fuel, given its reliance on nuclear energy for the bulk of its electricity production. The UK is in a shift from being an exporter of energy to starting to become an importer and therefore having to think differently about its relationship, but it has a much more unique bilateral relationship, as you all know, because of our hosting various people who are not particularly popular in Moscow. That has led to all sorts of complexities in our relationship. I am concerned that there are some differences in opinion, but cut right down to the national interest perspectives of France, Germany and Britain, and we have not worked our way through them yet. I would strongly encourage greater European co-operation on energy security, but we can’t simply assume that it is going to be an easy shift to make from co-ordinating with the US in this area.

Q9 Mr Horam: I would like Dr Allin to come in on this one, but on a second point about some evidence that we had from Lord Hurd. He said that Tony Blair never learnt the art of being a junior partner to the US and confused it with subservience. In handling the relationship, do you think that’s a correct comment?

Dr Allin: I think it was an inherently problematic relationship, when you go to war in opposition to much of European public opinion and important European countries. Whether I would characterise it as a subservient relationship, I am not sure. There was clearly a senior partner in the relationship for reasons that are understandable.

Q10 Mr Horam: He is saying that Mrs Thatcher, for example, and Churchill in wartime understood the relationship of the junior partner, whereas Tony Blair did not understand it, and allowed it to slide into subservience.

Dr Allin: I am not trying to avoid the question. His basic position was clearly very pro-war. We must not forget, he did not choose to go to war because it was what the United States wanted. That was not my impression. Given his basic position, I am not sure how he would have avoided that image.

Q11 Mr Horam: We would not have been there though if America had not been there, would we?

Dr Allin: No. That is absolutely the case. We could discuss the same thing in terms of Afghanistan. When we speak about the Iranian problem, clearly the United States values Britain above all as a member of the three. There are areas of obvious disagreement with continental Europe, but it is a perfect example of how Britain at the heart of Europe is seen as being in America’s interest. The original question was about whether Britain sees too much in this relationship for the relationship, in a sense, to bear—if I understood it correctly. There is something to that. Given the silly spasms of press

coverage about how many minutes or the missing bilateral meaning and so forth, there are more serious things to which the British press could devote itself and more serious problems, particularly when the very next day we saw the importance of Britain in Pittsburgh dealing with the Iranian file. Part of the big problem is personalising it too much. What is new with Barack Obama is not that he does not like Prime Minister Brown, but that he is not sentimental in his relations with any of Europe’s leaders. It is interesting that you have the situation in which relations with Europe are unquestionably better. When I say “with Europe”, I include the UK, but personal relations between the President of the United States and the Chancellor of Germany, the President of France and the Prime Minister of Britain are not the same. That is not a particularly significant factor. If you invest too much work and too many expectations in the personal relationship, you will simply be hostage to the personality of the American President.

Dr Dunn: I concur with the previous comments. The degree to which the press fixate over this is reminiscent of Snow White saying “Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who is fairest of them all?” Going back to your previous question about whether there was a choice to be made between a special relationship with Washington or a closer relationship with Paris and Berlin, it does not need to be that stark a choice. It is not a zero sum game. It is not like a marriage. It is not monogamous. That is not required. America has special relationships with many powers, such as Israel and Japan, and, indeed, China in some respects. We can have special relationships with our closest allies, whether in Europe or America. One does not preclude the other.

Q12 Sir John Stanley: Do you think that the present US Administration has made up their mind as to whether it is more in their interests that Europe becomes more integrated and speaks more with one voice—the downside from their point of view is that that could produce a more powerful Europe and possibly a more anti-American Europe—or is it more comfortable with a Europe that is less integrated and which preserves the particular relationship it has with the UK?

Dr Allin: I think that they want to see a more integrated Europe. The evidence for that will unfold. I base that mainly on my personal knowledge and relationships with people in the Administration who have a long-standing view that we do not have to fear an anti-American basis to European integration. As I said in answer to an earlier question, the kind of divide and conquer strategy that you saw during the Bush Administration has been discredited. That was one of the things that Barack Obama ran against when he ran for President.

Dr Dunn: Indeed. I think that every signal that I get from Washington—I have just come back from there—shows that the Americans would like to see a more united, and expect a more united Europe than we have, but, primarily, they want a more engaged, more capable and more involved Europe. In a sense,

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they see those two things as linked. The integration process will enable Europe to be more of an engaged actor than it is. There is a huge frustration that the division of Europe leads to the incapacity of Europe to act with one voice, one policy or any capability on the international stage.

Dr Niblett: I entirely agree with both the previous points and, as you say, we all have personal experiences. I remember working at CSIS, where we ended up doing a project, in which people who are currently in the Administration are involved, pushing for European defence integration. They actually chaired and pushed the project, as Americans, on behalf of deeper European defence integration, which I find quite fascinating. I do not think that they see it as a threat, they do not assume that it will be anti-American and, certainly because of who they see themselves as—the Obama Administration—they do not see this as being a kind of zero-sum relationship. This is very important in terms of where the UK ends up because there was a value to the UK, certainly historically—I would even say going back a bit—of being a potential guard against too much integration, and that was an important role that it played within the “special relationship”. That aspect of the relationship and that role for Britain as a guardian against deeper integration is not what is needed. It is not important any more. One thing that I suppose gets my back up a little bit at the moment is when I hear about US frustration. This has been reported in the press and comments have been made by the Assistant Secretary of State for Europe about yellow lights and frustration with Europeans for not giving enough and not being organised enough. On Afghanistan there are clearly deep differences among European Governments about how central and important that conflict is. It is deeply important to us, as Brits, and to one or two other European Governments, but it is not seen that way by others, so it is a matter of choice that we are not organised or engaged. It is not because European integration is failing in some particular way, it is a very clear political decision by some not to be engaged. On the other hand, I can see European leaders say, and I have heard them say, “Look we’re pretty organised on climate change, we’ve been very organised on dealing with the global financial crisis and we’ve got some pretty clear views on trade issues, so we are organised. We just don’t happen to be organised, because we don’t want to be, on the one issue that is deeply important to you. And we are organised—more than we were—on Iran.” There is a dialogue of the deaf going on. There is a search for greater co-ordination by aspects of the US Administration on something that is deeply important to them, but there are things that are important to European Governments, where they feel that they are organised, on which they are not getting a very clear answer from the US—climate change being the absolute case in point in the lead up to Copenhagen.

Dr Dunn: Can I make a couple of follow ups on that? One is that the expectation is that if we were more integrated, and had implemented Lisbon for example, we would actually get a common position

together on Afghanistan, and, therefore, would be a more effective interlocutor as a consequence. So there is an expectation in the frustration about where things would go.

Dr Niblett: Which is not true.

Dr Dunn: Which is not true. America must understand the implications of Lisbon and of European integration more broadly. On just one other point—the defence integration aspect—just now the European Union as a whole spends about 60% of what America spends on defence and yet has a capability to deploy forces of about 5% to 10%. We get very bad value for money through a fragmented European defence spend and the Americans would like to see us move away from that.

Dr Allin: May I comment very briefly? I thought that Dr Niblett touched on a fascinating comparison when he referred to climate change. The standard criticism of Europe is that in its very nature it is incoherent and cannot get anything done. Here we have an example where Europe, by its nature, is able to do a lot on climate change and the United States, because of our 18th century system of bicameral legislature, may well be prevented from doing it by about six senators representing 12% of the US population.

Q13 Ms Stuart: Let us explore this in the context of the special relationship a little bit more. I was struck by the earlier debate about the bridge. The comparison came to me that we keep looking at Turkey as being our bridge into Asia. Turkey says, “We don’t want to be a bridge into Asia. Please don’t put that on us”. Is there a danger here? I have no evidence that Blair ever said, “I will be your bridge to Europe”, in that he meant that he really could deliver that. He thought that he would be the bridge that links two positions, but if he ever thought that he could deliver Europe to the Americans he deluded himself. He could say that he was the halfway house between the Europeans—us—and then get to you. My take on that term “special relationship” is that when we were in the UN the American Ambassador to the UN was quite clear that the Americans regard the UN as a useful vehicle in as much as it delivers US national interests. Is our special relationship with the US the same? We have a special relationship; they have a special relationship with us in as much as we can help them deliver their national interests and if we don’t then there isn’t a special relationship.

Dr Niblett: That is a tough question.

Dr Allin: It is. The negative answer that you are driving at is true, but it is not so sinister. Countries are in a business, in a sense they have an obligation to seek their national interests and that is what the US finds—one avenue of that is the relationship with Britain. Maybe I would turn it around. Clearly when one speaks of a special relationship—I’m not sure we want to get into an historical, philosophical discussion here. I am not crazy about the term to be frank, because it is an artefact—

Q14 Ms Stuart: What would you call it then?

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Dr Allin: For one thing it is a treaty alliance. We are part of a treaty alliance, so we are allies. My only objection to it is that it is an artefact—a coinage—right after World War Two, or right at the end of it, and now it has almost become a fetish to fill it out. In a certain sense it does more harm than good. Having said that, there are clearly sinews of it that are not based on mechanical relations between states. They are so obvious that it is almost embarrassing to mention them: language, culture and shared history. All of this is valuable and seen as valuable in the United States. The problem is when it is—these are bad words to choose—described in almost quasi-racialist terms as an alliance of the English-speaking peoples implicitly against the inferior rest of the world. Sometimes a concentration on it almost has those terms.

Dr Dunn: I think the relationship we talked about earlier in terms of the way in which the press fetishise about the term “special relationship” can be problematic. But there is value in the discursive act of describing something as a special relationship as a rhetorical device. In a sense by discussing it and describing it as such it consequently has a meaning in a wider sense. We get a special warmer feeling from the relationship as a consequence of describing it in those terms. In a subliminal way it can be beneficial, although it can be frustrating for academics trying to pin it down. That is the first point. There is a wider point at which the whole variety of the lineage of our common histories, approaches and linguistics and stuff—what Obama called the kinship of ideals, at one level—gives us that automatic plug-in, which is a special term. Then, of course, there is the way in which at a functional level in defence, intelligence and diplomacy we are linked in. There is an operationalised aspect of the relationship where it does work hand in glove in a way that is unusual. It is unusual for two states to work as closely together as is the case and has been established and institutionalised over time. As for national interests, there is a degree to which America uses its relations with Britain on occasion to get us to draft a resolution or to be there, to broaden the issue out and make it appear that it is not just America doing things but that there is a multinational aspect. But the reverse is also true. I asked at the British Embassy in Washington, “What do you see as your main mission?” They said, “Our main mission is to deliver American power to British interests”. It plays both ways. When the UK is asked to draft a UN resolution, we get to put our language, expertise, values and interests in, as a consequence of being the custodian of the English language. That is a phrase used when they ask us to draft something because we are better at English than they are. We derive benefit from them.

Dr Niblett: I agree with the points made. A special relationship in today’s world cannot have the uniqueness that we in Britain expect. It is still special—we have all agreed on that and certainly I wrote that in my testimony—in some specific areas in particular where it is unique. That is what special has almost come to mean. We wish it was unique; it

is not unique, it is special. But where it is special—and it is likely to be a very important area for the next 10 to 20 years—where we can help each other, is on counter-terrorism and that complex aspect of security that requires a sharing of information and intelligence. We have built very close links on operational capabilities; we are, in a way, intertwined, in a way that we will not want to disentwine—if that is a word. That is in both our national interests, and we can both do something special for each other, and that will remain strong. Something that we haven’t talked much about so far, but this is a pivotal and fascinating moment, is: is there an Anglo-Saxon economic model? We are wondering that right now but don’t really want to mention it. As we look to the future, I think that we—Britain and the US—will want to fight for certain aspects of open markets and financial regulation. Although mistakes were made, we don’t want to throw out the entire model that in many ways has delivered fantastic wealth for many in other parts of the world. Aspects of trade, open trade, deeper financial markets—even if they’re better regulated—could become a common agenda. Along with Paris and Berlin, in particular, and other European countries, we are united in a view about non-proliferation and the risks that nuclear proliferation carries for us all. We will work together on that common national interest. Again, it doesn’t have to be sinister. We have to recognise that there are certain areas where we have a national interest but the US may not. We can’t assume that it’s special because it covers the waterfront. I don’t think it does any more.

Q15 Ms Stuart: The Committee went to New York and Washington recently and we were struck by the absence of any mention of Al-Megrahi. We expected that to be mentioned. Was that just politeness, or is it something that hasn’t really damaged our relationship as much as some aspects of the press seem to suggest?

Dr Dunn: I got no mention of it when I was in Washington, either. I scoured the US press for it and it was difficult to find. I wonder whether it is a bit of posturing on the part of Americans to get us to change our policies and not go down that direction, rather than a serious threat to information-exchange on intelligence matters.

Dr Allin: As I recall, at the time American officials said they were angry about it; they didn’t like it, but it was not a threat to relations with the UK. I think one can take that pretty much at face value. It’s over now.

Dr Niblett: There have been differences in approach on other counter-terrorism operational aspects in particular, and the balance struck between acting and observing. We have had these irritants through the process. I was there three weeks ago and didn’t get much mention of that. What I did hear just about everywhere was something I’ll precede with an important point. It all depends where the local politics and domestic politics really play. They did play for a moment on the Al-Megrahi case, with some of the families concerned, but I think it was

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dealt with. The Conservative party's decision not to be part of the EPP had raised some domestic politics within the US body politic that were being talked about when I was there. I think where the domestic politics come in, it can take something from being an irritant, which maybe the Government do not want to become a problem, but they are forced to raise it to another level. Neither of those things are fundamental to the relationship, but domestic politics can sometimes get in the way.

Q16 Ms Stuart: That leads me to the final question. To what extent do personal relationships between the leaders—the President and the Prime Minister—matter? For example, Gordon Brown is an immensely transatlantic-minded Prime Minister. Does the personal relationship with Obama matter if you were to compare it with David Cameron, who has left the EPP, which really irritated the Americans? Would personality overcome those kinds of conflicts, or is the importance of personal chemistry just something superficial?

Dr Niblett: The personal chemistry is important. In a world—at least as I see it—where more and more critical foreign policy decisions seem to centralise in the Executive branch, partly because of the media and the speed of reaction, you need to trust somebody and be able to go on instinct at times, as a leader at that pinnacle position. Not having a personal linkage and element and a sense of trust can be problematic; at least it's a plus if you have it. On the other hand, what is this Administration looking for? Like any US Administration, I think they are looking for delivery. I don't think that they are necessarily deeply upset about the EPP decision—the party chooses whether to join—they are worried about delivery. Will this make it tougher for Britain to deliver a Europe that can be a better partner on particular issues that we have talked about so far? Britain remains a very important partner for the US in Europe. Will it be difficult for Europe to be a partner, with this internal conflict? Will Britain become less constructive, and will Europe, as a result, be less constructive? I don't think it's emotional—it's quite a practical calculation.

Dr Dunn: President Chirac had a habit of using his mobile phone and being very rude about President Bush on the mobile phone to his friends. Of course, with the Americans' satellite system, he got transcripts on his desk. Bush would never forgive Chirac for the comments he made about how dumb and stupid he was. That made a real difference to that relationship. Only when he was gone were French-American relations able to improve. The nature of international politics today—the technology of communication and the expectation of leadership-derived diplomacy—is such that personalities matter. They meet an extraordinary number of times in different forums around the world. They are expected to communicate—we have, between Downing Street and the White House, a video link—and to talk on a regular basis. The interaction is so prolific that the personal chemistry matters. We've seen that particularly during the period when Blair was so popular in the States and

Brown, for various reasons, was more awkward, partly due to personality, and the relationship suffered. I think personalities matter, unfortunately. They are looking at Cameron, unsure of what to make of him, partly because of the issues you mentioned, and partly because of his attitude to Europe more broadly. They are anxious to see how that will pan out.

Dr Allin: Personal relationships obviously matter—it would be silly to suggest that they don't. Alliances and relationships of trust are important. Having said that, the flip side is that you can get into a situation where things are personalised in a negative sense, to the detriment of what should be common work and common interest. I think about President Bush's relationships with the leaderships of Spain, Germany and France. Although it is important, it is not something to obsess about.

Q17 Sir Menzies Campbell: Isn't it the truth that we shouldn't put too much store on this personal relationship aspect? It didn't stop the invasion of Grenada and it certainly didn't stop F-111s flying from Lakenheath. These were actions conceived of as being in the strategic interests of the United States, notwithstanding the very close personal relationships at that time between the Prime Minister and the President—they went ahead. That is why I was rather relieved to hear Dr Dunn say that if you think about this from the other side of the Atlantic, the truth is, our relationship with the United States is, I think you said, based on a conception of where our national interest lies. It is in our national interest to have access to intelligence. It is in our national interest to have access, unlike anyone else, to nuclear technology, and also defence co-operation. It is in our national interest to be part of the joint strike fighter programme and put £3 billion into it, because it gives us some leverage but also gives us access to equipment that we would not be able to fund ourselves. So perhaps the partnership is best understood as being a partnership of mutual interest, which has some tinges of affection around it, some nostalgia, and sometimes some personal relationships. But if you think about it all the time as being about national interest, that is a much more logical and more explicable analysis. Would you agree with that?

Dr Dunn: Exactly right. If you go back to the F-111 decisions from Lakenheath, that was a deliberate *quid pro quo* for American support during the Falklands war. The deal was “You support the Falklands and we will support you in this”. Even though Thatcher might have gritted her teeth over it, that was the deal that was done.

Sir Menzies Campbell: I remember it was Lord Tebbit who gritted his teeth more than anyone else.

Q18 Mr Heathcoat-Amory: There is a book called *The Death of Distance*, which proposes that, because of communications and information technology, geography does not matter any more and what counts by extension are things such as language, culture and historical experiences, and therefore the colossal interchange between the United States and

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here—the films that people watch, the music they listen to, the trips they make, the language they speak—is arguably increasing in intensity. Is this just sentimentality, or would this actually decide the sacrifices that people might make in a crisis? Alternatively, is it the case that hard-headed military power and diplomatic clout renders this populist cultural dimension unimportant?

Dr Allin: What is deciding this sacrifice that Britain is making in a crisis, and the crisis that followed September 11, for example? I am not saying that a cold-headed look at British interests would not have brought the same decision. In fact, in the case of Iraq, it might have brought a better decision. There is no question that moral sentiment, if I may use that phrase, has influenced great sacrifices on the part of Britain and it is appreciated in the United States. Your suggestion that this will become more intense because of communications—I suppose that is true. This is getting very personal but I can give you a counter-example. I am much more plugged into my own country and much less plugged into Britain, in a sense. I should not say the latter part, but even though I have lived here for 12 years, because of the web I am much more connected to culture and political debates and so forth in the United States than I would be. In a sense, that alienates me from my British hosts. I do not want to exaggerate that. I say that only because I lived abroad in the '80s, when one did not have that. Also I was younger and more open to experience, but I was a little more into the foreign culture and politics in the country I was living in then. I have just thought of this. I do not know if that makes any sense.

Dr Dunn: Distance matters in a variety of ways, but distance has shrunk. It has shrunk by virtue of technology. It is replaced by a new speciality. Academic geographers are really thrilled by the different conceptions of space brought about by the technology revolution. Some people talk about the easyJet map of Europe, how Europe has changed its geography by virtue of where the chief networks of flights go and how any notion of what Europe is is actually influenced by those things. In terms of Britain's relations with the US, geography matters in one sense in that, where we are, the time zones mean that the City of London is uniquely placed to be in the hub of business: it is awake at the right time for the rest of the world, at the end of the day and the start of the day. Distance has an effect that way. Language is important as well. In a sense, Britain benefits from the fact that the superpower on the world stage speaks English. The fact that English, or American English, has become the international *lingua franca* means that we benefit as a consequence. Everyone speaks English and we can influence them by virtue of the fact that we speak English and that we produce our cultural artefacts and output in English. It therefore has a worldwide audience. Our diplomacy benefits from the fact that we can speak English to the world and it can understand what we are saying. We can communicate with the whole world directly in English, and we are good at doing that. The hard-part aspect also matters—this is something that I

mentioned in my written evidence—in that we are approaching the prospect of a defence review that may require us to make hard decisions on where we spend the money, especially if the defence budget is going to be asked to make significant cuts in capability. The capacity to actually be on the ground in Iraq to support American operations in a variety of different theatres is not a capacity that every other state has. Therefore, if we find ourselves in a situation five or 10 years hence where, by virtue of our lack of capabilities, our solidarity with Americans in defence terms were lacking, I think that would be to the detriment of the overall relationship.

Dr Niblett: Geography may not matter as much for globalisation in an economic sense, but I think it matters deeply geopolitically. I still think that our conception of who we are and where we are in the world as Britain is affected by our being to the side of Europe, and I think that the US conception of the world is affected by where it is. So I think that geography matters in terms of geopolitics, but not as much for economic globalisation. I will give one line—this is mentioned in my written evidence—and say that, from a cultural standpoint, the US is changing, to state the obvious. It is becoming less Anglo-Saxon and less European, which will have an impact over time. We are not going to see it: it will be gradual and hard to spot, but I see the first changes now.

Q19 Mr Heathcoat-Amory: Dr Dunn mentioned the importance of military power. There are only two armies in Europe: the French and British armies. Ultimately, that is what counts. Two of us here were on the Convention on the Future of Europe. I went to America at that time and know that there were misgivings in the Bush Administration about the enhanced co-operation articles in the constitution, which is now the Lisbon Treaty. They felt that it might separate European military power from NATO and the United States. That was never expressed publicly, because of the Bush-Blair alliance. Have any of those fears been carried over into the Obama Administration, or is it all still about the rather superficial cliché about having a single telephone number for the Europeans and assuming that that is the end of the argument?

Dr Dunn: I think that a lot of those disquiets were dropped towards the end of the Bush Administration. The fear was more to do with the lack of ability of the Europeans to get their act together to produce any capability that was deployable at all, rather than the configuration that that took. In a sense, it was a case of, "We don't really care how you organise it, but please create some capability". There was frustration; that is what comes through. The Obama Administration are much more relaxed in their attitudes towards European integration. The ideas that we saw in the early 1990s of the geopolitical rival have largely been discounted. The world has changed so fundamentally and there is recognition of how close we in Europe and America are in terms of our geopolitical view of the world, compared to the rest

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of the world with the rise of BRICs or the rise of transnational threats to national security more broadly. There is recognition that actually we approach the world in a very similar way.

Chairman: I am conscious that we don't have much time left. There are two more witnesses and there will be a slight delay before we call them.

Q20 Andrew Mackinlay: I want to put something to you and ask whether this is the thinking in the United States—it is probably not among the public figures that we see most of all—but is there a feeling that NATO as we know it has run its course and that this feeling might be accelerated by the experience of Afghanistan? Although in theory it is an article 5 operation—I don't say this provocatively—demonstrably it is not. There is not the solidarity. On the Georgian experience, the Bush Administration were going to get Georgia in, but now I think most people reflect and thank God that it didn't come in, because it would have blown article 5 completely. Therefore, if that thesis is true—that people are beginning to think that the thing has run its course—it would raise the question of whether you will have an increased bilateral alliance, perhaps with the UK. I was particularly struck when your colleague mentioned 1982. The Falklands was not an article 5, yet we were able to cash in on the solidarity. Caspar Weinberger saw the signals that it would send if there were not solidarity and thought that that was important. We were also able to use EU solidarity because Charlie Haughey and the Belgians were locked in. They might have wanted out, but it did prevail. Compared with 1982, when those relationships did to some extent work, now the big thing is the failure of Afghanistan in terms of NATO, because it is not article 5 as it was intended. It is blown. So are we not on the cusp of a quite seminal moment? In five or 10 years, you guys will be writing that this was the time when things changed—everything does change. Alliances last 60 or 70 years, don't they?

Chairman: May we have brief answers on this question please? I am conscious of time.

Dr Allin: Yes, of course. Obviously, it is a big subject, but it seemed to me that one could observe, after 11 September 2001, that the big question about NATO was American interest and commitment to it. That story is well known—coalitions of the willing and so forth. There are many ways in which I think NATO is overloaded and stretched. I think enlargement has introduced differing interests and differing relations with Russia that cannot help but be stressful. You mentioned Georgia. I think that, in a room, privately, there would be remarkable unanimity and consensus between the Americans, the British, the French and the Germans on that subject. But of course the Americans, and maybe the British to a certain extent, are also tugged towards their client relations—that is not the word I want to use—their relations with east Europeans. I do not disagree with any of your analysis, but sometimes you set tests that are impossible. Afghanistan may or may not be a success. I do not think it is necessarily going to be a question of alliance solidarity, or even European and

British contributions. I think it may just be too difficult. It does not make sense to say that NATO failed at something that could not be done.

Dr Niblett: NATO was article 5 with Afghanistan when it really was an attack, if you see what I say, on the US directly. The NATO operation in Afghanistan has evolved enormously since then and for many countries it is not an article 5 question anymore. So, for me, I would rather it were not a test on the future of NATO. It may end up being that way politically—there is nothing I can do about it—but I think it is an unfair test for NATO and I think David was saying that. I do not think it is the end of NATO. I do not think the US wants to give up the one seat where it is at the table with the Europeans as an equal, or even maybe a lot more than an equal, and they will fight to maintain it. The key question is how it is redefined. As you know, the whole strategic concept issue is going on right now. I think that they will give that time, genuine time, and effort. Cyber security, energy security—there are many dimensions that are emerging on what the future NATO may be involved in. On missile defence, I think the new structure that has been put out got so much stick at the beginning, because of pretty bad handling, politically. But if you look into the detail, this could be a fascinating new area where the US and the European countries will all be working together on a form of protection that matters to all of them—Europeans and the US. This will be my last point on this. Distance matters; it is critical. This is another place where distance matters. For most European countries you just cannot stretch NATO beyond an extended regional defence. That is what we are trying to deliver at the moment and Afghanistan is probably just beyond the edge of that reach. If we can get it thinking effectively about north Africa, the Caucasus, the Iranian missile threat within that inside arc, maybe we'll hang in there.

Dr Dunn: NATO has been a different creature in every decade of its existence. It has evolved to meet the circumstances of the time. That is true of this decade as of previous ones. For institutional reasons America will not give up its involvement in NATO. It very much sees it as a way to influence European politics more broadly and is concerned about its lack of influence within the EU. From an American perspective it is strong and the article 5 foundation will remain for the future. Afghanistan is a challenge to it, however. If Operation Allied Force in 1999 over Kosovo was seen as a success for NATO, then Afghanistan, to this point, has been much more of a failure. As a consequence, the legacy of Afghanistan might be much more coalitions of the willing rather than trying to do things as the alliance. As Dr Niblett explained, as the proliferation concerns of the Middle East and north Africa develop, we may see a new incarnation of NATO in future.

Q21 Mr Illsley: My question relates to our diplomatic service in the US. We have been told in evidence that the Foreign Office and the diplomatic service get access to US decision makers at the very highest level and that our diplomatic staff are called

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upon for advice by the Administration. To a certain extent the new Administration looked for advice from our diplomatic service when conducting reviews shortly after they came into office. Does that high-level access and respect translate into practical influence? Are there any concrete examples of that, or, in terms of what Dr Niblett said earlier, is the question irrelevant in that we should not expect influence from our diplomatic service in those circumstances because the relationship is evolving and moving away from the traditional areas that were classed as a special relationship?

Dr Niblett: I shall jump in and try to be quick on this. It is a very important question. There is no doubt that British diplomats and certain Ministers and the Prime Minister have an intimate relationship and a more regular relationship than just about any other diplomats across the broad area. This gives them the opportunity to influence how the United States conceptualises its problems. So the conceptualisation part—how the United States thinks about a problem—is where we can really make a difference. Sometimes, influencing how it thinks about a problem can lead us to influencing the decision, but we cannot assume that the former leads to the latter. This Administration may or may not have been influenced by the British Government, but certainly the work we have done on climate change with them is shared within the Administration. Will that enable the Obama Administration to deliver America on this? Probably not, because of their system of government. On Afghanistan, we have been intimately involved, as I understand it, in the review process. But now the final decisions are going to be made. Perhaps others know better than I do, but my sense, from some of the meetings that are happening there with Barack Obama, is that he is going to have to make a call based on all sorts of aspects, including US domestic politics, where our influence is going to have to step back. My point is that it is very important to be able to be there to conceptualise the problem. We do that. In terms of success, the US has come to love the G20, if I can put it that way. That has been partly as a result of thinking about it and going round the table with its British partners, even though we may end up losing out a bit from this, but that is another story. Our ability to take conceptualisation to influence cannot be taken for granted. As we said, in the end it comes down to national interest. At some time the US Government will decide, “What is in our national interest? Nice that you conceptualised it that way, but in the end we are going to do something different.” We cannot stop them.

Dr Allin: I will just underline one of Robin’s examples. The concept of a proper response to the financial and economic meltdown was in the first instance a shared US and UK idea. I personally think that it was the correct one. So at a time when people were worried about the end of the special relationship this is an area where there was clear US and British leadership. That came from having the same concept of the problem and the solution.

Dr Dunn: I noticed that you picked on the start of the Obama Administration. Mr Obama has been particularly slow, even though the trend is slow, to appoint people to the political appointee positions in the US Administration. In that vacuum, there is a very good opportunity for the British to get their point of view in there. Indeed, I have watched in Washington the way in which the British diplomats operate. They are an independent player in the American inter-agency process, which of course is traditionally an invitation to struggle between different branches and agencies of the Government. Britain tries to influence every different aspect, to play its cards in trying to get different agencies to work for what they regard as British interests and British values. That is a very skilled role, playing the system to British advantage—they are very good at doing that. There are multiple examples, which we can all think of, in the financial world, the intelligence world or the defence-industry world, in which that influence has brought tangible benefits as a consequence.

Q22 Mr Illsley: The Committee is really concerned that we could see some cuts to what has been described as our Rolls-Royce diplomatic service in the US. Is that going to be disastrous for us, if we cut back?

Dr Dunn: I think, pound for pound, you cannot get better value for money than spending money on diplomats in Washington and indeed elsewhere. The influence that Britain gets in terms of trade policy and pursuing the national interest from our skilled and highly regarded diplomatic service is extraordinary. To cut it back would be extraordinarily short-sighted.

Chairman: Thank you very much, gentlemen. We may have some follow-up questions, which we will write to you about, but may I say, Dr Niblett, Dr Allin and Dr Dunn—the three doctors, as you will now be known—thank you very much for coming along today. It has been a very valuable session.

Witnesses: **Professor Malcolm Chalmers**, Royal United Services Institute,³ and **Lord Wallace of Saltire**, gave evidence.

Q23 Chairman: Thank you. Gentlemen, you sat through the previous session, so you heard what was said. In this session we are going to concentrate more on the defence and intelligence side of the relationship, but for the record could you both introduce yourselves before we begin?

Lord Wallace: I am William Wallace. I have two hats, and I shall put on my academic one rather than my partisan hat here. I went to the United States for the first time in 1962, spending three and a half years there as a graduate student and teacher. I have been there on a fairly regular basis—once or twice a year—ever since, so I think that I have seen the relationship change. It was very much a white

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Anglo-Saxon Protestant élite when I went there, but it certainly no longer is—that is part of the whole shift. I continue to follow transatlantic relations as closely as I can.

Professor Chalmers: I am a professorial fellow at the Royal United Services Institute, where I have been for a couple of years, and I am also a professor at King's College, London. I worked in the Foreign Office for a couple of years, about three years ago, so I have some insight from that period.

Chairman: And you have given evidence to our Committee before—quite recently, in fact.

Professor Chalmers: I have indeed.

Q24 Chairman: I begin by asking you both about the importance to the US of the defence relationship with the UK. How important is it to the United States?

Lord Wallace: It is important, above all because under the last Administration, as under the previous ones, the United States does not really like to be unilateralist. It therefore likes to have allies. The United Kingdom has been one of the most loyal allies in military deployment elsewhere—Vietnam being the great exception over the last 60 years. The remark that I quoted in my *International Affairs* article was that Obama, as a candidate, said that Bush multilateralism is rounding up the United Kingdom and Togo, and calling it a multilateral operation. That expresses the downside of matters. The upside is that, having the British ready to go has often been the trigger to persuading others to go alongside, such as in the Balkans, in the first Gulf War and, indeed, in the second Gulf War.

Professor Chalmers: I agree with that, but we have to put it into perspective. The US is more important to the UK than we are to it, because of our size. Whether we are important in particular circumstances often depends on what we bring to the table, whether it is the symbolic importance of being there—which we discussed—military capabilities or basing or whatever it might be. The structural question that has not yet been answered is about what the shift of the strategic focus of the United States away from Europe is doing. The long-term implication of that is that European powers are less important to the United States in its military calculations than they were during the Cold War, because Europe is relatively safe.

Q25 Chairman: The UK is making and has made big contributions to a number of military engagements over the years. Do we get sufficient return from the US for all our efforts alongside it?

Lord Wallace: That depends on how you define “sufficient”. If you look at the contribution made in the first Gulf War or, indeed, in Afghanistan, it is small by comparison with America. That is part of the growing imbalance of the special relationship. When Winston Churchill defined “the special relationship”, he defined it as a special relationship between the British Commonwealth and Empire, and the United States. We still had the Indian Army as part of it—just, at that point. As we have shrunk and lost the Commonwealth and Empire, we have

clearly become much less important. How much influence you think you can buy by how much defence contribution you make is, after all, the crucial question for the security review, which the British will have to have next year. The sentiment of a lot of people in and around the Ministry of Defence is that we need either to spend more on buying influence or accept that we have less than we would like.

Q26 Chairman: When you say, “spend more”, do you mean that it depends on how much American military equipment we buy or how much we spend as the UK on defence?

Lord Wallace: I mean much more of the latter. We probably need larger forces. We perhaps need two to three aircraft carriers. To reinforce what Malcolm has just said, American interests have shifted away from Europe in terms of the projection of power across the greater Middle East, above all, and perhaps in the Asia Pacific region. That is much more difficult for the British to do unless we have long-range transport and Oceanic naval deployment, and those things cost a lot of money.

Professor Chalmers: It always seems that it is important to emphasise that influence is a means to an end. The end of British relationships with the United States is not to have influence, for the sake of having influence. It is not to be Greece to America's Rome and be a wiser counsel. It is to ensure that Britain's interests are protected. One way of doing that is to have a very good relationship with the most powerful and generally sympathetic power on the planet, which sometimes has a rather different take on things from us. To do that, we have to have a starting point of our being able to articulate and understand for ourselves what we want, then going into a process with the United States and trying to convince it to take what we want into account, in return for us contributing something to what it wants. It is perhaps a more hard-headed approach, getting away from the idea that because of our history and so on we are inextricably linked no matter what happens.

Q27 Chairman: Professor Chalmers, you referred in your written submission to there “never” being “any question of” the UK “being involved in these operations” in Afghanistan and Iraq “without US military commitment”. Can I turn it around the other way? Can you conceive of any circumstances in which a British Government would refuse to make a military contribution to a joint operation with the US? Given that we went to Kosovo and both the Iraq wars, and we are in Afghanistan now, can you conceive of any circumstances in which we might in the foreseeable future say, “No”, either because we do not have the military capabilities or, more importantly, because we think that we wish to take an alternative view, in line with our European partners for example?

Professor Chalmers: I am sure other people here are best placed for political speculation but, yes, I can conceive of circumstances in which the US decides on a particular course of military action and the UK

says, “Count us out on this”. To give one example, which admittedly is slightly retrospective, if President Bush had decided two years ago to take military action against Iran on the nuclear file, I do not think that the United Kingdom would have been part of that action. So, I think it is conceivable.

Lord Wallace: I think that if there were problems on the Taiwan strait now, which is not completely inconceivable in a Chinese and American military confrontation, I think it unlikely that the British would wish to be involved—or indeed would be able to be involved. A Royal Navy deployment went past Singapore the year before last, to demonstrate that the Royal Navy could still do it, but I very much doubt whether we would now see ourselves as being involved in that sort of very distant confrontation.

Q28 Chairman: But generally your view would be, for reasons you have given earlier, that our military, our MOD in particular, would be very keen to have close co-operation with the United States.

Lord Wallace: I think there is an established mindset in the Ministry of Defence that that is after all one of the key links that we need to maintain. The problem that I have with it is the circularity of the argument. We have to spend money and buy the kit in order to maintain access. Then the question is how much influence the access gives you. I was quite struck by those who told me that we have had people embedded in the analytical stage of the discussion of US policy towards Afghanistan, but that the Americans insisted on taking the embedded British officers out when they moved on to the strategy stage. That is access without influence. It is clearly going to be a question for anyone’s security review: where are our interests in this and how much are we going to spend in order to buy privileged access?

Q29 Mr Illsley: That leads me nicely into a mixed group of questions. The Committee has been quite exercised recently, not least when we were in Washington just over a week ago, by signs that there are sections within the American military who are unhappy with the efforts of the British military. These concerns were put to us quite forcefully in a recent meeting in Washington. Do you attach any importance to those claims? Do you think that they are true? The claims are really that our performance in Afghanistan was not as good as it should have been, perhaps through defence cuts, perhaps because of stories of inadequate equipment, troop numbers and so on. The criticism was coming from a very high level in the US military.

Professor Chalmers: I would attach importance to that. We should take it with due concern. Some people in the American military remember the time when we were telling them that we knew everything there was to know about counter-insurgency from our experience in Northern Ireland and Malaya. We were perhaps rather complacent, so there is a little bit of getting back at us. It also reflects the fact that the American military, partly because of its greater resources and its greater agility and leadership, has moved on an enormous amount in thinking about counter-insurgency warfare, and the sort of

operations that are happening in Afghanistan in particular. We are trying to follow it from a position in which our resources are much more constrained. There is a genuine problem here. One of the implications for us when thinking about the future of our defence forces and future defence operations is whether we might be better taking on tasks that we are sure we can do or are more confident about in order to show the Americans that we will do what we promise. In learning from our experience in both Basra and Helmand, we can be more careful about taking on tasks that basically involve having the main responsibility for entire areas, so, in a way, we are running our own independent—at least, autonomous—intervention. In Basra, as long as things were going well, the Americans really did not notice us very much. Indeed, the central Government in Baghdad did not notice us very much. Once things started to go a bit badly, the Americans said, “Hang on, you said that you had this sorted”. There is a little bit of that in Helmand as well. It is not easy to move on, but we at least need to question the assumption that the best way of operating as part of a coalition is always to take geographical responsibility for an area in an operation that is 80% or 90%, in terms of effective military capability, American.

Q30 Mr Illsley: Your points about Basra and Helmand were interesting because it was put to us that we took on the responsibility of the offensive in Helmand and the Americans were beginning to question why we did so. Was there some legitimacy in that claim?

Professor Chalmers: We took on Helmand at a time when the Americans were focused mainly on Iraq and were not prepared to have the big increase in forces that they have had in recent months and which it looks as though they will continue in the coming months. We did it at a time when ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) was trying to expand its say over the country. It is fair to say that the political leadership in this country and, indeed, the military advice that it was being given did not anticipate the escalation that occurred. That is the nature of conflict. Things are uncertain, especially in a country such as Afghanistan or, indeed, Iraq. You have to anticipate that things can go badly wrong and then respond to them. My point is that, even as one of the most powerful militaries in Europe, the resources in the country are such that we found ourselves very quickly overstretched in Helmand. Fortunately, the Americans are now there in great strength and are supporting us. We left ourselves vulnerable to that possibility by being prepared in the first place to say that we would take on such a difficult area by ourselves.

Q31 Mr Illsley: Bearing in mind that, a few moments ago, Lord Wallace said that we need to increase our defence spend to maintain influence, and you talked about strategy and so on, if we are forced into defence cuts in the near future, that relationship between the American military and the British military is likely to come under even further strain.

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Lord Wallace: That is very much part of what we all have to discuss next year. Part of the criticism that we are getting from the Americans is that our equipment, helicopters and so on are frankly not up to the level that they expect. The idea that the British volunteering or leading in can help to make up the Americans' minds is there as a mindset. It worked in Kosovo. Blair was prepared to commit a very large number of British forces to a ground war, when the Clinton Administration was resisting. I recall hearing a senior military officer saying that he and two drivers would be left at the Ministry of Defence if the operation went ahead. It worked there. It did not work so well in Basra, and it did not work so well in Helmand. When you are operating so close to capacity—as we would have been in Kosovo—that is the risk that we are taking.

Q32 Ms Stuart: Thank you. That is an interesting perspective on Helmand and the way that can lead us forward. I want to change tack completely. This goes back to the provision of bases to the United States. Lord Wallace in his evidence said: "The United States benefits very considerably from the provision of these bases" and "Britain benefits from this power projection to the extent that it shares US objectives". There are two bases that we have been concerned about in the recent past. One is Diego Garcia and the other is Ascension Island. Do you feel that we have sufficient control over what happens on those bases?

Lord Wallace: Evidently we don't. The whole experience we have had on the question of whether people have been rendered—however one puts it—through Diego Garcia, is that Ministers did not know. A Minister told me off the record that she did not know—

Q33 Ms Stuart: She had to apologise to the Committee at some stage.

Lord Wallace: Indeed. It is quite clear that we did not. The story that one gets that these are under British command is completely offset by the relatively junior nature of the attached squadron leader who is usually the only person there. I know most about Menwith Hill because when I'm driving from Saltaire up to Wensleydale or Nidderdale I drive past it. I happened last summer to be driving past as they were taking the British and American flags down. I stopped and watched a small detachment of American troops taking the Union Jack down. That seems to me a good symbol in the sense of the relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom in RAF bases, as they are formally labelled.

Q34 Ms Stuart: But what could we do? What would you suggest that the British Government ought to do?

Lord Wallace: There is a parliamentary question here. Going back to the record, there ought at the very least to be some parliamentary accountability of what the status of these bases is. It is slightly better now, with the Intelligence and Security Committee allowed to visit, than it was, but still, I learnt about

the very substantial increase in the number of American personnel to Alconbury and Menwith Hill post 9/11 partly because I had friends who worked for Harrogate borough council and partly because the wife of one of these American officers came to see me at the LSE about whether she could do some graduate work while her husband had been posted to Alconbury. None of this appeared in the British press. It does seem that at least some Members of the British Parliament ought to have been told that a surge in American intelligence personnel had arrived in Britain.

Q35 Ms Stuart: Let me pin you down. What is that process? You know how this place works. You know how the place works down here and up your end. What would be your mechanism for making that accountable? The Intelligence Committee is answerable to the Prime Minister, not to Parliament. What about the Defence Committee? Tell me, what do you think we should do?

Andrew Mackinlay: Me.

Ms Stuart: Other than Andrew Mackinlay.

Lord Wallace: I think it is a matter more for your place than mine. I think there ought to be a demand at least for a White Paper setting out what the formal arrangements are. I have been unable to discover whether there is a lease on Menwith Hill, for example. As I understand it, there isn't any longer a lease on Menwith Hill. So it is there for as long as the Americans wish to have it. There is an excellent new paper on US-European relations published by the European Council on Foreign Relations in which Nick Witney, who used to be a Ministry of Defence civil servant, remarks that when the Americans upgraded the Fylingdales radar system, Her Majesty's Chief Scientific Adviser went to Washington to ask about the technical specifications of the upgraded radar, and he was not allowed to see classified material. That seems to me rather odd for a major installation on the sovereign territory of the United Kingdom.

Professor Chalmers: Perhaps I could add to this briefly. The UK itself, as well as bases in Diego Garcia, Ascension Island and Cyprus, is very important to the United States. When we have discussions that are framed around the proposition that unless we do A, B or C we will threaten our relationship with the United States, we have to remember that those bases are really quite an important card for us, which we do not have to remind the Americans of. They know they are important to their interests, but it does mean that we can be a little more self-confident that the Americans are not going to take steps that are fundamentally against our interests, without there being consequences.

Q36 Mr Horam: I take it from what you both said earlier, that you would agree that our influence with America would be reduced if there were significant defence cuts by the UK Government in the near future.

Lord Wallace: In so far as the core of the special relationship is defence and security, yes.

Mr Horam: Would you agree?

Professor Chalmers: One would have to spell out the scenarios a bit more. We are probably entering a period in which the UK will have to make significant defence cuts but so will the United States. I don't think the UK will be the only country facing defence economies.

Q37 Mr Horam: It has been suggested to us that if we look at spending in the whole area—including the Foreign Office and intelligence—we could minimise this reduction in influence if we spent more, as Eric Illsley suggested, on our FCO forces and intelligence services. Those two could be better value for money in terms of influence, if we have less money to spend, and would also help to keep our relationship with the US Government. Would that be fair?

Lord Wallace: It depends on the sort of threats you are facing. If we are facing further conventional military threats, the United States would be looking for military assistance. There is a wonderful phrase in Nick Witney's report: he says that while the United States looks for assistance, the Europeans ask for consultation. That is a generic problem. If, on the other hand, the security agenda is moving more to problems of immigration, climate change and counter-terrorism, our investment should in any case be in that direction, in our own interests. That is part of the debate we need on our own priorities for a national security review.

Professor Chalmers: And, of course, the spending priority given to the intelligence services has increased substantially in recent years, so that increase has occurred both domestically and internationally. I agree that the Foreign Office is relatively good value for the amount of money spent. I would be tempted to give that a relatively higher priority at the margins. There are still ways in which the Foreign Office can look for effectiveness in deploying people in the right places and changing priorities. That shouldn't be off the table, either. I suspect, however, to be realistic, that the Foreign Office is going to have to take its share of economies.

Q38 Mr Horam: A recommendation made to us by another witness, is that if this scenario of lower defence spending happens, we might need to hasten the development of the European security and defence identity, provided that is done in concert with Washington and not in opposition. Is that something to which you would attach importance?

Lord Wallace: I would say, for broader reasons, closer Franco-British co-operation has a very strong logic. How far it is under the formal framework of ESDP—

Q39 Mr Horam: What is the logic you would point to?

Lord Wallace: We're both facing a point where it is difficult separately to afford the sort of serious equipment that we want. Thus, if you are to have one full aircraft carrier each, it makes a lot of sense to try to work together. We are, after all, in Helmand with Danes, Dutch and Estonians. Those are the ones with whom we have been co-operating on the

ground in recent years. The north European countries have been up there with us and quite often closely integrated with us. We haven't always flagged that to the United States. I wrote an article five years ago for *Survival*, which grew out of an argument in Washington in which the Americans said, "You Europeans aren't doing anything". We then went off, Bastian Giegerich and I, and pulled together just how much different European countries were putting together on various deployments outside our regions. The interesting part of that was how far the Dutch, the Danes, the Swedes and the Finns came up strongly, as well as the French.

Professor Chalmers: My attitude would be that we should continue to look at ways in which we can co-operate more with other European states on defence, and there are clear areas, especially in our neighbourhood, where Europeans should be taking the lead in defence matters, for example, the Balkans, Moldova or wherever. I am more sceptical about the proposition that such co-operation will save money. I think that in order to achieve real savings on something such as procurement and not actually spend more, which has been the experience with some European co-operation projects, you have to have a degree of sharing of sovereignty, which, I suspect, is not acceptable. The aircraft carrier example, which William gave, is a good one. It essentially means saying, "If we can only afford one aircraft carrier after this defence review rather than two, then, since the French only have one, we can co-ordinate our refit schedules and our aircraft can use each other's carriers. Indeed, we can do that with the Americans as well". Yes, why not? Maybe at the margins, that is driven by expense, but I am hesitant about the broader argument that European co-operation is more cost-effective; it just seems to me to make sense because the Americans will not always want to be involved in issues that they see as primarily European.

Q40 Sir John Stanley: I want to turn to the US-UK intelligence relationship. This is of course an entirely public meeting and we do not expect answers at any level other than that. Firstly, what do you judge to be the aspects of the US-UK intelligence relationship that are most highly valued by the US and, separately, by the UK?

Lord Wallace: I think that the Americans have most valued the human intelligence contribution and the analytical contribution that the British bring—an alternative source. Certainly from one or two conferences that I went to in Washington after 9/11/2001, I think that there are those within the American intelligence community who also valued the British having an autonomous capability, because we could take in things at a higher level than they could in Washington, at a point when the Bush Administration did not want to listen to a number of people within its own intelligence community. The SIGINT relationship works differently. We provide Cyprus and Menwith Hill and the Americans use them. That is a more automatic dimension of co-operation. But I think that the sharing of analysis is probably what they value most. Again, it is not an

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exclusive relationship now. I sat in on a fascinating private meeting some months ago, in which a number of British personnel were talking about how much they now value the sharing of analysis with our European partners, so the world is changing again. The Americans in their turn, when they are talking about the Middle East or east Asia, obviously find it more valuable to share with others who have more resources in those regions than we do.

Q41 Sir John Stanley: And the other half of my question: what do you think the UK most values from the US-UK relationship?

Lord Wallace: Access to a far larger operation than we can afford.

Professor Chalmers: Including a massive amount of signals intelligence. We value access to a lot of intelligence gathered technically—signals intelligence—that we do not have the resources to gather ourselves, so that is very important to us. In human intelligence, I think that the fact that it is a second centre of analytical capabilities is rather important. In a business that, inevitably, can sometimes be dominated by group-think, it is good to have a second group because it may come up with a different way of looking at things and it has an autonomy in career structure and everything else, which means that there is not the same pressure to agree with each other. So, I think that can be really important. I think we have some assets in some countries that the Americans do not have, for historical reasons, so we add something there.

Lord Wallace: But again, that is not exclusive to us. I was told, some while ago, that with some of the former Portuguese states in Africa, about which we are rather short of intelligence, we have to rely very much on others. So, a great deal depends on which country the new crisis blows up in as to how valuable we are and who has the best resources.

Q42 Sir John Stanley: Thank you. Can I just come to the Binyam Mohamed case? The issue here, as the Foreign Secretary has made clear, is not about the degree of sensitivity of the particular paragraphs. The key factor is whether there is a breach of the fundamental principle that if you give intelligence to another country, you expect the confidentiality of that intelligence to be maintained. The question I would like to ask you first of all, therefore, is do you think that the Foreign Secretary was right to go to appeal, from the judgment of the High Court to the Appeal Court, which is what he is now doing?

Lord Wallace: I want to say that I am not sufficiently expert in this case. I do however say that it has been a consistent experience over the past 30 or more years that more information is available in Washington than in London. Quite often highly confidential or secret information that we are holding in London is published in Washington. So I am doubtful about the basis for the Foreign Secretary's case.

Professor Chalmers: Like William, I am treading rather beyond my area of expertise. I am not a lawyer, but my instinct is that having the ability to exchange information with the United States on a

confidential basis is actually rather important to the relationship. We have to take seriously the Foreign Secretary's concern that if a precedent is established and extended in this area, less information will be shared.

Q43 Sir John Stanley: That brings me to the next question that I would like to put to you both. Would you like to give us your judgment about what the implications might be should the Foreign Secretary lose his case—in other words, about the creation of a precedent in which US intelligence has been given to this country and, as a result of a judicial process in this country, ends up in the public domain? Do you think that it might be a matter about which Washington will shrug its shoulders and say that it is of no great consequence, or would it take a much more serious view and, on a permanent basis, reduce the degree of transmitting sensitive intelligence to us across the board?

Professor Chalmers: I do not know. The first question that the Americans will ask us is what precedent it creates for the future. I guess that their reaction will depend in large measure on the answer to that question.

Lord Wallace: I doubt that it would have a permanent impact because, after all, in relation to the previous Administration, the US intelligence community was not entirely united about what the Bush Administration were doing. I recall going to one conference when I came away thinking that part of the opposition to Bush was inside the Administration, so to speak, so I doubt whether it would lead to a permanent break. The United States is driven by national interests. We are providing a lot of valuable information on a range of issues in which it continues to be interested. It will want to continue exchanging information.

Professor Chalmers: But it seems that the issue is not whether, in this particular case, the countries agreed with what each other was doing, or whether the Bush Administration behaved badly and the current Administration believes that they were wrong. The issue is that, if the Americans are doing something very sensitive in, say, Afghanistan or Iran and are thinking about whether they want to discuss it with their British counterparts, they will want to know that they can discuss it frankly without it getting into the public domain through the British legal system. If there is not a reasonable degree of assurance about that, it will make them bite their tongue more than they have.

Q44 Chairman: Finally, can I ask you about the nuclear relationship? How much does the reliance on and relationship with the United States about nuclear matters affect foreign policy choices?

Professor Chalmers: That's a very hard question to answer. It certainly affects British decisions in the area of nuclear weapons. The fact that we have this close nuclear weapons relationship with the United States clearly constrains the exploration of other options, for example, in relation to France. Does it have a bigger impact? I have heard people argue that it makes it more difficult for the UK to take a

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fundamentally different position from the US in international crises because the US has the capacity to disable our deterrent, given a period of years. It would create at least a major crisis for us to be able to maintain it in some form. There are a number of different factors preventing the UK from going in a fundamentally different direction from the US. It is over-determined and maybe this adds a little to the picture but it doesn't seem to be fundamental. After all, it wasn't long after the Nassau Agreement that Harold Wilson refused to go to Vietnam, despite American requests, and that didn't have any impact on the nuclear relationship that I know of. One can exaggerate that. Clearly there are things at the margins that Americans could do if we cut up awkward in other areas, so it does increase a degree of interdependence.

Chairman: Lord Wallace?

Lord Wallace: I am happy to agree with that.

Q45 Chairman: How important to the US is the UK nuclear deterrent? Will the UK have any influence in the current US nuclear posture review?

Professor Chalmers: I think the UK nuclear force is not very important for the US. There would be questions if there were a possibility of the UK giving up its force altogether. But the consequences for France would be much greater than they were for the United States. That is a very hypothetical question. Basically, it is not very important. I am sure the UK is being consulted on the nuclear posture review but would not have a big input into it. The UK may have rather more influence in the NATO strategic concept discussion which is covering the role of nuclear weapons in NATO's future posture and the discussion about the placement of weapons in

Germany and so on. The UK nuclear deterrent is at present assigned to NATO, so there we have a structural position which we can use, but in relation to the US domestic NPR, much less so.

Lord Wallace: When we were having the last great debate on renewal at the beginning of the 1960s, when we were in the middle of the Cold War, the argument for the British nuclear deterrent was very much as an additional uncertainty factor in facing up to a Soviet threat. That did buy all sorts of attention and interest in Washington. Now that the United States is much more concerned about Iran, south Asia, China and other potential threats outside Europe, we play a much smaller part in all those calculations. So whether Britain has a residual deterrent or not is much less important, except perhaps in the debates about the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Professor Chalmers: Of course the caveat I would add is that we live now in a period in which nuclear confrontation and deterrence is less relevant in Europe. If we were to return to a period in which it became more important, consideration of the UK deterrent would rise in salience.

Lord Wallace: Harold Wilson once offered to send out submarines to the Indian ocean in order to protect India against China, but I doubt whether any future British Government would wish to make that pledge.

Chairman: Given that India is now a nuclear weapon state I suspect that is a bit of an academic consideration. Gentlemen, thank you very much. We appreciate your time. This has been a very useful session. We may have one or two questions that we would like to pursue in writing. Thank you very much indeed.

Wednesday 2 December 2009

Members present:

Mike Gapes in the Chair

Sir Menzies Campbell
Mr Fabian Hamilton
Mr David Heathcoat-Amory
Mr John Horam
Mr Eric Illsley
Andrew Mackinlay

Mr Malcolm Moss
Sandra Osborne
Mr Ken Purchase
Sir John Stanley
Ms Gisela Stuart

Witness: **Nick Witney**, European Council on Foreign Relations, gave evidence.

Q46 Chairman: Mr Witney, thank you for coming today. As you know, we are conducting an inquiry on UK-US relations as part of our general thematic global security inquiries. You have co-authored a very interesting publication on a power audit of EU-US relations. I would be grateful if you could begin by introducing yourself for the record.

Nick Witney: Thank you, Chairman, and thank you for the invitation to attend this afternoon. I am Nick Witney and I am a senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, which is a think tank. In previous lives, I have worked in the UK's Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence, and in Brussels, establishing the European Defence Agency.

Q47 Chairman: Thank you very much. The documents that you have written and other things that I have seen refer to the shift in the US approach towards Europe. Do you think that the current focus of the Obama Administration is specific to the Obama Administration, or is it part of a longer-term trend whereby US relations will, for the foreseeable future, focus on areas outside Europe?

Nick Witney: I think it is a longer-term trend, simply because it reflects the diffusion of global power. I think we are entering a multi-polar world where increasingly the Chinese will matter more and more and, after them, the Indians and the Brazilians. I think that that is a function of globalisation. In our report, we certainly identify the idea that the Obama Administration have latched on to this and adopted what they call a multi-partner strategy to try to ensure the maintenance of US power. Assuming that globalisation continues and global power continues to diffuse in the way that it seems to be diffusing at the moment, I think that America will go where it needs to go to get the partners it wants.

Q48 Chairman: If there had been a McCain presidency, would there have been any significant shifts or differences from where we are with the Obama presidency?

Nick Witney: If one thinks of what McCain had to say about the league of democracies and so forth, I think that perhaps there would have been a stronger interest in a McCain Administration in reaching out particularly to like-minded democracies around the globe. That is something that the Obama Administration do not seem too concerned about.

They seem to be prepared to deal with China as China without necessarily scoring them down on the grounds that they are, rather obviously, not a democracy.

Q49 Chairman: In your document, you argue that the United States is in favour of a more co-ordinated and cohesive European approach, but is that actually always in European interests? Would it not sometimes be better for joint initiatives by some European countries, as opposed to some kind of lowest-common-denominator approach?

Nick Witney: Well, this can certainly never be an either/or situation. As I think we have seen with the recent appointments following the Lisbon Treaty, none of the countries of Europe are remotely interested in giving up their independent foreign policies or their networks of bilateral relations, and Washington is probably the last capital in the world where individual European Member States would be prepared to shut up their embassies and leave the work to a joint EU Embassy. So, yes, there is always the risk with Europe that, if you are dealing with combined policies, you get to a lowest common denominator and I think that one of the interesting developments that may come out of Lisbon is the sense of more multi-speed activity in the defence sphere, for example, and no doubt in relation to foreign policy too. We see it already, for example in the recognised role of the big three in Iran and that may indeed be a way—a rather variable geometry way—in which Europe chooses to execute more common foreign policies in future.

Q50 Chairman: Why should the US favour a more co-ordinated European approach? Is it not actually sometimes in the interests of the US to be able to play a divide-and-rule game? If the European Union is always united and cohesive, presumably it has more power and influence. Is that always in the US interest?

Nick Witney: Certainly, the present rather unco-ordinated and often cacophonous approach of European Member States has its advantages for the Americans. In the report that you referred to, we catalogue various instances of how America finds it useful either to divide and rule the Europeans, work around them or ignore them, if they are not presenting a coherent, strong posture. But at the same time it has been a pretty consistent thread of

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American thinking since the Second World War, certainly with J.F. Kennedy and beyond, that on the whole that short-term advantage would, in theory, be outweighed by the opportunity to engage with a more coherent and, hopefully therefore, more effective and united partner on the other side of the Atlantic. I think that has been, with the possible exception of the first Bush presidency, a pretty consistent American view. What is depressing at the moment is that although we believe there is an Obama Administration preference for a united Europe, they frankly do not care too much. They do not see that they will get much out of Europe disunited or Europe united. They are not prepared to do anything very much to encourage the united Europe that they would in principle like to see.

Chairman: We will explore that a little bit further later.

Q51 Ms Stuart: May I probe you a little bit more on EU3 and how that is a kind of European policy? We noticed when we went to the United Nations that the language was developing, and occasionally there was talk of P5 plus 1, and then they would talk about P3 plus EU3. That struck me more as a way of making sure that Germany did not feel too left out—they are not on the permanent council—and felt included, rather than as a reflection of a European foreign policy. Do you think the Americans see EU3 as a foreign policy unit? What is your perception?

Nick Witney: I think the Americans have been pretty largely content to leave the running to the European side which has meant Solana, and Solana with the backing of the three big European states.

Q52 Ms Stuart: But that is not a European foreign policy. That is very old-fashioned: three big countries who happen to be European doing one thing.

Nick Witney: Yes, but the presence of the High Representative in the pack, and as the sort of point man for this, ties him into the other 27. Often European foreign policy has to work on the basis, if you are to avoid lowest-common-denominator outcomes, of acquiescence round the table. It may be that 22 out of the 27 do not much care but are content to be told what is going on by the High Representative and, although he is more nearly involved in an issue, to lend their name to it and let the business go ahead as an “EU policy”. I think that is a pragmatic way of proceeding.

Q53 Ms Stuart: May I quickly reverse the question? We have so far looked at what is in it for Obama or the American Administration if Europe is more united. What are the circumstances where the current Obama foreign policy would be to the advantage of the United Kingdom? When would there be something in it for us the way he is going?

Nick Witney: Most of the Obama instincts and the Obama Administration substantive policies are ones which the United Kingdom would in principle be in favour of. Obama has succeeded in changing dramatically the terms of the internal debate in the US about climate change. Alas, there is still the US

Congress, but he has done the things that I think we would have all wanted to see him do in terms of extending a hand to Iran. We have seen him looking for a constructive financial relationship with China. Most of the initiatives he has taken—Russia, his moves on the Israel-Palestine dispute—are the things that make Obama instinctively so popular in Europe and, indeed, in the UK. So, in a sense, more power to his elbow, issue by issue, not on everything, but generally speaking. The question that is increasingly being asked now is when is he going to deliver on these specific aspirations.

Q54 Chairman: Can I take you back to what the US Administration wants from Europe? What does it want from its relationship with the UK?

Nick Witney: It looks, as it does from other European countries, for legitimisation of its interventions overseas. In terms of the role that the UK provided for Iraq and the role that the UK provided for Afghanistan, the demonstration that these were not simply American adventures was, of course, powerful and important to the US. The US has a particular intelligence relationship with the UK, obviously. It has a particular intelligence relationship with a great many people, but probably with the UK more closely than with any other power in the world. It understands, I think, that the UK is generally free-trading and non-protectionist in its instincts and, as a powerful international financial centre, has many of the same preoccupations and instincts as North America. It will want help, in the same way that Obama came to Strasbourg and looked for Europeans to help him close Guantánamo.

Q55 Chairman: But is there something specific that we can provide that other Europeans cannot provide?

Nick Witney: Less and less. Of course, what we would like to think is that we would provide a mediatory role with Europe: that the Americans would come to us in order to understand Europe better, or to have us act as a bridge between the US and Europe, but this, I’m afraid, is an illusion. If it ever worked, it is an historical fantasy now. I think we would also like to think that the Americans came to us to benefit from our wisdom, but again, that is a very widespread European illusion, it turns out. All our research suggests to us that actually, the Americans, on the whole, think that they understand the world pretty well and that they don’t stand in need of a lot of wise advice from their European partners, not even from the British. There are advantages in literally speaking the same language. It makes it easier to converse, exchange ideas and act as a sounding board, which is something that the Americans would occasionally want, but I don’t think we have any longer the particular advantage that we have liked to believe we have.

Chairman: I think some of my colleagues will come in on that later.

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Q56 Sir Menzies Campbell: May I read something to you with which I am sure you will be familiar? It says of the Europeans: “They fail to take responsibility where they should (for example, on Russia); they fail to get what they want out of the US (for example, visa-free travel); they acquiesce when America chooses to strong-arm them (except in the economic relationship); they adopt courses of action not out of conviction but in order to propitiate their patron (for example, Afghanistan); and they suffer from US policies not specifically directed against them but which nonetheless have adverse consequences for them (for example, Israel/Palestine). Americans, meanwhile, find European pretensions to play Athens to their Rome both patronising and frustrating . . . They do not want lectures from Europeans; they want practical help.” You will recognise that, because you wrote it.

Nick Witney: It’s not under-written, is it? But I recognise it.

Q57 Sir Menzies Campbell: That was the point I was going to make. It’s pretty strong meat, isn’t it?

Nick Witney: Yes, but I think it’s true.

Q58 Sir Menzies Campbell: You feel it’s justified?

Nick Witney: Yes.

Q59 Sir Menzies Campbell: That suggests a relationship rather keener to subservience than one of a subordinate nature.

Nick Witney: Yes. I think so. Again, I guess this is an accusation I direct to the UK, but it’s an accusation I generalise surprisingly widely across other European countries: we have fallen into the habit of treating the Americans with a very excessive degree of deference. It all goes back to the sense that without Uncle Sam, we’re all doomed, and that NATO is the bedrock of our security and the US are the ultimate guarantors of our security, as indeed was the case during the Cold War.

Q60 Sir Menzies Campbell: So this is a post-Cold War attitude, or one which pre-dated or was to be found current during the Cold War?

Nick Witney: It is an attitude formed by a set of circumstances that existed in the Cold War, that have not now existed for 20 years and that we are finding it difficult to shake off in a world that has changed out of all recognition over the past two decades.

Q61 Sir Menzies Campbell: How should we adapt our relationship to fit this new reality?

Nick Witney: By being readier to assert ourselves where necessary. In particular, by working harder with other Europeans to arrive at consolidated European approaches, because that is what America will take notice of, rather than the individual approaches of individual European states, which are, like it or not, rather rapidly sliding down the scale of global power.

Q62 Sir Menzies Campbell: Supposing, in an ideal world as you conceive it, Europe were to find that integrated approach, do you think that that would

preclude the Americans from making bilateral forays into Europe if and when it suited them? You mentioned the first Bush presidency. That was characterised at one stage by a willingness to put Bonn ahead of London, but all of that rather blew up in their faces—forgive the metaphor—as soon as the first Gulf War came along.

Nick Witney: You are right, but there is never going to be a switch thrown—there will not be a situation where yesterday, we had 27 European foreign policies, and tomorrow Lady Ashton will dictate things from Brussels. This is going to be a long journey of approximation, and that is because, even under Lisbon, what we are dealing with is the voluntary co-operation of sovereign Member States. There will always be differences, and there will always be individual Member States that cannot resist an eye for the main chance of making particular runs into Washington to try to secure their interests. Conversely, the Americans will naturally, on occasion, look to exploit differences between Europeans. If you are dealing with something that is not a confederacy or a federal arrangement, but a co-operation of individual states, that is going to happen. It is a question of a gradual shifting of weight from this very fragmented, atomised view, particularly of the relationship across the Atlantic. At least if you are talking about China or Russia, there is a dawning awareness that we would do better if we could be more unified as Europeans in dealing with those powers. I do not think that we are even up to that first base in our transatlantic dealings. Most people think that there is something rather indecent about the idea of Europeans dealing collectively with the Americans, except in trade—trade competition policy—which has become well accepted and has been seen to work well. But we are still very much at the stage of wanting to hang on to those bilateral lines into Washington.

Q63 Sir Menzies Campbell: An expression attributed to you is that European Governments “fetishise transatlantic relations”. What did you mean to convey by that? Am I right that that is one of your expressions?

Nick Witney: It is.

Sir Menzies Campbell: What did you mean to convey by it?

Nick Witney: We meant to convey that we Europeans—a big generalisation but I think that it applies—regard the transatlantic relationship as something to be venerated in and of itself as opposed to thinking what it might be used to deliver.

Q64 Sir Menzies Campbell: Intrinsically rather than what it produces?

Nick Witney: Yes. That leads you to value enormously closeness, harmony and the act of having a summit and being consulted, rather than thinking, “Do we like American policy? Do we not like American policy? Would we like to be able to shift it? If we would like to shift it, what strategies might achieve that? How can we make ourselves

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useful to the Americans or obstructive to them in order to achieve whatever it is that we might want to achieve in the way of change in American policy?"

Q65 Sir Menzies Campbell: What can we get out of the deal—is that what you are saying?

Nick Witney: What can we get out of the deal, yes.

Q66 Sir Menzies Campbell: One last question from me. Is there a distinction, as you observe it, between the attitude of the British foreign service and of British politicians towards the transatlantic relationship? Is one group more hard-headed than the other, or are they equally infected?

Nick Witney: Would you forgive me for saying that I think sometimes politicians are quite keen on the photo opportunity?

Sir Menzies Campbell: You have been observing us very closely.

Nick Witney: There isn't a better photo-op than in the Rose Garden or the White House.

Sir Menzies Campbell: Not all members of the Committee get there, but we understand what you are saying. Thank you very much.

Q67 Chairman: We have received written evidence from Lord Hurd, who told us that the UK, under Tony Blair, our previous Prime Minister, was confusing being a junior partner with subservience. Do you agree?

Nick Witney: I have already dished out the excessive deference charge pretty widely. I don't know what Mr Blair was doing, but I sense that there was a strategy. If you think back to the turn of the millennium, it was a rather millenarian time. The Cold War was finished with the triumph of liberal democracies. These were the years of liberal interventionism and the responsibility to protect: the west was going to put the world right. It was a missionary and noble instinct, and I think that Mr Blair saw the chance to get up there on the elephant's neck and direct the big beast in this joint project of making the world a better place. You can certainly see that in the last major Defence White Paper. In 2003, we are saying that the job of the British armed forces is to be sized and shaped so that we can make a chunky contribution to an American-led operation. That will get us to the table, so that we can be there when the decisions are taken (with the suppressed premise that they will therefore be better decisions). I am afraid that we have seen that theory, which is quite logical, being tested to destruction, first through Iraq and now through Afghanistan. We cannot afford it. Even if we could, the Americans are not that interested, because they are so big and have so much power to bring to the table.

Q68 Sir Menzies Campbell: What about political cover? Going back to your illustration of Iraq, the opinion polls in the United States by and large showed support for what George W. Bush was proposing, but when the United Kingdom was added as a partner, the opinion polls were more favourable. Is there a sense in which the political

dimension of cover is important to the United States, rather than the kind of bottle that we could bring to the party?

Nick Witney: Absolutely. Yes, the role of coalitions—the allies—in legitimating US military action overseas is very important. I think that it probably carries a bit more kudos, even in middle America, if it is the United Kingdom rather than some other less well-known smaller partner coming in from another part of the globe. It is definitely a card to play but it is indeed the case that, in many ways, that is what matters to the Americans, not the fact that we have X thousand troops on the ground.

Q69 Mr Heathcoat-Amory: May I ask you a little more about the likely effect of the Lisbon Treaty? Occasionally, America does want something from Europe—over Iraq and now over Afghanistan. Do you think that the likely effect of Lisbon will be to deliver a more pro-American policy in those two areas?

Nick Witney: Not necessarily a more pro-American policy, just a more considered policy, and a more pro-European policy. I know that I risk sounding anti-American, which I am not; and my co-author of this study—being an American and working in the Administration, he has now become a cog in that machine—is not anti-American either. We are still these great liberal democracies and we do share values. The relationship between the peoples is very close—there is the cultural relationship, and all those things. So, a European policy is likely to coincide with an American policy much more often than not. Lisbon will, I hope, produce more coherent, conscious pro-European policies, not necessarily pro-American ones.

Q70 Mr Heathcoat-Amory: Leaving aside the fact that there was no European policy on Iraq—despite all the institution building, European opinion vanished and disintegrated into two or three camps—is there not a danger to the Americans, in that, in so far as there will be greater opportunities for unity, it may not take the American position? The Americans could therefore find themselves not being able to deal bilaterally with, say, the United Kingdom, which would probably, and which normally, supports America militarily. That could be inhibited, and there could be a very uncomfortable European policy that the Americans would have to accept.

Nick Witney: At the risk of controversy, have we really served the Americans terribly well in Afghanistan? Europeans have quite deliberately and irresponsibly ignored Afghanistan in European councils—have never debated it seriously around the Rond-point Schuman in Brussels, but have been very happy to send this thing up the road to NATO and operate under American direction. Has that approach, at the end of the day, really served American interests? It seems to me that the campaign has bumbled along, with most Europeans contributing the minimum they could get away with, without any real conviction about what they are doing there, but all running their Afghan policies

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with reference to how to avoid excessive pressure from Washington, or, indeed, how to present themselves to Washington as the loyal first lieutenant. Whether all that, after eight years, has got us into a position which the Americans can really regard as satisfactory, I doubt. It might have been a lot better if Europeans had taken a grip on it themselves. Would they have been wiser than the Americans? Not necessarily, but they could have decided either that they really wanted to be in and to go for it with some conviction, or that it was all going to be too difficult, and could have suggested that we did not get quite so deeply into the hole.

Q71 Mr Heathcoat-Amory: Do you think that the advent of Lady Ashton and Mr Van Rompuy will make it more likely that there will be a European position?

Nick Witney: It is the institutions that tend to matter in Europe. There has been a lot of comment about the personalities in these appointments. I know there were initial reactions of surprise in the United States. People have, rightly I think, looked at how the French and the Germans have rather conspicuously ignored the foreign policy jobs and gone for the economic portfolios as an indication that Europe isn't really ready for a conjoined foreign policy. All that is true to an extent. Over the next five months, when Lady Ashton is designing her foreign ministry, if she can produce a machine, not to take the decisions—because we all know that the decisions will remain with the 27 by consensus—but to collate information; generate shared analyses and understandings and positions; prioritise agendas; come up with policy options; put issues in front of Member States in a way that they cannot duck; put Russia in front of them and force Germans and Poles to discuss why there are such extraordinarily divergent views about whether Russia is a threat and what kind of neighbour it is—then (I am an optimist in these matters) I think the existence of that machine, providing that service, will help a more thoughtful, considered and responsible European set of joint positions to emerge.

Q72 Mr Heathcoat-Amory: So you've described a kind of consensus-building exercise, but of course we've had the Foreign Affairs Council in the European Union for many years, often chaired by a very considerable figure from a big state. It has tried to do exactly what you've described, but over Iraq it didn't work. We noted or were advised that these appointments didn't cause a flutter of any kind in Russia, China or India. They're not only not impressed; they're not even interested, so quite how is the weather going to change?

Nick Witney: To be honest, I think the traffic-stopping metaphor was a bit inappropriate. I don't think we were going to have—or that the system could have found a useful role for—a sort of foreign policy tsar in Brussels, because the authority is not there. The Lisbon Treaty does not create a foreign policy tsar; the Lisbon Treaty creates a representative and a chairman, and that's the way the thing has to work. We will get continuity. We will

now, hopefully, have a machine that will think strategically and not according to a six-month presidency. We've had some six-month presidencies that have been well organised and dynamic, and we've had some recently which have been pretty catastrophically awful. We will now get a chance to have a coherent, stable approach to developing sensible foreign policies where common ground can be found.

Q73 Ms Stuart: I was rather intrigued when you said that it's institutions that matter, not the personalities. Can I take you back to your previous job, at the European Defence Agency? You know it was set up to provide greater capability within Europe. The reason why it failed to do that was not that the institution was wrong; it was that the personalities weren't there and the political will wasn't there. Am I wrong?

Nick Witney: You need both. You can have the most wonderful machine, but if it has no petrol in it, it's not going to move or go anywhere.

Q74 Ms Stuart: But it's the political will represented by the personalities that drives the thing, and the institutions that follow.

Nick Witney: I don't think it has to be represented by the personalities. I don't for a moment doubt the political will of the two new appointees to make the best possible job of pulling Europeans together, but if President Sarkozy and Chancellor Merkel won't play ball, Baroness Ashton will have a thin time over the coming years. But we travel hopefully.

Q75 Ms Stuart: But Tony Blair would have had an easier time if Mrs Merkel and President Sarkozy wouldn't play ball, and he had picked up the phone and said, "You get your act together", so it's the political will of the personality.

Nick Witney: Sometimes big personalities can induce unwelcome reactions. But you're probably right.

Ms Stuart: Thank you.

Q76 Mr Moss: To what extent has the UK become less important to the US, given the shift in opinion on European integration from the US? Will that accelerate as a result of what you referred to in your comments on the Lisbon Treaty and recent developments?

Nick Witney: I think the UK has become less important over the last decade. This is my perception, which is probably overdone, but it seems to me that at the time of St. Malo, the UK was ready to get into Europe and start leveraging its defence capabilities around Europe. It assumed a sort of leadership role with the French and invested very heavily and very successfully in building up the militaries of the central and eastern Europeans. We made a lot of friends in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic at that time. Since then—I think it's partly the distraction of two major wars—we've rather taken the foot off the pedal and detached ourselves from the European mainstream of defence thinking. People may rightly say that it's the

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continent that's cut off in that case, because so many of the capabilities of European defence players are inadequate. Meanwhile, in America, what is very clear is that they've got over their sensitivity about European defence. The prevailing mood now is "European defence? Yes, we'd like to see some of that". They're very clearly in favour of however the Europeans choose to organise themselves if they can be more effective. So I think that we have, in a strange sort of way, drifted into the position of being more royalist than the King; there's a US Administration that would be content to breathe on and smile benignly at European defence efforts, and we're still very active as the brakeman on the process.

Q77 Mr Moss: How is the UK's approach to Europe viewed in the US, and would that change with a change in Government?

Nick Witney: I think they do wish—I know they wish; at least, some of them wish—that the UK were in there, particularly in the defence and foreign policy fields, waking up some of those Europeans. A lot of European countries don't have a foreign policy at all. Probably the majority of European nations have no experience or no understanding of global engagement. For most of them, their historical experience of warfare has been depressing, to say the least, and they would rather just go for the big Switzerland option; the idea is shorthand for staying at home. Generally speaking, Americans would like to see the UK more active in trying to inject some yeast into this lump on global engagement, and more active in defence and foreign policies.

Q78 Mr Moss: We've received written evidence that indicates that in several areas, France is now the preferred partner in Europe for the US. Do you agree with that?

Nick Witney: If Mr Sarkozy says no again to more troops for Afghanistan, that could change. I think it's Mr Sarkozy's clear intention. There was a belief that he had rejoined NATO in order to be able to promote European defence, whereas I think it was probably the other way around: he put his shoulder to the wheel of European defence to give himself coverage for rejoining NATO. I think he's very conscious of where France sits, on the Mediterranean and at the crossroads of many areas of strategic interest to the US, and I think he probably does aspire to be the favoured ally. I doubt he's achieved that status, but—

Q79 Mr Horam: This is a hypothetical question; it follows on from the sort of answers you've been giving just now. Suppose Tony Blair had taken a different decision over Iraq and been more like the "cheese-eating surrender monkeys" of Bush nomenclature. There were obviously two or three different attitudes to Iraq in Europe, but suppose that Paris, Berlin and London had been of the same mind and had taken a firm view about it. In your view, would things have been very different?

Nick Witney: I don't know. We have to wait for Chilcot, really.

Q80 Mr Horam: What would it have done to the UK's reputation, or the UK's hand? We've just been saying that France may have a stronger hand than we think, because it has played it very differently. If the UK had adopted the French approach, what I'm saying is, do you think—it's implicit in much of what you're saying—the UK would have been more powerful and more influential in relation to the US?
Nick Witney: If the UK had been positively against the Iraq invasion, it would have given the Americans very serious pause. Their operation would have lacked the legitimacy that we and many others gave it. Would it have stopped Bush? I don't know.

Q81 Mr Horam: Probably not. None the less, I am thinking of the effect on the UK in relation to the US, and our influence in Washington.

Nick Witney: I don't think today it would have cost us influence.

Q82 Mr Horam: You do not think that it would have cost us influence?

Nick Witney: I don't think it would.

Q83 Mr Horam: I'm just trying to locate what you really think is the right posture for Britain. Dean Acheson's famous phrase was that Britain had "lost an empire and not yet found a role". You seem to be saying that, if there's a foreign policy and defence role, it is more in an integrated Europe—a stronger British presence and influence in Europe and much less deference to America. Is that correct?

Nick Witney: Yes.

Q84 Mr Horam: So if we have a role, it is a role in Europe, formulating a more consensus approach.

Nick Witney: Yes. We, like any other European state, no longer have the military power or the money to make an impact, properly to promote our values and properly to defend our interests in the wider world, unless we combine our weights with those whom we work with in Europe.

Q85 Mr Horam: You made the point that it seemed as though the Government at the time were about to make a serious effort to get involved in redeploying defence assets, and foreign policy as a consequence, but they didn't follow that up because of Iraq and Afghanistan and so forth; and if they had done so, that would have made a difference and Britain might have a stronger posture in the world than it does now. And Europe might have a stronger posture in the world, too.

Nick Witney: Yes, I accept all that, I think.

Q86 Mr Horam: You also finally made a point about Russia, which I think is interesting. Russia is after all a European country—at least, mainly a European country. You said that there was an opportunity for a more coherent approach if we got our foreign policy act together. You think that's important, do you?

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Nick Witney: Russia is probably as important as any issue for Europe. Geography still matters. We have Russia as a very difficult, belligerent neighbour. The Middle East is the other area that is of huge importance to us where we are on the globe. As far as the Russians are concerned, we have extraordinarily diverse views in Europe. We have the Balts and the Poles, who believe—in ways that I think are quite unjustified—that the Russians represent a continuing military threat. I think the facts simply disprove that, but that scarcely matters—what I think on the subject does not matter at all. What does matter is what the Poles and the Balts think about it. The Germans, of course, take an entirely different approach to how we should deal with the Russians—tying them in and increasing the gas dependency rather than diminishing it. The argument we advanced in this paper is not necessarily to say that one approach is right and the other is wrong—although we do say that we shouldn't be worried about the Russians militarily: be worried about them in all sorts of other ways, but not militarily—but that Europeans need to debate these things and come to some shared understanding of what they think about them.

Q87 Sir John Stanley: On our defence relationship with the US, we obviously cannot begin to match the US in terms of defence capabilities. Given that, what do you consider should be the British Government's objectives in establishing a viable, satisfactory and mutually supportive defence relationship with the US?

Nick Witney: Well, there are some things, obviously, that the UK benefits from in its particular relationship with the US. If you want a nuclear deterrent, the current arrangement we have with the Trident missiles is a highly cost-effective way of doing it, so that's clearly something to preserve. These relationships don't always work—sometimes there are costs associated with them. I would take the case of nuclear propulsion. Things may have changed in the six years since I was in the Ministry of Defence, but up to that point we'd actually had nothing out of the Americans of any use on nuclear propulsion since the original technical help back in the 1950s. What we had had, because of this technical debt, was an inhibition on being able to co-operate with the French in these areas. In a similar way, some aspects of the intelligence relationship—satellite imagery and so on—have encouraged us to stand off Europe in ways that may be outliving their usefulness now.

Q88 Sir John Stanley: Right. I wanted to get your response on what our objectives should be. You referred to the benefit that we still derive from the SSBN relationship, but what about the conventional area? What should the present Secretary of State for Defence and the Prime Minister be saying to themselves? What are we seeking from our defence relationship with the US?

Nick Witney: I don't think you can start there. I think you have to start further back, as all strategic defence reviews are meant to, by asking where we think we stand in the world. You need to get rid of the illusion that we can act as a loyal first lieutenant, which will be admitted to the inner councils of the American defence establishment and will be able to guide and steer them, because the experience of recent years has demonstrated that we can't do that. So we have to think about our position in the world and what sort of operations we think we'll be taking part in. Clearly, interoperability with the Americans as far as possible is an important aim, and we have NATO for that. Parenthetically, I would say that it is an important role for NATO to get back to its last of working for interoperability among the allies, which it has rather lost sight of of late. The Ministry of Defence needs to get off this concept of the gold standard of being able to do everything, even on a small scale, as well as the Americans, because we simply can't afford to. It has been a bit of a will-o'-the-wisp, which has landed the defence budget in its current sorry condition through this natural tendency to look across the Atlantic and to always want to be up there playing with the premierships side, when we, alas, can't afford that any longer.

Q89 Sir John Stanley: Do you think there are any defence opportunities in our relationship with the US that we are currently missing?

Nick Witney: It is of course unsatisfactory, five years on from seeking to extract from the Americans a reward for Iraq in terms of better access to American technology and American classified information, that, as far as I am aware, that treaty is still stuck in the Congress and showing no signs of coming out of it. If we can't do it by ourselves, we perhaps need to think again in a pan-European way as to whether there are ways of getting the Americans to improve market access to their defence market and to operate technology exchange across the Atlantic on a more equitable basis.

Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr Witney, for coming along today and giving us a lot of useful information and food for thought. We are grateful to you.

Witnesses: **Stryker McGuire**, Contributing Editor, *Newsweek*, and **Justin Webb**, Journalist, BBC, gave evidence.

Q90 Chairman: We will resume with our second panel of witnesses. Gentlemen, you were listening in on the previous session, so you can see roughly where we are going in our questioning. Can I begin by asking you to introduce yourselves for the record?

Justin Webb: I am Justin Webb. I spent eight years reporting for the BBC from the United States, most of those years as the radio correspondent and then latterly as what we call the North America editor, so I was doing radio, television and a blog. I covered two presidencies—I got there soon after 9/11, so I saw the atmosphere that there was then—right the way through to the end of the Bush years, through the '04 election and then obviously Obama and his coming to power.

Stryker McGuire: I am Stryker McGuire. I have been here since 1996—sort of a mirror image of Justin's experience. I came here with a wife and a young boy—you went over there with your children, Justin—we have now become citizens of this country as well as America. I came here on the eve of Tony Blair and lived through all of that, and I presume I will be here for your next election. I am a contributing editor to *Newsweek* now, having run the bureau in London for 12 years. I actually retired in 2008.

Chairman: You are obviously active in your retirement.

Stryker McGuire: Yes.

Q91 Chairman: Can I begin with a quote? You referred to British Prime Ministers having a "slavish obeisance to a relationship that is almost always lopsided". To what extent are the political relations between the United Kingdom and the US based on sentiment rather than realism?

Stryker McGuire: I think it is obviously a mix of the two. The relationship is bound to be off-kilter, as it were, simply because of the relative size of the two countries and their geopolitical weight, but I think there is a great deal of sentiment, most of it justified. The two countries have been close through history. They have been close in many ways, including language and culture—high culture and also pop culture. The military and intelligence ties, which you have been hearing a lot about from people who know much more about those links than I do, are extremely important. There are 12,000 to 15,000 US officials who come to London on official trips, or pass through London at least, every year. That is a huge number, and I am sure that the number going in the other direction is also very large, albeit maybe not that large. I think that what has changed is the reality. If you go back to World War Two and before that time, it is remarkable to think that, even in those days, Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill met in person—over the course of their lifetimes; not always when they were Head of State—more than 40 times. That was an amazingly close relationship. Since that time, we've gone through an era in which there were two great blocs, and the US and the UK were in one of them. Then, we've gone through everything from the G5 to the G6 to the G7 to the G8, and now it is the G20. The story of the changing

relationship between the two countries is the fact that many other countries have risen in importance, and the United States, for all kinds of reasons, has to establish extraordinary relationships with a number of different countries, including this one.

Q92 Chairman: Mr Webb, do you wish to add anything to that?

Justin Webb: I agree, and I think it's helpful sometimes to take a big step, almost a leap back, away from the day-to-day Brown and Obama, Blair and Bush, us and them right now, and to look at how America is positioning itself in the future; what kind of a country it is. Within the United States, there is an open debate about whether or not the Mayflower link—that sense of being, in essence, European and all the things that go with it in terms of the Protestant work ethic and the sense of what the nation is—is gradually disappearing, as waves of immigrants come from all sorts of exciting and interesting places from right around the world, and that is certainly true; or is the United States a nation in which all those people who come from Vietnam, Afghanistan and wherever else, when they arrive, have to sign up for a kind of set of Americanness that is, essentially, still the Mayflower myth? That is a live debate in American academic circles. You get people such as Samuel Huntington on the right who are very keen to say that America is a nation of settlers, not of immigrants, and that when you come here, you sign up for something, and it already exists, and that is what then links them back to us. Or is there a sense that America is in flux? The Obama generation, or those who regard themselves as Obama people, probably subscribe to the second view that America is just an incredible melting pot, and that the Mayflower is a long time ago. You can read about it, but it does not have any relevance today.

Q93 Chairman: What about the UK approach to the US? Is there a difference between those thousands of officials to whom you referred travelling backwards and forwards, and the politicians?

Stryker McGuire: Yes, I think that the officials, including some elected officials, going back and forth speak more to the long-standing and almost permanent strands between the two countries, and have to deal with institutions ranging from academic institutions, through military intelligence, right to the City of London. The link between New York and London is, I think, a phenomenally important one. Politicians here sometimes try to use the special relationship for their own ends in a way that US politicians do not need to. Tony Blair saw the special relationship as a way of perpetuating Britain's greatness at a time when it was an important military power, but not a great one, and when it had geopolitical importance but had even more by attaching itself to the United States.

Justin Webb: It's not so easy when you live there to overestimate the importance of the United Kingdom and its policy in a way that you can when you visit occasionally. Officials on the ground do that. In moments of great American decision making, and

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during the election, they come face to face with the fact that what matters most to Americans is America, and America is so huge and so all-consuming that it does not leave much room for anything else. So when I lived there, in the first few years, I used to scan the American papers, incredibly naïvely, looking for snippets of British news—this was slightly before the Google aggregator—and as you will know there isn't any, really. An occasional snippet about the royal family, possibly the odd election, if there is one, but that might be on page 2 and there isn't this sort of sense. I think the officials get it, because they are there for some time. They live among Americans and if they are good, they travel around and get a feel for the place and for the size of the place. They go to Kansas and look around and realise they cannot see Europe, either literally or metaphorically. That is a really important part of being an official there, and I think it is terribly easy then. Your Committee visits reasonably regularly, but for those who do not come regularly and come expecting to be a big deal, then it can be a shock.

Q94 Ms Stuart: Justin Webb, congratulations on your job with Radio 4. Most of us wake up to your voice, so be gentle between 6 and 7.30.

Justin Webb: If I keel over, it's nothing to do with—

Ms Stuart: We know why. Following up the Chairman's notion of the civil and political relationship, there is a President, there is a Prime Minister, but there is a second tier of the relationship and that is between the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State. How important is that second tier? Or is the President-Prime Minister relationship all persuasive and persuading?

Stryker McGuire: It can be very important. Obviously, it was important during and after the Iraq war, and during and after the invasion. It is not as important as the Heads of State, but I think it is very important. When you hear stories about Hillary Clinton and David Miliband getting along very well, that obviously does not hurt. I also think that to the point of the officials, at least one of your ambassadors to Washington in recent years used to ban the use of the words, "special relationship". Here at the US Embassy, they are careful with that phrase. However, ambassadors to this country from the US tend to love it because it gives them something to talk about, basically, 365 days of the year. Just adding to that, to your question about personalities, what is also interesting is that the links between London and Washington tend to be above the ambassadorial level—they tend to be President to Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary to Secretary of State. They tend to be on that level rather than embassy to embassy.

Justin Webb: I think it is important. It is a way in which Britain can still punch above its weight if there are relationships that work, as there have been on both sides of the political spectrum here and there, and were during my time. That can open doors in a city in which—and Washington does very much work in this way—people who know one another and understand the cut of their jib tend to get better access than people who do not. Americans can be

terribly closed when it comes to access if they do not trust and like the people. I agree with what you are suggesting—it is a crucial thing, not just at Secretary of State-Foreign Secretary level, but right across the board, but it is an odd paradox. I think I am right in saying—it was certainly the case at the beginning of the Obama Administration—that the London School of Economics had the greatest number of students from any university represented in the higher echelons of the Administration, more than any other US establishment as well. That might not be the case any more as they have appointed more people, but it certainly was right at the beginning. Peter Orszag, the Budget director, and other really key people were educated here. That was plainly the case in the past—Bill Clinton, of course, went to Oxford—and it hasn't gone under the Obama Administration. However—and we might get on to this later—I think there genuinely is a sort of carelessness in the Administration about this special relationship, indeed almost a neuralgia about the term, which co-exists with the fact that a lot of them are Brit-educated and very knowledgeable about the UK. Phil Gordon, the Assistant Secretary for Europe at the State Department, couldn't be more knowledgeable or linked into the UK, so these things can coincide.

Q95 Ms Stuart: I am not sure whether you were in the room when we quoted to the previous witness something from the evidence that Douglas Hurd gave us: "Tony Blair never learnt the art of being a junior partner to the US and confused it with subservience." What is your view of that statement? Did Tony Blair understand?

Justin Webb: Without speaking specifically about Tony Blair, I think that, as a reporter based there watching people come and go and watching the relationships they have built up and the relationships that went wrong, I agree with what that witness then went on to say to you, which was that there is a way to speak to America and Americans and that one cardinal area to avoid is the Greeks and Romans stuff, particularly with this Administration, which prides itself on its intellectual wherewithal—probably quite rightly. There is an incredible sense of annoyance if we, as the junior partner—or any European, because it applies across Europe—see it as our role to give wise counsel to a bull in a china shop. It has to be more subtle than that if it is to work. They are wise to that ploy.

Q96 Ms Stuart: Isn't it counter-intuitive to have to be more subtle with Americans? But I take your word for it.

Justin Webb: I don't think they see it as counter-intuitive.

Stryker McGuire: On Tony Blair, it is worth noting that because of Iraq he did end up looking subservient. However, it is also worth noting that not only was Britain shoved aside in the run-up to the Iraq war and in the aftermath, but so was the State Department. It was the Defence Department and the White House that were basically running the show.

Q97 Chairman: On that point, it was quite often argued that the British Government were weighing in on the side of one faction or another within an inter-agency or inter-departmental battle in the US. How is that perceived? Do the American Administration accept that that is a fact of life or do they find that difficult as well?

Stryker McGuire: I think that during that era they were weighing in. However, I do not know how often Tony Blair would have had the opportunity to weigh in in a really serious way. It would have been done at other levels and I do not think it got very far.

Q98 Sandra Osborne: I know it's rewriting history, but what do you think would have been the implications if the UK hadn't supported the Iraq war?

Stryker McGuire: Your previous witness talked about this. First of all, I have a hard time thinking that it could have been any different. In other words, although I know that it is a hypothetical, it is one that is very hard to imagine. Had Tony Blair played Harold Wilson, I think that Bush would have been furious and taken it as personally as he did when Chirac supposedly said in telephone calls to people that Bush was stupid. I think that that would have infuriated the White House. In the end, if that had happened and we were now talking about it five or six years later—much of the relationship is, under water, solid for all the turbulence at the top of the sea—it would not have destroyed the relationship, but it would have made things extremely difficult in the short term.

Q99 Mr Purchase: I just want to deal with something that you said, Mr McGuire, in trying to deal with the conundrum of whether we are subservient, or junior partners. It is about the national psyche. You say that you're not really concerned about that particular part of the problem, of subservience to Presidents. You say, "I may . . . be slightly embarrassed by the political investment" of Blair or Brown. You go on to say, "my real concern with the ritual debate that greets any meeting of British and American leaders is that it reflects a deeper unease on the part of Britons about their identity". You have dual nationality. I find that the wrong way around; I always find that it is Americans who have no idea what they are. We are certainly concerned in Britain, because we know what we are and that there are certain readily identifiable threats to our identity, but I have always found in my relationship with Americans that they are the opposite. They seem to think that Britons have a deep sense of who they are compared with Americans, who seem not to.

Stryker McGuire: Certainly, if you were to talk to Americans living in America about what they normally call England rather than Britain, they have a sense that people here have a strong sense of identity, but that is because they haven't lived through what has gone on in this country over the past 10 or 15 years. I think that immigration has rocked the boat a bit here, has made people think more about questions of identity—and, as an extension of that, made people in this country, and

certainly officials, think more about their relationship with the United States. That is how some people in this country identify themselves as a country; it is *vis-à-vis* their relationship with the United States, which is why you would hold a hearing like this. Here, it is quite logical, but it is hard for me to imagine the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the House of Representatives holding a hearing to talk about their relationship with the UK.

Mr Purchase: I understand that completely. There is a certain feeling about this sitting, and about how important our relationship is, that I know is not reflected in American minds.

Justin Webb: May I add to that? If you look inside the current Administration, there is a level of real frustration and eye-raising at what they perceive as the obsession of the Brits with their relationship with the Americans. It is not about Prime Ministers and Leaders of the Opposition, or indeed Members of Parliament; it is about the press. In preparation for coming to see you, I asked someone in the White House to take a minute or so with a senior Administration official the other day and have a quick word on the current feeling. He said that he had 30 seconds: the Administration official said, "Get out of my room. I'm sick of that subject. You're all mad". There is a sense in the Obama press office that we obsess about this. I was speaking to another Administration official about the bust of Churchill and the way in which it was rather unceremoniously taken in a taxi to the British Embassy, and the fallout, particularly in the British press. He said, "We thought it was Eisenhower. They all look the same to us". They like and admire us in many ways, but they don't want to be dealing with this kind of moaning—not from you and certainly not from Downing Street or from the Leader of the Opposition's office, but from the press.

Chairman: We will come on to our media in a moment.

Stryker McGuire: May I add one thing to that? I realise we are going back and forth in a probably inappropriate way. What America sometimes does want from this country speaks to how Americans see Britain. Sometimes they want your—our—moral authority. That was terribly important in the run-up to Iraq, the invasion and the aftermath and so forth. Had that moral authority been stripped from that whole process everything would look quite a bit different.

Q100 Mr Horam: I was fascinated, as Ken Purchase obviously was, by this comment of yours: "my real concern with the ritual debate that greets any meeting of British and American leaders is that it reflects a deeper unease on the part of Britons about their identity". I thought that you were referring to the sort of Dean Acheson comment that we Brits have "lost an empire and not yet found a role". We have some sort of foothold to some extent, but we have not found a real role. I thought that is what you were getting at there.

Stryker McGuire: That is another part of it. It is

multi-dimensional. I think it is clear that this country is trying to figure out where it is in the geopolitical world, not necessarily who you are—that is another issue—

Mr Horam: But where we are.

Stryker McGuire: Where you are. You have this hearing. Chatham House is just embarking on a long, nine-month study to talk about where Britain should be in the world. Britain's relationship with Europe is always an issue. Your relationship with the United States is always an issue.

Q101 Mr Horam: You probably heard some of the comments by a previous witness, who was talking about Europe and saying that he felt, as far as I could see, that a more integrated approach with Europe would pay dividends for this country, not only in itself for the UK and for Europe, but also in relation to America. Would that be so?

Stryker McGuire: Having mentioned moral authority in terms of what America has wanted from this country, another thing that Washington wants from London is for London to play a role in Europe. America feels that that is in America's interests because Americans prefer the British vision of Europe to the Franco-German vision of Europe, which they see as much more federal.

Q102 Mr Horam: It may be, of course, that if we were to move in that direction, the British version of Europe would become more like the Franco-German version.

Stryker McGuire: True, but I think that when David Cameron pulled out of the mainstream centre right grouping, it was not appreciated in the United States. They would rather have the British Prime Minister, if the Government change next time around, active in the way in which Tony Blair and Gordon Brown have been active than the way in which David Cameron has suggested he might act in Europe.

Q103 Mr Horam: Mr Webb, do you agree with that general point about Europe?

Justin Webb: Yes. I think there is a sort of ambivalence about what they want in Europe that goes right across the political spectrum. You saw it in the Bush Administration. I went on a tour of Europe with President Bush quite a few years ago where we went to Brussels and he saw all the office holders. There were jokes about the number of presidents he was seeing, most of them not elected and all this sort of thing, but at the same time there was an appreciation at that stage in the Bush Administration that they could go to Brussels and see everyone. They could see the convenience of that. Yet at the same time they had a view, and there is generally a view on the right in American politics, that nation states are important and that individual European nation states—Britain, yes, but also the eastern European nations in a sense even more than Britain—need to play their own, individual distinctive roles. From the Obama team, there is a similar sense. What really struck me is that there are one or two strategic policy aims that cut across the

Administrations and which they want from Europe—it's a very different perspective from ours. The one that really sticks in my mind is Turkey. I remember sitting down with Paul Wolfowitz many years ago to interview him about the European Union, and all he wanted to talk about was getting Turkey into the EU—that was his central focus at that time. Fast-forwarding to this Administration, you have Phil Gordon—I haven't talked to him about this, but he's an expert on Turkey and its relationship with Armenia and the rest of it—and I think he would also say that the relationship between Europe and Turkey is hugely important. In a way, it probably wouldn't be the first thing that would occur to any of us—to most Europeans. However, when the Americans view Europe strategically from that distance—when they look at Europe as a bloc, as they sometimes do—they see it as useful in terms of attracting people in and solidifying their friendship or doing other tasks around the world.

Q104 Mr Horam: Therefore, is talk of the special relationship just window dressing? As you said, Mr McGuire, the last thing Britain needs is more talk about the special relationship. Has this just reached a point where everyone is bored stiff by this nonsense?

Stryker McGuire: I think that the phrase, or the words, are the problem, in effect, because they are so freighted. There is certainly nothing wrong with looking at the relationship, which is a very important one. It is just that the phrase and the way it's used by politicians, and even more so by the media, has caused more of a problem than anything else. The relationship is what it is and it has been what it is for quite some time.

Q105 Sir Menzies Campbell: There's a kind of Lewis Carroll feeling about all this, isn't there? "Words mean what I want them to mean, and 'special relationship' means what I want it to mean at a particular time and in a particular context." Both of you have had the responsibility of representing one country to the other—Mr McGuire, you have represented Britain to America, and, Mr Webb, you have done the same in the other direction—so were you guilty of using this expression? If so, were you aware that it conveyed different meanings when you did so? Actually, "guilty" is a bit hard. Were you inclined to use this expression?

Stryker McGuire: That's an interesting point. In my case, you're absolutely right, in a sense, about what part of my role was. Interestingly—Justin will have noticed this—the flagship edition of *Newsweek* magazine is in the United States, and then there are international editions, so 85% of what I did would not have appeared in the United States.

Q106 Sir Menzies Campbell: So you were representing Britain to the United States, but for a British readership?

Stryker McGuire: Yes, or for an American readership that doesn't really want to hear about it and for editors who don't want to hear about it. For

a while, the words “Tony Blair” were as magical in some ways as the words “special relationship”. If there was a story about Tony Blair during a certain period, you could get it into the United States, but for the most part, although I wished what I was writing was being read more in the United States, it was really being read in Europe, Singapore and around the world.

Justin Webb: I had the opposite problem in a way: everyone here thinks they know America, because lots of them have been on holiday to Orlando and New York. I went there not knowing much about it, frankly, and part of the value of being a foreign correspondent is that you grow into the role, get to know a place, learn about it and then pass that on—that is the great tradition of foreign reporting. That is a) slightly difficult in this age, where people can have one-to-one conversations and b) particularly difficult in America, because people feel that they know it and own it. But on your point, I don’t think I ever knowingly used the words “special relationship”, except when quoting other people. What interested and fascinated me during my time there was not the “special relationship” but the opposite—the incredible cultural divide that exists between us and them. You can be as friendly as you like with Americans and feel that you know them, and yet they come from a very different place. That always struck me as the more interesting aspect of reporting America—not the closeness and all that, but the incredible difference.

Q107 Sir Menzies Campbell: But that is a divide, is it not, that is reflected internally in America? It is as far from Boise, Idaho, to Washington as it is from Boise, Idaho, to London.

Justin Webb: Yes, but Boise and Washington are much, much closer than anywhere in America is with London. That is the point that I was trying to make. Even Obama, when you think of him and his background—I remember saying this during the election—is still closer to Sarah Palin or John McCain than he is to any Brit, because there are just those wellsprings of culture that are so hugely different. They do not mean that we dislike each other necessarily, or that we cannot be close, or that we do not have a political relationship that is important in various ways. But it means that, from a reporter’s perspective, when you go to America—I do not think that I was in any way unique in this—what really interests reporters who go there and enjoy being there is the differences rather than the similarities.

Q108 Sir Menzies Campbell: But is there a ready market for explaining those differences to the producer of the 10 o’clock news back here at the BBC in London? I mean, to what extent does what we see on our news bulletins reflect a conventional view—perhaps a historical view—rather than the more variegated view that you have just described?

Justin Webb: I think we have got to be careful, as time passes, that we begin to reflect an America that is not only the sort of America that we can imagine in our mind’s eye. Obviously, that means the east and

west coasts, but it also means someone in Kansas who has not got a passport and who is not very interested in the outside world etc., and people who have not had any link with the outside world for many generations. We need to understand and report the newer America—the influx of people, but also the crossover of people, where you have Koreans married to Afghan-Americans, and you have Chinese married to Latvian-Americans. You have this sort of incredible melting-pot atmosphere. We need to reflect on how they live their lives, how they see themselves as Americans—because they do very much see themselves as Americans—and that is part of the American story. By contrast, I think that there is always a tendency in Britain, and sometimes in British reporting, to go to sort of default positions, which are that Americans are all either crazy evangelicals or have guns and are shooting each other all the time, and not to report the ways in which American life is much more interesting and culturally diverse than that. That is a challenge for the future.

Q109 Sir Menzies Campbell: Now you are back living and working in Britain, do you have any sense that perceptions of the United States here in Britain are inaccurate by virtue of the fact that there is insufficient reporting coverage of the distinctions that you have just described?

Justin Webb: I think there is an overall perception of the United States that does not always do justice to the degree of outward-looking openness that exists there. Having come back here, one of the things that always strikes me when talking to people here about the US is that people here assume that Americans are much more introverted and isolated than they actually are. Going back to something that was said earlier, I think that one of the things about the Obama Administration—it was said with reference to Bush and whether or not it mattered whether Britain went along with Iraq; it improved his poll ratings when it became obvious that Britain would do so—is that there is a hunger in America not only for outside approbation but for contact with and interest in the outside world. After all, it set up—in a large part—the institutions of global governance.

Sir Menzies Campbell: The post Second World War institutions—NATO, the United Nations, the World Bank.

Justin Webb: Yes, and given the right persuasion it could probably do it again. To many Brits, that is a bit of a surprise, because their assumption is that Americans are naturally isolationist, but I don’t think they are.

Sir Menzies Campbell: Do you have any reflections on that, Mr McGuire?

Stryker McGuire: A couple of things: on the question of identity that Justin mentioned, one of your former colleagues, Rageh Omaar, who was at the BBC and now works at al-Jazeera, went over and did a series of documentaries on Islam in America. It was fascinating. He actually could not find a single Muslim in America who identified himself or herself as a Muslim first and an American second. They all

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identified themselves as Americans, but he said—he is British and, I think, of Somali descent—that to him that is simply not always true in this country.

Sir Menzies Campbell: We got into that argument about the cricket test. I don't think there is a baseball test yet. Thank you.

Q110 Mr Illsley: To take up the point that Justin made, he said that the Americans are more outward-looking than we give them credit for, but before George Bush was elected, he had only visited Mexico—it was the only country that he had ever visited. Only 7% of Americans hold a passport. I appreciate what you are saying about formulating a lot of our world institutions—

Justin Webb: Is it 7%? I think it is more.

Mr Illsley: Only 7% of Americans hold a passport.

Stryker McGuire: I think that's changed.

Justin Webb: Can I just address that passport issue before we go on to something else? This is not to cavil at the 7%, but until recently—it is no longer the case now, I think—you did not need a passport in America to go to Canada, the Caribbean or Mexico. I wonder how many Brits have passports only to go to France or Spain. Think of the country's size and the cultural diversity that there is on America's doorstep.

Q111 Mr Illsley: I don't disagree with that. Americans have no need for a passport to go on holiday. They can visit the Caribbean and Canada on their ID cards, as you point out. A small proportion of them would travel long distances abroad and engage abroad. When you talked about the Americans being involved in the creation of some of our great world institutions, do you mean at a level of government, or do you mean that there is a view that the people of America embrace world events? My experience is that America is inward-looking and insular. Their TV and news bulletins are very much localised.

Justin Webb: That's certainly true. There is an odd ambivalence at the level of ordinary people and their interests when you think that so many of them, so recently, came from somewhere else. There is still an openness, too. You can go to parts of America and meet people who are quite recent immigrants and who have a lot of financial or familial links with, or just an interest in, areas of the world that you do not normally associate with Americans being interested in them. So, there are some pockets of America where there is enormous knowledge of, interest in and often financial support for parts of the outside world. What I am suggesting is that that is part of the foundation of America that we do not often think about. There is knowledge there, and interest in the outside world, and it is certainly not reflected in the mainstream media at all now, really, which many Americans regret. They are not quite as cut off as we think they are.

Q112 Mr Heathcoat-Amory: Mr Webb, you've commented about the anti-Americanism in the British press and described attitudes towards

America of "scorn and derision". I understand what you mean about the British press, actually. [*Interruption.*] I am not talking personally, here. The press take the same view about Germany. Successive German ambassadors used to say to me that they just despaired at the way cartoons always show Germans with helmets on, even though Germany has been virtually a pacifist country for 60 years. Does this matter?

Justin Webb: That's an interesting point. It may be that we treat too many parts of the world with scorn and derision. My particular issue about America was that I felt that we were missing out. It wasn't an altruistic thing. I just feel that in our reporting of America—I include myself in this; it wasn't a criticism of other journalists—there is a trap when you go to America. For instance, on evangelical Protestantism, which is a fascinating side of American life, there is a tendency—a terribly easy and slightly lazy one—just to find the kind of "craziest" people and suggest or insinuate that they somehow represent America. A more rounded and interesting view of that group of people would show the extraordinary way in which, although they do have some pretty outlandish views on all sorts of topics, evangelical Protestantism drives people's lives, causes them to go to prisons to help combat recidivism, and causes all sorts of aspects of American life, such as its aid programme under Bush in Africa. What I was suggesting is that there is a tendency—you are absolutely right that we do this in every country, but I have only noticed this about America—to deal in headlines that give a less interesting picture than could be got by delving a little bit under the surface.

Q113 Mr Heathcoat-Amory: Doesn't this partly arise out of a kind of familiarity—almost affection? We talked earlier about the fact that you can't find a foreign policy on sentiment, but at a popular level, there is a colossal trade in popular music, films, television, internet contacts and travel, which arguably has gotten stronger. Just to take the pop music industry, when I was growing up, there was a sort of vestigial French and even German attempt to break into the British charts. I am told by my children that that doesn't exist now. I am told that this magnetic pole—maybe the issue is simply one of language—is creating an "Anglosphere", or a global culture, which is incredibly strong here. Maybe it doesn't resonate so much in America.

Justin Webb: There is also a problem there in terms of perceptions. In a sense perhaps it doesn't matter, but in terms of our relationship with America, whatever that is—whether it's special or not—it is interesting. For instance, it always struck me that when I met British people who came to holiday in the States—we would be talking somewhere—that one of the things that really surprised them, and shocked them in some cases, was how peaceful it was. They would say, "It's amazing, isn't it? You don't have to carry a gun. You can go about your business." In many ways, parts of suburban America are more

peaceful than some parts of suburban Britain. It was interesting to discuss with them why that might be. I felt that too often, they got their views of America from the odd visit to Manhattan and popular culture writ large, which gives you a sense of a huge and slightly dangerous—almost deranged—place. Actually, if you go to most of small-town America—to Iowa, for example, where the presidential process begins—it is small, peaceful and home-loving in a kind of almost schmaltzy way that we would associate with the 1950s, and yet it actually exists right now, in 2009, in the most powerful country on earth. That is an interesting thing that I don't think people get.

Stryker McGuire: It's funny, because I see it slightly differently; I mean, I agree with almost all of what you say, but what I'm struck by when I go back is the amazing encroachment of religion on American life. Even within families that I know, I've seen the situation change so dramatically. You mentioned the suburbs; in suburban New York and suburban Pittsburgh, there are school boards arguing over evolution versus intelligent design/creationism. I find that to be quite remarkable. I remember that in the late '70s, I think, I did one of the first stories for *Newsweek*—it was on the cover—about the rise of the religious right, which was really quite new at that time; it certainly took place in my lifetime. To see how that has affected the political world in the United States since the late '70s—between then and now—is, I think, quite remarkable.

Q114 Mr Heathcoat-Amory: Can I follow up the point about language, though? Do the Americans in any sense see themselves as part of a global English language community? The rise of India, which the Americans have latched on to very much recently, must be helped by the fact that it is in large part an English-speaking continent, and that, of course, is partly because of us—or, indeed, mainly because of us. Getting away from pure sentiment, it must have some influence on world outlook and foreign policy—or not?

Justin Webb: On the question of language it goes back to this really interesting issue about whether America regards itself in 10, 20 or 30 years' time as an English-speaking country. You go to parts of America now and there are little stickers on cars saying, "This is America. Speak English". It is a real source of hot controversy and it's something that's terribly difficult for politicians on both sides of the spectrum, because of Latino voters—and the "Speak English" things are talking about Spanish, of course, and specifically about Mexicans. The issue is whether in the race to get those all-important votes, the parties, both Republican and Democrat, slightly lose, in years to come, the attachment that at the moment, generally, America has to the idea that it is an English-speaking country. That then obviously plays into whether or not, in worldwide terms, it sees itself as part of an association of English-speaking nations. You could postulate that in, say, 50 years, America won't regard itself as simply an English-speaking nation, but as something more.

Q115 Mr Hamilton: I bow to your superior experience here, but I wouldn't have thought they'd ever let that happen in America—that they'd ever let English become a second language in the United States, whatever the demographic changes.

Justin Webb: Well, I think it's an open question, to be honest. I'm not sure about a second language, but if you go to parts of the United States, to Miami—

Stryker McGuire: It's sort of a co-language.

Justin Webb: Yes, it's a co-language already, and the issue is whether, at some stage in the future, that is something that they would address. There are certainly many Americans who feel that the English language is under threat. I simply throw that in.

Stryker McGuire: I think these things take a long, long time, sometimes. I think that still in the United States the largest national group, if I'm expressing that right, is German. That's the largest in terms of where people have come from—it's huge.

Chairman: That would be going back three or four generations.

Stryker McGuire: Absolutely, but that's why it's so big.

Chairman: And you've got a big Irish group as well.

Stryker McGuire: Yes.

Sir Menzies Campbell: Northern Europeans, in fact.

Q116 Mr Hamilton: Can I just move us on a bit—on or back, to an extent—to the special relationship, but on the defence level. Mr McGuire, at one point you said, I think, you believe that the UK's role in the world will shrink with its budget—of course, it is pretty inevitable that our budget will shrink—and that in a transfer from using hard power to soft power, the main instrument of soft power would be the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and we're obviously diminishing its budget as well, so a cash-starved British Army would have important implications for the future of NATO. I just want to come back to this perception of the United States and how it sees the United Kingdom. Does it see the UK as increasingly part of an integrated Europe, given what's happened in recent weeks with the Lisbon Treaty, and how are its political perceptions changing with the increased importance of, and the increasing importance that the US gives to, China and India—the emerging giant economic countries, the emerging economies?

Stryker McGuire: I think that it's because of precisely what you're talking about that America has quite different relationships with different countries. If you speak in terms of the defence relationship, I think that the relationship that the United States has with the UK is still very, very important. As I think one of your witnesses said before, there are only two real armies in Europe and only one of those armies has been an incredibly loyal ally to the United States. I think that that is very important. On the other hand, China and Japan now own 47% of US Treasury securities. They basically have their hand around the neck of the dollar, as it were, so with them you have to have a different kind of relationship. Mexico is now the largest source of immigration to the United States, so that relationship is very important. There's the relationship between the

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United States and Israel, which certainly might be called a special relationship. But all those relationships are quite different in nature, and I think that that's really the lesson of what has happened in the past several decades—how those relationships have had to morph to adapt to changing global conditions.

Justin Webb: I think it's worth mentioning that at the level of people-to-people contacts, it is still a fact, particularly among Americans of a certain age, that there is something special about Britain—or England, as Stryker rightly said they always call it. If you go to Billings, Montana, or Virgin, Utah, or Wichita, Kansas, and you get off the plane and go to a Starbucks and say, "Could I have a cappuccino and a muffin?" there'll be a ruffle of interest: "Oh my God, could you just say that again?" There is that extraordinary affinity that they feel with something about us. It's partly the accent, but it's partly something more. You can look at the adverts on late-night cable TV. If people want to advertise things as trustworthy and solid, they will still use, as often as not, an English accent. There is this hard-wiring, almost, in Americans of that generation to regard Britain as special when they look across at Europe, but as we've already discussed, in all sorts of other ways, we don't really think the relationship is that special at all. I'll just mention one thing, though. We've talked quite a bit about defence, relative size and power and all the rest of it. There is—I always felt this in the time I was there—a genuine respect. Of course, they would say this, wouldn't they? But there is a real respect among senior American military people for their British counterparts. I spent a bit of time in Fort Leavenworth—I don't know if you've been there; it's a fascinating place. It's where they educate their brightest soldiers and they think about the past war and the lessons that can be learned and think about future wars as well. The guy who ran Fort Leavenworth, General Caldwell, has, I think, just gone to Afghanistan to be in charge of training the Afghan army for McChrystal, so it's a really important key role. When you go to Fort Leavenworth and talk to them—there are British officers there—you get a sense of a closeness. I'm sure they are close to the French in all sorts of military ways, and all the more so since France came back into the full ambit of NATO, but I think the real closeness, respect and friendship that exists is something that you shouldn't ignore.

Q117 Mr Hamilton: That leads me neatly into my second question, which is: do we in Britain pay too much heed to what the President says? Are we too interested in the US Government's view and the relationship between Government and Government, and not enough in other sections of US society? As you say, the military has a close relationship, but there must be other sections of US society—media, the arts and cultural areas—

Justin Webb: Well, television.

Mr Hamilton:—where there is a very different and perhaps closer relationship.

Justin Webb: We have a natural tendency to think of ourselves as being swamped by American television, but actually I think that, in many respects, it is almost the opposite. Think of the success of things such as "The Office". Many formats go over there and are—with various tweaks—hugely successful. There are all sorts of ways and areas of life where we do influence America. If we want to satisfy ourselves, maybe we should obsess more about those and less about the relationship and which door in the White House we get into. We might have more joy that way. You certainly get an impression when you live in the States of all sorts of ways in which things that you recognise as once being British still have a role.

Stryker McGuire: Ambassador Simon Cowell.

Q118 Mr Moss: My first question is to Mr McGuire. I read with great interest the article that appeared in the August edition of *Newsweek*. I see it is the international edition, and bearing in mind what you said earlier about Americans not necessarily reading what you were writing in *Newsweek*, it is a very strong indictment of—to coin a phrase from the States—the state of the nation of this country. I am recommending it to David Cameron as a basis for attacking the Labour Government over the last 12 years. Would you say that opinion is shared by movers and shakers in the United States, or is it a very personal view?

Stryker McGuire: I don't think it is an indictment, really. Some of the language on the cover and in the headlines is, as usual, stronger than the story itself. I think the story just says that the relationship has changed, that there is nothing wrong with that and that the UK should basically move on, rethink its position in the world and not always view itself in terms of senior partner and junior partner. I don't think that's really an indictment.

Mr Moss: What you are saying is that the current state of our finances, the current position of the City of London and the current position vis-à-vis our armed forces and the need to perhaps row back in defence spending—all these diminish our role; and your title, of course, is "Forget The Great in Britain". That is not an indictment?

Stryker McGuire: I don't think so. I really think that it is more descriptive. In fact, you could write a similar story about the United States, which is itself in decline—Wall Street has had the same problems as the City, and budget cuts will be dramatic. There is health-care reform, too: if you take federal taxes, for people making, I think, more than \$500,000, the health-care tax will be added to city tax, state tax and so on, so there will be some people—admittedly, quite wealthy people—in the United States paying 60% taxes. I think it is really a description of what I think is going on in this country, but frankly you could write the same thing about indebtedness in the United States.

Q119 Mr Moss: I would like to move on to the UK's diplomatic operation and ask your views on how well or otherwise you think it is doing in the States. In particular, did we use everything to the full during

the change of Administration? What effect, if any, would a diminution of our diplomatic operation in the States have on our relationship?

Stryker McGuire: To the extent that the relationship would be affected, it would take some time. I personally have tremendous respect for your foreign service. It has always been my experience while travelling around the world and covering stories that you are often far better off in many countries going to the British Embassy than to the American Embassy. They are simply better informed. The professionalism in your foreign service obviously goes straight through the ambassadorial ranks. You have very few, if any—I guess you have a few—high commissioners and ambassadors who are in effect political appointees, whereas in the United States these days almost all of them are. I guess I have a sort of nostalgia for the Foreign Office that pushes me in the direction of not wanting to see it get smaller than it is, but it already has gotten quite a bit smaller and, given the budgetary constraints that everybody will be facing over the next decade in the United States and the UK, I think that that is bound to be affected.

Q120 Mr Moss: Would you say that we punch above our weight with our diplomatic operation in the UN—in the Security Council?

Stryker McGuire: In the UN?

Mr Moss: In the Security Council particularly.

Stryker McGuire: I'm here and not there, so I can't speak with that much authority about the UN.

Justin Webb: I'm afraid I can't either; I know very little about our UN operation. In my day-to-day working life, I tend to go directly to people and not through the embassy. It is interesting that the British Ambassador, whoever it is, is still a big figure in Washington, and obviously a decision that this country will make in years to come is the extent to which it wants to maintain and pay for that size of presence. I have always felt that all the ambassadors who have been there when I was, finishing up with Nigel Sheinwald who is still there now, can command attention in Washington, and not all ambassadors from all countries can. They are all there.

Q121 Sir John Stanley: Mr McGuire, I think that we owe it to you for pointing out that President Obama in his inaugural address managed to make only one reference to Britain, that being the defeat of British forces by George Washington. Given the fact that Britain may not be registering too strongly on President Obama's radar, and holding to one side the intelligence relationship and the nuclear deterrent relationship, may I ask you both whether there are particular areas where you feel that for the future the British Government should be trying to construct a new and better relationship with the United States?

Stryker McGuire: I am not so sure that there are any areas in which the UK has failed to take advantage of historical ties with the United States. I was wondering whether there might be a way of strengthening the relationship between the City of London and Wall Street, but they are so closely

connected as it is. Viewed from Wall Street, I think that the one thing that they would want the British Government to keep an eye on would be any sort of attempt by Europe—the EU and the new whoever is going to be handling banking regulations, whether that is the internal markets commissioner or whoever—to ensure that that does not adversely affect the flow of business and money between the City and Wall Street.

Justin Webb: On the importance of education, we talked a little about the LSE and others earlier. American universities are such an incredible magnet for talent from around the world—and ours to them. That flow can only work to everyone's favour on both sides of the Atlantic in the future, if it can be maintained.

Q122 Sir John Stanley: One final question: we have not referred at all to the economic and commercial relationship between the two countries. Obviously, as far as our external tariffs are concerned, those are an EU responsibility. I would like to ask you both, given that we have these two enormous economic blocs—the US, possibly coupled with Canada, and the EU—and the fact that within both blocs there are still some quite strong protectionist interests in commercial terms, do you think that it is within the realm of possibility, and desirable for the UK's interests, to seek a free trade agreement between the US and the EU to bring down the tariff barriers?

Stryker McGuire: It might be desirable. In the foreseeable future, though, I think it feels like things will be moving in a different direction.

Q123 Sir John Stanley: A reverse direction you mean?

Stryker McGuire: A reverse direction. If you look at what's about to happen in Copenhagen on climate change, what appears to be developing is not so much a global policy, but a series of national policies. You get the sense that, under the economic circumstances that we are all facing, countries are looking out for themselves and for their own economies, and that, it seems to me, will last for a few years.

Justin Webb: On the broader point of whether the Obama Administration is genuinely signed up to free trade, I think that it is in many ways similar to the way that the Bush Administration was. There is a sense of wanting to do it, but there are also enormous pressures, particularly in these times, that Obama will come under at key moments; assuming he manages to get a second term, there will be pressures that he might find very difficult to overcome. There have already been one or two cases where they have sort of bent the rules slightly. It is a constant work in progress for Administrations across the board in the US—the extent of their professed desire to see free trade rules throughout the world adhered to and their willingness to do it all the time at home. I agree with Stryker, I think that the fallout from Copenhagen and the pressures that there are only add to a sense of, "Well if we're going to sign up for these things, we need to make sure that

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everyone else is transparent and that everyone else is following the rules and paying their people properly and has proper labour regulations, *etcetera*.”—all the things that cause the pressure that there is on occasions in America for free trade not to be at the top of the agenda. It is going to be interesting to see how he copes with it over the course of the Administration.

Q124 Sir John Stanley: The US is negotiating and has negotiated significant FTAs with a number of the major Asian countries. Why is it not possible to go for the big one and do one with the EU?

Justin Webb: I have no answer to that.

Stryker McGuire: I suspect that it has something to do with the fact that the EU is an economic power and the sorts of things that countries in the EU do well and what the US does well. They are too competitive with one another and therefore there is an inclination to hold them off.

Chairman: Thank you, gentlemen. That was a very useful session, and we are grateful for you coming along today. Mr Webb, we look forward to hearing you early tomorrow morning.

Justin Webb: Do come on. I don't think I am empowered to ask you all on, but if I had my way, you would all be on.

Witnesses: **Sir Jeremy Greenstock**, GCMG, former British Ambassador to the UN, and **Sir David Manning**, GCMG, CVO, former British Ambassador to the United States, gave evidence.

Q125 Chairman: Gentlemen, thank you for coming along this afternoon. Apologies for the slight delay. This is our third session this afternoon, and we have gone from academics to journalists, and now we are coming to diplomats. We are very grateful to you, and we know that both of you have been very busy in the past few days, and we may, in passing, touch on those issues, but the purpose of the inquiry is to look at UK-US relations in the context of global security. How would you describe the current approach of our Government on transatlantic issues? For the record, will you introduce yourselves as you begin your remarks?

Sir David Manning: I'm David Manning. I was Ambassador in Washington between 2003 and 2007.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock: Jeremy Greenstock. I was Political Director in the Foreign Office from 1996 to 1998, Ambassador in New York from 1998 to 2003, and Special Representative for Iraq from 2003 to 2004. Since then, I have been director of the Ditchley Foundation.

Chairman: Who would like to begin?

Sir David Manning: With the caveat that I am no longer privy to the relationship on a day-by-day basis, it seems to me that the fundamentals of the relationship have not changed. The present Government see the relationship as the most important bilateral relationship in their terms, and want to work as closely as possible with the United States on the major international issues. I think that there is a recognition that the United States is and remains the only superpower, that it is indispensable in dealing with most of the international problems we face, if not all of them, and that it is important to try and work with the United States on those issues where our interests coincide. So I don't think I've detected any great shift in the approach of our Government to the Obama Administration. I think those fundamentals remain unchanged.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock: I would agree with that. I think it's worth recalling, Chairman, that over the last several years, going back into the last decade, the closeness of exchange between the US and the UK Governments has been, in historical terms, extraordinary. Obviously, there was the subject of

Iraq, which needed managing, particularly at the beginning of this decade, but I don't think, in my diplomatic career, I have witnessed from a distance such a constant flurry of communication at the top, at the level below the top and down into the senior reaches of officialdom, between Washington and London—there is far more than, say, the 1970s, when I was first in Washington, or the 1990s, when I was back in Washington again. What makes up the US-UK relationship is, at this moment, in good repair. The two Governments, as a whole—including, on the American side, the legislature with the British Parliament—the two economies as the biggest cross-investors of all in the world in a bilateral relationship, and the two civil societies, have as much exchange in correspondence as they have ever had and as much business to do together between them as they have ever done. While the media concentrate on the chemistry at the political level—the high political level—it is just not right to assume that what happens at that level characterises the relationship as a whole. It is much more than that. However, I am sure that this Committee will want to examine how that works in practice, to what extent we have in mind real hard-headed UK interests in our communication and business with the United States and whether there are circumstances, as the world develops, in which we may have to husband this great resource in a different way. But the business that we do across the Atlantic bilaterally is in very good repair.

Q126 Chairman: You referred to media hype. Is there a tendency for politicians to play to that by exaggerating talk about the special relationship? References were made in previous evidence sessions to photo opportunities and competition with other countries to try to be the first to see the incoming President, and so on. Do we exaggerate the form for the substance?

Sir Jeremy Greenstock: This Committee will know as well as anybody that there are various levels at which politics works and one of them is the public level—the demonstrative, presentational level, which gets milked—but what happens underneath

that in terms of substance is very real in this relationship. I think that Sir David and I will both agree that British officials do not use the term “special relationship”. We might have to respond to it in public if it is thrown at us by Americans, but we don’t regard it as special: we regard it as an asset that has to be nurtured and worked at, and the access to the United States in terms of politicians, officials and Members of Congress has to be earned because we’re bringing something to the table. That is the way we think and work. We do not think it is special unless we are introducing substance to make it special.

Sir David Manning: I would very much agree with Sir Jeremy on that. There is sometimes a tendency to over-hype the emotional relationship, probably for the reasons Jeremy gave. I think it is natural to some extent, but underneath it is only special if it is actually doing the business. One of the difficulties about the term “special relationship” is that it can be overused. It can give a sense that we can deliver more than is actually going to emerge from this relationship. It is important to stay focused on the business. As Sir Jeremy said, it is not necessarily a good thing to refer constantly to the emotional content of these labels but one should get on and do the business underneath, not least because if the special relationship is hyped too much, expectations are exaggerated about what it can deliver and what to expect from it. As Sir Jeremy said, we have to bring something to the table. The Americans are hard-headed; they want us to participate in certain things. If we want to do that, we have to bring something practical. Sentiment can be used from time to time in support of a policy. I don’t think one should disguise the fact that warmth between the two countries can help us, but it is certainly not a policy in its own right.

Q127 Chairman: You were both right at the centre of relations between the UK and the US throughout the period of Tony Blair’s premiership. Lord Hurd said in his written submission to us that the former Prime Minister confused being a junior partner with subservience. Would you agree with that?

Sir David Manning: May I say two things? First, we should not be subservient. I am quite clear about that, but I don’t like the idea of junior partnership, either, because it sounds as though we are tied to something in a junior role. The key is to work in partnership with the United States when our interests dictate—and they will in many areas although not necessarily on every occasion. I think we need to approach it from that perspective. I was often asked whether this relationship delivered anything. It comes back to your point about subservience and partnership. I always took the view that essentially the relationship wasn’t about *quid pro quos*. If we wanted to do something, we should do it because it was in the national interest. The key for us is to try to be part of the debate in Washington, in the American system, on the key issues that matter to us, so that at least our voice is heard and we try to influence. I certainly did not feel, as ambassador there, that we were subservient but neither am I keen on the idea of being anybody’s junior partner.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock: Let’s tease this out a bit more because I think there is a poor understanding in public in this country—particularly perhaps after the saga of Iraq—about what the relationship really is and what it means to us. First, if we have disagreements with the United States in official business, we play out those disagreements, we argue with the United States, in private. We tend not to argue in public unless public explanation is necessary or we are having a great row about something that cannot be kept out of the public domain. One of the most difficult periods of my diplomatic career, as far as the United States was concerned, was when I was No 2 in Washington in 1994–95 and had to deal with the question of Bosnia and the Balkans when there was severe disagreement—perhaps the greatest disagreement since Suez between the United Kingdom, with some European involvement, and the United States. Some of that was quite bitter; we had some hard arguments. At the same time, under Ambassador Robin Renwick, we were arguing quite hard with the United States over the American treatment of Gerry Adams, Sinn Fein, the whole IRA question and American backing. There were some bitter elements to that, most of which will remain private for a few more years. But I do not remember great headlines about the opposite sentiment, as it were; about our failing to realise that we had to keep the United States on our side and that we had to remember our place. We had arguments. I can give you another example. At the United Nations, where we often worked hand in glove with the United States because we had exactly the same interests, there were plenty of areas where we had quite severe disagreements with the United States. It was quite important for the United Kingdom at the United Nations, which was my area of experience, to make it clear to other members of the United Nations that we were not agreeing with the United States for the sake of it, that we had arguments and that we would sometimes expose the feebleness of the US argument in the Security Council before anybody else did, because we disagreed with the US. That sometimes got a blowback. Indeed, in the period of the Bush Administration in Washington, I got a bit of a name from time to time with the harder right-wing elements for being much too soft a collectivist and a multilateralist for their liking. That did not mean to say that I could not do business with them on Iraq, the Middle East and the hard issues. These things do not come out in public, but in your inquiry, Chairman, I think that it is important that the public see a rather greater range of what makes up the US-UK relationship than what normally comes out in rather superficial media comment.

Chairman: Thank you. That is very helpful.

Q128 Mr Horam: I’m very interested in what you say, Sir Jeremy. However, one of the things that was put to us when we were in Washington was that the US is not very co-operative with the UK on certain crucial things—for example, the defence procurement treaty, discussion of which has been going on for about eight years. That treaty is still

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stuck in Congress. Whichever Administration you have in Washington, they do not seem able to make any progress: we cannot get joint use of software for the joint strike fighter, the extradition thing still remains unbalanced and all of these things go on and on. In addition to that hard stuff, where the US quite clearly considers its own interests and does not pay much regard to us, there is now what has been described as a “casual” attitude towards Britain, which might not always have been there. Professor Clarke, one of our witnesses, pointed out that at the UN General Assembly meeting in September, it was clear that Gordon Brown was not favoured by the Obama Administration. Indeed, people at the Brookings Institution made the point to us that there was nothing more embarrassing than the scramble to get to be first to see the American President. And then there was the photo-opportunity that our Prime Minister was finally given as he went for a walk-and-talk through the kitchens. All that betokens a casualness towards us and a hard-headed ignorance of our position, given that we have spilt blood and money in Iraq. Isn't this really totally unbalanced?

Sir David Manning: On the defence treaty, you are of course right. Throughout my time in Washington, we were struggling first of all with the whole question of the International Traffic in Arms Regulations waiver, which I am sure the Committee has discussed. We were unable to get that revoked, or changed in our case. In the end, we decided to try to go for a different option, which was a defence trade treaty; I believe that that is still stuck, but there are hopes that it may be ratified in the new year. I think that that is quite an interesting example of the problem that we have in the UK in dealing with the United States, because of course the problem was not with the Administration; the problem was on the Hill. I think that one of the things that we have to understand when we are operating in America is what a very different Government structure it has and what a different society it is. I have said this before—forgive me if I repeat it—but I think that there is a tendency sometimes for people to think that the United States is the UK on steroids, that it is just like us and that if you go across there and you talk to the White House and they say yes, that is the end of it.

Mr Horam: I think we appreciate that.

Sir David Manning: The difficulty on the trade issue, and indeed on other issues, was the White House. I dare say this might be true in the Obama White House—I don't know; I haven't been working with it—but we often have a problem in the UK in that we get a yes from the Administration, but we then have to work the Hill extraordinarily hard to try to get what we want. In the case of the ITAR (International Traffic in Arms Regulations)—ITAR waiver—it was one individual who blocked it. There is a structural thing that we need to bear in mind. When I was there, I felt that if the Administration said that they wanted to help us with something, they meant it, but very often they could not deliver. I think we have to beware, therefore, of assuming that when we hear yes, it is going to be yes all round. On the other issue that you mentioned—this question of

feeling embarrassed about whether you are first through the door, to which Sir Jeremy alluded—I think a lot of this is the way in which it is seen, if you like, through the media. If we are not seen to be privileged in some way, the special relationship is in crisis. I think it is important for us to relax. I get worried if I think that we are obsessing about this—the sort of “he loves me, he loves me not” school of diplomacy.

Q129 Mr Horam: But do you detect a greater sense of casualness about the way that the Obama—

Sir David Manning: Again, I have to be careful, because I have not been on the ground. I suspect that you have a President who, first of all, is new to foreign relations, and it is important for us to understand that his background is completely different from that of his predecessors. He is a very quick study, so there is no doubt that he will master these issues, but he does not come with a knowledge of Europe and of Britain that his predecessors would have had—indeed, had McCain won, he would have gone back a long way. The President also comes with a very different perspective. He is an American who grew up in Hawaii, whose foreign experience was of Indonesia and who had a Kenyan father. The sentimental reflexes, if you like, are not there. As Sir Jeremy said, if you want President Obama's attention at the moment, particularly when the agenda is so cluttered, it has to be relevant. You have to bring something important—it has to be something he is struggling with—so I do not think that we should look for slights or imagine that because we were only the second people, or you only got the meeting in the kitchen, that this somehow indicates that we have a President who is casual about the relationship and does not care about it. I think, however, it means that it is going to be less sentimental. Having said that, the advantage for us, it seems to me from the outside now, is that you have a multilateralist. You do not have a sentimentalist but a multilateralist. This is an opportunity for us, actually.

Q130 Mr Horam: What is the opportunity?

Sir David Manning: It is an opportunity for us, because if the United States wishes to work through multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, it is much easier for us than it was when we had a unilateralist sentiment, and we have to find ways of capitalising on that. I am sorry—it is a long answer.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock: Let me take up this point of opportunity, if I may, to which Sir David referred. I think that it is thoroughly healthy that we should have a President in the White House whose respect we have to earn. This is at the public level as well as at the level of confidential Government business, because that is the reality, and it always has been the reality. If it makes us sharper in a competitive sense, because we are not relying on sentiment and a playing field that is tilted slightly our way by history, values, sentiment and all the rest of it, we will perform better.

Q131 Mr Horam: Do we have to change our attitude? That is what I am getting at.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock: No, because that is the way the system works already. You have rightly questioned us over some of the things that might have gone better in the relationship, but I think it is worth bringing out in this session the enormous amount that we gain from a close relationship with the United States. The British public need to have it explained from time to time that you cannot just count on an abacus the deals that go in our favour from the United States because they like us. Why is BAE one of the largest defence companies operating in the United States? Why is the City of London an absolutely natural place for American finance houses, banks and insurance companies to do business? Why is it that there is \$400 billion-worth of investment in the United Kingdom, which is more than in France and Germany put together? There are many other examples, but it is because in the American system and the British system, although the two systems are different and in the future may drift further apart—something that we might need to examine in this conversation—there is an enormous familiarity and confidence between the two peoples and the two Governments, the two corporate areas in which it is as good for Americans to do business in Britain and for the British to do business in the United States, whatever that business is, as in their own country. We would not have in the world of global security the partnership that is necessary to defend our interests in an unpredictable world unless we and the United States worked very carefully at the analysis of what was going on in a changed security atmosphere, which brings us into partnership with the only power in the globe that can project military capability anywhere. It is an enormous advantage in an era when the United States is no longer—as it was in the Cold War—a European power through NATO. That has changed. That, too, needs examination, but the sentiment at NATO—apart from the bilateral sentiment—is also something that has moved on and needs examining. We get tremendous advantages out of this relationship, and the figures speak for themselves in that respect.

Q132 Sir Menzies Campbell: I just wanted to explore with you in relation to the Hill—Congress—and the Administration the extent to which British diplomats operate in a highly competitive arena in which another 190 countries would desperately like to have the ear of the Senator who is the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee or the senior official in the Administration. Sometimes you have to use your elbows to make sure that you enjoy the pre-eminent position that previously might have been for emotional or sentimental reasons, but is now much more to be earned than to be handed out.

Sir David Manning: Yes, that is absolutely right. You need sharp elbows. The Americanism is that you had better be in your face. Basically, Americans do not do self-deprecation, so you better get up there, make your case and say why it is a really good one. You are quite right. It is important. I always felt that the

Embassy was itself a lobby group. I described earlier my view that we had to be part of the argument in the United States. It goes much wider than Washington, as you know, but it is very important that your voice is heard. If you are going to get it heard, there is a lot of competition from within the American system itself, as well as certainly from other countries. Having access to the Hill, having access to the White House and having access to the media to make sure that you can get your message across to the whole of the United States through a network are all very important. It will not get any easier, particularly when the regime has changed in the United States. We now have a Democrat who is not familiar with us, so making such arguments again is very important. If we are going to be heard and use our sharp elbows, it comes back to the proposition that we have to have something important to say and something to offer on the big issues.

Q133 Sir Menzies Campbell: The slights do not matter if you close the deal. Do you agree? As for doing the deal in the kitchen, Lyndon Johnson had some interesting views about the venue where Senate business was conducted. None of that matters if you actually do the deal at the end of the day.

Sir David Manning: It is the substance, and as Sir Jeremy said, the substance of the bilateral relationship is extraordinary—whether it is the investment relationship, the trade relationship or what we gain from intelligence and military relationships. There are all sorts of pay-offs, but they are so because we bring something important ourselves. It is objectively in our interest and their interest. If we can show the Obama Administration that we have things to offer, they will listen. But I am sure that we have to elbow our way in to make the case.

Q134 Sir Menzies Campbell: Can we do better at blowing our own trumpet about the achievements or would that operate against future success?

Sir Jeremy Greenstock: If the slights mattered, the two of us would not have lasted as diplomats for very long. You have to separate out the personal from the official. Diplomats don't normally slight each other in a personal sense, but if you're getting a blow in the face in terms of somebody else's national interests, which won't accord with yours, you take it, you move on, or you find some way round it. From experience of the United Nations, one of the more interesting parts of the US-UK relationship in New York—in the Security Council, for instance—was in tactical handling. The United States would want something in the Security Council, but the United States tends to walk around with quite heavy boots, and there are sensitive flowers in the United Nations of other nations. The United Kingdom is a lot better at the tactical handling of other delegations and of language in drafting texts and tactical manoeuvring. We just happen to be tidier, more experienced and better at it, and not worried about getting our hands dirty in that respect. The United States, which has to conduct policy formation and implementation in an

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even more public environment than this country, tends to be very sensitive about short-term losses and presentational difficulties, whereas we get on with it. When we agree with the United States, we can be very helpful to it in that kind of subterranean tactical handling, which doesn't come out in public. The Americans appreciate that, because it brings them something they don't normally have. We of course gain from being on the coat tails of the immense power operation of the United States, which brings us into places that we wouldn't reach if we were just on our own—and we wouldn't reach, frankly, if we were just with the European Union. The United Kingdom uses that, to some extent, quite shamelessly. As Sir David said earlier, a *quid pro quo* is involved, and occasionally you run up against Americans who don't like the way we operate or think that we're slightly snotty-nosed about our experience in global affairs or our colonial past. At times, when it works for them—when we give them some tactical advice on how to handle Iraqis in Iraq, or whatever—they can quite appreciate it, because they haven't been there. There are a number of facets to the relationship where these things really work, but they aren't visible, and if we blew our trumpet on them, we would spoil that relationship, because we're blowing a trumpet then about our use of their power, which it's better not to go on about—so I'll stop.

Q135 Chairman: So you wouldn't use the Greeks and Romans analogy that we heard earlier.

Sir David Manning: No, I absolutely would not use the Greeks and Romans analogy.

Q136 Mr Purchase: Moving not very far from what we have been talking about, we have been gathering evidence about our ability to influence the United States and have got generally positive responses, but a bit of a mixed bag. To what extent—I shall ask both of you, if I may—and in what policy areas does the UK access US decision makers, and how does that translate into influence? If it does, in what way does it happen, and can you give us any concrete examples?

Sir David Manning: Perhaps I could begin. The truth is we can go and talk to the Administration about any issue that we want to, if it matters to us and we want to discuss it with the Administration or on the Hill, we have access. We are very fortunate, and I think it is the case that we probably have as good access as anybody, and probably better than most. Access doesn't necessarily mean that what you ask for you are going to get, of course, and I think we need to be realistic about that. This is an unequal relationship in the sense that the United States is a global power. We are not; and one of the things that I think we have to be conscious of is that, on a lot of these issues, there's not much we can do by ourselves. But if we are successful at getting access and influencing the Americans, it may have an effect. I can only speak obviously about the time that I was in the States myself. I do not know what sort of access and influence we would have at the moment, but during the period that I was there, we

had a major difference with the United States Administration over climate change, which was a very high priority for the Government here and something that got a pretty low priority within the Administration. We went and made the case, as forcefully as we could. When the then Prime Minister made it one of our G8 presidency objectives, this was not greeted with enormous enthusiasm in Washington, but it did not mean that we gave up because the Administration didn't necessarily like it. We, because of this network across the United States that I spoke about, were able to do quite a lot of work on climate change, for instance, in the states themselves. I think, probably, opinion changed pretty dramatically in the four years that I was there; and, increasingly, I felt, the White House was out on a limb, and big business in America and a lot of the key states were moving in the direction of accepting that something had to be done. I am not going to claim that that was because of the British Embassy, but I am quite sure that making a big effort across America to influence these opinion formers on climate change was worth it, and I think we probably contributed. If you take an issue that was very much more specifically Government to Government, the decision by the Americans to try and get Libya to give up its weapons of mass destruction, that was very much something advocated from London. Perhaps I should not go into great detail in public at the moment, but, as I am sure the Committee can find out, there were exchanges. That again is an example that I would give you of the impact on American thinking. Something that happened before I was in the United States in which I was conscious that we affected American thinking was on the relationship with Russia. This is quite hard to remember now, because the relationship is so bad, but during the early period of President Putin's power, there was a real effort, particularly after 9/11, to try and reach out in a much more inclusive way. I can remember going with the Prime Minister to Moscow, and President Putin said that he would like a different relationship with NATO. We worked really quite hard on the Americans to think about a different relationship. The result of this was the NATO-Russia Council. So there are examples. There are plenty of examples in which we try and don't get very far, and the Middle East peace process was a source of constant frustration to me. We wanted action, and we did not get it. We pressed; we got various promises and suggestions, but we all know where we are. But I come back to what I said: you have to be realistic. We have a certain weight in the system. We should not exaggerate that, but nor should we underestimate it. We should decide what it is that we want to try and do, and then become part of the debate. It will vary from issue to issue and from place to place, but if we have this network, we should try and use it to that end.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock: It is quite important to unpack your question, Mr Purchase, about influence. It is not as though we are standing outside and we need something from the United States, so we go and lobby—like influencing a board to give

your cause a donation. We are talking with them the whole time. Being a superpower is quite a lonely business—the Americans don't have many friends out there; they talk among themselves and, in fact, American decisions on hard issues are always finally made among Americans, in the Committee of Principals or between the White House and Congress, or whatever. Outsiders, even outsiders in Washington, are not involved in it—it is an American business. However, in the process of getting there, they like to try ideas out on or seek the views of people who they can easily talk to. Many Europeans feature in that; the Japanese might feature, and, nowadays, they might talk to the Chinese, Indians or Brazilians as well, but they nearly always talk to the Brits, one way or another—“What do you think about this?” That gets into a habit of just checking that our perspective on things, which comes from a different national history and background, gives them extra confidence that they are doing the right thing. Very often, when they don't check with us, they can do the wrong thing, as they find out, for their own interests. Good Americans, as it were, in the State Department, in the National Security Council and in Congress, who think about these things say, “What do the Brits think about this?” Let me give you two examples, since you were asking for examples. In November 1998, President Clinton wanted to bomb the Iraqis, because they were defying the United Nations—November 1998. Prime Minister Blair said, “Okay, they are defying the United Nations”. Then, at the last minute, the Iraqis sent a letter saying that they would accept the return of inspectors to Iraq. The Americans were inclined to think that this was just another fob-off from Iraq. The Prime Minister, in the middle of the night, said no to President Clinton—that if, at the UN, a letter has arrived accepting what the UN has asked for, the US and the UK cannot go and bomb them. The aircraft had already taken off. Those aircraft returned to base without taking any action because the Prime Minister had intervened. The next month, the Iraqis did go over the line and we bombed them. In the Balkans issue, on Bosnia, we had this fight with them over “lift and strike” and their policy on Bosnia—a bitter division. In the end, the Americans decided that, actually, their policy was not going to produce peace in the Balkans and that the Europeans actually had a route through to a possible solution to the Balkans crisis, but the Europeans were implementing it rather weakly. So suddenly, in August 1995, they came over to London first, talked this through and said that they were going to take over aspects of our policy but they were going to implement it themselves, as the US, and that led to the Dayton agreement a few months later. These are the ways in which the Americans go through the various stages of grappling with a problem, listen to others, go back into their own councils, decide on a new way forward. And lo and behold, it is rather closer to where the UK was than if they had not talked to us at all. That sort of thing is going on the whole time.

Q137 Mr Purchase: Fascinating. If I can follow on just a little further. Being very specific, if we want to talk to the Americans about foreign policy—not

necessarily at the level of Iraq—who do we contact? Who are the people? What are the organisations? Which are the channels we go through? Can you give us some insights into that?

Sir David Manning: I can certainly try and give you insights as far as I was concerned. You would go to the White House. You would go to the State Department. You would almost certainly go to the Pentagon. It would be very important to go on the Hill and talk to the key foreign affairs committees, both of Congress and of the Senate. Depending on the urgency and the scale of the foreign policy problem, you would select individuals in at least those areas to go and talk to. In terms of foreign policy, though, it is also worth talking about those who are not in government or on the Hill, or in the Administration. There is a very powerful think-tank community in the US. It is important to be alongside; it is important to talk to them about your foreign policy proposals. It is a pretty wide panorama, but, as I say, we have good access, and if it is a serious enough issue, you can certainly talk to the National Security Council; you can talk to the State Department; you can talk to the agencies there; you can talk to the Department of Defence. So you have a wide range of interlocutors, and on the whole, the door is open.

Q138 Mr Purchase: Is it ever worth while speaking to the Foreign Relations Committee and its Chairman?

Sir David Manning: Oh yes, absolutely. I think—we may have discussed this when your Committee came to Washington when I was there—it is important for the Embassy to do that. It is important for visiting Ministers to do that and it is very important for this Committee to do that. One of the things that I was certainly keen on when I was there was thickening up the relationship, not just with your Committee and your counterparts, but with other committees. If we are concerned—we may get on to this—about a lessening focus among American politicians these days on us and on Europe, it is very important that they hear the arguments from their political counterparts, not just from officials.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock: If I can just add one other aspect to this, we need a very real understanding of American public opinion, because it has an effect on Congress and on the Administration. Therefore, it is actually rather important for the Embassy to have a good feel for what is going on outside the beltway. Remember also that American Administrations come to Washington from governorships and other parts of the country—it's as often an ex-Governor as an ex-Senator who takes on the presidency of the United States. In my time in Washington in the 1970s, I learned an early lesson in this. My Ambassador cultivated the people in Atlanta well before Jimmy Carter became the lead candidate, and he got credit for that. We then had a very close relationship with President Carter in the White House because we were the people who got furthest with the Atlanta team before he ever made it to the White House. That doesn't mean to say you have to cover every single base in the United States, but the

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British Embassy and its system have a huge reach in the United States. That is not just commercial or a service to British citizens in the United States, but a very real aspect of the British ability to do business in the United States in every way.

Q139 Mr Purchase: With two very large missions—one in New York and one in Washington—how do we avoid being cherry-picked by the Americans? How do we avoid giving slightly different versions of the same story? Indeed, do the Americans even try to cherry-pick? Do they like to go to one particular city rather than another for particular purposes?

Sir David Manning: That is a very good question. On the whole, you do get different stories, but I don't think it's deliberate. You have a very complex process of government in Washington, and different Departments are often at odds with each other. A lot of the time, what you are trying to do in the mission is to find out how the argument is going internally. So it's absolutely likely that somebody will go and see the State Department and somebody else will go and talk to the Department of Defence, and you will get a different story. One of the things that the Embassy has to do all the way through is to try to assess who's up, who's down and where this argument is actually going. I may be naïve, but I don't look back thinking that there was a tremendous campaign to deceive us and tell us all sorts of different things. I think it was much more a question, a lot of the time, of the Administration finding it quite hard to come to a conclusion themselves, because there is such a cacophony of voices. Even if the Administration do come to a conclusion—this comes back to the structural issue—that doesn't mean to say that the Hill will follow. Coming back to your earlier question, that is why it is so important to go and see the senior figures on the Hill who run these great committees, because they are immensely powerful, and they certainly have the President's ear. As we have seen over the Afghanistan issue, it often takes a long time for an American Administration to reach consensus about what they will do. One of the roles that you have in Washington—I am sure this would have been true for Sir Jeremy in New York—is to see how the argument is changing and shifting, to try to make sure that our views are heard by those who we think will affect the decision, and then to monitor things as best you can.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock: To put it the other way round—if that was part of your question—there wouldn't have been different British answers in New York and Washington. The mission in New York doesn't get played off against the mission in Washington, because we read each other's telegrams and we know where we are.

Mr Purchase: You're really tight.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock: The Consulate General in New York is subject to the oversight of the Ambassador in Washington. The Ambassador runs his own system in Washington. The Ambassador in New York usually has a good relationship with his colleague in Washington—it hasn't always happened.

Mr Purchase: We read nothing into that at all.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock: Against the background that, in my view, all Governments are to some extent incompetent, the British system is less incompetent than most. The capacity of the British diplomatic system and Whitehall to say the same thing, whoever is asked, is quite refined.

Chairman: We won't pursue that line too far; unfortunately, we don't have time.

Q140 Ms Stuart: May I pursue the matter a little further? I would like to hear Sir David's observations on how opinions in the United States are formed. Because we talk so much to everybody, do the Administration sometimes use us as a messenger to other parts of the Administration?

Sir David Manning: Yes, I think they do. I think it may sometimes be quite deliberate, but it might sometimes be because certain individuals are hoping to influence another part of the Administration, or even plant a message with us. If that does happen, and it suits us, that's fine—let's use it. It certainly has happened on occasions, yes, and we have to be aware of that, and conscious of how far we want to be used in that way.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock: It is important to bring out an example of where the two systems do not fit together particularly well. That is on Iraq. Vice-President Cheney and Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld were giving a particular view of what should happen in Iraq, in competition with the State Department under Secretary Colin Powell. Our Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, had an extremely good relationship with Secretary Powell; and the President had a good and constant relationship with the Prime Minister and vice versa. But it was quite difficult for the British system to get to what was, by historical comparison, quite a powerful vice-president, and to influence Vice-President Cheney, because there was no natural opposite number in the constitutional system. In the Pentagon, Secretary Rumsfeld was not inclined to listen, not only to non-Americans but to Americans of the wrong political character. So it was a narrow but powerful area that we found hard to influence in the lead-up to and the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq.

Chairman: Thank you. John Stanley is next.

Q141 Sir John Stanley: May I ask you both, following the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, whether you think that ratification will prove advantageous, neutral or detrimental to our bilateral relationship with the US?

Sir David Manning: Shall I hazard the first guess? I would be surprised if it were detrimental. Cynical or not, my view is that the big countries in the EU will continue to run very energetic bilateral policies with regard to the United States. I am doubtful that the EU and the Commission will find it possible to do much to dilute that. The United States has quite high expectations of the EU. I am conscious that this is a minefield, but I think that it is important to say that the United States wants Europe to be an effective partner. It wants it to be an effective pole. It is looking to Europe to be more effective, more

united. Certainly during my time in Washington it was clear that people on both sides of the aisle wanted us to be effective within a more effective Europe. America will look to see whether Lisbon delivers this. From our side of the equation, I do not have great fears that Lisbon is suddenly going to undermine our role or the classic way in which we have dealt with the United States. Perhaps I shall be proved wrong. Instead, we should see whether there are new levers that we can bring to bear, because if the United States does want Europe to be more effective and if the European Union can do more, we want to influence the European Union to be a more effective partner for the United States. I look back at my time there and think about the commercial policy. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that it was effectively through the EU that we managed to contain protectionist pressures and other pressures that it would have been much more difficult to contain individually. I do not think that we should see the EU as some threatening competitor. If we are astute, we should be using the EU as an additional lever for us in Washington, unafraid that somehow it will replace us in any way as a key interlocutor. At the same time, we should be conscious that the Americans want the EU to be an effective interlocutor.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock: I entirely agree with that. I would go so far as to say that if the relationship between the United Kingdom and Europe is weakened, the relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States is weakened. It is quite important to have a good appreciation of the multifaceted transatlantic relationship, and if it would help, Mr Chairman, I would like to leave for the Committee a copy of the record of a recent Ditchley conference on the transatlantic relationship—US-EU relations—which gives a very accurate description of the selective nature of contacts between the United States and Europe.¹ On first-pillar business, where the European Union has competence through the Commission—on economic, trade, finance and other matters, but particularly trade as the lead issue—the United States will deal with Brussels and with the Brussels Commissioner in charge. It is a powerful presence that the EU brings to the table on economic, financial, trade, development, environmental and other issues. On security and defence—hard defence—issues, America will have very little to do with the European Union. It will want to deal with individual countries, but particularly with NATO. In previous decades that was always, and very strongly, done through NATO, but as I said earlier, the United States is no longer a European power because there is a Soviet threat. It has moved on from that. But NATO can't do everything. It does some of our security work but it doesn't do everything. So, the third area is the individual bilateral relationships, or *ad hoc* multinational relationships, as with the EU-3—UK, France and Germany—over Iran. Those three countries act with the backing of the European Union, but do their

own business. There is an à la carte menu, particularly on the American side, which will respond to where the power is—where the action can get done. That is what the Americans are looking for, with a hard-headed approach. The United Kingdom needs to know how to place itself best in those three areas to get the best for the UK national interest, and that means being hard-headed ourselves about maintaining the channels and relationships within Europe with the United States in quite a complex way. I think our Government, civil service, military and intelligence systems do that very well.

Q142 Sir John Stanley: Thank you. May I just ask you a follow-up question on that, impinging directly on the British diplomatic service in the United States? The EU clearly has some pretty expansive plans as far as its External Action Service is concerned, both in numbers and in funding, and it is a safe bet that the External Action Service is going to be thickened substantially in Washington, and probably in New York as well. Where do you think that is going to leave the UK diplomatic presence? You're going to have the External Action Service; they are going to be thick on the ground on the Hill, in the State Department, in the NSC and so on. Do you see that as affecting the quality, content and influence of our bilateral diplomatic activity with the US Administration?

Sir David Manning: Again, I am very sceptical that that would be the outcome, but that may be wishful thinking on my part. I think the key will be that the United States Administration and Senators and Congressmen on the Hill are looking for us to provide effective partnership on key issues, and I don't think that will suddenly change. If the EU mission is built up over time, I think it will become more influential, but I really don't think that need be at our expense. If I may just make this point, which is a bee in my own bonnet, I think that a much greater threat to our effectiveness in the United States is cutting back our own network. I am far more worried about that. I was the ambassador who had to preside over closing four posts in the United States and I was very unhappy about doing that. It is very easy to just look at crude numbers and say, "There are 470 or 500 people in the Embassy—what on earth are they all doing?" But I think that a much greater threat to our impact is to cut back on key people, particularly those who are working in areas of real interest to the United States—not just the political and military areas, but science, crime and international terrorism. We have really got something to offer. If we are forced to continue closing our network across America, or cutting back in salami slices, so that it is almost a virtual network, we will find it very much harder to influence the Americans in the ways that we want. Then, if the European External Action Service is there building itself up, we will be leaving something of a vacuum. I can see that we need to watch what happens with the European developments very closely, but I am pretty sanguine that if we maintain the sort of embassy and the quality of the people we have had—I had

¹ www.ditchley.co.uk/page/356/us-eu.htm

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splendid people working for me—the access will stay and we will be able to make our case in successive Administrations. If we keep taking people away and if, by some chance, we find ourselves apparently deciding on the numbers of people we have according to the fluctuations of the exchange rate, we will certainly be in trouble. In my view, this is a much greater threat to our position in the United States than the European External Action Service.

Sir John Stanley: Sir David, we can assure you that we have been truly fully briefed by Sir Nigel Sheinwald and his team about the current very serious financial position that they are facing.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock: I agree entirely with what Sir David has said. I would add, Sir John, that the European Union's foreign policy outreach under the Lisbon Treaty has got to prove itself. Outside the first pillar, in my experience, the European Union has normally added up to less than the sum of its parts. When it is capable of punching at or above its weight, we should start investing in it and divesting from our own diplomatic service, but I think that is a long way away. I think that the French, the Germans and others with powerful diplomatic services will maintain their national approaches to these issues, and that the UK has a tremendous amount to add, both for European interests and for UK national interests, by maintaining a strong diplomatic presence.

Q143 Sir John Stanley: One final question, not in the EU context, but on the totality. With the huge experience that you both have in Washington and New York, do you see, looking ahead, new opportunities that we may be able to seize in Britain, as a British Government, to strengthen further our relationship with the US in new areas?

Sir Jeremy Greenstock: David will have his own ideas. I will mention just one thing that illustrates some of the things we have been talking about—climate change. The American states—five of them in particular—have started to take their own decisions on carbon emission reduction, which is very much along the lines that we in Europe and the United Kingdom are trying to go, with the federal Government some way behind. In having the capability to interact with those states beyond the federal Government, we are serving our own climate change interests by encouraging American public opinion to realise their global responsibility on carbon emissions. I think that is quite a good illustration of how the UK system can act beyond the immediate relationship with Washington.

Sir David Manning: I certainly agree about climate change. As I said, Sir John, I think it is something that changed quite profoundly in terms of public opinion even during the Bush Administration. If you accept my proposition that the new Administration are naturally much more multilateralist, I think that, where we believe there are real opportunities to move international issues forward through multilateral machinery, this is a new opportunity. Climate change is obviously one of them. I suppose the emergence of the G20 is another, although if I am candid we have to work out whether the G20 is good for us because

when we were G8 we were one of eight and now we are one of 20. These sorts of evolutions may not necessarily enhance our power. In terms of our opportunities, yes you have an Administration who are thinking in a multilateral way much more like we do. The rider I might add to this, though, is that one should not have any illusions. An awful lot of Americans do not necessarily think that this is a philosophy that they much want to support. I am not suggesting that there has been a mass conversion, but it will give us opportunities on big issues if we want to use them and pursue issues through multilateral machinery.

Q144 Mr Heathcoat-Amory: You have both stressed the importance of a British global reach in the diplomatic service and all the benefits this brings, and then you say that this is under no threat from the External Action Service, but from two hard-headed diplomats, I find that a little bit innocent. The plan is to build up an External Action Service with secondments from national services and staff from the Commission. Delegations will become embassies. How on earth can we maintain the number of embassies and the quality and number of our staff when that happens? It is bound to reduce our global influence. Are you in denial about this or do you seriously believe that we are going to run both in parallel?

Sir David Manning: I think it is much more likely to be both in parallel.

Q145 Mr Heathcoat-Amory: Where is the money going to come from?

Sir David Manning: That is an interesting issue. As Sir Jeremy said, you are not going to find Paris or Berlin, in my view, or probably a lot of other European capitals outsourcing their key national and international interests to the External Action Service, certainly not in the short run. What you describe could develop over the long period, although I am sceptical, particularly in watching the way that the European Union has developed. But I think it is unlikely that we will find that our interests are undermined in any appreciable way by the emergence of the Action Service. I said earlier—I may prove to be wrong—that my own view would be that our approach should be to see whether we can use the post-Lisbon period to enhance, through the EU, our influence in the United States. The United States may be looking now to a Europe that it hopes will be more coherent and more of a player. That is how I see it. Maybe if we come back in 10 years' time I will have been proved to have been disastrously wrong.

Q146 Mr Heathcoat-Amory: It is quite a risk you are running there.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock: I would argue also that you should not see this as a zero-sum game. I think that we will gain as the United Kingdom from having a continuing proficiency in diplomacy as a national organisation, and we will gain in having an effective and quite powerful EU External Action Service. If we are going to find recruits for both, if you look at

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the number of good graduates who are wanting to join the UK diplomatic service—about 10 or 20 times the number that the Foreign Office can take—there are plenty of people to recruit into both services. Obviously we will have to help them get going with some secondments of experienced diplomats, but let's not see this as a zero-sum game. There are real arguments for having effective

services, both at the EU level and at the national level and that we are perfectly capable of working in both without losing power at our own diplomatic level.

Chairman: Gentlemen, we are not going to go on any longer—we've had a very long session this afternoon. I appreciate you both coming, it has been extremely valuable. Thank you very much.

Wednesday 16 December 2009

Members present:

Mike Gapes in the Chair

Sir Menzies Campbell
Mr Fabian Hamilton
Mr Eric Illsley

Andrew Mackinlay
Mr Malcolm Moss
Sir John Stanley

Witnesses: **Mr Ivan Lewis MP**, Minister of State, and **Mr John Rankin**, Director, Americas, Foreign and Commonwealth Office,¹ gave evidence.

Q147 Chairman: Minister, welcome. This is your first appearance before this Committee and we appreciate your coming along on the day of the Christmas Adjournment. Mr Rankin, I don't think you've been before the Committee before, so welcome. As you know, we're doing an inquiry on Global Security: UK/United States. It's one of a series of global security inquiries we've done throughout this Parliament. We've touched on a number of other areas of your ministerial responsibility. We've looked at South East Asia, the Far East, South Asia, Afghanistan and the Middle East. We haven't looked at North Africa specifically, but we've looked at most of the issues that you seem to cover. In fact, your ministerial responsibilities seem to be very wide ranging. Have you ever estimated how much of your time you're able to devote to this role as the Minister dealing with North America?

Mr Lewis: First, Chairman, I thank you for the opportunity of appearing before the Committee, although I accept it's not an entirely voluntary arrangement. I look forward to having, as long as I have this job, a positive, constructive and full and frank dialogue with the Committee. The Committee fulfils a crucial role in terms of improving our foreign policy and has done over many years. In terms of my respective responsibilities, I guess you could argue that if you look, for example, at the core of my responsibilities, which is the Middle East and the Middle East peace process, our relationship with the United States in that context is absolutely crucial. If you look at my responsibilities with regard to the political elements of our mission in Afghanistan, our relationship with America, in terms of development, politics and security, is again at the heart of our being able to move forward successfully in terms of those issues. If you look at the work that I'm engaged in on nuclear proliferation, President Obama has taken a very important lead in trying to have a new push, particularly with the NPT review coming up next year and the nuclear security conference that he has called for the spring of next year. If you look at most of the responsibilities that I have, the relationship with America is pretty pivotal in terms of achieving our foreign policy objectives, our national interest. And therefore, in different ways, that relationship is absolutely crucial.

Q148 Chairman: Have you any idea percentage-wise how much of your time it takes?

Mr Lewis: I cannot really put a specific percentage on it. For example, I intended to visit the United States only last week, both to talk about the Afghanistan-Pakistan issues and also to major on the Middle East. Because of parliamentary business, I was not able to make that visit. I hope to be able to do so in the new year. I was recently at the annual G8-Arab League conference, at which Hillary Clinton was present, to look at the question of human rights, but inevitably that conference was dominated by debates and discussion about the Middle East peace process. I wouldn't like to put a percentage on it, but our relationship with the United States is pretty central to a significant part of my responsibilities, and us being able to move forward and achieve our foreign policy objectives.

Q149 Chairman: Over the years, it has become very clear that our relations with the US, as our most important ally, are quite often dominated by the Prime Minister-President relationship. That is topical in terms of the Chilcot inquiry; it is also clearly important in terms of Afghanistan. In reality, does the role that you and the other FCO Ministers play act as a kind of second-tier relationship to the US, when in fact No. 10's and the Prime Minister's relationship with the United States is more important?

Mr Lewis: I hear that the Foreign Secretary and Secretary Clinton are very fond of each other. But it is a serious point. Given some of the big issues that we face right now—whether it be Afghanistan or the Middle East peace process—that relationship, as well of course as the relationship between the Prime Minister and the President, is pretty crucial. If, for example, you look at some of the work that we do that is US-EU, the relationship between Secretaries of State can be very significant and important—as important in some ways as that between Prime Ministers and Presidents. And it's on a more operational day-to-day basis.

Q150 Chairman: How much does personal chemistry matter in this?

Mr Lewis: You and I have always got on rather well, Chairman. No, the serious answer is that I had not had any experience of international relations until I was appointed to a development position in DFID about 18 months ago. I was the Minister for Africa in DFID for 10 months, and I have been a Minister in the FCO since June. My experience was entirely in domestic policy. What I learned was that personal

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chemistry, in terms of diplomacy and foreign policy, is absolutely crucial. If you can form a relationship of trust, respect or friendship—although that is perhaps less important—then you can achieve objectives based on that trust and respect. But if that is absent from the relationship, it can be a major problem—a major obstacle—to achieving some of your objectives. It does matter. It's not the most important thing, but it can make a significant difference. If people feel able to speak freely and frankly, sometimes that can move situations forward, where in a more formal engagement people have to be guarded, have to be defensive, have to some extent to be careful about what they say in the public arena. That private dialogue, that sense of confidence and trust between individuals, is a far more powerful factor in terms of foreign policy than is often given credit for. If you look at history and the relationships between different leaders, from what I hear, the relationship between Kennedy and Macmillan was a close one, and that made a significant difference. We are all aware of the relationship between Prime Minister Blair and President Clinton and later President Bush. I also believe that the relationship between Prime Minister Brown and President Obama is strong and largely based on shared values. If you look at the new American Administration and the policies of this Prime Minister and Government, there is a very common set of values, which, these days, binds us together. The way we responded to the financial crisis was an important illustration of the mutual respect that exists between President Obama and Prime Minister Brown.

Q151 Andrew Mackinlay: I entirely agree with much of what you've said, Mr Lewis, particularly the things about personal chemistry. Two things occur to me. Since 1997 there has been an enormous turnover of Ministers in what is broadly your portfolio. I know that there has been a case of somewhat shifting sands, because Prime Ministers Blair and Brown would have probably added a few things here and there, but for the core part of your duties, there must have been numerous Ministers. In fact, on the law of averages, you must be halfway through your period of office. How many Ministers have there been?

Mr Lewis: Ministers of State?

Andrew Mackinlay: Yes, covering your broad portfolio, the North America portfolio.

Mr Lewis: Since 1997?

Andrew Mackinlay: Yes.

Mr Lewis: I don't know.

Q152 Andrew Mackinlay: Could you let us know?² It would be helpful because we are talking about the machinery of Government. Looking at this long list, you would have an interface with not one person in the Administration, but a number of Under-Secretaries or whatever. So, in a sense, you, or whoever holds your portfolio, are having to pedal

twice as fast. Would I be correct in saying that in the State Department you would not have just one opposite number?

Mr Lewis: If you went through my responsibilities, you would look at the Middle East as being an area of responsibility, Afghanistan, nuclear proliferation, Asia and you could go on. You are right, there would be a number of people in the Administration who would be my equivalents, but some, without being totally close, would be politicians and some would be diplomats.

Q153 Andrew Mackinlay: Point taken, but you are the office holder and the North America man. In terms of developing the important personal relationships that you referred to, you are, at different times during a week or a month, having to interface with different people of an equivalent rank to yourself. You are not dealing with just one.

Mr Lewis: That's true. To be fair, that has brought together Foreign Secretary, Secretary of State, Prime Minister and President, and we should not forget that. They have a corporate relationship that looks at all the issues in the round. You are right, though.

Q154 Andrew Mackinlay: What I haven't understood, and I don't think we hear about this, is that in No. 10, certainly since Tony Blair came in and probably in Margaret Thatcher's time, there has been—to use a shorthand—a White House created. Among all the policy departments, there are people whose names I do not know, who deal with transportation, defence and foreign affairs. At your level as it were and the level of your colleagues who give you support, what is the mechanism, the modalities, of a thing that you might want to do or say? How and to what extent does this have to be cleared with No. 10? How is it done? I will be candid with you. I get the impression that there are some people in No. 10 who, across the range of Whitehall including the Foreign Office, have to be consulted. Can you explain how that works?

Mr Lewis: I'll be very honest in answering this question. I have been around Government quite a long time now. I was in Education for a parliamentary term, the Treasury for a year, Health for two and a half years and Development. In this role in this Department, the attempt by No. 10 to intervene in decisions that I or others have sought to make has been minimal. Bear in mind, though, I have been in this Department since June. Relative to other Departments and other portfolios, it has been minimal.

Q155 Chairman: Is that because the Foreign Office does not have much legislation?

Mr Lewis: No, I think there is a healthy relationship between No. 10 and the Foreign Office. I think there is a great level of confidence and trust in the work and the respect that the Foreign Secretary has built up around the world in terms of leading Britain's foreign policy issues. Where appropriate, clearly the Prime Minister takes the lead, for example, in terms of the recent G20 issues and the requirement to respond to the international crisis. It seems entirely

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appropriate that in those circumstances the Prime Minister and the Chancellor were in the lead. On other issues, the respective roles and responsibilities of No. 10 and the Foreign Office are at an appropriate level. The Foreign Office feels that it is an organisation that is empowered, enabled and respected to get on with job that it is charged with doing, but there will be big strategic national interest issues where it would be totally irresponsible of a Prime Minister not to want to have a very significant role. We have all seen in recent times that the Prime Minister's leadership, for example on Afghanistan, has been very important, in terms of saying that we need complete clarity about the mission in terms of the security, political and development issues, as I have said. The appropriate balance of responsibilities between No. 10 and the Foreign Office currently feels to me to be about right.

Q156 Sir Menzies Campbell: There's a question of equivalence here, isn't there? If President Obama is leading on the issue of multilateral nuclear disarmament, it would be very peculiar indeed if the British Prime Minister wasn't responding to that. So, to some extent, I guess you would agree that the level of engagement may be set by others outside the UK.

Mr Lewis: Absolutely. President Obama made it very clear that one of his priorities was going to be nuclear proliferation. He also, early in his Administration, made it clear that the Middle East was going to be important, and of course he has had very difficult choices to make about American engagement in Afghanistan and where that goes in the future. You rightly say, based on many years' experience, that it would be slightly bizarre if on those big issues the Prime Minister did not have a very intensive bilateral relationship with the President of the United States. In terms of operational responsibility—daily attempts to veto and interfere in decisions—I am trying to say that the relationship is a very healthy and positive one. I say that in the context of experiences in other Departments over a number of years. There is a healthy respect, and I mean that in a positive, not a cynical, way, between No. 10 and the Foreign Office.

Q157 Sir Menzies Campbell: You used an interesting expression: you said that there was a healthy relationship now. Without being overly legalistic, I infer from that that you may think that, in the past, the relationship hasn't been that good. We are not conducting a parallel inquiry to Chilcot in this Committee—

Mr Lewis: That's a relief to hear.

Sir Menzies Campbell: But there are certainly some who argue that, in and around the decision making in relation to military action against Iraq, the relationship between No. 10 and the Foreign Office was perhaps not as complementary as it ought to have been.

Mr Lewis: In some ways it would be easy to say that what I have said was a criticism of the previous Prime Minister, but I would refer you back to your response to me—that where Presidents lead, there is

an inevitability about Prime Ministers having to engage. It was absolutely clear, wherever we all stood on the decisions that were made on Iraq, that the President of the US was making the decisions and taking lead responsibility, so you yourself, by the helpful comment you made in response to my question, underscore the reason why Prime Minister Blair was so heavily involved in providing the leadership on the whole Iraq war question.

Q158 Sir Menzies Campbell: I don't want to take this too far, but one would normally expect that, while the decision making may rest in No. 10, No. 10 would want to rely comprehensively on the informed and experienced advice that you would expect to get from the Foreign Office.

Mr Lewis: I think that that is true. We've had this debate over many years, and it will never end. The officials' and advisers' job is to advise, and the Ministers' and the Prime Minister's job is to decide. Sometimes, the critical mass of advice will be reflected in the decisions that are made, and on other occasions, it won't. I think we've got to be careful: we could rewrite the history about Iraq and say that all foreign policy analysts and experts were against the decision to go to war in Iraq, but that would, of course, be an inaccurate presentation of the situation.

Sir Menzies Campbell: I'm not suggesting that for a moment.

Mr Lewis: A lot of people are running away from the fact that they were part of that decision, because subsequently it has been seen to be highly unpopular in many quarters. I think we've got to be quite careful. Of course the decision to go to war in Iraq was a political decision at the end of the day—we shouldn't forget that Parliament also voted for it—but, equally, to say that foreign policy advice was ignored in that decision would be unfair.

Sir Menzies Campbell: You tempt me with that answer, but the Chairman's beady eye forces me to resist that temptation.

Chairman: I think it would be wise if you did. We could spend the whole time talking about history, but we're trying to look at UK-US relations, where we are now, and where we will be going forward.

Q159 Mr Hamilton: Minister, a number of witnesses in the past few weeks have told us that British politicians tend to talk up our relationship with the US—not officials, but politicians in particular. Do you accept that that's the case?

Mr Lewis: The reality is that the United States is a superpower—the only remaining superpower in many ways, in the round, even though there are emerging superpowers. The reality also is that we have had for a very long time, and continue to have, a special relationship with the United States. Often, our foreign policy interests and objectives and the national interest are best pursued by our engagement with the United States of America. I don't know whether we talk it up—it's for others to make that judgment—but it is an incredibly important relationship. Is it to the exclusion of other relationships? Clearly it isn't. The US has important

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relationships with many countries, including other European countries, and so do we; but it is our key strategic partner, and it is the superpower in today's world.

Q160 Mr Hamilton: How would you respond to the claim that we've heard that some American officials, and indeed US politicians, get very frustrated with the claim that we have the special relationship and therefore we should be spoken to first? Actually, we've been accused of being infantile in the way we push this special relationship to the exclusion of all others.

Mr Lewis: I think what's infantile is when the press report that "Britain was snubbed yesterday" because President Obama visited Germany or France, or because a meeting between the Prime Minister and the President didn't happen on day one of a summit, but day three—those are easy headlines. What is certainly true is that we should not think of ourselves as the wise old head and the Americans as the new kids on the block, who need the benefit of our wisdom in terms of the decisions that they make. I think they find that quite offensive.

Q161 Mr Hamilton: Have you, in your role, felt any sense of frustration on the part of American politicians in particular, or even officials?

Mr Lewis: No.

Q162 Mr Hamilton: You don't think that they believe we're obsessed with the special relationship?

Mr Lewis: No.

Q163 Chairman: In your earlier remarks, Minister, you talked about the economic crisis and the role that President Obama and Gordon Brown were playing together on those issues. We've had written evidence from the Atlantic Council that talked about how New York and London are sometimes portrayed as rivals, when in fact they are mutually dependent financial hubs. In the world we're living in today, in what way are we, as the UK, benefiting from this economic relationship—I will not use the term "special relationship"—between our two countries, with their respective Governments investing \$400 billion in either direction? Is that a great advantage to us at this time? Or, conversely, given that the global meltdown started in America, is our relationship with the United States causing us more damage than would have been the case if there was less of an interrelationship?

Mr Lewis: I think it's a good question, but there isn't any evidence to support the contention. Our financial and trading relationship was incredibly important—I shall explain why in a second—and will be so going forward. We should not use the economic crisis as a justification for saying that the relationship is unhealthy.

Chairman: I did not say that.

Mr Lewis: That we have suffered disproportionately as a consequence of the relationship is not a contention that I accept. Let me just give some important facts about the nature of our economic and trading relationship. The US is our top export

destination and our second-largest trading partner overall. The UK is the United States' sixth-largest trading partner overall, and we are the United States' largest partner in trade specifically in services. The UK is a major destination for US foreign direct investment. American capital stocks in the UK totalled nearly \$400 billion in 2007, employing approximately 1 million British people. In 2008–09, 621 US foreign direct investment projects meant that there were 13,000 jobs, and that represents 36% of total inward investment projects and 37% of new jobs from FDI. The UK is the largest foreign investor in the US. At the end of 2007, the UK had an investment stock of nearly \$411 billion in the US. In 2006, American affiliates of British companies supported, it is estimated, over 900,000 American jobs. All those statistics demonstrate the strength of the economic and trading relationship.

Q164 Chairman: But, getting back to my question, is there a danger that the relationships have become unbalanced because of the financial links? I understand that there is a big trade relationship and foreign direct investment, but what about the financial institutional relationships between London and New York?

Mr Lewis: I don't think that a lesson to learn from the recent financial crisis is that the institutional relationship between London and New York was inherently the problem, or will be a problem in the future. There are many lessons to learn from the recent economic crisis, but I don't think that the Committee necessarily wants to go through them; a Committee that is meeting next door will probably want to go through them with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I don't think that one of the lessons to learn is that somehow the institutional relationship between ourselves and the United States was a cause of that problem.

Q165 Chairman: But would you accept that the measures that we take to deal with problems need to be co-ordinated with those taken by the US Administration and that, when dealing with this problem, we need to ensure not only that our economy retains its vitality, but that we have effective regulation on both the trade side and the financial side?

Mr Lewis: I totally would accept that, but we have to be careful. Our Prime Minister was calling for more effective global regulation for a very long time. One of the major obstacles to that was not the current American Administration, but the previous American Administration, because there were serious ideological differences. Again, we often don't talk about them when we discuss the special relationship; there are sometimes very different political and philosophical views, and very different values in play. Do I agree with you that one of the lessons we need to learn is that we need global regulation that is far more effective than was the case in the run-up to this financial crisis? Most definitely. Did the concerted agreement that fiscal stimulus was the best way to go make a significant difference, and

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the fact that that was done at a global level? Absolutely. The United States and Great Britain, in a sense, decided that the G20 would be the most appropriate organisation to take forward our response to the financial crisis. Those are some of the lessons that have been learned. However, in a sense, they are about political choices and political decisions; they are not necessarily about the weakness of the institutional relationship.

Q166 Chairman: May I conclude on this? You referred to the US Administration, but one of the big problems—people in this country often fail to recognise this fact—is that the President is actually far less powerful than a Prime Minister of this country with an effective working majority. Are you confident that we will be able to get our reform agenda agreed by the US Congress, as opposed to simply by the Obama Administration?

Mr Lewis: I am not sure that I can predict the outcome—nor would you expect me to—of senatorial and congressional elections in the future. But, I hope there would be a sufficient critical mass in terms of consensus to realise that business as usual is neither acceptable nor desirable, and that politicians who advocate that will earn the ire of their electorate and their population. We know there are people on the far right who almost seem to articulate business as usual in response to the financial crisis, and who continue to resist the need for more global regulation and greater levels of responsible behaviour by those in financial services. There are some people in our own country who do not really agree with the notion of fiscal stimulus through these difficult times. So, of course, there are people with different ideological positions, but I would hope there is a mainstream majority consensus that will support the frankly clear lessons that need to be learned from the financial crisis. Those lessons should be learned by people of all political persuasions.

Q167 Mr Moss: Minister, may I return to the special relationship? We were told by Sir Jeremy Greenstock, “British officials do not use the term ‘special relationship.’” It seems to be the Americans who deploy the term more frequently. For example, when the Prime Minister visited Washington, the President’s official statement spoke carefully about a special partnership. Later in the year, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton spoke of the historical importance of the special relationship. Do you think that this term is overused and raises unreasonable expectations of its importance?

Mr Lewis: I think it’s a reality for political reasons, trade reasons, reasons of defence, security, intelligence, and in terms of the respective people, the culture, language, media and history. It’s a special relationship. Now, the key is how you define it. As I said earlier, is it an exclusive special relationship, or do Britain and the United States have a special relationship with other nations and institutions? Clearly, the answer to that is most definitely they do.

Q168 Mr Moss: So you don’t believe the Americans are using it because they think that is what we would like to hear on our side?

Mr Lewis: Let me try to look at some of the issues very quickly. Look at the history—two World wars and the Cold War. Look at the more recent developments. Again, I am not going down the Iraq route, but consider the way we responded after 11 September—forgetting what subsequently happened. The shock of that incident in America and the fact that Britain identified with the way that Americans felt in the immediate aftermath of 11 September was very significant in terms of the special relationship. We can debate Iraq and subsequent events, but there was tremendous appreciation by ordinary Americans that Britain stood shoulder to shoulder with them in the immediate aftermath. I have talked about the G20 already. There are also the issues of Iraq—for good or for bad—Afghanistan, the threat that Iran poses to the world, the nuclear proliferation matter that I referred to earlier, Middle East peace and climate change. Arguably, Britain has played a very important role internally in the United States in helping to change the nature of the public debate about where America needs to stand on climate change. In all of those issues—both historical and contemporary—the relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States is very important.

Q169 Mr Moss: In an earlier reply, you were slightly disparaging about the press and the writing up of the so-called relationship. Does that affect the Foreign Office’s work in any way? Are they simply reflecting in their commentary what the Foreign Office actually believes?

Mr Lewis: No. What I was disparaging about was the way that the press seek at moments, somehow on a random basis, to decide that because a meeting did not take place—

Q170 Mr Moss: It took place in the kitchen, for example.

Mr Lewis: Yes. That the special relationship was no longer special, or that there was a conflict in private. It is the way it is characterised—the way it can be bastardised from time to time—that is the problem, not whether there is a special relationship or not. There is, so we should not be in denial about reality. We can have an intellectual debate—we could probably go on for hours, days or months, and it would be great fun—but there is a special relationship, for good or for bad, and I think it is largely for good.

Q171 Andrew Mackinlay: I want to ask you about areas such as the Mohamed court case and the litigation that is now going on about whether or not there should be disclosure of intelligence and so on. How fragile and difficult is this area of work? What sort of pressure are you under?

Mr Lewis: You know more about intelligence matters than I do, Mr Mackinlay, I suspect. To give you a very straight answer, we were given intelligence in confidence by an ally. It is very clear to us that, for

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whatever reason and in whatever circumstances, for us to release that into the public domain would be a breach of trust and confidence that could seriously damage our relationship not just with the United States, but with others who give us intelligence in confidence. The second issue is that, frankly, it is a responsibility of the United States if it wishes to make public its own intelligence. It is not our job to make public intelligence gained by another country.

Q172 Andrew Mackinlay: On this narrow issue, am I not correct that there is an international rule—it might be a convention? It is not just the United States that gives intelligence; you get intelligence from other states. Is there not a convention on the ownership of that? Isn't there a case for the ground rules of this to be dealt with either by a treaty at some stage, and/or with legislation in the United Kingdom? It seems that this case has left an unsatisfactory situation. It would appear that our courts diligently are going to say, "This should be disclosed". There is the political dimension to which you referred—it is a matter of fact. Isn't it time, both in relation to our bilateral relations with the United States but also internationally with allies, for treaty agreements supported by legislation to codify what can or should be disclosed?

Mr Lewis: I would say to you that the specific case is not concluded, so it is very important that we do not prejudge the outcome. As you know, the Foreign Secretary has made it clear that we intend to pursue this. If you are asking me that if, at some stage in the future, a court made such a decision, would that raise the potential need for a different regime or set of rules around the passing and transfer of intelligence, the honest answer is yes, it might well do. We also do not want to make assumptions about where this court case is going to end.

Q173 Andrew Mackinlay: No. Can I go on to a related area? I shall cite two examples, but not with a view to arguing them. There is the McKinnon case and a case I noticed at the weekend of a high-profile Iranian, who had been Iranian Ambassador to Jordan. He is in the United Kingdom, obviously, and the United States wants him extradited. Aren't these fraught areas? Clearly, the United States feels it should have people "on demand"—I don't use those words in an emotive sense—under the treaty. It might well again be that our courts—as neither case is concluded—take a different view. Are we going to keep running into some of these troubles? Obviously, the United States feels very strongly about both cases.

Mr Lewis: Chairman, can I quickly use some statistics to try to address as honestly as I can the true situation?

Chairman: Briefly.

Mr Lewis: Very briefly. Since 1 January 2004, 30 persons have been surrendered from the US to the UK, and 53 have gone the other way in the same period. These figures show that more people are extradited to the US than *vice versa*. Fair enough, but that merely illustrates that more US fugitives flee to the UK than happens in the opposite direction.

Those disparities are not at all unusual in extradition. Far more people are extradited from Spain to the UK than vice versa, to give an alternative example to the United States of America. At the heart of the argument is the notion that the treaty we have signed with the Americans is inequitable and unfair.

Q174 Andrew Mackinlay: I haven't said that yet; I was going to come on to it. I think that you have slightly missed my point. If, for instance, the United Kingdom courts say no, you will come back to a similar situation as you have even with intelligence, as it were, with the United States Administration tearing their hair out and saying, "Why do the Brits do this?", but our courts probably might say—

Mr Lewis: Hold on a minute. I would say that one of the cases is still in court, so we have to be very careful. We have agreed an extradition treaty. If a British court decides in the context of the British legal system that it is not appropriate to extradite somebody—I am not talking about an individual person at the moment, because that is not appropriate and the Home Secretary has given very full information to the Home Affairs Committee on the issue—clearly the American Administration will have to respect that decision.

Andrew Mackinlay: One final thing, if I may just change gear—

Mr Lewis: They might not like it, but they will have to accept it.

Q175 Andrew Mackinlay: Thank you. It is a bit of history now, but it is in the lifetime of this Committee. When the United States-United Kingdom treaty was signed by Home Secretary Blunkett, it was enacted in the United Kingdom because it was done by royal prerogative. I think that there was some supporting legislation, but basically the treaty was signed and enacted. However, it took another two and a half years for it to go through the Senate, which is again part of its perfectly legitimate process. A number of issues were raised by that, one of which was the fact that there was immediate disparity for some period of time because it was definitely one way. That also raises the issue of our stewardship in our Washington mission. It struck me that either it was not geared up, or that it did not understand that a United Kingdom mission to the United States is not just to the Administration, but to the other arm of government—Congress. There was not sufficient lobbying. They were not saying to the Senators, "Here, look, this is grossly unfair. It is unacceptable", but there was an inordinate period of time—I think it was two and a half years—when the US extradition treaty was applying only one way. I don't know if any lessons have been learned from that.

Mr Lewis: I suppose the one lesson that is slightly churlish is that our mission doesn't control the decisions that are taken by the US Senate or Congress. As for influence, that is totally unfair. I shall give you an example from recent times. For a start, we regretted the fact that it took them two and a half years, but we did try and influence them to

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move quicker. We failed—if you like—to win that argument, but the idea that we did not even try is not fair. We did, but in the end—you are a politician—there was realpolitik playing in their Senate for whatever reason. I was not involved in this in those times, but there were clearly issues. I shall give you an example of how our Embassy has been massively influential in terms of the Congress in America: on climate change. We have worked on Capitol Hill on making the case, building a coalition and explaining. Only last week, our Ambassador was given the platform to write an article about where we stood on climate change policy in the run-up to Copenhagen in the Senate's major publication that all Senators read. It is very unfair, in a sense, to say that we didn't try to influence and that we didn't use all the capacities that we had. We did try but in the end, for whatever reason at the time, it took two and a half years.

Q176 Sir Menzies Campbell: The reason is well known: it is that the Irish lobby descended upon the Senate, which is, as we know, very susceptible to the Irish lobby in the United States, as indeed are all elected politicians. Can I come back to the mechanism? As Mr Mackinlay has quite properly pointed out, we had passed the domestic legislation, so we were giving effect to a treaty which the United States had not ratified. Would it be possible in future simply to put a provision in any such legislation to say that it should not come into effect until such time as the contracting party to the treaty has ratified the treaty and brought it into force?³

Mr Lewis: I would have to take legal instruction on that. I imagine that the answer to your question is, I guess, it would be possible. It depends whether you take the view—it depends where you're coming from—that this extradition treaty was an example of Britain caving in to the wishes of the Americans as an acquiescent partner, or that we entered into the treaty because we thought it was right and proper, fair and equitable. A lot of the subsequent allegations and criticism have been that we signed up to an extradition treaty that demonstrated that we were somehow acquiescent to America, rather than an extradition treaty that we judge to be fair and equitable in the context of a relationship with the United States of America.

Sir Menzies Campbell: I have never made that charge. I made the charge—indeed, to Prime Minister Blair—that these treaties are supposed to exemplify the principle of reciprocity; and in this case, because of the different standards of proof required, that principle was not observed. That, I think, is the continuing issue, which will, I suspect, reassert itself until such time as the obligations of each country are put properly into balance.

Q177 Chairman: Minister, the evidence that we have received so far in our inquiry into the relationship between the UK and the US has been a little bit contradictory. Former Foreign Secretary Lord Hurd referred in a written submission to Britain being “a

junior partner” of the United States, but our former ambassador, Sir David Manning, said that he didn't like that idea; he thought that we should simply say that we worked in our own national interests. Where do you come down in this debate?

Mr Lewis: I think that we are a smaller partner—that is pretty clear. I think we always attempt to pursue our own national interest in our foreign policy objectives in the context of our relationship with the United States of America. In terms of the equity and the power relationship, the question really is: can we provide evidence or examples where, as a consequence of our position and our objectives, or partially as a result of our influence and our position, we have been able to shift the United States' position?

Q178 Chairman: Give me some examples.

Mr Lewis: I can give you some examples. On the response to the economic crisis, I think our Prime Minister took arguably the lead role on the decision that the G20 ought to be the appropriate body, and on the fiscal stimulus. On climate change, there is absolutely no doubt that we have played a significant part in influencing American public opinion, as well as American political opinion. Where we stand on matters such as Iran is taken very seriously by the Americans. The new American Administration have taken very seriously Britain's views on the Middle East peace process. Finally, to give an example that is not often used—I know it does not strictly fall within your Committee's remit—America is pretty keen to adopt the British aid and development model, which represents quite a significant shift from the aid and development model that the previous US Administration adopted. There is a number of examples where we, as a result of the special relationship, can say that we have moved, or contributed toward moving, American policy.

Chairman: That is helpful.

Q179 Sir John Stanley: Minister, we will come a little later to the defence and intelligence dimensions of the special relationship, so the question I'd like to put to you is: leaving those two on one side, do you think there are any aspects of the British Government, whether at ministerial or at official level, that we could honestly say are truly valued by the US Administration? Are there any particular aspects of which the State Department or the White House say, “My goodness, yes, the Brits have really got something right here. We'd better pay attention.”?

Mr Lewis: I thought that I had just read out a long list.

Q180 Sir John Stanley: Those were specific policy areas. Are you saying that the Americans value the levels of expertise that we have or that they value our judgments? What are you saying?

Mr Lewis: I think that the State Department has a massive amount of respect for the intelligence, capacity and expertise that exist in our Foreign Office—yes, I do. I think that you know better than

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most that the defence establishment in the United States has respect for our security and intelligence services and our defence forces, too.

Sir John Stanley: We will come to that in a moment. Thank you.

Mr Lewis: There is the development issue as well. They are very taken by our successful development models.

Q181 Sir Menzies Campbell: The perception is that the United States wants a relationship with a Europe that is more co-ordinated than it has been in the past. The Lisbon Treaty has at last been ratified and the appropriate appointments have been made in relation to the presidency and the High Representative. Do you think that Britain has a particular role to play in Europe's presenting to the United States a more cohesive front than it has in the past? If you do agree with that proposition, how would you see it being carried through?

Mr Lewis: I suppose that Britain's role depends on who is in government in Britain at the time. But the serious answer is that, of course, Britain has an important role in saying that it is important that Europe, as often as possible, can speak with one voice on some of the biggest challenges that the world faces. We know, though, that even under Lisbon that will be done through consensus and not through qualified majority voting. Therefore, I think that Britain does have an important role. Equally, I do not accept the model that Britain is the only bridge between the United States and the European Union; I think that that is mistaken. Because we have a special relationship, clearly America will look to us to give an analysis of where the European Union is, its direction of travel, the challenges and the issues. Equally, America has important relationships with many other Member States—France, Germany and others. We do have a role to play. We think that on the big global issues Europe's speaking with one voice wherever possible is a healthy and positive thing. Our analysis of whether the Americans welcome that is that, on balance, they do.

Q182 Sir Menzies Campbell: This goes back to what was attributed to Kissinger, although no one is quite sure that he actually said it—"If I want to find out what Europe thinks, who do I phone?" Are you confident that the Lisbon Treaty will make the answer to that question more easily obtainable?

Mr Lewis: I do not think that that will happen overnight; I think that it is an evolutionary process. There will be issues on which the European Union will continue to struggle to achieve consensus because different nation states will judge that they have different national interests or national perspectives at stake. But I think that over time there is absolutely no doubt that Lisbon will lead to more co-ordination in terms of foreign policy and to more integration. As the Foreign Secretary has said, there are centres of power in the world, going forward—China, the US—and if Europe is to sit round the top table and be big hitters it will be very important that Europe can speak with one voice on many crucial

issues. It won't come overnight; it will take time and be evolutionary. Lisbon is an import step in the right direction.

Q183 Sir Menzies Campbell: Two particular issues—Iran and how we deal with Russia. Would you apply your guarded optimism, if I may so describe it, to either or both of those?

Mr Lewis: Over time, but the first thing to say is that we know that for many of the accession states, there are realpolitik and historical reasons why their relationships with and feelings about Russia will be quite different from others for some considerable time. You cannot be in denial about the reasons for that. If you look at the threat of Iran, what people say on the other side of the argument to ours is that what they need is more time, that we should give Iran more time and that we need to engage. My argument is that we do. We want engagement, diplomacy and a political solution. That is where E3 + 3 stands. But having offered that, there reaches a point, when Iran has not responded in any shape, way or form, and has not demonstrated any sense of a willingness to respond positively, at which we have to consider what further action we need to take. We cannot keep being told by the backmarkers that they need more time. With more time, the clock is ticking on their capacity to develop nuclear weapons. Yes, over time I am optimistic that even on those issues we can have a more unified and integrated approach. I think it would be very naïve to pretend that there aren't some incredibly difficult issues to get through before we have complete unity of purpose on these issues.

Q184 Chairman: Can we now move on to the defence relationship, which John Stanley touched on? Given that the United States is a major producer of military equipment and the most important world military power, isn't it clear that it doesn't really need allies to bring much in terms of effectiveness or military components to what it is doing, but that it really wants allies to give legitimacy, international status and support to what it wishes to do?

Mr Lewis: With the new American Administration, we have seen a massive shift to a commitment to multilateralism. The thread running through all of Obama's foreign policy pronouncements, initiatives and decisions has been a complete shift from unilateralism to—

Q185 Chairman: My question is not about negotiations, diplomacy or multilateralist approaches, but about military effectiveness and military alliances. It is a separate point. I accept entirely what you said about the Obama Administration's approach and their multilateralism. My question is what added military value the UK gives to the US, which it does not have itself?

Mr Lewis: I am not a defence expert, but I certainly know enough to think that one of the challenges in Afghanistan, for example, is the very local, community work of trying to peel off those people who don't want to associate with the Taliban and don't want to be a haven for al-Qaeda. If we can

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work with those people at a very local level, we can persuade them to take a different course and we can offer them alternative economic hope. Our troops have a tremendous track record in that kind of local, community-based work. That does not suggest that the Americans don't or can't do that, but I know that our troops and forces are particularly respected internationally for that kind of work. I would argue that that is one example of where we add value. It is not just about military might.

Q186 Chairman: But isn't there a problem that we will increasingly confront, and which we are confronting today? Because of budgetary pressures and the growing technological gap, although we are the United States' leading military ally, to sustain that role, we get to a big problem. We have had witnesses who have said that to us already. We are not able financially to sustain the level of expenditure and commitment that will mean that we will forever be able, if you like, to keep up with the main focus of where the United States is going in military terms. The budgetary pressures mean that unless there is a significant increase in military spending, and clearly that is not going to happen and the statement yesterday by the Defence Secretary is a clear indication that it is not going to happen, our influence at the military level, and therefore associated political influence, is likely to decrease in future.

Mr Lewis: That depends on a whole range of factors. It is absolutely true to say that there is no doubt—you mentioned the statement by the Secretary of State for Defence yesterday and we all know the economic climate that not just Britain functions in but other countries function in too. I think that it depends on a range of factors. It depends on the strategic review of the future of NATO. What will the implications of that review be in terms of the future role of different countries and their armed forces? It depends on the direction that the UN takes in the future. It depends on US foreign policy; we have seen a massive shift in terms of the US's approach to foreign policy, just by virtue of a change in Administration. I think that it depends on a whole variety of factors as to what that will mean for the future. I think that it is very difficult to be sure.

Q187 Chairman: You know very well Minister, and the Foreign Secretary confirmed it last week when he spoke to us, and Peter Ricketts also, that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has got rid of all the fat and is now cutting into the bone. In the circumstances where we are the United States' closest ally, could we not be more effective as an ally if we were to put resources into those areas where we can really make a difference, that is, the diplomatic, intelligence and foreign policy side, rather than pretending that we can keep up with the quality, in sufficient quantity, of military innovation? In a sense, we face a choice. We cannot do both effectively because we have not got the resources to do it. Shouldn't we be arguing that the money should

be put into the, if you like, soft power aspects to a greater extent, because we are able to then play, and you yourself have said so, an influential role through our diplomacy and through other means?

Mr Lewis: Yes, but we equally have to maintain strong defence forces, which have the capacity to respond to the challenges of a changing world.

Chairman: I am not denying that.

Mr Lewis: It is that balance that we have to get right. It is difficult to know where you draw the line though, Chairman. When you talk about proportion of spend or resources, where do you draw that line and how do you make those judgments?

Q188 Chairman: Perhaps we need, as when the Labour Government first came in and George Robertson was the Secretary of State at the time, a foreign-policy-driven defence review.

Mr Lewis: I certainly think that we need, in the decisions that we make about our future defence, foreign policy considerations at the heart. If you look at some of the biggest challenges that the world faces, I think that we are all increasingly aware of the link between security, governance and development, and therefore we need to look at that in terms of how we have a more strategic approach.

Mr Hamilton: In fact, former Defence Secretary and Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, said exactly that on the radio, Chairman: that we need a foreign-policy-driven defence review pretty quickly. When we were in the States in October, we were told by some of our interlocutors that there is concern within some parts of the US military that the UK operation in Afghanistan in particular has been hampered by lack of resources. Do you attach any importance to these claims, or are they not really based on much?

Mr Lewis: I do not accept them. I can give you alternative quotes if you want me to, or I can pass them to the Committee.

Q189 Mr Hamilton: Please do.

Mr Lewis: Very quickly, Brigadier General Nicholson, following his first visit to Lashkar Gah said, "We will be seeing a lot of each other in the summer months. I think we"—the US and the UK—"will be extremely closely co-ordinated because if we co-ordinate our actions we will have a significantly greater effect". That was back in May. In August, General Petraeus praised British troops. He said, "I have always been impressed by the courage, capacity for independent action, skill and exceptional will of your soldiers. It's what sets forces in the UK and I'd argue the US and a handful of other countries apart from others in the world".

Q190 Mr Hamilton: Let me interrupt you for a minute. I do not think anybody suggested that our forces weren't brave, weren't excellent fighters, or weren't brilliantly trained soldiers. The perception was, and some people actually made this very clear to us when we were in the States, that because of the

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economic crisis and the clampdown on public spending—as we heard yesterday in the Secretary of State’s statement in the House—we simply did not have the resources to support our excellent quality troops. There was no criticism of our troops at all.

Mr Lewis: If you look at the statistics, the figures that the Secretary of State for Defence announced yesterday, that the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have spoken about over the past few months, helicopters, tanks, armour, equipment—

Q191 Mr Hamilton: But at a huge cost to our ability in the future to go to other theatres.

Mr Lewis: With all due respect, you said that a lack of resources had hampered our ability to do the job. You did not talk about the future. The Chairman asked me about what the financial crisis meant for the future in terms of soft power, hard power and the balance of spend on military versus civilian. I would not want to give the impression that we have not made the resources available to support the tremendous courage and professionalism of our people on the front line in Afghanistan. Today I believe that we have got those resources.

Q192 Mr Hamilton: Are you not worried that there is this perception in some quarters in the US military? How are we going to overcome that? Is it damaging to our relationship in Afghanistan with the Americans? I know you have quoted some very important figures, General Petraeus particularly, but is it not damaging that certain people within the US military have this perception?

Mr Lewis: I think it is quite damaging that there are some people in Britain who are highly anti-American, but they do not represent the British Government or the highest levels of the British Government—or, I think, most mainstream parliamentarians. So, no, I don’t think we should respond.

Q193 Mr Hamilton: To be fair, those critics are not determining our policy or our relationship in Afghanistan.

Mr Lewis: But I think that the General Petraeus of this world are rather respected figures, and maybe we should listen to them rather than to some unnamed, anonymous individuals—without being too disrespectful.

Q194 Mr Hamilton: That’s fine. You might hope then that General Petraeus makes that view known among his own people as well.

Mr Lewis: I think they ought to speak to the American troops who work alongside the British troops on a daily basis, and talk to them about the tremendous mutual respect for the professionalism and the expertise.

Q195 Sir John Stanley: Minister, you probably agree that across the whole of the special relationship, the most special element is the intelligence relationship. If you have something very special and if you are

prudent, you ask yourself, “What are the risks to which it is exposed and how can I protect myself against those risks occurring?” What do you see as being the main risks to which our special relationship on intelligence is exposed?

Mr Lewis: Can you give me some examples?

Sir John Stanley: Well, you might say that it could be at risk if we were unable to continue to finance the particular individuals of the requisite experience and capacity; you might say that we cannot finance the necessary physical equipment; you might say that, if there was a serious breach of security, that could put it at risk; or you might say that the way in which litigation proceeds might put it at risk. It is for you to answer my question.

Mr Lewis: Okay. I think the first responsibility of any Government is the security of their citizens. However difficult the financial climate, I would imagine that one of the last things that responsible Governments would seek to reduce is their intelligence capacity, particularly when we face the real threat from al-Qaeda and associates in terms of fundamentalism. Undoubtedly, the greatest threat would be that there are going to be some very tough decisions, which politicians are going to have to make, in the years ahead in relation to finite public resources, but it would be short-sighted if those politicians were to take the view that intelligence was an easy target, especially as in recent years we have spent—as you are probably aware—more than most. We have significantly increased the amount of money that we have spent to protect ourselves domestically in the intelligence system. In my view, the biggest threat would be to do with finance. Any Government needs to remember that their first responsibility is the security of their citizens. In a modern world, one of the most important front lines, if not the most important front line against that threat, is the intelligence services.

Q196 Sir John Stanley: As you know, we have been to Washington quite recently and we have had a very full explanation of the extreme financial pressures that are coming on our post in the US. Can you give the Committee any assurance that those financial pressures will not extend to those who are an integral part of our defence relationship with the United States?

Mr Lewis: I can give you guarantees that we will do nothing to undermine the intelligence capacity that we have in the context of that relationship. Can I guarantee you that in any future spending review no changes will be made to any individual budget within the Foreign Office or any other Department? Of course, I can’t give you that guarantee. The Government said in the Pre-Budget Report that there are certain overall global budgets that will be protected at a certain level—that is in the public domain, in the Pre-Budget Report—but when you get to individual budgets and individual missions, those decisions will have to be considered in the period ahead. But we will not make any decisions that compromise our fundamental intelligence capacity.

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Q197 Sir John Stanley: Do you see any risks to our intelligence relationship arising out of legal proceedings and how human rights might be interpreted in the UK courts, to the detriment of our relationship on intelligence with the States?

Mr Lewis: Of course, if the courts make decisions that raise new questions that have never been asked before on the nature of the transfer of intelligence, we will have to act on that and reflect—as parliamentarians and as Government—on what that means. Are we satisfied with rulings of court that may, in our view, undermine and jeopardise the protection of our citizens? If we are concerned about such rulings, do we wish to change the law? On reflection, do we believe that those court rulings were fair and reasonable in the context of protecting people’s human rights? We will have to have a grown-up and mature response. Also, the United States is a mature democracy. There are times in the United States when its courts make decisions that are unhelpful and inconvenient to its Government, but that means that you either change the law or you decide that the courts, on balance, have it right.

Q198 Sir John Stanley: Would you agree that the fundamental principle underlying intelligence co-operation between sovereign states is that, where a sovereign state agrees to share intelligence information with another sovereign state, it is done on the basis that that material remains wholly confidential, usually to a very limited group of people. Do you agree that that is the fundamental crux of any intelligence relationship?

Mr Lewis: I totally agree.

Q199 Chairman: Can we get back to this question about our ability to influence the American debates? From what you have said in your earlier answers and from what we have received in evidence from a number of people, including academics who gave evidence to us in previous sessions and some of the written submissions, the way in which we try and influence the United States has now moved into a wide variety of areas. You have talked about the economy and climate change, and Mr Mackinlay referred to extradition matters—there is a whole host of issues. Given the resource pressures that we are under, do we have sufficient resources on the ground in the United States, which means principally our Washington Embassy, to be able to shape the debates not just with the Administration but with Congress? Do we have enough people able to engage with the Governor of California or the Governor of the State of New York or whoever else on some of the issues that affect us? Because the agenda is constantly becoming broader and more technical, do we have enough specialists able to deal with this? Do they get sufficient support when they go there? We had some disturbing evidence. Lord Wallace referred to the Chief Scientific Adviser going to Washington and not being allowed to see classified material. Are we moving into a situation where we have not got enough people actually in the US who will be able to really influence those debates?

Mr Lewis: The question of whether we have enough people is a difficult one. Clearly, our Embassy does an excellent job in the United States. It punches above its weight—it is incredibly effective. If you look at, for example, its use of modern media, it is one of the most watched embassies in the entire world, because it chooses to be very open.

Q200 Chairman: Do you mean officially watched or unofficially watched?

Mr Lewis: Probably both, Chairman. To give a tangible example, the work that was done in the States—not so much in Washington, but outside Washington—on trying to influence states when the American Administration were very negative about climate change, was massively important in terms of some of those states providing leadership. Governor Schwarzenegger is the most well known example, but there are others. That is an example of where we clearly did have the resources and we clearly did have reach and we clearly did influence policy in a very significant way. We decided that, clearly, we were not going to shift the Administration’s position, so we needed to find other ways of influencing American policy makers and American public opinion. To turn the question on its head, one of the things we will have to ask ourselves as we enter this very difficult period of financial constraint is how we can be smarter and more strategic about how we use our resources. You have already spoken about defence and intelligence resources; the same applies to our use of soft power. As we look at these difficult financial times, we will have to become a lot more strategic and a lot smarter. To be fair to the leadership of the Foreign Office, a tremendous amount of work has already been done to achieve that in recent times. As you said, it is not as if there is a lot of fat around the system to start with. Like any Government Department, we will have difficult decisions and choices to make. There is no way of ducking those decisions.

Q201 Mr Hamilton: Two weeks ago, Sir David Manning, our former ambassador in Washington, gave evidence to this Committee and he said, “I was the ambassador who had to preside over closing four posts in the United States and I was very unhappy about doing that . . . I think that a much greater threat to our impact is to cut back on key people, particularly those who are working in areas of real interest to the United States—not just the political and military areas, but science, crime and international terrorism. We have really got something to offer. If we are forced to continue closing our network across America, or cutting back in salami slices, so that it is almost a virtual network, we will find it very much harder to influence the Americans in the ways that we want”. My first question is: how damaging has the removal of the Overseas Price Mechanism been to the work of our US network?

Mr Lewis: Well, it has had an impact—there’s no point in pretending otherwise. It has an impact on that and on other elements of our work as well. First of all, it is important that, when you have to make

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reductions, you make those reductions in a strategic, considered way. You do not just make them in the context of the short term; you plan ahead for the challenges that you can see over the next decade in terms of those strategic decisions. We have made difficult choices and we will have to make further difficult choices in the period ahead.

Q202 Mr Hamilton: The Foreign Office is currently reviewing a strategic review of our US network, isn't it? Can you tell us a bit about the rationale behind that, when you think it will be completed and what sort of post closures are being contemplated?⁴

Mr Lewis: No. There is no formal strategic review under way as far as I am aware, specifically in the US anyway. What I am referring to is—

Mr Hamilton: I am clearly misinformed then.

Mr Lewis: Or I am misinformed. One of us is.

Q203 Mr Hamilton: If there isn't, there isn't. *[Interruption.]* Mr Rankin has confirmed that. That is absolutely fine. If we had to cut back further on the network—our presence in the US, including personnel—given what you have said and given the reality of the situation, do you think that that would have the effect of reducing our influence, in Washington, on the US Administration?

Mr Lewis: That depends on the decisions that were made. To an extent, we depend on our ambassador, we depend on our senior management, we depend on the people who work in the Foreign Office in London to advise us on making difficult choices—how do you make those choices and do the least damage to your capacity to exercise influence? That is the challenge when you have to make difficult budgetary decisions. We cannot look at our American mission or network in isolation from our activities elsewhere in the international community. We have to make considered and balanced judgments.

Q204 Mr Hamilton: The US is clearly looking away from Europe, given demographic and economic shifts in the world, and perhaps putting more of their resource in terms of diplomacy into other parts of the world. Is there not an argument that we should put more resource into our network in the US to actually be able to shout louder and get their attention, given that their attention is moving away from Europe quite dramatically?

Mr Lewis: There is an argument, but which other part of our activities in the Foreign Office would the Foreign Affairs Committee like to recommend we take those resources from?

Mr Hamilton: I think we need to have a bit of time and get back to you on that one. That is not a decision for us to make.

Mr Lewis: That was not a churlish response.

Chairman: We are not arguing for you to have a smaller budget, we are arguing for you to have budgets from some other Departments.

Mr Lewis: Absolutely. I hear what you say, Mr Chair. Your contention is that in terms of the importance of America and the nature of our relationship with America, it should have a greater share of the overall budget.

Andrew Mackinlay: The scale and the fact that it is federal—there are states.

Mr Lewis: It's not just about Washington.

Mr Hamilton: And because their attention is being diverted elsewhere, inevitably, because of the shifting polarity of the world economically and politically.

Chairman: Have you finished?

Mr Hamilton: Yes, thank you very much, Chairman.

Q205 Chairman: Can I ask you, finally, how the Foreign Office tries to influence public opinion? We understand that you have four priorities in the US: the global economy, which you have already referred to; Afghanistan and Pakistan, which you have touched on; the Middle East, which you have also mentioned; and climate change. How do you measure, in terms of shifting the debate or changing the decisions in the US system, how effective you are with that public diplomacy in the US? Is there a way that you rate your performance? Do you have those awful boxes with red, amber and green and decide if you've met them or not?

Mr Lewis: I do not think that it is as scientific as that. I am sorry to bore the Committee by keeping on coming back to climate change, but that is the most contemporary example of where clearly Britain has had significant influence. Are you talking about public opinion?

Q206 Chairman: Well, it is think-tank opinion as well. It is the US public opinion as well as informed opinion.

Mr Lewis: We have done a lot of work and made a lot of progress on climate change. I also think another area is the Middle East peace process, where we have really pushed and pushed the argument for the urgency of a two-state solution. While we are all very concerned at the lack of progress in recent times, the fact that in a sense it is now conventional orthodoxy in America to believe that the only way forward is a two-state solution, with a viable Palestinian state alongside a secure state of Israel—that that is no longer a source of debate and is the policy position of the mainstream majority—is an important change. So I would say that climate change and the Middle East are two examples of where I think we have significantly affected public opinion, or certainly insider opinion—former opinion as well.

Q207 Chairman: So if we get into a position where locally engaged staff in the United States have to go on unpaid leave, where you are drastically cutting your entertainment budget and you are unable to host receptions at the Embassy because you have run out of money, that would seriously undermine the public diplomacy work of our Government in the USA.

⁴ Ev 151

16 December 2009 Mr Ivan Lewis MP and Mr John Rankin

Mr Lewis I am not sure that many British people would say at a time of financial hardship that cutting back on the odd reception is a bad thing for Governments to do when ordinary people are having to make difficult choices too. It is a difficult balancing act, but I take what you say about staff. Of course it is regrettable that we have had to take this course of action in terms of local staff. It is not something that any employer should or would want to do. All I can say to contextualise the matter without lessening its significance is that it is fairly usual in America, when seeking to reduce spend, to give staff unpaid leave. Culturally, in America that is not as, maybe, bizarre as it would be in Britain or elsewhere in the world, but that does not lessen the impact on the staff or the service. Of course it is regrettable, but if we have budgetary, fiscal responsibility, we must find ways of exercising that responsibility and staying within the allocated budget. We ask people to make difficult choices.

Q208 Chairman: Okay. Can I now take us to the long-term? Over the years, we have tried to build up networks, such as through the Marshall scholarships and the work of the British Council. There is clearly an important relationship between UK Universities, with which the British Council assists, and partners, programmes, schools and so on. Is there not a need to boost that in the US, because the demographics of the United States are changing significantly with the large rise in the Spanish-speaking population, and immigrants from all over the world? If we are to retain this long-term relationship, we are no longer talking about a relationship with the East coast and the Atlanticist view of the world. We are now dealing with a country that looks more and more to the Pacific—to Asia—and which internally has a population with global connections rather than mainly European connections.

Mr Lewis: We know that a number of eminent people were part of the Marshall scholarship programme, and that as a result of that they are often commentators in America about the importance of the relationship between our two countries. We also know that, interestingly, a high proportion of the new Obama Administration

studied in the United Kingdom. Therefore the answer to your question must be yes. We must reflect, in our educational relationships, the changing nature of America, as well as of the world. I would like to see more investment in future, but I must be frank. Those decisions would have to be taken in the context of tough financial decisions, but strategically you are making a very good point. It is a powerful way of cementing and strengthening our relationship on a long-term basis, and it should not be seen as a minor matter, or a side show.

Chairman: We have a final question.

Q209 Andrew Mackinlay: I do not want to open up a new front at all, but when I first got elected to the House of Commons, I was on the Transport Select Committee, which was talking about open skies, and it is still apparently talking about open skies. Although it is a matter primarily for Lord Mandelson's Department, I guess, in that commercial area there seems to be a major cultural and business difference between us still, which we do not seem to have any influence over. Although we have rightly focused on foreign policy, open skies is such a big trade issue that it has a foreign policy dimension, doesn't it?

Mr Lewis: Mr Mackinlay, you will understand if I decide not to tread on Lord Mandelson's shoes. I do not have a detailed response.

Chairman: Perhaps you can write to us.

Mr Lewis: I can write to the Committee on that issue.⁵

Chairman: Minister and Mr Rankin, thank you very much for coming along today. This has been a valuable session, and we have covered a great deal of ground. Early in the new year we will produce our report, so we found this session extremely useful. I thank all the officials in your Department who helped us with this inquiry, both those in the United States, in Washington and New York, and the people we deal with daily here in London. I wish them all a very happy Christmas.

Mr Lewis: May I return the favour, and wish all Members of the Committee a very merry Christmas and a happy new year?

⁵ Ev 150

Written evidence

Written evidence from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has prepared this memorandum for the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee inquiry into relations between the United Kingdom and the United States, and the implications of US foreign policy for United Kingdom interests. We welcome this opportunity to demonstrate the work the UK is doing with the US, which involves many government departments and agencies. UKTI is submitting a separate memorandum on trade promotion and investment issues. The Committee will be receiving other evidence, written and oral, both before and after their visit to the USA. This memorandum relates primarily to the FCO's areas of responsibility.

The Basis of the Bilateral Relationship

2. As the Foreign Secretary has previously stated, the United States remains our most important bilateral ally, and has the greatest capacity to do good of any country in the world today. The relationship between the two countries is broadly based and deeply rooted. The key elements are:

- *History.* The US and the UK are linked by history—not only through the colonial period and the legacy of the Common Law, but through our alliance in two world wars and throughout the Cold War.
- *Values.* We share values like democracy, the rule of law and free markets, and seek to promote them outside our borders.
- *Culture.* The English language remains a great unifying force; and the popular culture of films, music, television and the written word build bridges between the peoples of the two countries.
- *Personal ties.* An estimated 678,000 British citizens live in the US; around 130,000 US citizens live in the UK. Last year almost 3 million Americans visited the UK and over 4.5 million Britons visited the US—whether as tourists, to study or to do business. Over 47,000 US citizens enrolled in courses of study in the UK in 2008.
- *Business links.* The US remains the largest investor in the UK (and the UK is the US's number one investment destination in Europe), with US investment, totalling \$399 billion at the end of 2007, supporting over 1 million jobs; the UK is the largest investor in the US (total investment stock of \$411 billion at the end of 2007), supporting almost 1 million jobs. The US is the UK's top export destination.
- *Security, Defence and Intelligence.* The UK's national security depends on our uniquely close partnership with the US, in NATO and bilaterally. At its heart, the relationship relies on sharing the burdens of nuclear deterrence, the benefits of intelligence and technology, and the risks of military operations. As a result, we have maintained an exceptional level of trust and understanding.
- *Science links.* The US and the UK are each other's most important partners in science collaboration. 30% of the UK's international collaborations are with the US—more than double any other country—and 13% of the US's are with the UK.
- *Shared interests.* All our history and culture and the mutual benefits of our economic and security ties would not add up to the relationship we have unless we also had shared interests—in a peaceful, prosperous and just international order.

The Nature and Value of the Bilateral Relationship, and its contribution to Global Security

3. It is obvious that the world of 2009 is very different from the world of 1941, when Churchill and Roosevelt set out their shared hopes for the future, post-war world in the Atlantic Charter. But it is also very different from the world of 2001, when the Committee last reported on British-US relations (<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmfaaff/327/32702.htm>). In particular, in recent years countries like China, India and Brazil have seen dramatic rates of economic growth, and have begun to play a greater role in global governance. The traditional powers of North America and Europe, including the US and UK, are no longer the exclusive poles of global power that they might have been in the past. Each of us has had to adapt our foreign and economic policies to the new reality.

4. But the United States is still the only superpower, economically, diplomatically and militarily. Its GDP, which makes up more than 23% of world GDP (according to World Bank figures for 2008) is larger than that of any other country—almost three times larger than that of the second largest economy, Japan. Even if current growth trends are sustained, China's GDP is unlikely to overtake that of the US for more than a decade. The US's combination of high spending on science and research, ready access to venture capital and its entrepreneurial business culture has given it, since the Second World War, a technological lead over other countries. It has unrivalled military power and political influence across the globe. It is a key member of the global system of multilateral institutions.

5. Against that background, it is clear that the UK's ability to achieve its own international objectives will be immeasurably greater if we share those objectives with the US. Thus the maintenance of a strong transatlantic relationship has been one of the cornerstones of British foreign policy since the Second World War. Our partnership, both bilaterally and in international organisations, has made an immense contribution to global security—throughout the Cold War, through our membership in NATO; and since, through our participation in international peacekeeping, stabilisation and enforcement operations in the Balkans, the Middle East, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

The Alignment of UK and US Interests

6. Powerful as it is, the US still needs effective international partners which share its aims and are ready to share the task of achieving them. The UK is still regarded as one of the most reliable US partners. As President Obama said on 1 April during his visit to London “The United States and the United Kingdom have stood together through thick and thin, through war and peace, through hard times and prosperity. We have always emerged stronger by standing together”.

7. All countries have national interests which are particular to them and not shared with others. The UK and US are no exception. But to a very great extent we also have shared interests—in combating violent extremism around the world, and addressing the poverty, ignorance and conflict which underlies it; in promoting good governance; in supporting development and economic growth to the benefit of the world's poorest countries. Britain's willingness to support the US after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, and subsequently to send troops to fight alongside US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan built on the common values and the instinct of both countries to look to the other in times of difficulty. But it also reflected the common interest we had in fighting the scourge of terrorism.

The Special Relationship and UK influence

8. As the Prime Minister has said, no international partnership in recent history has served the world better than the special relationship between Britain and the United States. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton commented after meeting the Foreign Secretary on 29 July “Our special relationship is a driver for greater peace, progress and prosperity, not only for our own people, but around the world”.

9. We are confident that the special relationship will endure, because it is not just a relationship of sentiment but a “partnership of purpose”, as the Prime Minister told the Joint Session of the US Congress on 4 March this year, based on our evaluation of our current interests, not just the depth of our shared culture and history. As President Obama said on 3 March: “The relationship is not only special and strong but will only get stronger as time goes on”.

10. We have a uniquely close relationship with the US also in the scope of our co-operation—both in terms of the areas of the world where we work together, and the issues on which we co-ordinate. Relations with the Administration of President Obama have built on the tradition of wide-ranging co-operation. The new Administration spent its first months in office reviewing US policies inherited from President Bush. The Embassy in Washington and other British officials were able to contribute to many of those reviews and especially those in areas of most importance to us such as Afghanistan/Pakistan, nuclear disarmament and the Middle East. The Prime Minister and President Obama and their respective officials worked together to prepare the G20 summit in London in April, showing that this reflex operates in the international economic field as well as in foreign and security policy. Britain has similarly established very strong working links on climate change with the new US Administration and, through our network of posts in the US, with regional leaders as well.

11. This does not mean, however, that the UK and the US always agree, or that British governments defer to the US when we occasionally disagree. The UK-US dialogue is based on mutual respect and candour which is rare between international partners, however close. The strength of the relationship lies in part in our ability to maintain a frank and open relationship with the United States even when we disagree. The UK's ability to express a different view to that of the US, coming as it does from a close friend without a hidden agenda, is something which senior US officials tell us they find valuable. But our influence is achieved not through megaphone diplomacy but through persuasive and evidence-based arguments, which in turn depends on our shared economic and financial interests and on the effectiveness of our diplomatic networks, Armed Forces and intelligence and security agencies.

12. The later paragraphs of this memorandum will set out in more detail all the elements which link together to create and maintain this relationship, which include our shared interests in international security (including our defence and intelligence co-operation); in global issues such as the world economic crisis and climate security; and in tackling regional conflicts whether in the Middle East, Afghanistan or elsewhere.

The Implications of Changes in the Nature of the Relationship

13. We do not foresee any fundamental changes in the nature of the UK's bilateral relationship with the US, given that it is based on enduring common interests. But it will evolve, not least in the light of the development of other bilateral and multilateral relationships. In recent decades, successive British governments have sought to promote the security and prosperity of the UK and advance its global interests by establishing Britain as a leading partner in the European Union while maintaining a strong link to the United States.

14. The British Government does not believe it has to choose between strengthening its ties with other European countries through its EU membership and maintaining a close relationship with the US. Indeed, in the modern, globalised world, where the emphasis is on finding multilateral solutions to global problems, the Government wants to see the EU and the US working closely together, providing leadership to the international community. Good relations between the UK and the US and between the UK and the other EU Member States are a necessary condition of that close transatlantic co-operation. The US Administration share our views on the importance of a strong Europe, as indicated by Secretary Clinton's comments in Brussels in March 2009 "President Obama and I intend to energize the transatlantic relationship and to promote a strong European Union—and more fundamentally, a strong Europe... A strong Europe is a strong partner for the United States, and the Obama Administration intends for the United States to be a strong partner for Europe".

15. The Government is not and cannot be complacent about the working of the UK-US bilateral relationship or the broader transatlantic one. The United States has a complex political system and foreign policy-making process, and a federal system in which important powers are reserved for the States. This requires not just good high level access, but a broad range of contacts developed across all levels of the Administration. It also means taking full account of the important role played by Congress and the increased overlap between domestic and international priorities. It requires the ability to influence powerful lobby groups—including those whose interests or outlook may be opposed to those of the UK. It means being able to deal directly with the powerful US media. It means maintaining a high profile and visible interest in the individual states—not merely to promote British commercial links but to influence public opinion and opinion formers across the US. Our work on climate change across the United States is a good example of how our network of nine Consulates General and the Embassy have influenced the domestic US debate and the policy of certain states. The Consulates are also key for our work on Best Practice, where they can identify innovative ways of delivering public services that might provide useful lessons for domestically focused Whitehall departments.

16. In short, the UK-US relationship goes far wider than traditional co-operation over foreign and security policy. The comprehensive nature of the relationship is reflected in the work carried out by our posts in the US. They are engaged in almost all areas of public policy from public health to trade policy, from transport to immigration and civil liberties, from aid policy to financial services and banking, from welfare to education, from drugs control to policing and so on and so forth. Whilst bringing together each of these strands underscores the strength of the overall relationship, this memorandum will focus on foreign policy.

II. CURRENT UK OBJECTIVES IN THE UNITED STATES

17. Among our key objectives in relations with the US are:

(a) Economic

- (i) To promote an open, high growth global economy by: working with the US, bilaterally and in the G20 framework, to deliver robust and co-ordinated policy responses to mitigate the impact of the global downturn; promoting the reform of the International Financial Institutions (and other international bodies); resisting protectionist responses and committing to open markets, including liberalising EU-US air services; and delivering an ambitious, pro-development conclusion to the Doha Development Agenda.

(b) Political

- (i) To build deep and lasting relationships with the Administration, the Congress, State Governors and their Administrations, the Mayors of big cities and senior figures in the business community throughout the country in order to influence US policy in priority areas for HMG and in order to contribute to UK policy development through best practice exchange in line with Whitehall priorities.
- (ii) To encourage the US Administration to sign up to an ambitious post-2012 climate change treaty and the Congress to ratify it, and to strengthen UK/EU/US co-operation on energy issues.

(c) Security

- (i) To strengthen our co-operation with the US in the prevention and management of conflict and instability in regions of key national interest to the UK, in particular Afghanistan/Pakistan, the Middle East, areas of conflict in Africa and in the European neighbourhood, on the basis

of shared analysis of countries at risk, a common approach to peace support operations (including support for the UN's role) and a closer identity of views on the underlying causes of conflict and instability.

- (ii) To harness US capabilities and influence US policy to develop a shared approach to preventing states from acquiring WMD, to align more closely our positions on global nuclear disarmament.
 - (iii) To co-ordinate all aspects of our counter-terrorism (CT) activity.
- (d) Bilateral
- (i) To deliver first-class public services in support of trade and investment, managed migration and British citizens abroad.

III. THE ISSUES

The Global Economy

18. The global economic crisis has highlighted the interdependency of economies and especially of their financial systems. The UK and US have worked closely together in the G20 and other fora in order to tackle the greatest economic and financial crisis the world has seen since the 1930s.

19. The key current issue facing the UK and US economies is securing a sustainable global economic recovery. In response to the economic crisis, the G20—under the UK's Presidency—has taken unprecedented action to tackle the global downturn. The London Summit agreed a \$1.1 trillion package of measures to restore growth and jobs and rebuild confidence and trust in the financial system.

20. The UK and US are both committed to the pledge made at the London Summit to restore confidence, growth, and jobs; repair the financial system to restore lending; strengthen financial regulation to rebuild trust; fund and reform our international financial institutions to overcome this crisis and prevent future ones; promote global trade and investment and reject protectionism, to underpin prosperity; and build an inclusive, green, and sustainable recovery. Leaders also agreed at the London Summit, the principles underpinning reform of the global banking system including: bringing the shadow banking system, including hedge funds, within the global regulatory net; new international accounting standards; regulation of credit rating agencies; and an end to tax havens that do not transfer information on request. The countries also continue to work together as part of the G20 on reform of the International Financial Institutions.

21. Whereas preparations for the London Summit focused on agreeing the immediate response to the crisis, the focus of the UK-US relationship for the months ahead will be on promoting a sustained recovery, including identifying and supporting future sources of growth. The UK's engagement with the US in preparation for the G20 summit in Pittsburgh on 24–25 September has been an important step in securing sustainable recovery.

22. The UK and US trade and investment relationship is one of the most quantifiable aspects of the "special relationship"—(The US is the largest investor in the UK, as the UK is the largest investor in the US and UK exports to the US amount to around £70 billion per year).

Afghanistan and Pakistan

23. There are few areas of contemporary foreign policy in which the UK and US co-operate as closely as in Afghanistan and Pakistan—in diplomatic, military and development terms. The UK and US share the same aims of promoting peace, prosperity and stability in the region. We recognise that Afghanistan and Pakistan are at very different stages of development, but they face shared challenges, so we have promoted complementary strategies but different approaches to the problems in the region. Since the inauguration of President Obama, the US has recalibrated its approach to Afghanistan and Pakistan through a review of operations (in which the UK was closely consulted), and the conclusions of its new strategy (announced March 2009) showed a high degree of convergence with the UK strategy presented by the Prime Minister to the House of Commons in December 2007. The Prime Minister underlined this when he presented our updated strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan to the House of Commons in April 2009.

24. Our aim is, as far as possible, seamless joint development and implementation of policy. It is taken forward through frequent contacts between UK and US civil and military representatives in Kabul, Lashkar Gah, Islamabad, Brussels, London and Washington. In Kabul, our embassies share information and analysis on a daily basis; co-ordinating with the UN and international partners. Apart from our Embassies and military commanders, our co-ordination involves frequent contacts between the UK's Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, and his opposite number, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke. A senior British diplomat has been attached to Ambassador Holbrooke's staff, contributing insights which the US recognise as valuable.

Afghanistan

25. Following the September 11th terrorist attacks, the US has been at the forefront of the international community's efforts in Afghanistan since 2001. The UK supported the US response in Afghanistan and provided a significant number of troops to the initial phases of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). This support has continued and we are the second largest contributor to the NATO-led ISAF mission in Afghanistan. President Obama praised the UK effort in Afghanistan saying, "The contribution of the British is critical, this is not an American mission."

26. The US is the largest single contributor of troops to both ISAF and OEF, with around 63,000 troops currently deployed. It provides the Commander of ISAF (with a British Lieutenant General as his deputy). It is also the largest contributor of bilateral aid, committing in excess of \$20 billion in reconstruction aid and pledging more than \$10 billion over the next two years. The US is the lead G8 partner nation on the training of the Afghan National Army (ANA).

27. Close co-ordination of UK and US resources in Afghanistan takes place through a wide range of structures. A key example is UK and US military forces and civilian experts, including development and Rule of Law specialists, working with Afghan counterparts and other international partners to deliver our comprehensive approach on the ground in the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Lashkar Gah. We have also been working with the US as they develop their civilian plans, to share our experience in Helmand and in national level development programmes and encourage them to align their assistance behind Afghan development priorities and strengthen the capacity of Afghan government institutions.

28. UK-US military co-operation has recently been successfully demonstrated with the deployment of the US Marine Corps 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade (2 MEB) to Helmand earlier this year. 2 MEB, known as Task Force Leatherneck, have their headquarters in Camp Bastion, the main UK logistics base in Helmand. Recent UK and US military operations in Helmand were conducted simultaneously and shared the common goals of clearing the insurgency from major population centres to ensure lasting security in the long-term and a safe environment for voting in the Presidential election in late August. The value of UK troops to the US was summed up recently by General Petraeus: "I have always been impressed by the courage, capacity for independent action, skill and exceptional will of your soldiers". Regarding the British forces deployed to Afghanistan he said: "British troops have been in a very tough place and they have done exceedingly well".

29. We also enjoy strong co-operation with the US on countering narcotics in Afghanistan. The UK and US have established the Joint Narcotics Analysis Centre (JNAC) and the Inter-agency Operations Co-ordination Centre (IOCC), to improve law enforcement co-ordination mechanisms and to tackle the drugs trade in Afghanistan. The UK also supports the US-led CN Joint Inter Agency Task Force, which conducts inter-agency operations against illicit trafficking. Additionally the UK and US (DfID, USAID and the PRT [Provincial Reconstruction Team]) jointly funded the CN (counter-narcotics) Plan for Helmand in 2008–09.

Pakistan

30. The US has significantly stepped up its engagement with Pakistan, given its strategic importance, fragility and relationship to the situation in Afghanistan. The US is now, followed by the UK, the largest bilateral donor to Pakistan. We have been working to persuade the US to bring its assistance closer in line with UK practices, including channelling funding through Government structures and working towards a shared goal of promoting strategic, long-term partnerships with Pakistan, based on mutual co-operation.

31. In particular, the UK and US are working closely together to support Pakistan's efforts to tackle terrorism effectively and to co-ordinate our own CT programmes. Both the US and UK have encouraged Pakistan to go faster and further in its efforts to counter terrorist groups operating on its soil, including those that threaten India, and are helping to build its capacity to do so. We have welcomed Pakistan's efforts to counter Pakistani Taliban groups operating in North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and the Government of Pakistan's commitment to a comprehensive strategy for stabilising the border areas. As part of our wider programme of defence engagement, we are also working with the US to build the capacity of the Pakistani security services.

32. Effective co-ordination of development and capacity building programmes in Pakistan is essential; and we are working to ensure that international efforts in Pakistan are as joined up as possible. The UK and US were instrumental in establishing the Friends of Democratic Pakistan (FoDP) group, designed to galvanise international political support for Pakistan's long-term development and to help the Pakistani Government to tackle the serious development, security and economic problems it faces. With the advice and support of UK and US experts, the Government of NWFP has designed a stabilisation plan for the Swat/Malakand region, which was announced at the FoDP Ministerial meeting on 25 August. We will continue to work closely with the US to ensure that the implementation of this strategy and the wider FoDP process is fully supported by the international community.

Iran

33. As two of the members of the E3 + 3 group of countries, the US and the UK have worked closely in concert since 2005 to find a diplomatic solution to the Iran nuclear issue. The UK's diplomatic presence in Tehran informs regular exchanges with the US Administration. Our close co-ordination over policy reflects our shared assessment of the security threat posed by the continuing development of Iran's nuclear programme, and its destabilising effect on the wider region. The UK and the US are both clear that Iran must take urgent steps to assure the international community that its nuclear programme is for exclusively peaceful purposes.

34. As members of the E3 + 3, the US and the UK are both fully committed to the "dual-track strategy" of pressure and engagement. Work on the pressure track has included close US-UK co-ordination during the planning and implementation of five UN Security Council resolutions on Iran, including three which impose sanctions. On the engagement track the UK and the US worked together with the rest of the E3 + 3 to assemble a package of incentives to encourage Iran to halt its programme and enter negotiations. The offer was made in June 2006 and renewed in June 2008, and would provide Iran with everything it needs for a modern civil nuclear programme, as well as many other benefits.

35. The US conducted a review of its Iran policy in early 2009, following the inauguration of President Obama. Following that review, the US made clear that it was now willing to engage directly with Iran on matters of shared concern, including in any negotiations on the nuclear file. This shift in the US position enabled the E3 + 3 to re-issue an invitation to Iran to enter talks about its nuclear programme in April 2009. The UK fully supported the position adopted by the new US Administration. We consider that the offer of Governors and their Administrations, the Mayors of big cities and senior figures in the business approach.

36. We envisage that the UK and US approach to Iran will remain closely aligned over the coming months, during the period in which Iran's response to the E3 + 3's April 2009 invitation will be assessed.

Middle East Peace Process

37. The US and UK fully share the aim of a settlement in the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP). In his Cairo speech of 4 June, President Obama clearly outlined the urgency for a peaceful solution. We welcome the emphasis placed on the need for all parties to co-operate and work towards a two state solution.

38. President Obama has engaged early in his term on the MEPP, both personally and through the appointment of his envoy, Sen. George Mitchell. We support US efforts: to secure a freeze on current Israeli settlement activity, and for Arab countries to demonstrate their willingness to progress towards the normalisation of relations with Israel, as first set out in the Arab Peace Initiative. This will be vital in order to restart negotiations between the parties.

39. The Government has been fully engaged in support of US efforts. The Prime Minister has held discussions with President Obama, Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas. The Foreign Secretary has discussed a number of issues related to the MEPP with Secretary of State Clinton and Envoy Mitchell. The Government has also urged Israel and Arab partners to respond positively to US efforts, with the Foreign Secretary personally engaging with his counterparts on a regular basis.

*Counter-Terrorism**Common Threat*

40. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in the US and 7 July 2005 in the UK, and attacks against US and UK targets overseas, demonstrated the nature of the threat that continues to face both our countries (and others) today, a threat identified in the UK's 2009 National Security Strategy [http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/reports/national_security.aspx] as "the most significant immediate security threat to the UK". Al-Qaeda has sought to bring together disparate groups, networks and individuals into a single global movement with an anti-western ideology at its heart aimed principally against the US and the UK.

Shared Response

41. The US is our most important partner in protecting UK interests at home and overseas from terrorist attacks and for reducing the threat globally in the long run. Strategically and operationally we work very closely with the US, including through our network of posts in key countries as well as in London and Washington. We have a shared assessment of the threat and generally share analysis of the solutions. We share intelligence, collaborate closely on law enforcement and enjoy regular official contacts at almost every level. This far outstrips the level of interaction and co-operation with other nations. This collaboration has led to the disruption of terrorist attacks in the UK and overseas, for example in Operation Overt. British, and American, lives are saved as a result of this co-operation.

42. We work together in the fields of defence, diplomacy and development to deny al-Qaeda and other extremists safe haven in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen and elsewhere, and to help build the capabilities of such countries to deal with a terrorist threat. For example, in Pakistan our broad strategies are increasingly aligned and designed to support the Government of Pakistan itself in dealing with the difficult issues it faces. We co-ordinate our counter-terrorism capacity building efforts in third countries with the US. Although the US has more resources, the UK can sometimes commit funds more easily, or provide specialised capabilities.

Future Co-operation

43. Some of the strategic factors that currently sustain international terrorism are likely to persist including non resolution of conflicts and disputes, existence of ungoverned spaces and failing states and the wider availability of technology. We will therefore continue to work with the US on these issues.

44. The ideology associated with al-Qaeda is likely to be more resilient than the group itself. We therefore want to increase our co-operation with the US on countering radicalisation and extremism (our Prevent agenda, the US' "Countering Violent Extremism"). We are increasingly sharing knowledge on this subject and co-ordinating our strategic communications to challenge the rhetoric of al-Qaeda in local contexts (eg in the tribal areas of Pakistan) and globally through the internet.

45. Our close relationship, and our pre-9/11 experience of countering terrorism, means we are able to discuss frankly some difficult and sensitive issues such as those relating to Guantánamo Bay. We remain closely engaged with the US Administration on these issues.

46. US CT capabilities are enormous, and help us achieve UK counter-terrorism objectives (both domestically and overseas). Without them, it would be considerably harder for us to achieve our objectives. We continuously consider how the UK can add value to the CT relationship.

NATO

47. NATO has been the cornerstone of the UK's defence and security and an essential transatlantic link for 60 years. President Obama said in January 2009 that "Our nations share more than a commitment to our common security—we share a set of common democratic values. That is why the bond that links us together cannot be broken, and why NATO is a unique alliance in the history of the world."¹ The UK supports this analysis.

48. The US plays a critical role at the centre of the Alliance, as the world's strongest military power, the largest troop contributor to NATO operations and the Ally shouldering the largest share of NATO's budgets. The UK and US have many shared priorities for the activity and future of NATO. We want to see an Alliance that: is flexible and capable enough to tackle a wide range of threats both within the Euro-Atlantic area and further afield; works in partnership with other international actors to resolve conflict; and promotes our shared values of democracy, good governance and liberty. The UK and US have worked together closely to promote ongoing reform of the Alliance and its structures to ensure that it is best placed to deal with the evolving challenges we face.

49. At the Strasbourg/Kehl Summit in April 2009 the Alliance commissioned work on a new Strategic Concept for agreement at the 2010 Summit in Lisbon. This will set a vision for NATO's future role and we expect it to tackle: operational capability; reform of the Alliance; enlargement; relations with partners and other international organisations, especially the EU; and NATO's role in tackling new threats such as cyber and climate security; in addition to continuing to support a NATO role in addressing threats to our security beyond our borders, including in Afghanistan through increased use of a comprehensive, civil-military approach. The former Secretary of State for Defence, the Rt Hon Geoff Hoon MP, has been appointed by the NATO Secretary General to his Group of Experts, chaired by former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, which will advise the Secretary General on the evolution of this concept.

50. The UK believes that a capable and effective NATO will continue to be of primary importance to our security, and to the security of all its members. The new US Administration has made clear that they share this view. The new US Ambassador to NATO, Ivo Daalder, said in July 2009 that "The North Atlantic Alliance has always been the place where Washington looks first for international partners. It does so today and will do so tomorrow."²

Nuclear issues

51. As part of our strong defence ties, the UK and US co-operate closely on nuclear deterrence. The US and UK provide all the nuclear forces committed to the defence of NATO and co-operate closely in all elements of the Alliance's nuclear business. Deterrence, based on an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional capabilities, remains a core element of NATO's overall strategy.

52. Our relationship is underpinned by the 1958 UK-US Agreement for Co-operation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defence Purposes (MDA). This treaty enables exchanges between the UK and US on nuclear weapon and propulsion matters and helps both nations to maintain safe, secure and reliable nuclear stockpiles and propulsion systems as well as providing a unique opportunity for peer review between the two countries' nuclear specialists.

53. The UK nuclear deterrent is fully operationally independent. The decision making, use and command and control of the system remain entirely sovereign to the UK. Only the Prime Minister can authorise use of the system. Our nuclear warheads are also designed and manufactured in the UK. We procure certain other elements of the system, such as the D5 Trident missile bodies, from the US under the auspices of the

¹ Letter from President Obama to the Secretary General of NATO and the Members of the North Atlantic Council, 20 January 2009—http://nato.usmission.gov/dossier/Obama_NATO_Letter.asp

² Ambassador Ivo H. Daalder, Permanent Representative of the United States to NATO, Transatlantic Forum, Berlin, 1 July 2009—http://nato.usmission.gov/Speeches/Daalder_FA_Berlin070109.asp

1963 Polaris Sales Agreement, which was amended for Trident in 1982. This arrangement enables the UK to maintain an operationally independent nuclear deterrent far more cost-effectively than would otherwise be the case. This procurement relationship does not undermine the independence of the deterrent, nor has the US ever sought to exploit it as a means to influence UK foreign policy.

54. The new US Administration is currently undertaking a major Nuclear Posture Review, due to report early next year. We are fully engaged with the review process, including through high-level consultations and visits to ensure that the UK's equities both on nuclear deterrence and disarmament are well understood.

Climate Security

55. The UK is and aims to remain one of the Administration's closest partners on climate issues due to our experience of developing and implementing climate policies, and the substantial diplomatic resources we dedicate to climate issues. Climate change has been part of the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary's conversations with their opposite numbers and there are regular video-conferences between The Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change and Todd Stern, the State Department's Special Envoy for Climate Change.

56. The UK and US broadly share goals for action on climate change. Internationally both supported references in the 2009 G8 communiqué to keeping temperature rise within 2° and to developed countries collectively reducing their emissions by 80% by 2050. The UK is working to encourage Congress to pass ambitious legislation as soon as possible. There is strong interest amongst legislators in the experience of UK businesses and consumers of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme and other climate legislation. This year we have organised several high level events attended by members of Congress and the Administration.

57. In addition the UK has been working closely with the US National Intelligence Council on climate change and international security. We also have been feeding in our views to the Department of Defence as part of their consultative process on the Quadrennial Defence Review and we have jointly explored the impacts of climate change on the Arctic.

58. The UK is the US's partner of choice on climate change at a regional level. Our Embassy and nine Consulates General regularly exchange views on the UK's climate and energy experience with local government, business and other stakeholders. Five US states (California, Florida, Michigan, Wisconsin and Virginia) have signed bilateral agreements on climate change and energy with the UK. These are primarily focussed on sharing best practise for low carbon economic growth. Three US regional emissions trading schemes continue to seek UK expertise based on our experience designing, implementing and operating under the EU's Emissions Trading Scheme.

59. The UK is uniquely well positioned to work with the US in building momentum for the transition to a low-carbon economy, given our close relationships with multiple US agencies, and our advanced domestic programme as laid out in the Climate Change Act and National Low Carbon Transition Plan. The US is likely to continue to be interested in the UK experience as it develops and implements its own domestic programme.

Other Security Issues

Cyber Security

60. The digital information and communications infrastructure known as "cyberspace" underpins much of modern society and is critical to the economy, civil infrastructure and government across the developed world. In recent years awareness of the vulnerability of this infrastructure to external threats has increased. In 2009 both the US and UK have responded to these threats by developing new structures to manage cyber security on a cross-government basis. The US has created a new Cyber Security Directorate with the National Security Council staff, is strengthening cyber security structures in the Department of Homeland Security, and will create on 1 October a new 4* Cyber Command in the Department of Defense; the UK has created a new office of Cyber Security in the Cabinet Office and a Cyber Security Operations Centre, a multi-agency body hosted in GCHQ in Cheltenham.

61. There are compelling reasons for ensuring that the US and UK Governments remain closely aligned on this issue. Our infrastructures are tightly coupled, and the key industry players are multinational. The dominance of US industry in internet service provision makes partnership with the US essential for the UK, but the UK's position as a global communications hub and as a major inward investor in critical infrastructure services in the US provides incentives for the US to engage with the UK as well. Finally, cyber security is becoming an increasingly important component of overall security collaboration between our two countries. There are, however, countervailing pressures: for example, the ICT sector is intensely competitive, which makes players nervous about sharing threat and vulnerability information widely. And privacy concerns may be a constraint.

62. This is a rapidly developing field and our strategic approaches are still evolving. The UK is well plugged into the new structures emerging in the US. A good working relationship has developed between the National Security Council staff and the Cabinet Office, and operational relationships between the relevant

agencies in the US and UK are building on close collaboration that goes back many decades. It will be important to ensure that the importance of this co-operation is recognised more widely, including as the US Congress develops new legislation in this area.

Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

63. The UK-US bilateral relationship in the OSCE remains strong. Our interests are broadly aligned on key policy issues across its three dimensions—Human, Politico-Military, and Economic and Environmental. We both recognise the OSCE's prominent role in conflict prevention and resolution, not least in terms of the unresolved conflicts in the former Soviet Union. We both value the OSCE's key role in advancing democracy, human rights and good government across the OSCE space. We both strongly support the work of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) on human rights and election-related activities.

64. We have worked closely with the US in response to President Medvedev's initiative on European security. Following close co-operation between the UK, US and other partners, the Informal OSCE Ministerial held in Corfu on 27–28 June 2009 established, amongst other things, the centrality of the OSCE for this debate and the importance of the trans-atlantic dimension.

65. We continue to support the US-led negotiations on the Parallel Actions Package with Russia aimed at bringing about the earliest possible entry into force of the Adapted Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty and, meanwhile, Russian resumption of implementation of the CFE.

European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)

66. Both the UK and the US support and encourage the development of the EU's role in crisis management, and of EU-US co-operation in tackling international security problems. President Obama made clear even before his election that he was determined to intensify the US-Europe relationship, saying in Berlin in July 2008 that "In this century...[America needs] . . . a strong European Union that deepens the security and prosperity of this continent". Vice President Biden further confirmed the Administration's support for ESDP, in Munich in February 2009 saying that "We also support the further strengthening of European defence, an increased role for the European Union in preserving peace and security, a fundamentally stronger NATO-EU partnership and deeper co-operation with countries outside the Alliance who share our common goals and principles". The UK agrees with these views.

67. The UK supports the involvement of third states in EU civilian crisis management missions as a way to widen the expertise available to a mission and to further internationalise engagement in a crisis. A country with significant international experience such as the US is ideally placed to bring additional skills and capacity to an ESDP mission. The growing confidence of the US in ESDP is shown most obviously through the fact that 75 US personnel are for the first time taking part in an EU mission, the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, as well as the close and effective co-operation that has been established between EU and US military operations, for example in the counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia, where the activity of the EU (to which the UK is a key contributor, providing the operational HQ), NATO and US-led Coalition Maritime Forces is successfully co-ordinated by a joint mechanism. We also work with the US to strengthen the EU-NATO relationship and help to ensure that their efforts are mutually reinforcing.

The Comprehensive Approach

68. The UK and US governments both recognise the importance of the Comprehensive Approach (CA) to civil-military co-operation in the delivery of operational effect, and are leading exponents in its international promotion and implementation. The UK and US are working together closely on various training initiatives in order to develop deeper shared understanding of the CA and the most effective means for its delivery and further development. We also work together on joint planning and conduct of military and civil-military exercises, as we have both recognised the need to develop CA multilaterally and the need to improve co-operation between institutions.

69. The planning and delivery by the Civil-Military Mission in Helmand (CMMH) based in Lashkar Gah, Afghanistan, best illustrates the extent of the alignment between our concepts and the close co-ordination of UK and US civilian and military capabilities. Here UK and US military forces, civilian experts, their Afghan counterparts and other international partners are working towards delivering a comprehensive approach to conflict resolution and stabilisation.

70. The UK Government submitted evidence on the implementation of the CA as part of the recent Defence Select Committee Inquiry into the Comprehensive Approach, including in response to specific questions as to how the UK was working with the US

[http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/defence_committee/def090325_no_26.cfm]

Conventional Arms Control

71. On 3 December 2008 the UK signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). The Convention prohibits the use, development, production, stockpiling, retention or transfer of cluster munitions. The US did not participate in the negotiations that led to the adoption of the CCM and has not signed the Convention. Despite this, we have found some common ground and continue to work to expand this. Article 21 of the CCM provides for continued engagement in military co-operation and operations with non-States Parties, which was vital for the UK's ability to operate alongside the US and other NATO Allies. The Article also places an obligation on States Parties to encourage non-States Parties to join the Convention. The UK

will play its full part in these efforts. Recent changes to US policy on cluster munitions are positive steps: after 2018 the US will only employ cluster munitions containing sub-munitions that, after arming, do not result in more than 1% unexploded ordnance. Congress has also included a provision, prohibiting exports of cluster munitions that have a failure rate higher than 1%, in the financial year 2009 Omnibus Appropriation legislation.

72. In parallel with these steps taken nationally, the US and UK are participating together in the ongoing negotiations aimed at adopting a protocol on cluster munitions within the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

US-UK Defence Equipment Collaboration

73. The UK enjoys a close relationship with the US which covers a broad range of joint capabilities and programmes: the development of high-tech, state of the art equipment to off-the-shelf purchase of components. This delivers enhanced interoperability as well as helping to meet the UK's priority of securing the best equipment for our Armed Forces.

74. UK-owned defence companies have a major presence in the US which represents the UK's second largest defence export market. Currently, the UK and the US are partners in 22 collaborative equipment programmes, the most significant of which is the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) programme. The UK is the US' only Level 1 (ie closest) JSF partner which allows the UK to have a major influence on the basic design of the aircraft and other areas of the programme. The programme contributes significantly to the strength of our defence relationship and has reinforced the US-UK industrial relationship, with over 100 UK companies involved in the programme.

75. The US Government and industry have also provided invaluable support to the UK Armed Forces, in acquiring equipment, ranging from Reaper Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Mastiff Armoured vehicles. The US Government also actively helped to expedite export licenses to meet Urgent Operational Requirements in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

76. The US International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) control the export of equipment, technology and other information on the US Munitions List and can be a significant bureaucratic hurdle for industry in obtaining US export licences. In 2007 Prime Minister Blair and President Bush signed the US-UK Defence Trade Co-operation Treaty (considered by the House of Commons Defence Committee on 11 December 2007), which seeks to relieve this burden for the transfer of specified categories of equipment, technology and information. This is currently awaiting ratification by the Senate. This would allow the UK to access, more quickly, material required to support operations, help improve interoperability between our forces and enable our defence industries to work more closely together. The UK continues to work closely with the US Administration to prepare for ratification and subsequent implementation.

Ballistic Missile Defence

77. Like the US, the UK recognises that there is an increasing threat from ballistic missiles which could carry weapons of mass destruction. We welcome the recent US review which demonstrates again the real US commitment to the defence of Europe, and continued close co-operation between the US and NATO allies on developing anti-missile systems. The new missile defence architecture aims to provide a robust and timely defence to the short- and medium-range ballistic missile threats that the NATO Alliance is most likely to face in the near future. As it evolves, the proposed NATO architecture will also be able to address the potential threat of longer-range missiles that may develop in a longer timeframe. As the US have set out, their new programme will enable the threat to be addressed earlier and more flexibly, based on proven, effective technology; be able to cover the whole NATO European territory, including the UK should the threat evolve; and which can be shared across NATO.

78. In 2003 the UK signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the US to facilitate bilateral information exchanges, undertake co-operative work, and allow for fair opportunities for UK industry to participate in the US BMD programme. The UK also directly supports the US BMD systems by providing early warning information from the radar at RAF Fylingdales, and by allowing the US to use a satellite downlink at RAF Menwith Hill. This will continue. The UK has no plans to host further BMD assets, or develop a BMD capability of our own, although we keep this policy under review.

Non-Proliferation Treaty

79. Strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), is a key United Kingdom foreign policy priority. We have long recognised that US leadership is essential if we are to achieve it. The Government has worked intensively in the United States and elsewhere over the last two years to make the case for an ambitious but balanced strengthening of the NPT's three pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to advocate the long-term goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. We warmly welcome President Obama's leadership and personal commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, including the eventual abolition of nuclear weapons. This was a major factor in the much improved atmospherics at the May 2009 NPT Preparatory Committee. President Obama's praise for the United Kingdom's "Road to 2010" plan, published on 16 July, demonstrates the complementarity of UK and US approaches. We will continue to work closely with the United States and the other Nuclear Weapon States to exercise political and moral leadership on non-proliferation, set out a clear and credible forward plan towards multilateral nuclear disarmament and

achieve a clear mandate at the 2010 NPT Review Conference to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We welcome the conference that the US will be hosting early next year on nuclear security, and are also encouraged by the commitment of the US and Russia to conclude a successor to START I by the end of 2009.

Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)

80. The UK works closely with the US Government on CTBT issues. UK experts enjoy excellent working relationships with US officials on the many policy and technical aspects of the CTBT. This is particularly true for the development of the CTBT's highly technical verification regime. US experts are now engaging in negotiations to prepare key tools of the On Site Inspection (OSI) regime.

81. The Administration of President Obama has opened up new opportunities for taking forward work on CTBT issues. The UK warmly welcomes the positive commitment of President Obama to pursue US ratification of the CTBT, which offers new hope for the Entry into Force of the CTBT. The development of the Treaty's OSI regime in particular offers highly promising new areas of co-operation. The OSI regime will be a key element in verifying compliance with the CTBT.

Cooperative Threat Reduction Programmes

82. The UK and US co-ordinate very closely on policy and implementation of the G8 Global Partnership against the spread of weapons and materials of mass destruction. UK programmes in support of the Global Partnership are implemented as part of the UK's Global Threat Reduction Programme (GTRP), as set out in the Government's Annual Report (see <http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/3052790/global-threat-2008-100209>).

83. GTRP works closely with the US on a number of programmes in its nuclear and radiological portfolio. Our flagship joint project, in partnership with the US Department of Energy (DOE), is the decommissioning of the former Soviet Plutonium-producing reactor at Aktau in Kazakhstan. Between 2004 and 2006 GTRP contributed £11 million to the US-led international programme to ensure the irreversible closure of the Plutonium-producing reactor in Zheleznogorsk.

84. Both the UK and US have been engaged in programmes of assistance with construction of the chemical weapon destruction facility at Shchuch'ye in the Russian Federation, which successfully started operations in March 2009. The initial UK funding commitment for Shchuch'ye in 2000 helped to secure Congressional support for US funding for Shchuch'ye, which totalled \$1 billion making this the US's largest single cooperative threat reduction project. Since that time, the UK has maintained close co-ordination with the US to ensure complementarity and co-ordination between our respective programmes.

85. The US has developed a major cooperative threat reduction programme in the biological area, to reduce the risks of proliferation of materials and expertise that could be misused by states or terrorists for biological weapons purposes. The UK co-ordinates with the US to ensure that our respective programmes complement each other, especially in the Former Soviet Union and Iraq.

Nuclear Security

86. Because of the global spread of nuclear power and advances in nuclear technology, we need timely and concerted international action to prevent terrorist groups gaining access to nuclear material and devices and to secure international consensus for making nuclear security the fourth pillar of the multilateral nuclear framework.

87. As part of this multilateral effort, the UK is playing a leading role in tackling the nuclear security challenges that we face. The momentum for concerted action is building. President Obama has announced plans for a nuclear security summit in Spring 2010. We strongly support this initiative and are committed to working with the US and other governments to ensure that we develop an effective global response to the threat of nuclear terrorism.

Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT)

88. The Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) provides regular opportunities for UK and US officials and other partners to discuss areas of mutual interest and share technical expertise on a wide range of issues concerning nuclear security, for example in relation to detection. UK-US co-operation continues in this area with a joint GICNT workshop on detection planned for early 2010.

Proliferation Security Initiative

89. Launched by President Bush in May 2003, the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) is a multinational capacity-building initiative working towards more co-ordinated and effective combating of illicit trafficking in WMD, their delivery systems and related materials. As indicated in President Obama's Prague speech, the new US Administration sees an important role for PSI in international Counter-Proliferation efforts for years to come. The UK shares this vision and is working with US colleagues on how the initiative can become more effective in combating the proliferation challenges of the future.

Space

90. The UK liaises closely with the US in this area. The focus of UK policy on space is on civil and scientific uses, and we firmly believe that all states have the right to explore outer space and make the most of opportunities for scientific, economic, environmental and communications advances. In addition, the

security benefits the UK derives from the military use of space are important. Satellite communications, mapping, early warning, navigation, sensing and treaty verification are all integral to our national security responsibilities. As stated in the June 2009 National Security Strategy Update, the Cabinet Office will lead a Government review of the strategic security of the UK's interests in space. President Obama has also recently announced that the US will undertake a review of its national space policy.

Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)

91. The US has been a strong and active supporter of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) since the negotiation of the Treaty began in the 1980s. The UK and the US share a number of priorities and co-ordinate closely. Key areas of co-operation include strengthening the verification regime, for example through increasing and better targeting industry inspections to address areas of greatest relevance to the Convention; pressing for comprehensive and effective national implementation of CWC obligations and ensuring that the verification regime keeps pace with technological and scientific developments.

92. The UK has worked closely with the US and other partners in assisting with Iraq's preparations to join the CWC, just as we did in the case of Libya's accession to the CWC in 2004. Iraq acceded to the CWC in January 2009. We and the US continue to work together in providing post-accession assistance to Iraq, for example, in providing training to Iraqi officials responsible for national implementation of the Convention.

Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC)

93. As a depositary (like the UK) of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), the US takes an active and constructive role in the current BTWC work programme. Although the Obama Administration has yet to complete a review of its policies on the BTWC, the UK Government has already taken several opportunities at official level to discuss the next steps on the Convention, and in particular on approaches to the Seventh Review Conference in 2011, where constructive US engagement will be a key factor in agreeing a substantial programme of future work.

Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

94. The US and the UK work closely in a number of areas to help prevent the proliferation of conventional arms, and share the common aim of seeking to strengthen global arms export controls. The US however has concerns about how an ATT might impact on their right to export and on domestic gun ownership. They are also concerned that to have widespread adherence, an ATT would have to aim at lower standards than they would see as adequate and thereby simply legitimise the *status quo*. This has meant that our countries have differed so far on whether an ATT would be the most effective way of dealing with the problems associated with the unregulated trade in conventional arms.

95. The Government has maintained a very close dialogue with the US up to the most senior Ministerial levels since 2006 and has addressed their main concerns on the right to export and domestic ownership. Although the US have been the only country to vote consistently against work towards an ATT in the UN, they remain a participant in the UN process and have participated fully in the discussions in the UN Working Groups on ATT held this year.

96. The Foreign Secretary has reiterated to Secretary of State Clinton and to Senator John Kerry that we would not support a weak ATT. We hope that the emerging signs of a re-evaluation of the role of the US in the UN ATT process will result in a change in US policy on an ATT.

Intelligence

97. The UK has a long established and very close intelligence relationship with the US, which owes much to our historical and cultural links. The continuing high value of this relationship has been demonstrated on many occasions in recent years and on a wide variety of issues. We share many common objectives, including countering terrorism, drugs and serious crime. The closeness of this intelligence relationship allows us to extend our own national capabilities in ways that would not otherwise be possible and is invaluable.

98. Our intelligence relationship with the US includes a range of collection and assessment activities involving all of the UK's intelligence machinery. A fuller account of this relationship has been provided.³

OTHER UN, GLOBAL AND TRADE POLICY ISSUES

Co-operation in the UN Security Council, and on UN Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding

99. As Permanent Members of the UN Security Council, the UK and US share particular responsibilities for decisions on maintenance of international peace and security, and we are both committed to ensuring that the UN is able to draw on the full range of tools at its disposal to deliver this.

100. In pursuit of common objectives the UK and US continue to work closely together across the range of issues at the UN Security Council (UNSC). In recent months close co-operation has resulted in UN action on topics such as Burma, DPRK, Iran, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Sudan (all covered in more detail elsewhere in this memorandum). For example, we and the US have worked to ensure sanctions have been tightened on the DPRK (in the light of its further missile and nuclear tests); and that strong statements have been made on Burma (to address the ongoing detention of Aung San Suu Kyi) as well as on Sri Lanka (to address concerns about the humanitarian impact of military operations).

³ Not printed.

101. UN peacekeeping is a crucial area of UN activity, which has seen significant growth over recent years. We are both committed to ensuring the UN makes the most effective and efficient use of resources available and that the efforts of peacekeepers on the ground are backed up by broader engagement to build sustainable peace.

102. The US and UK (with some US\$2.04 billion (26.4%) and US\$606 million (7.8%) respectively), are among the biggest contributors to UN peacekeeping costs, and have worked together to ensure that missions are tasked to find savings and efficiencies. In a welcome move, the United States announced in a Security Council meeting on 5 August that it had cleared all peacekeeping arrears accumulated from 2005 to 2008 (totalling \$159 million) and had every expectation of meeting its obligations for 2009, currently estimated at approximately \$2.2 billion, in full.

103. In the coming months, the UK and the US will continue to work together on a range of issues affecting international peacekeeping, where we are already pressing for improvements on planning, mandate design, and monitoring and evaluation. The UK is also working closely with the US on building global capacity in support of international peacekeeping. Building on the 2004 G8 Sea Island Summit commitments, the US and the UK have consecutively hosted international meetings over the last two years which have brought together the international peacekeeping community to address the challenges of meeting the operational needs for peacekeeping missions. We also intend to build on existing US-UK co-operation to address more comprehensively a range of complex issues affecting the conduct of peacekeeping missions, including women in peace and security, robust peacekeeping and the protection of civilians.

104. To complement our work on peacekeeping, the UK initiated a new phase of work in the UN to improve its peacebuilding efforts, following a special meeting of the Security Council chaired by the Foreign Secretary in May 2008. We have increasingly engaged with the US, following the transition to a new US Administration, which, like the UK, is pursuing a comprehensive approach to enhancing international effectiveness across the conflict cycle. We will continue to work with the US to contribute to wider efforts: to ensure rapid implementation of the recommendations within the Secretary-General's Report; on preparations for the Peacebuilding Commission review in 2010; and on building links between peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

Energy Security

105. Both the US and UK recognise that access to diverse, reliable and affordable energy supplies is central to the global economy and global security; share a similar approach to achieving energy security; and work together closely bilaterally and multilaterally in pursuit of our aims. These include increasing the transparency and efficiency of the global oil market; working to eliminate fossil fuel and electricity subsidies; diversifying sources of supply; reducing our dependence on hydrocarbons through driving investment in clean energy and energy efficiency; and reducing energy poverty.

106. The UK and US have a shared interest in improving the EU's energy security through diversification of sources and routes of supply. The most visible manifestation of this policy is the development of the Southern Corridor, a route to bring hydrocarbons from the Caspian to Europe via Turkey, which the US strongly supports. US interest lies in bringing Caspian energy products to world markets, in assisting Caspian region states as they work to diversify their export routes, encouraging the EU to diversify its sources of gas supply. Both countries would also be keen in the medium term to investigate the potential to use the Southern Corridor to export Iraqi gas to the EU as well, assuming the political conditions allow.

107. US diplomacy was instrumental in bringing the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) and the South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP) oil pipeline projects to fruition. The US has considerable influence in the region, and will have a key role to play as the Southern Corridor develops.

UN Human Rights/Democracy

108. The new Administration shares our belief that the promotion of human rights and democracy is integral to the pursuit of our strategic objectives, not least our shared security. President Obama stated in Accra that democracy was a universal value, and one that was crucial to sustainable development. The new Administration recognises the UK and the EU as indispensable partners in global democracy promotion. They have sought our views on reclaiming and reinvigorating the democracy agenda.

109. Bilaterally, we continue to work alongside the US around the world to promote human rights in specific countries. Our complementary strengths, networks and alliances play an important role in this regard. The new Administration has acknowledged that the human rights agenda includes lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues, and has turned to us for our experience in this area.

110. At the UN, we welcomed US re-engagement with and subsequent election to the Human Rights Council. Both here and at the UN General Assembly's Third Committee, the new Administration is already putting into effect a new policy of reaching out to non-traditional partners to find common ground, whilst defending international human rights institutions and the universal principles that underpin them. We welcome this new approach and have already seen its benefits in, for example, the renewal of the Council's monitoring of Sudan.

111. There are, of course, some important differences between the UK and the EU on the one hand and the US on the other. EU opposition to the death penalty is well known, and we will continue to make it known in general and on specific cases. In UN fora, different approaches to economic rights, the rights of the child, and limits on freedom of expression have all caused difficulties between the EU and US in the past.

International Criminal Justice

112. The UK and US share a common agenda on issues relating to international criminal justice. Both governments work closely together in the UN Security Council on the Yugoslavia and Rwanda tribunals, and both governments have been among the principal donors to the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The US has also recently become a donor to the Khmer Rouge Tribunal and now sits, with the UK, on the UN Steering Committee which provides administrative oversight over the court.

113. With 110 States Parties, the International Criminal Court has, in UK eyes, successfully established itself as the permanent judicial institution at the very centre of the global fight against impunity. We note that President Obama, Secretary Clinton and US Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice have all spoken positively of the Court. We hope that US co-operation with the Court will continue and increase. We will continue to encourage and assist the US in overcoming its concerns about co-operating with the Court, focusing on the areas of greatest concern, such as Sudan, where our interests most clearly converge.

Development

114. There is a great deal of common interest and collaboration in UK and US development policy, on countries (e.g. Zimbabwe), on policies (e.g. faster progress on neglected tropical diseases), and in relation to other institutions (e.g. The Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria). The recent White Paper *Building our Common Future* sets out key challenges in development policy for the UK and many of those, including security, the need for the international system to work better, and value for money remain common. The UK has an active dialogue on security and development including country specific collaboration (e.g. Afghanistan), sharing best practice (e.g. stabilisation training practices and conflict assessments) and in working together to ensure more effective multilateral responses to post-conflict reconstruction.

115. President Obama's Administration has committed itself to increasing levels of US development spending, working in a more co-ordinated way with other donors and to a US system for development which is more joined up, and where the US fully participates in the Millennium Development Goals. We continue to encourage the US to take on a greater global leadership role in development. We hope to develop stronger programmatic partnerships in the areas of global health and education and to work towards closer alignment of broader policies affecting developing countries such as trade, climate change financing, and peace-building.

116. There are some philosophical differences between the UK and US development approaches, particularly in relation to untying assistance from national suppliers (UK is 100% untied), the use of developing country systems, focus on the poorest countries, and ability to make predictable, long-term commitments with partner countries.

Counter-narcotics

117. The UK and US have a common interest in tackling drugs trafficking and international organised crime. As such the US is a key strategic partner, both bilaterally and through the multilateral institutions, on both general drugs and crime policy and on specific issues such as Afghanistan counter-narcotics. The UK works closely with US partners at a policy and operational level on countries such as Afghanistan and Colombia, and regions such as the Caribbean and West Africa. Our network of posts acts as a platform for our partners across government to operate from, for example the Serious Organised Crime Agency which has representatives based in our Consulate-General in Miami.

Extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance

118. One aspect of our co-operation in fighting serious crime relates to extradition and mutual legal assistance. The UK-US Extradition Treaty 2003 was signed on 31 March 2003. It came into force when both Governments exchanged instruments of ratification on 26 April 2007. Present-day arrangements redress the imbalance in the previous (1972) Treaty, under which the US was required to demonstrate a *prima facie* evidential case in support of extradition requests made to the UK, whereas the UK only had to demonstrate "probable cause".

119. Between 1 January 2004 and 31 August 2009, 49 people have been extradited from the UK pursuant to extradition requests made by the US. In the same period, 28 people have been extradited from the US to the UK. Since the Treaty came into force on 26 April 2007 and up to 31 August 2009, 12 people have been extradited to the US as a result of extradition requests made to the UK since 26 April 2007; whilst 16 people have been extradited from the US to the UK as a result of extradition requests made to the US. These figures do not include requests made to or by Scotland or Northern Ireland (prior to 1 April 2008). Scotland deals with its own US extradition cases, as did Northern Ireland until 1 April 2008 when the Home Office assumed responsibility for extradition.

120. Under the new arrangements, the information that must be provided in order for a UK extradition request to proceed in the US is in practice the same as for a US request to proceed in the UK. On the one hand, the UK is required to demonstrate “probable cause” in the US courts. In American law this is described as “facts and circumstances which are sufficient to warrant a prudent person to believe a suspect has committed, is committing, or is about to commit a crime”. The US is required to demonstrate “reasonable suspicion” in UK courts. This has been defined in UK case law in the following terms, “circumstances of the case should be such that a reasonable man acting without passion or prejudice would fairly have suspected the person of having committed the offence”.

Scientific Collaboration

121. The US is the largest investor in scientific research in the world, investing \$368 billion in 2007. The US invests more on R&D than the rest of the G7 countries combined, accounts for around 36% of world R&D spending and employs 37% of OECD researchers (more than the whole of the EU combined). The US and the UK are each other’s most important research collaborators with 30% of the UK’s international collaborations being with the US (more than double with any other country), and 13% of the US’s collaborations being with the UK. The new Administration has placed a high priority on science seeing it as the foundation of the “new energy economy” that will drive the next generation of US growth and wealth creation. In order to improve the quality of UK science the US Science and Innovation Network facilitates new collaborations in areas of high priority for the UK such as climate science, biomedical (including stem cell research) and nanotechnology, and has helped UK researchers to access substantial US funding.

OTHER FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES

India

122. There is a general convergence of views between the UK and the US on India. The UK regards the strategic re-alignment of US-India relations in recent years, which started under the previous Administration, as a positive development. The American Administration pursues an approach which recognises India’s pivotal role in maintaining stability in South Asia and its increasing global role as a member of the G20, leading developing nation and economic powerhouse, as well as a country with a key role in addressing global challenges such as climate change.

123. The UK supported the US India nuclear deal which offered India a perspective on regularising its nuclear arrangements, encouraged India to behave in line with international non-proliferation norms and helped to meet India’s energy needs from uranium, thus reducing global competition for energy from hydrocarbons. The UK played a prominent role in promoting international consensus in support of the deal. UK support was welcomed by the US government.

Sri Lanka

124. The UK and the US took a very similar line to the conflict between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL). In February and May the Foreign Secretary and Secretary of State Clinton issued joint statements in response to the deteriorating situation. We have been in full agreement with the US that only a fully inclusive political settlement could lead to lasting peace between Sri Lanka’s communities. Since the end of the conflict in May the US and the UK have both been pressing the GoSL to take necessary measures to meet the needs of the almost 300,000 internally displaced persons. We have also been pressing the government to address minority concerns and to take effective action to tackle human rights issues.

Iraq

125. The UK’s involvement in Iraq is the subject of an inquiry led by Rt Hon Sir John Chilcot as announced to the House of Commons by the Prime Minister on 15 June. However, it is worth highlighting the strength of the UK and US relationship in our support of emerging Iraqi democracy since 2003.

126. Throughout this period the UK and US have worked very closely both diplomatically and militarily. The UK filled key roles in the Coalition Provisional Authority and our personnel worked with US colleagues in key Baghdad ministries before and after transition to the Government of Iraq. The UK contributions to the Iraqi Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence and the Interior were particularly substantial and British civilians were recognised by the US Government on a number of occasions.

127. After transition, the UK and US Embassies have continued to co-operate closely in support of the Iraqi Government and political development in Iraq. We are at present working with the US in assisting Iraq’s efforts to normalise its relationships with both neighbouring states and the United Nations Security Council (by addressing the Security Council Resolutions relating to Iraq) as well as promoting dialogue within Iraq on outstanding internal political issues such as the Arab/Kurdish dispute; the reconciliation process with disaffected Sunni groups; and intra-Shia’a reconciliation.

128. The UK was a significant contributor to the US-led Multinational Force—Iraq, taking command of and contributing the majority of forces to the Division in southern Iraq. The US provided significant resources to support the Division, including vital ISTAR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance) capabilities.

129. The UK provided key personnel to Coalition headquarters in Baghdad, including the Deputy Force Commander, and UK forces participated in counter-terrorism operations in Baghdad. Throughout the presence of UK forces in Iraq, senior US commanders went on record to commend the UK military contribution and were clear that UK strategy in southern Iraq was devised “in close consultation and dialogue with the senior operational command of the multi-national corps.”⁴

Libya

130. The UK and US have co-operated closely for over a decade on a range of issues in relation to Libya. We worked together to investigate and bring to trial those responsible for the 1998 Lockerbie bombing in 2001, to persuade Libya voluntarily to renounce its WMD in 2003 and to end its support for international terrorism. We continue to work together on important Libya-related issues, including counter-terrorism and counter-proliferation.

131. The 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie was an appalling act of terror. We understand the depth of feeling in the US and elsewhere over the decision by the Scottish Justice Secretary, Kenny MacAskill, on 20 August to grant compassionate release to Abulbasset Al-Megrahi, the man convicted of the crime, and the manner of his reception in Libya. In particular we understand the pain the decision has caused to the families of those on board Flight 103, the people of Lockerbie and many others. But as Ministers have consistently said, the decision was for Scottish Ministers to make.

132. Despite the well publicised US Administration criticism of this decision, the US and UK retain a shared strategic interest in ensuring Libya continues to abide by international norms.

Zimbabwe

133. *General approach to Zimbabwe:* The US and UK continue to work closely together on Zimbabwean issues. Both are committed to assisting, where possible, the Inclusive Government to achieve the political and economic reforms to which the parties in Zimbabwe have committed. The UK and US are two of the largest bilateral donors to Zimbabwe and work closely together and with other international donors on the provision of humanitarian and other essential aid. The UK will contribute £60 million to Zimbabwe this year, the US over \$114 million. Prime Minister Tsvangirai visited Washington and London, amongst other capitals, during a tour in June 2009, meeting the most senior political leaders in both countries. The US and UK governments urged the same message upon him; that we are willing to do all we can to assist the government and people of Zimbabwe, including the provision of more support, subject to further progress in the Zimbabwe government delivering its commitments on the ground. The US and UK are also working closely together—and, again, with international partners—in encouraging constructive Zimbabwean re-engagement with the International Financial Institutions.

134. *Sanctions:* Both the UK, via the EU, and the US maintain targeted measures against individuals and companies associated with the violence and human rights abuses of the Mugabe regime, and agree that these measures should not be lifted until there is evidence of substantial further progress on the ground.

Sudan

135. The UK works closely with the US on supporting peace and reducing poverty in Sudan. Both countries strongly support implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the UN/AU-led political process for Darfur, UNAMID deployment and provide significant development and humanitarian assistance. Progress in all these areas is vital for all the people of Sudan, including in Darfur. The US and UK are the largest and second largest bilateral providers of humanitarian assistance in Sudan.

136. The UK and US are committed to supporting peace in Darfur. A Tanzanian battalion funded, trained and equipped by the UK & US will be deploying September 2009 with an advance party already in Darfur. In March this year, the UK gave £1.85 million to the US to assist with training and equipping of the Sierra Leone Reconnaissance Company. This will be Sierra Leone’s first ever deployment to a UN Peacekeeping mission after years of receiving international aid in a number of areas. They are scheduled to deploy November 2009. We continue to explore options for future US/UK co-operation on deployment and funding of UNAMID and building peace in Darfur.

Somalia

137. The UK and US share a common goal of a stable, prosperous and secure Somalia. Our policies to achieve this goal are similar, and we work closely to realise it, collaborating at the UN Security Council and through regular bilateral dialogue in London, Washington, Nairobi, and elsewhere in the region. We both fully support the Djibouti process and the efforts of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG)

⁴ General David Petraeus, 18 September 2007.

to achieve peace and security. We continue to work closely with the US to support a stable political settlement in Somalia which can underpin future development, and are clear that any long-term solution must be Somali generated and not imposed from the outside. The UK and US share a common will to prevent Somalia becoming an unchallenged safe haven for international terrorists. Failure to do so will leave the UK, the US and our allies in the region open to the direct threat of terrorist attack.

138. Prolonged violence and instability in Somalia has also led to an increase in piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. The UK and US governments work closely together as part of the international effort to counter-piracy off the coast of Somalia—both through our work at the UNSC and in the Contact Group on Piracy, and in our naval collaboration.

Nigeria

139. UK and US relations concerning Nigeria are good, cemented by regular contact and a close relationship at official levels. The key areas of co-operation include the fight against corruption and narcotics trafficking, efforts to promote stability in the Niger Delta and UK-US military co-operation in training Nigerian peacekeepers.

140. Development co-operation is also strong. DFID works closely with USAID across the human development sectors: health, education, HIV/AIDS. Both USAID and DFID also participate in a country-level Political Governance Working Group; a group which will co-ordinate the international community's response to the 2011 elections and the broader democratisation process in Nigeria.

China

141. In President Obama's words "the relationship between the US and China will shape the 21st century, which makes it as important as any bilateral relationship in the world". The stance the US and China take on issues like climate change, the global economy, and on foreign policy challenges such as counter-proliferation, Afghanistan/Pakistan, or Africa will have a key impact on the UK's interests in those areas. The Government engages closely with the US Administration on the Chinese approach and on US/China relations on such issues.

142. Secretary Clinton set out the Obama Administration's approach to China in February this year, saying that it was "committed to pursuing a positive relationship". This is similar to the UK's strategy of constructive engagement outlined in *UK & China: A Framework for Engagement* which the Foreign Secretary launched in January. Our objectives as set out in that strategy align closely with those of the US notably to foster China's emergence as a responsible global player and to promote sustainable development, modernisation and internal reform in China.

Burma

143. The UK and US share policy objectives in Burma, including benchmarks for progress by the regime—the unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) and all other political prisoners, and a credible and inclusive political process leading up to free and fair elections. We have regular exchanges of views on how best to work towards these objectives. We also co-operate closely on the ground in Rangoon.

144. In February this year, Secretary of State Clinton launched an interagency review of US Burma policy. The US sought our views at official level. We are remaining in close touch with US officials, as their thinking develops and will continue to concert so that our approaches remain consistent.

Russia

145. The UK and the US, along with our EU and NATO partners, have common objectives in engaging with Russia, aiming to encourage Russia to work within international rules-based frameworks for co-operation and to meet its commitments to the international community. The reset in US-Russia relations, culminating in the July 2009 Moscow summit, has potential for bringing about progress on a range of areas where the US and UK have shared interests. We support the development of strong US-Russia relations across the board, including the important work to negotiate a successor to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. We believe that we can pursue our interests through dialogue with Russia in areas such as non-proliferation, climate change, international economic co-operation as well as regional conflicts in the Middle East and Afghanistan. However, we also attach importance to working with the US and other close partners to maintain our resilience where Russian interests run counter to our own. The US and the UK support the right of Russia's neighbours to choose their own path and strategic alliances. Following Russia's disproportionate military actions in Georgia last summer we are now working with the US and other key partners to encourage more constructive Russian participation in the Geneva talks.

Europe

Ukraine

146. As shown by Vice-President Biden's recent visit to Kyiv, UK and US goals with respect to Ukraine continue to be essentially the same: a politically stable and economically prosperous Ukraine more deeply integrated in European and Euro-Atlantic structures. To these ends, we both support continued democratisation and economic reform in Ukraine, using a range of bilateral, multilateral and public diplomacy instruments. The UK maintains a regular dialogue about Ukraine with US policy-makers in Washington, Brussels and Kyiv.

Western Balkans

147. The UK and US share a common strategic interest in stability in the Balkans region, and have invested considerable political, military and financial resource in effort to stabilise the region after the conflicts of the 1990s. This fundamental alignment of interest remains, even if the scale and nature of US and UK engagement has evolved, as large UN and NATO military and civilian stabilisation operations (primarily in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Kosovo) have gradually drawn down, and the EU has taken on a bigger role. Crucially, the US fully supports the strategic goal set by the European Union for the region of eventual EU membership, seeing the associated Stabilisation and Association Process, and its conditions based approach, as the best way to embed the political, social and economic reforms needed to ensure long-term stability. In parallel, the UK and the US also support the objective of eventual NATO membership for those countries in the region who aspire to it.

148. We, together with our EU partners, welcome and value highly continued US engagement in the region and US support for EU objectives. The new Administration has emphasised continuing US interest in, and commitment to, the region and has confirmed its support for the strategic goal of its Euro-Atlantic integration: a position set out clearly by Vice-President Biden during his visit to the region in May this year.

Turkey

149. As strong supporters of Turkey's EU accession and influential allies of Turkey, the US have a significant role to play in encouraging continued reform in Turkey. As an EU member the UK can help to ensure that EU and US activity is complementary. We co-operate with the US on human rights and minority issues in Turkey more broadly, including in relation to the Kurdish issue, where increased Turkish-American co-operation in tackling the PKK has strengthened their counter-terrorism co-operation across the board.

Cuba

150. The UK and the US share the objective of a Cuba which respects the basic human, political and economic rights of all its citizens, though our approaches differ. We welcome the recent changes in US approach towards Cuba such as the restarting of bilateral migration talks and the decision to remove all restrictions on remittances and family visits to the island for Cuban Americans. The UK, acting with EU Partners, has long preferred a policy of dialogue and engagement with Cuba. We have each year supported a Cuba-sponsored resolution against the US embargo at the UN General Assembly. We have also consistently rejected the US extraterritorial Helms-Burton legislation which penalises non-US companies doing business with Cuba.

151. In 2008, the UK took the decision with EU Partners, to resume the wide-ranging EU-Cuba Strategic Dialogue (following its suspension after the Cuban crackdown on opposition groups in 2003). Together with EU partners we will continue to press the Cuban government for progress on human, political and economic rights and will review progress under the Strategic Dialogue on an annual basis.

Colombia

152. The UK and US co-operate closely on counter-narcotics issues in Colombia at both a policy and operational level. The Home Office have the UK lead for tackling drugs and organised crime internationally.

Argentina

153. Both the UK and the US have a shared relationship with Argentina as a fellow member of G20. Argentina is in favour of International Financial Institutions (IFI) reform and has worked with the US on seeking additional funding for the Inter-America Development Bank. Other areas of close mutual interest are counter-proliferation, counter-narcotics and money laundering. On the Falkland Islands, the US is well aware of the UK and Argentine positions, and states publicly that it views this as a bilateral issue.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

154. The special relationship between the UK and United States is based on strong historical and cultural ties deriving from our shared values, and close links across a wide spectrum of interests, including economic issues, a strong trading relationship and close co-operation of foreign policy issues. The relationship continues to thrive, notwithstanding occasional disagreements—and indeed the manner in which such disagreements can be aired with the US in a full and frank manner further underscores the depth and

strength of the relationship. This memorandum sets out many of the areas in which the UK and US work together as a matter both of long standing experience and necessity. However, it cannot hope to capture the full range of exchanges and debate.

155. The FCO welcomes the Committee's continuing interest in the UK-US bilateral relationship and looks forward to its Report.

25 September 2009

Annex A

STAFFING ACROSS THE US NETWORK OF POSTS

The US Network comprises the Embassy in Washington, plus 10 subordinate Posts in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Orlando and San Francisco. (It excludes the New York Mission to the UN.)

The Network provides a platform for about 18 other government departments, including MoD, Home Office, SOCA, UKTI, Bank of England, DWP.

The staffing of the US Network of Posts is as follows:

	<i>FCO Staff</i>	<i>MoD Staff</i>	<i>Other Govt Dept Staff</i>	<i>Total</i>
Washington Embassy	248	142	57	447
US Network of Posts	169	0	200	369
<i>Total USA staffing</i>	<i>417*</i>	<i>142**</i>	<i>257</i>	<i>826</i>

* 70 of the 417 are UK-based diplomats (50 Washington, 20 elsewhere)

** The MoD has 142 personnel based in the Washington Embassy. There are a further 559 MoD personnel working in the United States not supported by the FCO network of posts. These range from military personnel in operational units or headquarters and exchange officers in each of the Services to technical experts working on joint acquisition projects.

The paybill for locally engaged staff in Washington is approx \$9 million (currently £5.6 million), and the rest of the network \$11.5 million (£7.2 million).

Since 2005 the major developments in staffing have included:

- A review of locally-engaged staff salaries and adjustments to salaries.
- A move towards recruiting locally resident staff rather than offering visas to British nationals (who then rely on their employment to remain in the US).
- The closure of Posts in Puerto Rico, Dallas, Seattle and Phoenix.
- The move to a shared corporate services platform, whereby Washington runs the Finance and payroll functions (among others) for the whole US network. This programme reduced staff slots across the network by 26 (approx \$2 million per year in paybill costs).
- A reduction by approx 15% in MoD staff numbers, but an increase in other government department staff across the network.
- An FCO Strategy Refresh exercise which cut 5 UK-based diplomatic posts but provided resources for extra staff to cover climate change and counter-terrorism issues.

Annex B

OPERATION OF THE US NETWORK OF POSTS

- As well as the Embassy, Britain has nine Consulates General in the US—located in Boston, New York, Atlanta, Miami, Chicago, Houston, Denver, Los Angeles and San Francisco—and one Consulate in Orlando (this last, a special case, is devoted entirely to helping British visitors in Florida who get into difficulties). The size and extent of this network of posts across the US is regularly reviewed. In 2005, a trade office in Phoenix and Consulates in Seattle and Dallas were closed.
- The Consulates perform a variety of functions, largely focussing on the FCO's service delivery strategic priorities—trade and investment promotion and consular support. Three posts process visa applications—Chicago, Los Angeles and New York. In addition, these posts are the British Government's eyes and ears in their regions. They develop relations with important local figures, like governors, state legislators, heads of Fortune 500 companies and university vice-chancellors. No US president in the modern era has come from Washington DC. Presidential candidates have usually cut their political teeth in the regions, where our Consulates can build relations with them before they become national figures.

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- The region covered by a Consulate, its consular district, is often very big and sometimes enormous. Many of these consular districts are larger than Western Europe. The 50 state governors enjoy a great deal of autonomy.
 - UKTI has about 120 staff across the network, which reflects the importance of the US to the British economy. The value of US direct investments in the UK is higher than those of any other country and the UKTI teams have an excellent record of attracting investment into Britain from US companies. Big US businesses are not generally based in or around Washington DC. UKTI does the vast bulk of its business outside the beltway, with its teams based in the Consulates.
 - The Consulates also play a role in fostering links between science and innovation bodies in the US and the UK. Dedicated officers, funded partly by BIS and partly by FCO, are posted around the network where the opportunities for building these ties are greatest. The US, where about a third of all scientific papers are published, is the UK's most important science partner.
 - In recent years, when the previous Administration was disinclined to see the urgency of action on climate change, the Consulates raised awareness of the issue, through public diplomacy campaigns, and rallied support for action at the State level. The UK has now signed a number of agreements with individual states governing our work with those states to combat global warming.
 - A large number of senior British government and parliamentary visitors travel to parts of the US outside Washington every year. Our Consulates host these visitors, organising their programmes, briefing and accompanying them. The success of these visits depends on the Consulates local knowledge and influence.
 - Our consular staff deal with more than helping British visitors in distress. They ensure the rights of Britons in US prisons are observed, including death row cases. They deal with high profile extradition cases, like that of the NatWest three in 2006. And they liaise with the relevant local authorities so that they can look after the welfare of Britons caught up in natural disasters like hurricanes and earthquakes. None of the Consulates issue passports, which is now carried out, on behalf of all of North America, by the Embassy in Washington.
 - The US is a laboratory for innovative methods of delivering public services, particularly at the state level. Our Consulates monitor the activities of State governments and, when they see new ideas of interest to Whitehall departments, encourage liaisons between British and American experts in the field. This Best Practice work is funded through a programme budget called the Superfund (worth £500,000 in 2009).
 - It is important to have this presence across the US. The country is too big to cover from Washington and the regions, in which our Consulates General are situated, are important centres for business, science and innovation, venture capitalism, tourism and higher education. Without a local presence, we could not form the relationships we have with senior figures and key institutions in those fields, which we cultivate in order to promote Britain's interests.

Annex C

CONSULAR OPERATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

1. On the consular front, the UK and the US are active partners in the sharing of best practice, development of policy, and co-ordination of crisis planning and response. Much of this work is taken forward through the Consular Colloque. This forum, made up of the UK, US, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, meets annually at Director level and runs a number of joint working groups which allow us to learn from each other as we develop policy, share best practice and co-ordinate efforts in lobbying third countries over their approach to consular issues. Importantly the Colloque provides a vehicle for real time joint analysis of crisis situations and a joined up response on the ground, for example after the Mumbai terrorist bombings in November 2008 and in response to the swine flu outbreak earlier this year. The US is providing valuable input in our current review of our guidance in response to Chemical and Biological Weapons attacks. There are sensitive issues, largely around death penalty cases, where we always intervene against capital punishment if British nationals are involved, for example the Linda Carty case.

2. Our largest consular operation in the US is based in Washington where the North America Passport Production Centre is based for customers in the US, Canada and soon to be expanded to the rest of the Americas and the Caribbean. In 2008–09, the Americas and Caribbean region issued over 52,000 of the 380,000 passports issued overseas. British nationals account for the second largest number of international travellers to enter the US after Canadians. A total of 4,565,000 British nationals arrived from the UK in 2008, an increase of 67,000 British travellers from 2007. All ten Consulates-General are involved in providing assistance to British nationals, supported by a network of Honorary Consuls. In 2008–09, North America handled 1,972 assistance cases.

MIGRATION AND VISA OPERATIONS AND BORDER CONTROL CO-OPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES

There are three visa sections in the US (Chicago, Los Angeles and New York) processing about 115,000 visa applications a year. At the three posts, 53 staff handle applications for US citizens who want to work or study in the UK for periods exceeding six months and applications from third country nationals residing in the United States. The New York Consulate also processes visa applications from 32 countries in Central/South America and the Caribbean.

From December 2007, there has been a legal requirement to collect biometric data for all visa applicants. UKBA entered into a unique relationship with the US Government and the biometric data is collected on our behalf through a network of 132 Application Support Centres managed by the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS). It has subsequently been agreed that fingerprints submitted by applicants for UK visas based in the USA will be checked against DHS records and for any relevant subsequent information to be shared between the Agencies. This represents a significant step forward for both parties in their respective control agendas and will have a major impact in the areas of security and criminality.

In addition to the visa services, the United States is a priority country for bilateral co-operation on migration issues. HMG's key objectives have been identified as:

- Pushing forward practical and operational co-operation on data-sharing within international fora and bilaterally to assist in identifying “harm” cases, testing applications and generating removals.
- Ensuring that customer facing services facilitate movement of travellers and provide fast and fair decisions, aligned with UKBA targets.
- Fully supporting joint capacity building and interventions to reduce criminal facilitation of illegal migration.
- Pushing forward practical and operational co-operation bilaterally, through the EU and through the World Customs Organisation to negotiate, agree, test and implement improvements to the control of freight both at the border and within the supply chain.

Achievements

1. We have a series of data-sharing arrangements with the US that have been implemented to help improve security and prevent immigration abuse. The agreements include:

- US National Targeting Center/UKBA Joint Border Operations Center: Exchange of Critical Passenger Information allows exchange of data on individuals, including Advanced Passenger Information.
- US Department of Homeland Security/UKBA International Group: Criminality checks on applicants for UK visas. We have a memorandum of understanding in place to check applicants for visas to come to the UK against US criminality databases, and are currently working on implementation.
- Five Country Conference fingerprint exchange: we have exchanged limited sets of immigration fingerprint exchange with the US, with high value findings. A new Protocol allowing fingerprint checks across FCC countries is due for implementation with the US in November 2009.

2. A number of high level meetings and visits have taken place which have strengthened co-operation between the UK and the US, including a recent visit by the Home Secretary to the USA, where he met key counterparts in Washington DC and visited the Visa Section in Chicago.

3. The Chief Executive of the UK Border Agency and key Board Members attended the Five Country Conference (FCC) with the US in June. The FCC agreed the formation of a new working group exploring the possibility of establishing a single trusted traveller arrangement, including the feasibility and affordability of creating a scheme with joint enrollment, and fleshing out potential standards. The US is leading on this project.

4. The US Government, Southampton Container Terminals and HMRC were partners in the Secure Freight Initiative—a trial to scan US bound containerised cargo by using radiation detection and x-ray inspection equipment. It ran successfully from October 2007 to April 2008 and was part of the US Government's worldwide programme to develop and test ways of preventing the illicit movement of radioactive materials through seaports.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

To achieve our policy objectives in the United States we need to influence not just those who make decisions, but also those who shape the environment in which those decisions are made. That is the aim of our public diplomacy work in the Washington Embassy and our network of Consulates-General across the US. Our work is driven by the US Network's Communication Strategy. The strategy's overall aim is to shape American perceptions of the UK as the US's partner of choice across a range of issues important to both countries. In FY 2009-10 our strategy focuses on four priorities:

- The global economy.
- Afghanistan/Pakistan.
- The Middle East.
- Climate change.

One good illustration of the kind of public diplomacy activity we undertake is our work on climate change. Examples of this across the US include:

- Our Chicago Consulate-General worked to secure the signature of memoranda of understanding on climate change between the UK and the states of Michigan and Wisconsin, and followed these up with activities such as UK-US experts' meetings on emissions trading and visits to the UK to see examples of effective climate and energy policy.
- In Florida, our Miami Consulate-General worked successfully to secure a Partnership Agreement with Florida on climate change and, through a number of high-level visits and the close engagement of UKTI on business opportunities in green energy, helped secure legislative action to tackle climate change in the state.
- In Texas, our Houston Consulate-General engaged state legislators through a visit to the UK, a conference in the State Capitol with UK expert presenters, support for research on the impact of climate change on the Texas economy and the Gulf Coast, and other meetings. As a result, we helped to change the conversation on climate change in the Texas legislature, with around 60 bills on the issue introduced during the legislative session; passage of the first-ever climate legislation in the State; and a Texas Senate resolution recognising the value of the UK's contribution to Texas on the issue.
- Our Consulate-General in New York organised a study tour to the UK for weatherisation experts and State policymakers, which has led to projects in this important area being implemented.
- Our San Francisco Consulate-General sent local mayors to the UK to study how cities could reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, generating extensive media coverage of the issue. The mayors have implemented the lessons learned from their visit—for example the Mayor of Palo Alto has released a Climate Protection Strategy for Palo Alto which acknowledges her debt to the UK examples.

In all of these cases, our teams have sought to widen the impact of their work by securing coverage in mainstream and specialist media.

Our communication teams around the US work closely with national and local media to secure positive coverage for UK policy priorities. Our activities range from placing op-eds and getting coverage of important Ministerial and other speeches, to rebuttal where necessary (for example when faced with attacks on the NHS in some parts of the US media during the summer of 2009). We also seek to maximise the impact of Royal and Ministerial visits to the US through strong media programmes. Our New York Consulate-General used the opportunity of a visit by HRH Prince Harry to the city to draw attention to the UK's and US's shared endeavours in Iraq and Afghanistan, and our support for the veterans of those conflicts. The visit generated some 2,500 press articles.

Effective public diplomacy can be as much about shaping the discussion where ideas are formed and generated as it is about promoting already established policy viewpoints. Our Consulate-General in Boston used the Prime Minister's drive for comprehensive reform of international institutions to engage the policy community at Harvard. In a keynote speech at the Kennedy Library in Boston in April 2008, the Prime Minister called publicly for reform of the international institutions before an audience of international researchers, US policy-makers and Democrat strategists. The Prime Minister then invited Professors at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government (including advisers to the then Presidential candidates) to analyse a range of options for international institutional reform, and to report their findings before the next US Administration took office. As the late-2008 financial crisis developed, the Consulate-General worked with Harvard to focus these efforts on reform of international financial institutions, and on the planned G20 response at the London Summit (April 2009). Harvard Professors, and their graduate students, held online debates on the UK's London Summit website to discuss and promote their views. This work was in turn picked up—and spread more widely—by traditional media, e.g. *The Boston Globe*. Meanwhile the arrival of several key Harvard figures in President Obama's new Administration meant that the ideas generated in the university environment were transferred into the thinking of the new team in Washington.

Digital diplomacy—using the full range of web-based tools—is crucial to influencing Internet-savvy US audiences. The Embassy and Consulates use our website, ukinusa.fco.gov.uk, to engage these audiences, with daily updates on the most important topics and events and blogs by Embassy staff on their policy areas. We have a strong and active following on sites such as Twitter and Facebook. In the run-up to the Copenhagen summit on climate change, we are running a “100 days, 100 voices” campaign with a new video blog every day from a range of people interested in climate change, while encouraging others to submit their own videos and comments to the site. On Afghanistan, certain foreign policy blogs are highly influential in shaping and breaking stories and points of view that later gain traction in more mainstream media. As a result, we have engaged these bloggers both in person for policy briefings, and through commenting on and linking to their blogs and participating in online debates.

UK Ministers including the Foreign Secretary regularly engage with the US online foreign policy community during visits. For example, our San Francisco Consulate-General enabled the Foreign Secretary to take part in a Google “Fireside Chat” with then US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, distributed through YouTube. Our Los Angeles Consulate-General ran a student competition, “click for change”, to engage young people on the Millennium Development Goal of education for all. The campaign generated lively debate and coverage in student media; the winning entry was software designed to help young people email legislators arguing for their support on international development.

As well as promoting the policy priorities of the day, our posts seek to build networks of long-term influence for the UK in the United States. The main focus of this work is the Marshall Scholarship programme, funded by the FCO. Under the programme, around 40 of the most talented US students each year are selected to study for Masters-level programmes at UK universities. In recent years we have placed a growing emphasis not simply on selecting the very best students for the programme, but on building networks and relationships with them over time and using these to enhance our understanding of and influence in the US. We have done so working closely with the Association of Marshall Scholars, the alumni association, which we have supported to build new networking tools such as an alumni website. Influential Marshall alumni include Peter Orszag, Director of the Office of Management and Budget in President Obama’s Cabinet; Tom Friedman, the commentator and author; Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer; and many more in the US Administration, Congress, business and other fields. Our Consuls-General across the US sit on the regional Marshalls selection committees which pick new scholars each year, and maintain close links with influential alumni in their regions.

The British Council works closely alongside the Embassy and Consulates-General in the US. The Council’s purpose is to build engagement and trust for the UK. The British Council in the USA has, over the last three years, shifted its focus from perception change to building new connections between the next generation of leaders from North America, the UK and the rest of Europe. Already a third of the US population is made up of minorities and the United States will be a “minority majority” nation by 2050. To address this, the British Council implements programmes in the US that target emerging leaders from all backgrounds, including those who may take a less-traditional path to influence.

In addition, given the importance of the US market to the UK, the Council helps UK partners and stakeholders in the field of education to gain access to the US by brokering relationships and providing market intelligence.

The Council’s programmes include:

- Transatlantic Network 2020, bringing together young influencers, many from non-traditional backgrounds, from North America, the UK and the rest of Europe to address global issues from a multilateral perspective, to foster transatlantic relationships and place the United Kingdom squarely at the centre of current and future transatlantic debates. There are now 100 participants from 20 countries in this new international network. The next summit is scheduled to take place in Chicago in 2010.
- Brokering relationships between US and UK Arts presenters and producers and showcasing new work by emerging UK artists. This year, the British Council invited 22 leading US presenters (the largest international delegation) to attend our Edinburgh Showcase—a week of the best in new British theatre. Externally commissioned research showed that there was a 1,400% return on BC investment for UK performing arts in the US over a two year period.
- Facilitating International Education Partnerships with UK HE and schools sectors. Last year, over 47,000 Americans enrolled in study abroad, graduate and post-graduate courses in the UK. Our research shows that 73% of US students enrolled on graduate and professional degree programmes in the UK have interacted with the British Council USA, primarily via our website. The British Council USA works directly with 80 UK universities through its “country partner” programme—commissioning and providing market intelligence. It manages professional development programmes for over 150 visiting British teachers each year, supporting best practice exchange and school linking opportunities.
- Engaging in dialogue with key US government and non-government actors about the British Council’s Cultural Relations work. The British Council is cited as a model in a number of reports outlining recommendations to the new Administration as to how the US should conduct cultural diplomacy. Documents where the British Council is cited include the Brookings 2008 report: *Voices*

of America: US Public Diplomacy for the 21st Century, and, the resolution put forward by Sen. Lugar (R), member of the Foreign Relations Committee, encouraging the US to invest more in public diplomacy.

Written evidence from Mr Lee Bruce

Mr. Bruce is an expert on political negotiations, defence and military strategy having completed a research thesis at the University of Leeds. He has subsequently published a book on British political and military strategy in Northern Ireland.

SUMMARY OF POINTS

- The UK-US relationship is based on shared historic, cultural, religious and economic assumptions. Endurance is the relationship's most impressive feature with evidence of its continued relevance being found in the close co-operation in the Iraq and Afghan wars, the maintenance of NATO and the permanence of extended deterrence as a defence doctrine.¹
- Washington is the senior partner in the relationship and the UK should continue efforts to influence the formulation and execution of American foreign policy. However the notion that British interests are marginalised because of military and economic inferiority is absurd.
- UK-US priorities align in a number of separate theatres. Shared priorities include containing resurgent Russian nationalism, interdicting terrorist capabilities in Afghanistan and curtailing the proliferation of nuclear weapons.
- Evidence for the continued existence of the special relationship can be found in the important role of NATO in defence postures and the US subvention to secure UK foreign policy priorities. However the special relationship is not guaranteed in perpetuity and the UK government should make greater effort to nurture US co-operation and investment.
- The UK government faces a perilous and potentially catastrophic financial black hole should there be a revision to the special relationship and subsequent end to US assistance. Calls for the UK to jettison its transatlantic policy and adopt a closer relationship with other "fashionable" allies should be considered within this context.

THE BASIS OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UK AND US

1. Transatlantic relations are predicated on a shared historic, cultural, religious and economic vision. One of the founding ideals of American political thought was, as Robert Kagan has demonstrated, a belief that America should be a new vanguard of the Glorious Revolution.² This Protestantism manufactured in American politics a form of "exceptionalism" that contrasted to the Catholic notion of "divine" right in continental Europe. Britain, as the epicentre of the reformation, helped shape these beliefs in individual freedom, property ownership and the separation between church and state.

2. Both the UK and US governments view each other as reliable bilateral partners. In Iraq and Afghanistan the two shared—and continue to share—experience, intelligence and equipment. By comparison other international allies with the notable exception of the Dutch have been less co-operative and use the conflict as an opportunity for political posturing. Such recklessness should surprise analysts as the European Union is set to increase its importation of oil supplies by 29% by 2012 and this gap, it is assumed, will be filled by oil secured by the US in the Middle East.³

3. Moreover the collapse in the sub-prime market shows the symbiotic relationship between the American and British economies and the interdependence of international markets.⁴ However the importance of the present financial crisis to the UK-US relationship is not simply its global impacts. What should invite investigation is the similarity between the UK and US economies. This is a product of the Thatcher and Reagan belief in fiscal prudence demonstrated through the removal of subventions to inefficient industries. Certain European states were by comparison less rigorous in implementing fiscal reforms and continue to prefer policies that involve expansive government intervention and spending.

4. Endurance is an impressive feature in any relationship. The UK-US alliance has proved resistant to conflict between the two partners, the fall of the British Empire and rise of an American replacement, and the expanding boundaries of pan-European federalism. Given the stability between the partners it is hard to conceive of any other bilateral relationship in the world that is more likely to survive the coming challenges of terrorism, nuclear proliferation and state competition. In Afghanistan—and the wider fight against global terrorism—the two partners continue to share intelligence, equipment and utilise combined command structures to maximise operational effectiveness.

UK AND US VIEWS ON THE NATURE AND VALUE OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE UK-US FOREIGN POLICY RELATIONSHIP TO GLOBAL SECURITY

5. Washington is the senior partner in the transatlantic relationship. The UK can influence policy formulation and implementation, and has a role in aiding the legitimacy of US action by galvanising support for intervention and neutering charges of American unilateralism. However if a US Administration was determined upon a certain course of action there is little that a British government could do except criticise from the sidelines. In comparison the failure of the Suez expedition in 1956 and the successful recapture of the Falkland Islands in 1982 exhibit the reliance of the UK government on its American ally.

6. Lawrence Freedom provided a precise and succinct definition of how the UK should perceive its role: “the United Kingdom should nurture a special relationship with the United States in the hope of shaping the exercise of US power”.⁵ However the military inferiority of the UK has allowed for confusion and misrepresentation to infect the public debate on both the *character* and *achievements* of the transatlantic relationship. Characterisations of the UK as a “poodle” duped into supporting its nefarious ally are wildly inaccurate. Rational analysis shows that the UK has its territorial integrity guaranteed, its interests in Europe protected, and its geopolitical position protected by the projection of US power across the globe. This has allowed the UK to reap a “peace dividend” and therefore reduce its defence spending as a proportion of total government expenditure, protect its energy supply and ameliorate regional antagonisms such as those present in the Balkans and Africa.

7. For Washington it is less clear cut as to what partnership with the UK achieves for the US national interest. This could explain why there has been an apparent cooling—apart from the Bush-Blair hiatus—in transatlantic relations since the end of the Cold War. Frustration in America at UK shortcomings is evident across the political divide. Britain stands accused of allowing its territory to become a breeding ground for Islamic militancy, of reducing its defence budget irrespective of consequence and bending its policies to suit the pan-Arabism of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.⁶

8. However the sheer historical resilience of the transatlantic relationship enables the US to ignore the often egregious failings of its ally. Neither is there a credible alternative European partner as France and Germany missed the opportunity in 2003 and none of the other EU Member States invest heavily enough in defence assets to viably support US power projection. Kagan used the memorable phrase “post modern paradise” to describe European diplomacy and presciently warned against the dangers of Europe debilitating the US: “since they have no intention of supplementing American power with their own, the net result will be a diminution of the total amount of power that the liberal democratic world can bring to bear in its defence”.⁷ The US in contradiction to the European position has a less sanguine reading of international relations and the UK should adopt the paradigm set by its transatlantic partner.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH UK AND US INTERESTS ALIGN IN KEY FOREIGN POLICY RELATED AREAS INCLUDING SECURITY, DEFENCE AND INTELLIGENCE CO-OPERATION

9. The interests of the UK and US should continue to converge across a broad spectrum of foreign policy areas. In Europe both partners should aim to curtail recalcitrant Russian nationalism and with it the bellicose foreign policy implemented by Vladimir Putin, and subsequently continued by Dmitry Medvedev, that includes tormenting former Soviet satellites. Russian attempts to control energy supply and prices will affect the posturing of European states—notably Germany and France—meaning that the UK could become ever more reliant on US assistance when deterring Russian irredentism. Clear indication of this was given during the Georgian crisis when the EU diplomacy lead by Nicolas Sarkozy focused on placating Russian demands and not safeguarding the viability of a democratic state.

10. A belief in the merits of European integrationism remains one of the cornerstones to British and American foreign policy. For the UK this is manifested by faith in a shared common European defence policy which, it is argued, will enable the EU to guarantee political stability both within its own border and where necessary abroad. Certain commentators will no doubt welcome a return to European liberal interventionism. The US for its part recognises that an independent European defence force could precipitate a reduction in the American military commitment in Europe.

11. However the potential success of a shared European defence policy is limited by the deplorable track record of EU Member States in armed conflict—the Balkan conflagration of the mid-1990s is a stain on European collectivism—and the lack of appetite across Europe to treat the issue of national security with the degree of serious thought and financial investment it deserves. There is little reflection on how an integrated European command structure could operate, or what a combined European defence force is there to achieve, or how procurement policy should be decided—for example which state purchases what pieces of equipment. Likewise the brittle commitment of European allies in Afghanistan sets another unenviable precedent.

12. Consequently it is in the UK and US national interest that a strong American military presence is retained in Europe to guarantee the territorial integrity of key allies. Moreover, it is prudent for UK and US to continue with the post Second World War policy of ensuring French geopolitical impotence and containing German aspirations to re-establish continental hegemony.

13. Afghanistan is presently the stage on which the War on Terror is being fought. However, the battle could legitimately be extended to the border regions of Pakistan, the Pakistani mainland should the country fall to the Taliban, and Iran should the regime of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad succeed in acquiring nuclear weapons. The UK and US have a shared interest in rigorously pursuing the campaign in Helmand, and must continue to monitor the situation in neighbouring states closely with the intention of acting should there be a sudden deterioration in the security climate. Bargaining with regimes in command of nuclear weapons and propagating nothing less than the destruction of Western civilisation is a dangerous game. It will be under these dire circumstances that the UK and US governments might have to consider the value of nuclear pre-emption: indeed an action potentially necessary for survival.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE UK IS ABLE TO INFLUENCE US FOREIGN POLICY AND UK POLICY IS INFLUENCED BY THE US UNDER THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

14. Dwindling military prowess, rising national debt and failure to invest in its defence forces could render the UK a less worthwhile partner. Yet the government in London continues to wield remarkable influence on US foreign policy: projection of US power guarantees the *status quo* in Europe, stabilises energy supply, underwrites nuclear non-proliferation and negates the operational capacity of non-state terrorist organisations. All of these aspects of US foreign policy serve the UK national interest and show palpable British influence in the State Department. In fact it could be argued that certain aspirations of US foreign policy are of greater advantage to the Prime Minister than they are to the President.

15. In contrast to popular mythology the Bush Administration was keen to engage with the UK as a crucial bilateral ally. Most notably in 2003 effort was made to elicit a resolution from the UN Security Council, an edict that would have little benefit for President Bush, but was seen as a powerful political weapon by Prime Minister Tony Blair. The pursuit of a UN resolution tarnished Washington's public image by opening the invasion to endless debates which then allowed those states intent on protecting oil agreements with the Saddam regime to build a coalition of support against the US and UK governments. In the context of this investigation it is appropriate to remember that even though there were clear limitations to multilateralism, the US dutifully pursued a resolution out of respect for the domestic political calculations made by the British government.

16. Since the inauguration of the Obama presidency the US has distanced itself—at least rhetorically—from the UK as evidenced by the tepid summit held between Prime Minister Brown and President Obama earlier in 2009. The irony of such a demarche is noteworthy when considered against the backdrop of the wild populism that greeted the Democrat's electoral success in the UK. However even in the context of a reduced congeniality in transatlantic relations there is still no sign that the US will divest itself of the responsibility for delivering UK foreign policy objectives.

17. Meanwhile Europe as an entity benefits from the security dividend created by the forward projection of American military power. Profit is not reaped by the US taxpayer as the Defence Department continues to invest heavily in its military capabilities. Instead it is American allies like the UK who are able to reduce military expenditure in real terms and focus on domestic priorities. The result of this situation for the transatlantic relationship is intriguing. In effect the US bears the cost for guaranteeing the most pressing British security priority: European continental stability. By comparison, the European theatre could be thought a peripheral concern in the US and one that if jettisoned would not lead to a collapse in Washington's security position. Considered along these lines it is difficult to discern how a rational evaluation of UK-US relations could fail to conclude that the British government is anything but the benefactor of the alliance.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH “THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP” STILL EXISTS AND THE FACTORS WHICH DETERMINE THIS

18. There has in recent months been a chill in the special relationship. Abdication of its position in Iraq, vacillations over Afghanistan, the Megrahi affair and a general failure to articulate the importance of transatlantic relations are signs that the UK government is either intent on a rift with Washington or guilty of disastrous incompetence in the conduct of its foreign policy.

19. In recognition of the new priorities facing the US, and the failure of its ally, President Obama could implement a radical realignment of his international priorities. Such a shift in American foreign policy cannot be dismissed lightly—the *US Defense Strategy*⁸ neglects to mention Britain—and has far reaching strategic and tactical ramifications. British desire to renege on its commitments in Afghanistan, along the lines of the withdrawal from Iraq, and the failure of other European partners, could potentially lead the Obama White House to question whether it is worth buttressing continental stability in Europe. US military bases in the UK, Germany and Kosovo might instead be redeployed to augment other priorities across the globe. Moreover, these geopolitical arguments could support a new isolationism in US foreign policy and enable the federal deficit to be ameliorated.⁹

20. In the meantime if the UK provokes the US into removing intelligence co-operation it will atrophy the capacity of MI5 and MI6 to defend British interests. Renewed efforts should now be made to restore the special relationship.

21. Whilst there is rightly concern about the prospect of the special relationship no longer being a permanent feature of international diplomacy it should nevertheless be recognised that the vital factor determining the alliance is US preparedness to invest in securing the UK's defence posture. The existence of NATO, access to missile defence, and the doctrine of US extended deterrence—the US nuclear umbrella—is evidence the special relationship remains a marked feature of the international scene. Crucially, President Obama has kept these projects and is not arguing for their cancellation or removal. The continuing US commitment to British objectives should imbue a sense of optimism across the UK government.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF ANY CHANGES IN THE NATURE OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP FOR BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

22. Radical revisions to the UK-US bilateral relationship could leave the British Exchequer with a crippling financial black hole. The collapse of NATO, removal of US bases in Europe, and the end of extended deterrence will open a gaping hole in the UK's defence portfolio. Any loss of US patronage raises difficult questions over how the UK can defend its interests abroad, threatens the continued existence of European pan-federalism—with Washington no longer able to mediate the EU could fall into factional strife—requires a slashing of expenditure across all government departments at Whitehall—except defence which would require stifling increases—in order that the security of the UK can be maintained. The final and most ominous consequence of a substantial change in the nature of the bilateral relationship is the potential for a re-emergence of the disastrous geopolitical competition that last afflicted Europe in the 1930s.

23. Neither will removing US influence from UK foreign policy lead to a period of mutual co-operation with other European partners. The historic record should caution against believing in the viability of a collective European defence posture or political identity. Reckless calls for US withdrawal from Europe and an end to the special relationship should be considered against this backdrop. Those who rail against US influence on the UK must prepare for—but notably do not accept—a precipitate increase in the UK defence budget. In the tumultuous economic climate additional increases in expenditure may not be a viable option to the British Exchequer and therefore the transatlantic relationship should remain ensconced as a permanent feature of UK foreign policy.

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- ² Robert Kagan, *Dangerous Nation: America and the World 1600–1898* (London, 2006).
- ³ Discussions about Energy and our future at <http://europe.theoil Drum.com/story/2006/9/22/95855/4850>
- ⁴ For a more detailed examination of financial history see: Niall Ferguson, *The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World* (Penguin, 2009).
- ⁵ Lawrence Freedman, *From the Falklands to Iraq*, Foreign Affairs (May/June 2006).
- ⁶ Robin Harris, “State of the Special Relationship”, Policy Review, no—113, (June/July 2002) at www.hover.org
- ⁷ Robert Kagan, *Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (London, 2nd edition 2004), p 158.
- ⁸ US Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy* (2008) at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/2008%20national%20defense%20strategy.pdf>
- ⁹ There is a tradition of isolationism in US strategic doctrine. For examples of this argument see: *America's Strategic Choices* (The MIT Press, 2000).

13 September 2009

Written evidence from The Rt Hon Lord Hurd of Westwell CH CBE PC

The shared inheritance of the United Kingdom and the United States goes beyond a common language; it includes a sustained commitment to liberty, democracy and a free market. This common ground certainly exists, and greatly helps the process of reaching agreement between our two governments and public opinions on particular matters.

This shared background is not in itself the substance of the UK-US relationship. Any attempt to assume otherwise is likely to end in tears. The substance of the relationship is the usefulness at any time of one partner to the other. This usefulness changes from decade to decade. It has to be re-established at regular intervals and can never be taken for granted. The United States is the more important partner by such a

wide margin that its usefulness to Britain is hardly ever in question. In practise therefore the survival and success of the partnership depends on the usefulness of Britain to the United States as an efficient ally. We are sometimes deceived on this point by the courtesy of the Americans in their appearing to regard the Anglo-American partnership as crucial to the United States when in fact it is not. When the usefulness or efficacy of Britain is in the shadows the alliance begins to shake. Lord Keynes' negotiations in Washington in 1946 and the Suez fiasco of 1956 illustrate the point.

Britain thus has the role of a junior partner, which is rarely easy. Neither Winston Churchill nor Margaret Thatcher was by nature or temperament a junior partner but they both learned reluctantly the art. A junior partner cannot dictate the policy of the partnership; it may not even have a blocking power. The junior partner has however the right to ask questions, to press that these be fully considered and to insist on rational answers. Discussions of the timing of the Second Front in World War II provides a classic example. Tony Blair did not learn the art of the junior partner; he confused it with subservience. As Professor Strachan wrote in the August/September issue of *Survival* "a preference in favour of alliance obligations did not relieve London of the need to think through the best strategy to serve its own national interests, but was treated as though it did".

If the substance of the relationship is in good heart, it is not necessary to worry about secondary though important arguments which blow up as storms crossing the Atlantic. Disagreements are inevitable. Within the common ground just described there are marked differences of emphasis, for example on many aspects of punishment and on attitudes to disagreeable dictators. Through the early part of my working lifetime the dispute over the recognition of China divided London and Washington, sometimes bitterly. Later there was lively disagreement about the right policy in Bosnia. Most recently of all the disagreement over the freeing by the Scottish Minister of Justice of the Lockerbie bomber was strongly described as a threat to the Anglo-American relationship.

Disagreements properly handled do not go deep; they represent accurately a genuine difference of approach, illustrated in this last case by the different attitudes of the relatives of the victims of the bombing on each side of the Atlantic. The press are always keen to exaggerate the nature of these differences; this is a cost which has to be borne as calmly as possible.

It is a mistake to describe the Anglo-American relationship as a bridge between Europe and the United States. Every substantial country in Europe has its own bridge across the Atlantic. It is true that we are usually though not always equipped with the means to interpret American policies and find acceptable ways of accommodating them. This advantage is most successfully used without too much noise.

It is also a mistake for the British to think of themselves, as "Greeks" as opposed to the American "Romans". As used by Harold Macmillan this implies a greater degree of experience and subtlety on our part. There will be particular experiences, for example the British counter-insurgency role in Malaya or Northern Ireland, which give us an advantage which can be useful to our partners. Experience in the Second World War and more recently in Iraq suggests that the Americans, in this case the Army, are quick, sometimes quicker than ourselves, to pick up the latest lessons and adapt accordingly. Nothing is more irritating to an intelligent American than the tacit assumption that longer experience of his British counterpart brings greater wisdom.

At the heart of the relationship lies a simple fact. British defence policy rests on the assumption that we will not fight a major war except in partnership with the United States. It follows that it is crucially in our interest to understand and influence American foreign policy. Moreover, our standing in the rest of the world will be shaped in part by the perceived extent of that influence.

Two particular positive aspects to the relationship need brief underlining:

- (i) The Anglo-American intelligence relationship has proved durable in all weathers. I am out of date on particulars, but recall how important it was from this point of view that Britain should find the money to finance at least a small share of the expenditure on technological innovation on which modern intelligence depends. I suspect that this consideration is more relevant than ever.
- (ii) For historical reasons almost all the diplomatic transactions between the two governments are conducted by the British Embassy in Washington rather than the US Embassy in London. If the right brains are available and deployed the Embassy is able to penetrate the US decision taking process high up stream at a fairly early stage of discussion within the Administration. If the necessary brains can be found and deployed this gives Britain a considerable edge.

The same point leads to a wider conclusion.

The US Congress, American think tanks and at any rate parts of the American media play a part in the forming of American policy than anything comparable here. The junior partner if he is to be effective has to cover a very wide waterfront.

22 September 2009

Written evidence from Ambassador Robert E Hunter, Senior Advisor, RAND Corporation

SUMMARY

- the “special relationship” still exists as between the United States and the United Kingdom, and is regularly honored by US leaders, but it has changed—and diminished—significantly over time;
- language, history, and culture still matter—even as the US population becomes progressively less “European”;
- the overall appeal of President Obama can ease any difficulties the UK government could have domestically in supporting US foreign policies; his emphasis on multilateralism may not, in fact, represent a sea-change on many specific issues; however, the change in tone can be productive in promoting US-UK relations;
- US Administrations always assume they will get a “fair hearing” in London, more than in any other capital;
- the US still expects that the UK will help it with the EU, and it remains ambivalent about how deeply engaged it would like the UK role to be in the EU, if that would be at the expense of US policies and preferences;
- HMG always gets a “fair hearing” in Washington, including on Capitol Hill, but this does not always translate into influence;
- the strongest area of practical co-operation is in intelligence; the second is in defence. Defence industry relations-co-operation-interpenetration are also important;
- Britain’s role in defence promotes influence in Washington. By contrast, the British nuclear deterrent is largely ignored by the US;
- London’s role as the #2 global financial centre promotes the overall US-UK relationship—and is particularly important as repair of the global financial system assumes a “global security” importance in the broadest sense of the term;
- economically, by contrast, UK importance/influence with the US is dwindling compared with the Continent and East Asia, except for the current short-term value of similar approaches to global recovery—another “global security” issue;
- the US particularly values UK engagement “beyond Europe” and in difficult security situations when other allies stand aloof or are reluctant—notably in Iraq and Afghanistan; the US will continue to look to the UK as its number one partner in foreign policy, generally, outside of East Asia, Francophone Africa, and Latin America;
- the US and UK have opportunities for close co-operation on issues such as arms control, non-proliferation, and relations with Russia;
- as the US increasingly looks to the integration of instruments of power and influence (military and non-military) to meet security requirements in many parts of the world, Britain’s experience and perspective (including in counter-insurgency) will be highly useful to the US and to the Special Relationship;
- the US will increasingly look to the UK for its role, domestically and internationally, in helping to meet a host of global issues, notably climate change, energy, and the like, which increasingly have a “global security” dimension;
- sharing of experience and approaches on homeland security will be increasingly important to the security of both societies; and
- on balance, the Special Relationship favours the US more than the UK, in terms of “who influences whom”; whether this matters to the UK is for it to decide, and should preferably be determined issue by issue. At the same time, there are few British security issues where the United States is likely to be unsympathetic.

Ambassador Robert E Hunter

Senior Advisor, the RAND Corporation (Arlington, Va).

Formerly US Ambassador to NATO (1993–98); Member, US Defense Policy Board (1998–2001); President, Atlantic Treaty Association (1993–98); Director of European Affairs, the White House (1977–79).

Currently Member, Commander US European Command’s Senior Advisory Group (EUCOM/SAG); Senior Concept Developer, Supreme Allied Command Transformation (SACT); Senior International Consultant, Lockheed-Martin Overseas Corporation; Chairman, Council for a Community of Democracies. PhD—International Relations, LSE (1969).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. The UK is, along with France, the only major NATO ally that consistently exceeds more than 2% of GDP in defence spending (and lags—2008 NATO estimates—only slightly behind France in total expenditures). Of course, in absolute terms, this is far below that of the United States (which accounts for a majority of global defence spending, at a rate one and a half times that of the UK in percentage of GDP—2.4% to 3.8% in 2008 NATO estimates).

2. The United Kingdom has a closer intelligence-sharing relationship with the United States than does any other country (Canada and Australia rank next).

3. The United Kingdom also has greater access to US defence high technology than any other country (although, as with the disagreement over sharing code for the F-35, it is not complete; and UK personnel still do not have unrestricted access to all UK-owned defence firms in the US).

4. The interpenetration of US and UK defence firms (ownership and doing business in one another's country) is the closest for the US with any country. BAE Systems has generally been the 5th largest supplier to the US Defense Department.

5. Interoperability of US and UK defence equipments is not exceeded by any other US defence partner.

6. The UK remains the “partner of first resort” in US defence co-operation. Early UK support for the F-35 was instrumental to the US going forward with this weapons system.

7. Since the time of US-UK disagreement over Bosnia (1993-mid-1995), Britain has been the most consistent major European NATO ally in supporting US military interventions, including in Iraq and Afghanistan. British support for the US-led coalition invasion of Iraq (2003) provided critical domestic political support in the US (as one element of political compensation, the US Administration pledged accelerated efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict). UK continuing support in Iraq was of major importance to the success of the post-invasion phase. UK military engagement in Afghanistan from 2001 onward has been instrumental to US policy and will continue to be so as the US debates its own future in Afghanistan. A UK withdrawal would have a major impact in the US.

8. Under the current UK government, the US has received increased support for its policies toward Iran; and it will continue to look for that support. It also looks to the UK for staunch support of US policies at the United Nations and usually reciprocates; co-operation at the UN is close.

9. In most areas, US and UK foreign policies have been compatible, to a consistency the US finds with no other major European country. Despite the improvement of Franco-American relations (and France's renewed full integration in NATO's integrated military structure), the US still looks to the UK as its “first partner”, at least in security terms, even though—at least outside of the current global economic downturn—the US look more to Germany as a leading economic partner and to the EU overall in economic relations.

10. Effective management of the global financial and economic systems has clearly become a major factor in “global security”, writ large; and the US and UK have close working relationships in the former and see many policies in similar fashion in the latter, even though the UK economy is losing relative importance for the US.

11. The US and UK look at management of Russia in similar ways (more so than with many European countries); they also have similar approaches to arms control and proliferation issues—creating a solid base for joint leadership in these areas.

12. The US still looks to the UK to “take its part” in the EU, and the two countries have consistently supported the primacy of NATO over ESDP (a competition that has now been muted), even though St. Mâlo (1998) for a time seemed to place the UK more on the French side in the debate.

13. Since about the time of the “Good Friday Accord,” the US has been less motivated to oppose UK policy in Ireland, and this has almost entirely ended this issue as an irritant in US-UK relations.

14. Active US involvement in Arab-Israeli peacemaking is more derivative of other requirements (dealing with security issues with Arab states and NATO allies) than a free-standing interest, and, among the Europeans, securing UK support for US Middle East policies is most important for Washington.

15. Personal interaction of government officials, along with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and foreign policy/security “think tanks” are as close as between the UK and US as for any other US partner. Influence thus gained for the UK cannot be quantified but it remains substantial. The British Embassy in Washington has consistently had excellent access throughout the US government, as well as having one of the best information operations on Capitol Hill (it is one of the few foreign embassies whose role in managing relations with the US rivals that of the US Embassy in the opposite capital).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. An admonition of President Ronald Reagan is apposite to much if not most of the US-UK relationship, especially in security terms: “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it”.
2. Continued significant UK defence spending, interpenetration of defence markets and corporations, close ties between the key financial markets of New York and London, maintenance of the unique US-UK intelligence-sharing relationship, and regular, frequent consultations at various levels of the two governments are obvious courses.
3. Closer relations should be forged between Parliament and Congress, including at the staff level (the continued relative lack of foreign policy interest on the part of too many Members of Congress should not be underestimated). This should include joint hearings on integrated security policy-making, alternately in Washington and London.
4. Educational exchanges, as well as attention paid to the “successor generation” (which hardly if at all remembers the Cold War), will be highly important. This should include revival of a systematic effort at British tutelage on methodology of strategic thinking (akin to the Institute for Strategic Studies at its inception—“speaking truth to [US] power”).
5. Close, bilateral co-ordination on security issues, including for NATO, should be intensified; reinvigorating “quad” consultations at NATO is particularly important. US-UK “strategic dialogue” should be intensified, including shared experience of efforts to promote military/civilian integration of tools of power and influence.
6. The US and UK should co-operate in trying to break down barriers between NATO and the EU. They should also co-ordinate in developing policies and approaches to Afghanistan, at a difficult time in the evolution of this issue.
7. The UK should explore, with the US, development of a new security system for the Persian Gulf and environs, and the integration of policy toward the entire region (“holistically”) from the Levant to Pakistan.
8. There should be close US-UK co-ordination on the development of the new NATO Strategic Concept; the UK should take the lead—with France and Germany—in developing a parallel document for the EU, with the goal of a joint NATO-EU summit at the time of the NATO summit in Lisbon in 2010.

21 September 2009

Letter to the Chairman of the Committee from Mr Andrew Tyrie MP, Chairman, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Extraordinary Rendition

I have written to your Committee on several occasions about rendition and I hope that you will take these earlier submissions into account in this inquiry. I will not repeat those submissions here. In summary, specific issues of concern relating to UK-US relations include:

Diego Garcia and Rendition Flights

- the use of Diego Garcia for the rendition programme;
- the apparent breach or inadequacy of agreements between the UK and the US concerning its use;
- the unreliability of US assurances on this issue;
- the withholding of information by the US about the two known rendition flights through Diego Garcia, including the names and treatment of the detainees involved, and where they were held before and after their renditions;
- allegations that UK airports and airspace have been used for so-called rendition “circuit flights” (flights to or from carrying out a rendition); and
- the implications for the US’ use of Diego Garcia in the future.

Detainee Handovers

- the rendition of detainees captured by UK Forces and handed over to US forces;
- allegations of further UK Forces involvement in the US rendition programme and detainee mistreatment, including allegations surrounding the UK Special Forces;
- the apparent inadequacy of procedures in place to ensure the proper treatment of people captured by UK Forces and handed over to US forces; and
- the implications for UK Forces working alongside US forces in the future.

Intelligence Agencies

- the involvement of the agencies in the US rendition programme, including that documented in the cases of Binyam Mohamed, Bisher al-Rawi and Jamil el-Banna;
- allegations of further UK agency involvement in the US rendition programme; and
- the implications for the UK-US intelligence sharing relationship.

More detail of these issues has been sent to you in my letters of 29 January and 3 May of 2009.⁵

23 September 2009

Written evidence from the British Pugwash Group

GLOBAL SECURITY: UK-US RELATIONS

1. The Foreign Affairs Committee has announced that it is taking evidence on the relationship between the UK and the US and the implications this has on UK foreign policy, and has invited interested groups or individuals to submit their views on six specific issues:

- the basis of the bilateral relationship between the UK and US;
- UK and US views on the nature and value of the bilateral relationship and the contribution of the UK-US foreign policy relationship to global security;
- the extent to which UK and US interests align in key foreign policy related areas including security, defence, and intelligence co-operation;
- the extent to which the UK is able to influence US foreign policy and UK policy is influenced by the US under the Obama Administration;
- the extent to which “the special relationship” still exists and the factors which determine this; and
- the implications of any changes in the nature of the bilateral relationship for British foreign policy.

2. The British Pugwash Group (BPG) wishes to offer the following thoughts on these six issues, as set out below. The BPG is affiliated to the international Pugwash movement, which has for over 50 years provided independent expert advice to national governments on matters affecting international security, particularly in relation to nuclear weapons. For example, it played major roles in the development of arms control treaties, including the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Partial Test Ban Treaty, and the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions. The British Pugwash Group has been an active participant in the work of International Pugwash since the movement started. It has strong international connections, and has technical expertise in many areas related to security, nuclear weapons (and other weapons of mass destruction), arms control and disarmament. It has recently produced a significant report on the *Management of the UK Stockpile of Separated Plutonium*. Copies of this report can be provided on request.

3. THE BASIS OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UK AND US

3.1 The roots of the bilateral relationship between the UK and US reach back into the 17th century, and the relationship has had high and low points ever since. The so-called “special relationship” was forged during the Second World War: it owed a great deal to the personal relationship between Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt, but has survived to the present day in spite of periodic tensions. In recent years, some of the most significant structural foundations of that relationship have been the close collaboration between the two countries in the areas of nuclear weapons and intelligence. In both areas there have been a series of formal agreements and informal cooperative practices.

3.2 In the nuclear area, among the most important of these have been the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement (MDA) and the 1963 Polaris Sales Agreement (PSA).

The 1958 MDA, formally known as the Agreement for Co-operation on the use of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defence Purposes, has a number of appendices, amendments and memoranda of understanding, many of which are still classified. It is known, however, that the agreement provides for extensive co-operation on nuclear warhead and reactor technologies, in particular the exchange of classified information concerning nuclear weapons to improve “design, development and fabrication capability”. The agreement also provides for the transfer of nuclear warhead-related materials. The agreement was renewed in 2004 for a further 10 years.

3.3 The 1963 Polaris Sales Agreement allows the UK to acquire, support and operate the US Trident missile system. Originally signed to allow the UK to acquire the Polaris SLBM system in the 1960s, it was amended in 1980 to facilitate purchase of the Trident I (C4) missile and again in 1982 to authorise purchase of the more advanced Trident II (D5) in place of the C4. In return, the UK agreed to formally assign its

⁵ Published in the Committee’s Seventh Report of Session 2008–09, Human Rights Annual Report 2008, HC 557, Ev 63 and 150.

nuclear forces to the defence of NATO except in an extreme national emergency under the terms of the 1962 Nassau Agreement reached between President John F Kennedy and Prime Minister Harold Macmillan to facilitate negotiation of the PSA.

3.4 The second area is intelligence co-operation. Exchange of intelligence information between the US and UK agencies has been routine since the 1930s, but was greatly expanded during the second World War, and in relation to signals intelligence (SIGINT) it was formalised on 17 May 1943 with the conclusion of the still-secret, and possibly still-active, BRUSA COMINT agreement. More general exchanges of information continue to this day, though periodically threatened by espionage scandals (eg the Philby affair).

4. UK AND US VIEWS ON THE NATURE AND VALUE OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE UK-US FOREIGN POLICY RELATIONSHIP TO GLOBAL SECURITY

4.1 A consequence of these agreements is that the UK has always been heavily dependent on the United States for its ongoing deployment of strategic nuclear weapons. Without ongoing US support the UK would very probably cease to be a nuclear weapon state. This inevitably constrains the UK's national security policies and actions insofar as they must not destabilise its relationship with the US for fear of dilution or even withdrawal of nuclear weapons co-operation. A more general consequence of the particularly close co-operation in these two areas has been that the UK has felt constrained to support the United States in other areas of military activity, including interventionist activities in the Middle East, and in sharing the "burden" of the conventional and nuclear defence of NATO.

4.2 These "distorting" effects of the "special relationship" in these two key areas has meant that the UK has periodically been subject to criticism from other international players, and particularly from the European Community, for paying insufficient attention to the international policy objectives of its other partners.

4.3 A particular issue where the UK has been seen to pay undue attention to US foreign policy has been the so-called "War on Terror". It is now widely believed that statements made by President Bush on this subject were counter-productive, but the UK at no stage expressed public reservations about these.

More generally, the UK has been inhibited from developing its own foreign policy in relation to cases of actual or threatened nuclear weapon proliferation such as Israel, North Korea and Iran.

5. THE EXTENT TO WHICH UK AND US INTERESTS ALIGN IN KEY FOREIGN POLICY RELATED AREAS INCLUDING SECURITY, DEFENCE AND INTELLIGENCE CO-OPERATION

5.1 The foreign policy interests of the UK and the US are naturally and properly aligned in a number of areas. Both have a strong interest in sustaining and strengthening the Non-Proliferation Treaty, in exerting pressure on those countries which have not already signed the NPT to do so, and to subscribe to the Additional Protocol. Both have a strong interest in deterring acts of terrorism, including particularly nuclear terrorism. Both have a strong interest in protecting the environment, particularly against the threat of global warming. Both have a consequential interest in promoting the "nuclear renaissance" and other low-carbon means of generating electric power. Both have a strong interest in the establishment of safe means of disposing of nuclear waste, and in the management of fissile materials.

5.2 However within this broad area of coincidence of interest, there are a number of actual or potential divergences.

5.3 *Independent nuclear deterrent.* The UK has always prided itself on its possession of an independent nuclear deterrent, and the US has always been outwardly supportive, and has indeed taken active steps to assist the UK in this, to the extent that the UK deterrent cannot really be described as "independent" (see attachment 1). However recent developments in US policy (as formulated by President Obama) raise the question as to whether it is really in US interests for the UK to continue to pursue this policy. It is arguable that US policy objectives would be better served if the UK were to take a lead, among the nuclear powers, in abandoning its nuclear weapons altogether, either as a unilateral step, or as part of a bargaining process. The BPG takes the view that no-one (politician, journalist, academic or whomever) has devised a plausible scenario in which an independent British nuclear weapon might actually be used, either now or in the foreseeable future.

5.4 *Openness in strategic policy formation.* The UK has over many years operated a policy of forming international policy within government and behind closed doors, and has used the Official Secrets Act as a means of preventing the unauthorised disclosure of information to outsiders. The recent Freedom of Information Act has done little to change this. By contrast, in the US, policy formation is much more open. One disadvantage of UK practice in this area is that government is unable to make effective use of advice on such matters coming from NGOs, academia etc, because those sources are unable to tap into the existing state of thinking within government. In the US, there are various mechanisms which make this possible—e.g. the mechanism of the JASON Defense Advisory Group, which gives expert outsiders access to classified information. One of the drivers behind the UK policy has been the belief that disclosure of information by the UK might prejudice UK-US co-operation in such areas as nuclear weapon development or intelligence. To remove this concern, there is a need for the UK and US governments to reach a common understanding about how to open up this channel of expert advice, without damaging real security interests.

5.5 *Constraints upon the nuclear renaissance.* During the past three decades, the US and UK have operated highly divergent policies on the subject of reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel. The US policy—to prohibit reprocessing internally and to exert strong pressure on other nations not to embark on it—was triggered by its concern over the Indian nuclear weapon test in 1974, in which the plutonium came from reprocessing technology supplied by the US. By contrast, the UK and France have actively engaged in reprocessing since the 1950s, and have in recent years offered a commercial reprocessing service to countries which have not developed their own capability. There are still authoritative voices in the US which argue that the US should maintain its policy, and take active steps to discourage reprocessing world-wide. On this view, only the once-through nuclear fuel cycle should be pursued, and those countries (like the UK and France) which have large stockpiles of separated plutonium should stop producing more, and take active steps to dispose of their stockpiles immediately in a manner which does not facilitate retrieval. On the other hand, there is a strong argument that if the nuclear renaissance is to be sustained for more than a few decades, it will become essential to engage in reprocessing, and to make the resulting plutonium available for a fast reactor programme. The existing stockpiles would therefore need to be either securely stored, or converted to MOX fuel for burning in suitable power reactors. The BPG has explored the arguments for and against each of these views in the report cited above, and has concluded that it is impossible to reach a decision without having access to information which is not in the public domain. It has recommended that HMG should make sufficient information available to permit a rational debate on the matter. When a firm UK policy in these matters emerges, it may be desirable to convince the US government that it is correct.

5.6 *Negotiating positions at the 2010 NPT review meeting.* It is widely recognised that the 2005 NPT review meeting was a nearly-disastrous failure, and that if the NPT regime is to be sustained, the 2010 review meeting must have a more successful outcome. The UK government has published a document entitled *The road to 2010* which sets out the steps which it believes need to be taken to this end. Various policy statements are made in that document which are not self-evidently consistent with the approach which is currently being taken by the US. These include:

- (a) advocating the introduction of a “fourth pillar” into the NPT framework—securing fissile material against the risks from clandestine diversion or nuclear terrorism;
- (b) development of multilateral approaches to the fuel cycle, so that countries developing new nuclear programmes can reliably access the fuel they need to generate power without having to establish individual national facilities; and
- (c) strengthening the powers and organisation of the IAEA so that it can play a stronger role in securing fissile material and preventing proliferation.

Important though such issues are, they may well be overshadowed at the review meeting by complaints from non-nuclear signatories that the five nuclear powers recognised by the Treaty are not doing enough to honour the spirit, if not the letter, of Article VI of the Treaty. In this respect, the UK position is currently looking less credible than the US position.

6. THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE UK IS ABLE TO INFLUENCE US FOREIGN POLICY AND UK POLICY IS INFLUENCED BY THE US UNDER THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

6.1 It is clear that because of the long history of collaboration in many areas of foreign policy, the US and UK have always had a strong mutual influence. Specifically in the nuclear area, the pattern of collaborative agreements and informal cooperative practices has again led to mutual influence, though with the US as the predominant partner for obvious economic reasons. In recent years, the collaboration on the development of next-generation nuclear warheads, nuclear missiles and submarine delivery systems has been particularly complex (for details and supporting evidence see attachment 1).

6.2 The UK’s policy on warhead development has largely been driven by two parallel US programmes which started in the 1990s—to extend the life of the W76 warhead, and to develop new warhead designs to replace it. These programmes evolved into the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) programme, which Congress funded in 2004 but subsequently stripped of further funding in 2007 and 2008, and which was formally terminated by the Obama Administration in March 2009. The UK faces (but has not yet taken) a decision on whether to extend the life of its Trident warheads or develop its own version of an RRW. It is currently undertaking a number of exploratory activities jointly with the United States under the MDA, including work which is being undertaken by a Warhead Pre-Concept Working Group at the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE). Some of this research is being undertaken with the US, and it is reported that AWE is “keenly, keenly interested” in the US RRW programme. The two countries have also conducted joint “sub-critical” nuclear tests using fissile material, in tests that do not produce a nuclear explosion. The UK conducted a number of sub-critical nuclear experiments at the US Nevada Test Site in 2002 and 2006 “that provided data of direct benefit to both the U.S. and UK warhead certification efforts”. US nuclear weapon laboratories have used AWE experimental facilities to conduct tests using non-fissile plutonium isotopes that are prohibited by US law. US nuclear weapons labs will also have access to the Orion Laser at Aldermaston under the MDA. In fact, an important rationale for additional UK government investment in AWE expertise and advanced experimental facilities is to ensure that AWE can continue to make a valuable contribution to US nuclear weapon programmes, including a credible peer-review capability, and thereby ensure that benefits from the relationship are two-way.

6.3 As regards missile development, the UK government has already committed itself to the US Navy's programme to refurbish and extend the service life of its Trident missiles.

6.4 As regards next-generation ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) development, the US Navy is four to five years behind the UK. The UK plans to introduce its first successor submarine in 2024 but the US only provisionally plans to introduce a new submarine in 2028–29. In consequence the UK has already begun working with the United States on possible new submarine designs, and the Joint Steering Task Group that oversees the Polaris Sales Agreement has already met three times during which concept studies for a new successor submarine were discussed. In December 2008 the US General Dynamics Electric Boat Corporation was awarded a contract to perform studies and design of a Common Missile Compartment (CMC) for the successor submarines to both the existing US and UK submarines, paid for by the UK but run through the US Naval Sea Systems Command in Washington.

6.5 The above represents what might be termed “business as usual”. However during the past two years, a new theme has emerged, commonly referred to as “getting to zero” or “a nuclear-weapon-free world”. This idea has been put onto the international political agenda, as a result of the ground-breaking open letter of Schultz, Perry, Kissinger and Nunn (4 January 2007), the speech made by Margaret Beckett to the Carnegie Foundation (25 June 2007), and recent speeches and publications by eminent UK politicians and generals, including some recent statements by Foreign Secretary Miliband, and Barak Obama's recent address to the UN General Assembly.

6.6 It is rather clear that to reach the eventual goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, the international community will have to proceed in steps. There is an immediate and pressing need to prevent the current situation from deteriorating further. This requires the strengthening of the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime, encouraging those countries that have not already signed the Treaty and the Additional Protocol to do so, and ensuring that those countries which have signed abide by its provisions. In parallel with this, there is a need for those countries which have already acquired nuclear weapons to start or continue arms reduction, arms limitation and other confidence-building measures, both to fulfil their obligations under the NPT and to move in the direction of a nuclear-weapon-free world. In the longer term, there is a need to create the international security framework within which nations could abandon nuclear weapons altogether as an element of their defence policy.

6.7 In the context of this long-term goal, there is an urgent need for leadership, and a particularly useful suggestion was made by Margaret Beckett in her speech of 25 June 2007, that the UK should become the “disarmament laboratory” of the world. The BPG has been seeking to develop this idea, and has proposed the creation of a British institution (which it has named BRINPARDI) which would bring together all the expertise which exists in this country in these matters, and which would contribute an element of British leadership to the international efforts which are required. It should be both British and International, in the same way that SIPRI is both Swedish and International—i.e. located in the UK, and predominantly funded from British sources—but open to both individual experts from around the world, and to funding from outside the UK. It should be a predominantly non-classified institution, but should be able to draw on the advice of experts with security clearance as necessary, as is possible in the US JASON system. It should operate in such a way that it earns the respect of the international community as an objective, fair-minded organisation, not subject to undue influence from any national, political or military faction, but should be regarded by the British government as a reliable source of information and advice on policy in this area. This idea is developed further in attachment 2.

7. THE EXTENT TO WHICH “THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP” STILL EXISTS AND THE FACTORS WHICH DETERMINE THIS

The importance of the “special relationship” can easily be exaggerated. However it still exists, and is likely to survive spats such as that over the repatriation of Abdelbaset Ali Mohmet al-Megrahi. It was strengthened by the US-UK partnership as allies during the Second World War, and by the UK support for US policy in Iraq, and draws on strong linguistic and cultural links. It could be strengthened further if the UK and US adopt a common approach to the NPT review and take parallel steps towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

8. THE IMPLICATIONS OF ANY CHANGES IN THE NATURE OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP FOR BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

8.1 The most significant change during the next decade or two will be driven by the shift from the US as the sole super-power to a multi-polar world in which China and other countries move towards economic, and perhaps also military, parity with it. The UK, as a country which has been through the experience of losing an empire, can perhaps help the US to develop a useful role in this new world. The US certainly still needs encouragement to show sufficient respect to international institutions.

8.2 The US has recently experienced some major set-backs in the exercise of power, with Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Israel, North Korea (to name but five) proving that they are able to thwart its foreign policy. The UK may be able to help find diplomatic solutions to problems which the US has been unable to solve by the exercise or threat of military power.

8.3 In the nuclear sphere, the US has taken a number of policy decisions (e.g. on reprocessing) which, with hindsight, were perhaps ill-advised. The UK may be able to help it to move forward.

8.4 During the past decade, the UK has adopted a number of foreign relations policies which, with hindsight, showed undue subservience to US policy. It would benefit the bilateral relationship if the UK were able to find ways to dissociate itself from US policy in certain areas, without undermining a long history of fruitful collaboration.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The UK should explore with the US government whether its policy objectives would be better served if the UK were to take a lead, among the nuclear powers, in abandoning its nuclear weapons altogether, either as a unilateral step, or as part of a bargaining process.

9.2 The UK and US governments should seek to reach a common understanding about how to open up the channel of expert advice from UK NGOs, academics and other experts on nuclear policy matters, without damaging the real security interests of either country. One specific possibility that should be followed up is to explore the applicability of the JASON model in the UK.

9.3 The UK government should develop, in consultation with NGOs, academics and other experts, a policy on reprocessing and plutonium stockpile management, and should then seek to convince the US government that it is correct.

9.4 The UK and US should seek to develop common negotiating positions for the 2010 NPT review meeting, having regard to any concerns that the US may have about the policies outlined in *The Road to 2010*, and Article VI of the NPT Treaty.

9.5 The UK government should take forward the suggestion which was made by Margaret Beckett in her speech of 25 June 2007, that the UK should become the “disarmament laboratory” of the world, for example by establishing an institution such as BRINPARDI (see attachment 2). The precise form that this institution should take could usefully be explored with interested NGOs, academics and other experts.

9.6 The UK should try to find ways to dissociate itself from US policy in selected areas, without undermining a long history of fruitful collaboration.

23 September 2009

ATTACHMENT 1

“US-UK SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP”

UNDERSTANDING CURRENT US-UK NUCLEAR WEAPONS CO-OPERATION

Any understanding of the US-UK “special relationship” must address the long-standing nuclear weapons co-operation that underpins it. This attachment outlines the contemporary state of that co-operation.

Anchoring itself to the US is a fundamental part of British security strategy, and nuclear weapons are seen as both an important part of the anchor and a symbol of its strength.⁶ The UK, however, remains heavily dependent on the United States for its ongoing deployment of strategic nuclear weapons in the Trident system. Without ongoing US support the UK would likely cease to be a nuclear weapon state.

As long as HMG deems it imperative that the UK deploy strategic nuclear weapons for the country’s security it will remain dependent upon the United States in this area. This inevitably constrains the UK’s national security policies and actions insofar as they must not destabilise its relationship with the US for fear of dilution or even withdrawal of nuclear weapons co-operation. Nuclear weapons co-operation is one of several dependency dimensions of the UK’s relationship with the US, one other primary area being intelligence co-operation.

The UK is, in fact, in a circular nuclear relationship with the United States in which it deems it essential to deploy strategic nuclear forces to reinforce and reproduce its role and commitment as the United States’ primary political and military ally, in part to facilitate its willingness to support the US militarily in interventionist activity,⁷ and in part to share the “burden” of the nuclear defence of NATO,⁸ whilst at the same time being highly dependent upon the United States for the provision and operation of its nuclear capability.

MDA AND PSA

Nuclear dependence upon the United States was cemented in the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement (MDA) and the 1963 Polaris Sales Agreement (PSA). The 1958 MDA, formally known as the Agreement for Co-operation on the use of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defence Purposes, has a number of appendices, amendments and memoranda of understanding, many of which are still classified.⁹ It is known, however,

⁶ John Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations in the Cold War and After*, (Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2001); John Simpson, *The Independent Nuclear State: The United States, Britain, and the Military Atom* (MacMillan: London, 1983).

⁷ Nick Ritchie, *Trident and British Identity*, Department of Peace Studies report (University of Bradford: Bradford, September 2008). Available at: <http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/bdrc/nuclear/trident/briefing3.html>

⁸ See Michael Quinlan, “The future of nuclear weapons: policy for Western possessors”, *International Affairs* 69: 3, July 1993, p 489.

⁹ Mark Bromley and Nicola Butler, *Secrecy and Dependence: The UK Trident System in the 21st Century* (BASIC: London, November 2001). Available at <http://www.basicint.org/pubs/Research/2001UKtrident1.htm>.

that the agreement provides for extensive co-operation on nuclear warhead and reactor technologies, in particular the exchange of classified information concerning nuclear weapons to improve “design, development and fabrication capability”.¹⁰ The agreement also provides for the transfer of nuclear warhead-related materials. The agreement was renewed in 2004 for a further 10 years.¹¹ Every 18 months a review, or “stock take”, of US-UK nuclear co-operation is conducted involving senior officials from the US and UK. More frequent interaction between the US and UK nuclear weapons laboratories and defence bureaucracies takes place via a range of Joint Working Groups (JOWOGs).¹²

The 1963 Polaris Sales Agreement allows the UK to acquire, support and operate the US Trident missile system. Originally signed to allow the UK to acquire the Polaris SLBM system in the 1960s, it was amended in 1980 to facilitate purchase of the Trident I (C4) missile and again in 1982 to authorise purchase of the more advanced Trident II (D5) in place of the C4. In return the UK agreed to formally assign its nuclear forces to the defence of NATO except in an extreme national emergency under the terms of the 1962 Nassau Agreement reached between President John F Kennedy and Prime Minister Harold Macmillan to facilitate negotiation of the PSA.¹³ Under the Polaris Sales Agreement, as amended for Trident, the UK is involved in a number of other working groups, including a Joint Steering Task Group, supported by the Trident Joint Re-Entry Systems Working Group and the Joint Systems Performance and Assessment Group.¹⁴

THE TRIDENT SYSTEM

Britain’s single remaining nuclear weapon system comprises three core components: four Vanguard-class nuclear powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs); 50 US-designed and built Trident II (D5) submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) drawn from a common pool of Trident missiles based in the US; and 160 operational nuclear warheads. Collectively, and sometimes misleadingly, the composite system is usually referred to as Trident.

The UK is entirely dependent upon the United States for supply and refurbishment of its Trident II (D5) submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM). The missiles themselves are produced and serviced in the United States by Lockheed Martin. The UK does not actually own any individual missiles, but purchased the rights to 58 missiles from a common pool held at the US Strategic Weapons facility at the Kings Bay Submarine Base, Georgia. British Trident submarines also conduct their missile test firings at the US Eastern Test Range, off the coast of Florida.

The UK is also dependent upon the United States for the software used for targeting and firing its Trident missiles. Ainslie reports that “targeting data on British Trident submarines is processed in the Fire Control System by software produced in America. This data is created in the Nuclear Operations and Targeting Centre in London. The Centre relies on US software”.¹⁵ Ainslie also reports that both UK and US Trident submarines use the Mk 98 Fire Control System produced by General Dynamics Defense System (GDSS) to carry out the calculations to prepare and launch the Trident missiles.¹⁶

UK nuclear targeting is also integrated into US nuclear targeting plans through the UK Liaison Cell at US Strategic Command (STRATCOM) in Omaha, Nebraska.¹⁷ STRATCOM develops and co-ordinates US nuclear targeting plans. This used to involve periodic revision of a Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) covering all US nuclear forces. It now involves an “adaptive planning” system comprising a family of nuclear war plans for different scenarios together with the ability to rapidly create new nuclear targeting plans for unexpected contingencies.¹⁸

The UK Trident force is formally declared to NATO. Ainslie argues that it is likely that detailed target planning for NATO use of strategic nuclear forces, including the UK Trident system, is also conducted at STRATCOM.¹⁹ The purpose of the UK presence at STRATCOM is therefore to co-ordinate and “deconflict” NATO and US nuclear targeting plans as they affect UK nuclear forces and avoid possible duplication and fratricide in nuclear war plans.²⁰ It is unclear whether NATO or the UK still maintain standing nuclear war plans.²¹

¹⁰ Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the United States of America for Co-operation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defence Purposes, signed in Washington, 3 July 1958.

¹¹ See Nigel Chamberlain, Nicola Butler and Dave Andrews *US-UK Nuclear Weapons Collaboration under the Mutual Defence Agreement: Shining a Torch on the Darker Recesses of the ‘Special Relationship’*, BASIC Special Report 2004.3 (BASIC: London, June 2004).

¹² *Official Report*, House of Commons, February 27, 2009, column 1150.

¹³ For details see Peter Hennessy, *Cabinets and the Bomb* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007).

¹⁴ *Official Report*, House of Commons, January 12 1998, column 140.

¹⁵ Ainslie, *The Future of the British Bomb*, p 12.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p 67.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, and Interview with Frank Miller by Jessica Yeats, CSIS, January 28, 2008. Audio files available at <http://csis.org/program/us-uk-nuclear-cooperation-after-50-years>

¹⁸ Nick Ritchie, *US Nuclear Weapons Policy after the Cold War* (Routledge: Abingdon, 2009), pp 25, 65.

¹⁹ Ainslie, *The Future of the British Bomb*, p 66.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p 52.

²¹ On NATO see *Ibid*, p 52. On the UK see Michael Quinlan, “The British Experience”, in Henry Sokolski (ed), *Getting MAD: mutual assured destruction, its origins and practice*, Strategic Studies Institute (Army War College, Carlisle, PA), November 2004, p 265.

TRIDENT REPLACEMENT

In December 2006 the government presented their decision to replace the current Vanguard-class submarines nuclear weapon system when it reaches the end of its service life in a White Paper on *The Future of the United Kingdom's Nuclear Deterrent*.²² In March 2007 Parliament voted in favour of the decision.

The government stated that the Vanguard submarines that carry the Trident missiles have a service life of 25 years. In order to maintain the current “continuous-at-sea deterrence” posture with one submarine at sea on operational patrol at all times, a new submarine will be required by the time the oldest Vanguard submarine retires in 2024. The government argued in its 2006 White Paper that it will take approximately 17 years to design, build and test a new submarine, hence a decision on whether or not to proceed was required in 2007. In October 2007 MoD’s Defence Equipment and Support (DES) department formally established a Future Submarines Integrated Project Team (FSM-IPT) to develop a concept design for a new submarine over two years.²³

The future of the British nuclear weapons programme is intimately linked to the United States. The UK will look to the US for political and technical support in replacing its Vanguard SSBNs and modernising the Trident system.²⁴ The US Navy is four to five years behind the UK in planning a replacement for its Ohio-class submarines that carry its Trident missiles having opted to extend the life of its submarines by 15–20 years in. The UK plans to introduce its first successor submarine in 2024 but the US only provisionally plans to introduce a new submarine in 2028–29.²⁵

The UK has already begun working with the United States on possible new submarine designs and in February 2008 it set up a programme office in the US to facilitate liaison on the design process in the US for an Ohio-class successor SSBN.²⁶ MoD reported in December 2007 that since March 2007 UK and US experts in the Joint Steering Task Group that oversees the Polaris Sales Agreement had already met three times during which concept studies for a new successor submarine were discussed.²⁷

In December 2008 it was reported that US General Dynamics Electric Boat Corporation had been awarded a contract to perform studies and design of a Common Missile Compartment (CMC) for both the UK Vanguard-class and the US Ohio-class successor submarines paid for by the UK but run through the US Naval Sea Systems Command in Washington.²⁸ MoD is also contracting out additional aspects of its own concept studies to US companies.²⁹

The government has already committed itself to the US Navy’s programme to refurbish and extend the service life of its Trident missiles.³⁰

US AND UK STOCKPILE STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMMES

In 1996 President Bill Clinton signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) banning all nuclear tests. In order to maintain the long-term safety, security and reliability of the US nuclear arsenal in an era of zero testing the Clinton Administration established a science-based Stockpile Stewardship Program (SSP).³¹

The programme was designed to sustain a consolidated Cold War legacy nuclear arsenal well into the future. It would use data from past nuclear tests, small-scale laboratory experiments, large scale experimental facilities, and detailed examination of warheads and their constituent parts to development of a comprehensive understanding of the functioning of all aspects of nuclear weapons under extreme conditions and the behaviour of the materials involved as they aged. This knowledge would be used to develop and improve powerful computer codes that simulate aspects of weapons performance and enhance understanding and prediction of defects in warheads.³² The primary objective of the SSP was to maintain

²² Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) *The Future of the United Kingdom's Nuclear Deterrent*, Command 6994 (HMSO: London, December 2006).

²³ “Birth of Son of Trident, at Yard”, *North-West Evening Mail*, October 11, 2007; “Future Submarines Integrated Project Team Officially Opens”, News Release, BAE Systems, 12 October 2007.

²⁴ It was reported in July 2005 that Defence Secretary John Reid had authorized officials to begin negotiations with Washington on the nature of Britain’s post-Vanguard nuclear force. David Cracknell, “Talks start with U.S. on Trident’s 15bn successor”, *The Sunday Times*, 17 July 2005.

²⁵ Elaine Grossman, “Strategic Arms Funds Tilt Conventional in 2009”, *Global Security Newswire*, 7 November 2008. Available at http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues/2008/11/7/2E8D226C-261C-4209-8B38-147F3CD8012B.html; “Sub officials: missiles will decide design of strategic deterrent”, *Inside the Navy*, 23 February 2009.

²⁶ Uncorrected transcript of oral evidence to the Committee of Public Accounts hearing on *The United Kingdom's Future Nuclear Deterrent Capability*, 19 November 2008, p 19.

²⁷ Defence Secretary Des Browne, House of Commons, *Official Report*, 3 December 2007, Column 843W.

²⁸ “CMC Contract to Define Future SSBN Launchers for UK, USA”, *Defense Industry Daily*, 26 December 2008.

²⁹ “UK WTS Training Implementation Plan Future Hull”, Defense Contract Management Agency, solicitation number N00030-07-G-0044NJ57, 28 May 2008.

³⁰ Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) *The Future of the United Kingdom's Nuclear Deterrent*, Command 6994 (HMSO: London, December 2006).

³¹ William J. Clinton, “The President’s Radio Address”, 3 July 1993, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, vol 29, no 27, pp 1229–1296 (Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.).

³² Jonathan Medalia, “The Reliable Replacement Warhead Program: Background and Current Developments”, *CRS Report for Congress* (Congressional Research Service, Washington, D.C., 2007), p 7.

the capability to identify problems in nuclear warheads, repair any problems and certify the repairs, or replace complete warheads or their component parts that could not be repaired, all without explosive nuclear testing.³³

A central part of the SSP was the modification and refurbishment of several types of nuclear warhead through extensive modernisation and life extension programmes (LEPs), including the W76 Trident warhead.³⁴ The UK Trident warhead is an “Anglicised” version of the W76 warhead. The refurbished US warhead is known as W76-1.³⁵ The first test flight of the W76-1 on a Trident missile took place in December 2002 with a series of further tests resulting in a first production unit in 2007.³⁶

The UK has pursued a comparable programme, albeit on a much smaller scale, labelled the Warhead Assurance Programme designed to “ensure the safety, effectiveness and durability of the UK nuclear warhead stockpile.”³⁷ The comparable purpose is to develop highly accurate computer models that can be used to predict the physical processes of the many materials used in the Trident warhead which occur when a weapon is detonated and validate those models against as wide a range of experimental data as possible, as well as against the database of previous nuclear tests.³⁸

US AND UK STOCKPILE STEWARDSHIP AND W76 LIFE EXTENSION CO-OPERATION

The US and UK have collaborated on many aspects of their stockpile stewardship programmes. As early as 1995 MoD stated that the UK’s stockpile stewardship programme would be “undertaken in continuing co-operation with the United States, which will contribute to the safe stewardship of Trident throughout its service life as well as sustaining capabilities to meet future requirements”.³⁹

In 2009 then Defence Secretary John Hutton stated that “Research, including trials, and experiments, is conducted on a regular basis, by the Atomic Weapons Establishment as part of its responsibility for maintaining the safety, security, and effectiveness of the UK nuclear stockpile in the absence of live testing. Some of this research is undertaken in collaboration with the United States under the auspices of the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement”.⁴⁰

In addition the US and UK have conducted joint hydrodynamic experiments under the auspices of the MDA.⁴¹ O’Nions *et al* state that “In addition to future [hydrodynamic] tests planned at AWE, complementary experiments are being carried out in collaboration with the US weapons laboratories, including some at their U1A facility in Nevada”.⁴²

The two countries have also conducted joint “sub-critical” nuclear tests using fissile material in tests that do not produce a nuclear explosion. O’Nions, Pitman and Anderson, for example, state that the UK has conducted a number of sub-critical nuclear experiments at the US Nevada Test Site in 2002 and 2006 “that provided data of direct benefit to both the U.S. and UK warhead certification efforts”.⁴³ The permissibility of sub-critical tests under the terms of the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is controversial but both the UK and US government insist they are permitted because they do not establish conditions for an exponentially growing fission chain reaction.⁴⁴

US nuclear weapon laboratories have similarly used AWE experimental facilities to conduct tests that Congress had prohibited in the United States. Stanley Orman, former Deputy Director of AWE, stated in 2008 that “we also devised a technique...of imploding a non-fissile plutonium isotope. Now because it was plutonium the laws in the States would not allow you to implode this even though it was non-fissile, because it was plutonium. So again the American scientists would come across and use our laboratories because they couldn’t use theirs”.⁴⁵ US nuclear weapons labs will also have access to the Orion Laser at Aldermaston under the MDA.⁴⁶

³³ Siegfried Hecker, “Testimony by Dr Siegfried S Hecker, Director, Los Alamos National Laboratory”, Hearing before the Senate Committee on Armed Services, March 19, 1997 (Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.), pp 206–207; Tom Collina & Ray Kidder, “Shopping Spree Softens Test-Ban Sorrows”, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol 50 no 4 (July/August 1994).

³⁴ *Stockpile Stewardship Program: 30-Day Review* (U.S. Department of Energy: Washington, D.C., 1999), pp 2–1.

³⁵ Hans Kristensen, “Administration Increases Submarine Nuclear Warhead Production Plan”, FAS Blog, Federation of American Scientists, 30 August 2007. Available at http://www.fas.org/blog/ssp/2007/08/us_triples_submarine_warhead.php

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Defence Secretary Des Browne, *Official Report*, House of Commons, 13 July 2006, column 1944W.

³⁸ Caroline Handley (a scientist in the Design Physics Department at AWE) “Nuclear Weapon Design and Certification in the CTBT Era” in *A Collection of Papers from the 2007 PONI Conference Series*, Project on Nuclear Issues (Center for Strategic and International Studies: Washington, DC, 2008), p 31; Keith O’Nions, Robin Pitman and Clive Marsh “Science of Nuclear Warheads”, *Nature*, Vol 415, 21 February 2002.

³⁹ House of Commons Defence Committee, *Progress of the Trident Programme*, HC 350 (HMSO: London, July 1995), p 24.

⁴⁰ *Official Report*, House of Commons, 23 March 2009, column 17W.

⁴¹ *Official Report*, House of Commons, 27 February 2009, column 1151W.

⁴² O’Nions *et al*, *Science of Nuclear Warheads*, p 856.

⁴³ Keith O’Nions, Roy Anderson and Robin Pitman, “Reflections on the Strength of the 1958 Agreement”, in Mackby, J and Cornish, P *U.S.-UK Nuclear Cooperation After 50 Years* (CSIS Press: Washington, D.C., 2008), p 182.

⁴⁴ See Suzanne Jones and Frank von Hippel, “Transparency Measures for Subcritical Experiments under the CTBT”, *Science & Global Security*, vol 6, 1997, pp 291–310.

⁴⁵ Interview with Stan Orman by Tara Callahan, CSIS, 24 January 2008. Audio files available at <http://csis.org/program/us-uk-nuclear-cooperation-after-50-years>.

⁴⁶ Stephen Jones, “Recent Developments at the Atomic Weapons Establishment”, Standard Note SN/IA/05024 (House of Commons Library: London, March 2009), p 7.

In fact, an important rationale for additional UK government investment in AWE expertise and advanced experimental facilities is to ensure that AWE can continue to make a valuable contribution to US nuclear weapon programmes, including a credible peer-review capability, and ensure benefits from the relationship are two-way. Under-investment in experimental facilities and high-fidelity computer modelling capability and atrophying expertise would risk undermining AWE's vital relationship with the US by appearing to have little to offer the US nuclear weapons laboratories in exchange for their invaluable support.⁴⁷ As Linton Brooks, former head of the US National Nuclear Security Administration, argues: "The major revitalisation conducted in recent years at the Atomic Weapons Establishment, Aldermaston, will improve British technical capability and thus the technical value of ongoing exchanges".⁴⁸

The UK has been involved in the US W76 LEP under the Stockpile Stewardship banner, although to what extent is unclear. According to AWE's 1998 Annual Report, AWE participated significantly, as an independent contributor, in the United States Dual Revalidation Programme that reviewed the status of the US W76 Trident warhead as the first stage of the LEP process.⁴⁹ It has also been revealed that an April 1998 *US Stockpile Stewardship Plan: Second Annual Update report* from the US Department of Energy that set out the work plan for the W76 LEP between 1999 and 2001 included an engineering, design and evaluation schedule for the UK Trident warhead.⁵⁰

Furthermore, Steven Henry, Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (Nuclear Matters) under George W Bush, stated in an audio interview for the US Center for Strategic and International Studies in 2008 that in the mid 1990s, when the US began developing Life Extension Programs (LEP) for various warheads: "As part of that exchange we also did exchanges with the UK to find out what kind of information did they know through their surveillance program and what kind of concerns did they have with their own unique weapons systems that would help us learn and to make decisions as to what kind of components would we replace and at what time would we replace those components. So we entered into a co-operation with the UK looking at Life Extension itself for the different warheads. We entered into a program of sharing information for the Enhanced Surveillance program and we also looked at more innovative ways of being able to do production so that we could gain efficiencies".⁵¹

One clear instance where the UK has benefitted directly from the W76 LEP is through the design and production in the US of a new Arming, Fusing and Firing system (AF&F) for the Mk4A re-entry body. The Mk4A AF&F is being installed on UK warheads and AWE has been recruiting a number of new staff to work on AF&F. A recruitment notice for one of these posts referred to work on introducing the Mk4A AF&F into UK warheads.⁵² Then Defence Secretary Des Browne confirmed that this upgrade is taking place and would be introduced over the next decade.⁵³

CO-OPERATION ON RELIABLE REPLACEMENT WARHEADS

In the mid-1990s the US began to explore potential new warhead designs to replace the W76.⁵⁴ Development of these designs ran parallel to the W76 warhead life extension programme.⁵⁵ This evolved into the Reliable Replacement Warhead programme that Congress funded in 2004 to "improve the reliability, longevity and certifiability of existing weapons and their components".⁵⁶

RRWs were conceived as completely re-engineered and remanufactured warheads based on existing tested designs that would incorporate less exacting design requirements and enhanced safety features. They would also be easier to monitor and maintain than the existing arsenal of Cold War-era warheads that had tight performance margins designed to minimise weight and size and maximise yield giving very little room for error as weapons age.⁵⁷ The first planned RRW, labelled WR-1, would replace some, and perhaps eventually all, of the W76 warheads for the US Trident II (D5) SLBM fleet.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, Congress remained unconvinced as the necessity and expense of the RRW programme and stripped funding in 2007 and 2008.

⁴⁷ See, for example, interview with Everet Beckner, former deputy Administrator for Defense Programs, National Nuclear Security Administration, by Cassandra Smith, CSIS, 2008. Audio files available at <http://csis.org/program/us-uk-nuclear-cooperation-after-50-years>

⁴⁸ Brooks, *The Future of the 1958 Mutual Defense Agreement*, p 155.

⁴⁹ Bromley and Butler, *Secrecy and Dependence*, citing "Hunting-BRAE Annual Report", 1998, p 41. Available at <http://www.basicint.org/pubs/Research/2001UKtrident1.htm>

⁵⁰ Tara Callahan and Mark Jansen, "UK Independence or Dependence", in Mackby, J and Cornish, P *U.S.-UK Nuclear Cooperation After 50 Years* (CSIS Press: Washington, D.C., 2008), p 31.

⁵¹ Interview with Steve Henry by Michael Gerson, CSIS, 2008. Audio files available at <http://csis.org/program/us-uk-nuclear-co-operation-after-50-years>

⁵² Recruitment notice for a Warhead Electrical Engineer for AWE as publicised by Beechwood Recruitment Agency, 2 February 2007, reference CA829v27.

⁵³ *Official Report*, House of Commons, 28 March 2007, column 1524W.

⁵⁴ US Department of Energy's 1996 "Green Book" on "Stockpile Stewardship and Management Plan", p V-9. Reprinted in *End Run: Simulating Nuclear Explosions under the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty* (National Resources Defense Council: Washington, DC, 1997). Available at <http://www.nrdc.org/nuclear/endrun/erintro.asp>

⁵⁵ Bruce Tarter, Director, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, *The National Nuclear Security Administration's Budget Request for FY2002*, Hearing of the Committee on Armed Services, 25 April 2001 (Government Printing Office: Washington, DC), p 7.

⁵⁶ Medalia, *The Reliable Replacement Warhead Program*, p 1.

⁵⁷ Medalia, *The Reliable Replacement Warhead Program*, p 11.

⁵⁸ *Interim report of the Feasibility and Implementation of the Reliable Replacement Warhead Program*, Submitted to the Congressional Defense Committees in response to section 3111 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, Public Law 109-163, by the Secretaries of Defense and Energy in consultation with the Nuclear Weapons Council, p 3.

In March 2009 the Obama Administration formally terminated the RRW programme in its current iteration.⁵⁹ It is now likely that a compromise package will be agreed by Congress and the Obama Administration for a hybrid LEP/RRW programme.⁶⁰

The UK faces a decision on whether to refurbish its Trident warheads through a full LEP comparable to the W76-1 process in the US or develop its own version of an RRW. In its 2006 White Paper on Trident replacement the government stated that a decision on whether to refurbish or replace the current UK Trident warhead is likely to be needed during the next parliament (2010–15).⁶¹ The White Paper stated that “The current warhead design is likely to last into the 2020s, although we do not yet have sufficient information to judge precisely how long we can retain it in-service. Decisions on whether and how we may need to refurbish or replace this warhead are likely to be necessary in the next Parliament. In order to inform these decisions, we will undertake a detailed review of the optimum life of the existing warhead stockpile and analyse the range of replacement options that might be available. This will include a number of activities to be undertaken with the United States under the 1958 UK-US Agreement for Co-operation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defence Purposes.”⁶²

In November 2007 the government stated that studies on the potential need for a new warhead were now being undertaken by a Warhead Pre-Concept Working Group at AWE.⁶³ Some of this research is being undertaken with the US. Then Defence Secretary John Hutton announced that following an exchange of letters between Prime Minister Tony Blair and President George W. Bush in December 2006 “additional research is currently being undertaken, some in collaboration with the US, on how we may need to refurbish or replace our current warheads to help inform decisions, likely to be made in the next parliament”.⁶⁴

It has been suggested that the UK is exploring options for a new RRW-type warhead that could be developed without nuclear testing, a so-called High Surety Warhead.⁶⁵ The government has denied any direct involvement in the US RRW programme⁶⁶ and insists that it is not developing a new warhead at Aldermaston.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, in 2006 David Overskei, Chair of the US Secretary of Energy’s Advisory Board reportedly said that “as far as I know they [the British] are not involved with the RRW . . . but they are keenly, keenly interested”.⁶⁸

In 2004 the Mutual Defence Agreement was extended for a further 10 years and amended to facilitate US-UK co-operation on nuclear warhead research related to the RRW concept. In 2008 John Harvey, policy and planning director at the US National Nuclear Security Administration, stated in an audio interview for the US Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), that “we have recently, I can’t tell you when, taken steps to amend the MDA, not only to extend it but to amend it to allow for a broader extent of co-operation than in the past, and this has to do with the RRW effort”.⁶⁹ He added that the MDA had been amended to give the UK access to information on US technologies to secure warheads against possible unauthorised use, for example by a terrorist group that managed to steal or otherwise gain access to a US nuclear weapon. This technology had not previously been explicitly declared as an area of cooperative research under the MDA. Harvey said that it “is such an integral part of our RRW efforts we will need to have the Brits involved in that if we are going to have them involved in RRW”.⁷⁰ Harvey also stated that UK scientists “are observers on some of the working activities that are chaired by the Navy for the Reliable Replacement Warhead”.⁷¹

This is supported by the most recent US nuclear weapons budget for FY2010 that shows AWE is continuing to collaborate with US nuclear weapons laboratories on a programme of “Enhanced Surety” for nuclear warheads.⁷² This is research into ways of making warheads safer and introducing new technologies to prevent unauthorised use “for consideration in scheduled stockpile refurbishments, life extension programs (LEP), and future stockpile strategies”.⁷³ Warhead research of this type was previously associated with the RRW programme. It constituted one of the concept’s core rationales and formed a critical part of

⁵⁹ *America’s Strategic Posture*, Final Report of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States (United States Institute of Peace Press: Washington, D.C., 2009), p 41.

⁶⁰ Bruce Goodwin and Glenn Mara, *Stewarding a Reduced Stockpile*, AAAS Technical Issues Workshop, Washington, DC, 24 April 2008. See also Jeffrey Lewis, “After the Reliable Replacement Warhead: What’s Next for the US Nuclear Arsenal?”, *Arms Control Today*, December 2008.

⁶¹ MoD & FCO, *The Future of the United Kingdom’s Nuclear Deterrent*, p 7.

⁶² MoD & FCO, *The Future of the United Kingdom’s Nuclear Deterrent*, p 31.

⁶³ Defence Secretary Des Browne, *Official Report*, House of Commons, 28 November 2007, Column 452W.

⁶⁴ *Official Report*, House of Commons, 23 March 2009, column 17W.

⁶⁵ Ian Bruce, “Britain in top-secret work on new atomic warhead”, *The Herald*, 4 September 2007.

⁶⁶ *Official Report*, House of Commons, 27 February 2009, column 1150W.

⁶⁷ *Official Report*, House of Commons, 21 March 2006, column 364W.

⁶⁸ Cited in Geoff Brumfiel, “The next nuke”, *Nature*, vol. 442, no 6, July 2006.

⁶⁹ Interview with John Harvey by Jessica Yeats, CSIS, January 23, 2008. Audio files available at <http://csis.org/program/us-uk-nuclear-co-operation-after-50-years>

⁷⁰ Interview with John Harvey.

⁷¹ Interview with John Harvey.

⁷² *FY2010 Congressional Budget Request*, National Nuclear Security Administration (U.S. Department of Energy: Washington, D.C., May 2009), volume 1, p 101.

⁷³ *Ibid*, p 100.

the RRW design competition. One specific area of future joint research collaboration between Los Alamos National Laboratory, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and AWE Aldermaston is the design of a Multi-Point Safe warhead.⁷⁴ Current UK Trident warheads are designed to be one-point safe, meaning that an accident leading to detonation of the high explosive trigger at one single point will not cause the warhead to go critical.⁷⁵ Re-designing the current UK Trident warhead to make it Multi-Point Safe could be difficult, suggesting that this collaborative UK-US research is for a potential future warhead design.

A number of other interviews in the CSIS series suggest that the UK has worked closely with the US on the RRW programme. Frank Miller, a civil servant who was Senior Director for Defense Policy and Arms Control at the National Security Council under George W Bush and previously held senior positions in the Department of Defense with responsibility for nuclear weapons policy under Reagan, Bush senior and Clinton, stated in 2008 that “They [UK] will need a Reliable Replacement Warhead of their own. In fact they are working on one. It has a different name. It’s got a different acronym. But they are working on the same kind of a thing for their W76 variant”.⁷⁶

It was also reported that data from the 2006 UK sub-critical Krakatau test conducted at the US Nevada Test Site would be used in the US RRW study. *The Times* stated that “Jacob Perea, project manager at Los Alamos, told *The Times* that data from Krakatau, a British-US test, was being used to help the US to work out how to build its new generation of weapons. Although he said that the project was American, he added: ‘It would be pretty surprising if they (the British) weren’t watching this pretty closely’”.⁷⁷

DEPENDENCY CONTINUES

The historical record shows that the UK nuclear weapons programme, including work on the UK Trident nuclear warhead at AWE Aldermaston, has been heavily dependent upon the United States since the late 1950s through provision of nuclear weapon systems, materiel, design assistance and operational support. It is clear that:

1. This extends to the current Trident system where dependencies are reflected in provision of the Trident missile, assistance with the development and production of the UK Trident warhead, including the Mk4 re-entry body, operational targeting, and in-service support for the weapon system.
2. The UK has embarked on a long process of replacing the current Trident system beginning with the procurement of a new fleet of ballistic missile submarines to carry the Trident missile. US-UK co-operation on nuclear weapon systems is already shaping the UK programme, for example through co-operation with the US on a new Common Missile Compartment for both countries’ next generation SSBNs.
3. Both the US nuclear weapons laboratories and AWE Aldermaston have developed extensive science-based stockpile stewardship/warhead assurance programmes focussing on high-energy laser experiments, hydrodynamic experiments, powerful computing capabilities to simulate nuclear explosions, archived nuclear test data and surveillance of individual warheads in the operational stockpile and that the US nuclear weapons laboratories and AWE Aldermaston have conducted joint stockpile stewardship experiments and used each other’s facilities stockpile stewardship activities.
4. The US nuclear weapons laboratories have undertaken a major life extension programme to refurbish a significant quantity of its W76 Trident warhead stockpile and that AWE Aldermaston has participated in aspects of the W76 LEP and has benefited from some of its outputs, notably the new Arming-Fusing and Firing system.
5. The US nuclear weapons laboratories have developed a new Reliable Replacement Warhead design based on tested weapon designs to replace some, or all, of the W76 stockpile and that evidence suggests AWE Aldermaston has been involved in RRW design studies at US nuclear weapons laboratories and that it is currently involved in “enhanced surety” studies to develop warhead use-control technologies integral to the RRW concept.
6. The UK government has stated that a decision on whether to refurbish or replace the current warhead will be required in the next parliament; that it has established a programme at AWE to explore these options; and that it is working with the United States on these options under the auspices of the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p 105.

⁷⁵ See “JSP 538—Regulation of the Nuclear Weapons Programme”, NIS Technical Briefing Note (Nuclear Information Service: Reading, August 2008), p 4.

⁷⁶ Interview with Frank Miller by Jessica Yeats, CSIS, January 28, 2008. Audio files available at <http://csis.org/program/us-uk-nuclear-co-operation-after-50-years>

⁷⁷ Tim Reid, “In the Wilderness, a Computer Readies a New Nuclear Arsenal”, *The Times*, 7 April 2006.

Current co-operation with the US on new ballistic missile submarine designs, the W76 warhead LEP and possibly RRW R&D programmes, and the Trident missile life extension programme reflect the deep cultural and bureaucratic institutionalisation of these relationships. They constitute a largely unquestioned norm from which the UK is seen to derive enormous benefit whilst the wider opportunity costs go unexamined and unquestioned.

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ATTACHMENT 2

BRITISH INTERNATIONAL NON-PROLIFERATION, ARMS REDUCTION AND DISARMAMENT INSTITUTE (BRINPARDI)

This note seeks to define the mission and scope of a possible new British institution, which would draw together the resources and experience of government organisations, academia and non-governmental organisations with an interest in the role that Britain might play in moving the international community towards a nuclear-weapons-free future. The underlying idea is that such a future is now on the international political agenda, as a result of the ground-breaking letter of George Schultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn in the *Wall Street Journal* on 4 January 2007, the speech made by Margaret Beckett to the Carnegie Institute on 25 June 2007, recent speeches made by the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary, and the letter from Douglas Hurd, Malcolm Rifkind, David Owen and George Robertson in *The Times* on 30 June 2008. There is an urgent need to take these ideas forward, by promoting studies of the concrete political, financial and technical steps which need to be taken over the next few years if such a goal is to be realised, and by creating a centre of excellence in which the necessary expertise can be built up and sustained, and the necessary international leadership can be promoted.

It is rather clear that to reach the eventual goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, the international community will have to proceed in steps. There is an immediate and pressing need to prevent the current situation from deteriorating further. This requires the strengthening of the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime, encouraging those countries that have not already signed the Treaty and the Additional Protocol to do so, and ensuring that those countries which have signed abide by its provisions. In parallel with this, there is a need for those countries which have already acquired nuclear weapons to start or continue arms reduction, arms limitation and other confidence-building measures, both to fulfil their obligations under the NPT and to move in the direction of a nuclear-weapon-free world. In the longer term, there is a need to create the international security framework within which nations could abandon nuclear weapons altogether as an element of their defence policy.

The approach proposed in this note is the creation of a British institution (hereinafter referred to as BRINPARDI) which would bring together all the expertise which exists in this country in these matters, and which would contribute an element of British leadership to the international efforts which are required. It should be both British and International, in the same way that SIPRI is both Swedish and International—i.e. located in the UK, and predominantly funded from British sources—but open to both individual experts from around the world, and to funding from outside the UK. It should be a predominantly non-classified institution, but should be able to draw on the advice of experts with security clearance as necessary. It should operate in such a way that it earns the respect of the international community as an objective, fair-minded organisation, not subject to undue influence from any national, political or military faction, but should be regarded by the British government as a reliable source of information and advice on policy in this area.

Historically, the organisation within the British government which has provided the key technical leadership in this area has been AWE Aldermaston, and it is clear that in the foreseeable future it will continue to have a very important part to play. However there are various reasons why it should not be the only player in this field:

- (i) Its current mandate from MoD is to concentrate strongly on its “core mission”, which is to maintain the existing UK nuclear deterrent, and to undertake the necessary development work to permit the construction of a next generation of UK nuclear weapons and deployment systems if the UK government so decides. Its so-called “Threat Reduction” work, which covers some of the work which would be undertaken in BRINPARDI, is on a much smaller scale than its core mission work, has a lower priority, and is subject to a number of constraints.
- (ii) Arising from the demands of its “core mission”, it operates a rigid security policy which severely limits access to buildings within the fence to individuals who do not have full security clearance. Access would be particularly difficult for non-UK nationals, especially from countries which might be able to make an important contribution to BRINPARDI’s objectives.
- (iii) The majority of its staff, particularly its senior staff who have the necessary experience to make a major contribution in this field, are highly committed to its core mission, and do not have a track

record of making and publishing innovative contributions in this field. Although AWE has a substantial, and growing, programme of collaboration with British universities, this is overwhelmingly on topics related to its core mission.

- (iv) It does not possess, and would probably not claim to possess, a very high level of expertise in the economic and international political aspects of this programme, or in technical aspects which have historically been funded by branches of the UK government other than MoD.

For all these reasons, this proposal envisages the creation of a Centre of Excellence in this area, which is physically located outside the AWE fence, and is not subject to the problems listed above. Nevertheless, its relationship with AWE would be rather close, and it would aim to develop a pattern of collaboration with AWE which is similar to the relationship between the US JASON organisation and the US defense establishments—i.e. enjoying mutual confidence, sharing information to the extent that national security permits, making use of AWE research facilities where that can be arranged etc.

The range of activities which this Centre of Excellence, referred to as BRINPARDI, would cover would include:

Nuclear Non-proliferation

- International political, economic and technical data gathering related to the NPT.
- Development of rationales for signing & adhering to the NPT.
- Analysis of loopholes in the NPT regime, and development of counter-measures.
- Technical & political aspects of monitoring for compliance with NPT.
- Identification of countries, groups and individuals with responsibility for non-compliance with NPT.
- Development of database on trafficking in nuclear materials and dual-use materials, and technology relating to the detection of such trafficking.
- Development of expertise on the potential for the creation of radiological threats (“dirty bombs” etc) and counter-measures.
- Development and implementation of a nuclear forensic capability.
- Development of “proliferation-resistant” civil nuclear power and an acceptable international inspection regime.

Arms Reduction, Arms Limitation and Confidence Building measures

- Development of arms reduction, arms limitation and confidence-building strategies, including test bans, regional non-nuclear zones, cut-off treaties etc.
- Development of rationales to persuade individual countries to adopt such strategies (political, military and economic).
- Monitoring/verification of compliance with such agreements, including the dismantling of withdrawn weapons in ways that avoid further proliferation, or unnecessary intrusion into matters affecting national security or commercial practice.
- Secure management of stockpiles of nuclear materials in NW states.

Disarmament Implementation

- Identification of political and military disincentives to complete nuclear disarmament, especially in the final stages, and finding means of countering those disincentives.
- Creation of non-nuclear security regimes.
- Identification of economic and social implications of winding down nuclear weapons establishments, and/or converting them to civilian missions.
- Intensification of the compliance verification regime as appropriate for the final stages in disarmament.

Nuclear weapon “breakout”, both within NPT-signatory countries and post-disarmament

- Creation of an acceptable international inspection regime
- Development of technology to make such a regime effective in detecting breakout at an early stage.
- Development of an effective international regime to deter breakout.

To be effective, BRINPARDI would need to have a leader with the outstanding management and communication skills required in a strongly interdisciplinary centre, who could command the respect of all those who would contribute to its mission. It should be located somewhere which is not too far from the key

contributory organisations. It would need to have a significant permanent staff, and also the ability to attach staff from other organisations for specific tasks. Above all, it would need to have a significant budget—perhaps £10 million per annum initially—if it is to undertake work at a sufficient speed to make a real impact on this urgent national/international task. In view of the interest in the “disarmament laboratory” concept which has been expressed by a number of senior UK government figures, it seems not unreasonable to hope that it could provide a significant fraction of the required funding.

Christopher Watson and John Finney

11 October 2008

Written evidence from Ian Kearns, Senior Analyst, British American Security Information Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Britain needs to be more assertive in its relationship with the United States through the varied channels at its disposal, rejecting a subservient role, but equally being aware of the limited power Britain can wield in a world characterized by shifting power balances.
- The effects of globalisation is inevitably encroaching upon the US/UK relationship, as Washington focuses more attention on the relationship with up-and-coming world powers. We also have to recognise that Washington is likely to pay more attention to a UK voice within Europe, rather than isolated.
- Conversely Britain benefits heavily from and is increasingly defined by globalisation, and it is directly in the UK interest to pursue the development and observance of international law and tighter global co-operation.
- The UK has established a reputation in Washington as taking a lead on ‘responsible’ disarmament (as exemplified by the arms trade treaty and the global nuclear disarmament agenda). Now that President Obama has outlined his strategy on this, the UK will need to work hard to stay ahead of the game, and to influence the direction of travel.

BASIC

The British American Security Information Council (BASIC) is an independent research organisation that analyses government policies and promotes public awareness of defence, disarmament, military strategy and nuclear policies in order to foster informed debate. BASIC has offices in London and in Washington and its governing Council includes former US ambassadors, academics and politicians.

We look to a world free from the dangers posed by nuclear weapons; we engage with policy makers and opinion shapers in a constructive manner, and serve as a trusted source of information for politicians, government officials and other decision-makers to promote effective strategies toward nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We facilitate opportunities for transatlantic dialogue on multilateral nuclear disarmament to flourish and promote active partnerships within the network of international NGOs in order to develop practical alternative approaches and strategies that can achieve progress towards multilateral nuclear disarmament.

INTRODUCTION

1. The bilateral relationship with the United States is the most important the United Kingdom has, and future relations with the Obama Administration present both an opportunity and a challenge. Britain has a particular chance to be in the vanguard of moves towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in step with the Obama agenda on this issue. But despite the enduring close ties between our two countries, Britain is not the only government competing for the President’s ear. As the US Administration develops its relations with emerging economies, the British government cannot be complacent. There have been strains in the relationship in the recent past and changes in the underlying structures of the international system, outlined later in this submission, are likely to mean it will be subject to further strain in future. The Committee’s work on this issue therefore represents a timely and important opportunity to reflect on the basis, nature and value of the relationship to the UK and on the approach necessary to keep that relationship healthy in future.

THE BASIS OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

2. The UK-US relationship rests on a mix of linguistic, cultural, historic and strategic ties.

It has often been defined by personalities, for example Margaret Thatcher’s relationship with Ronald Reagan, and Tony Blair’s with George Bush. But too often, since the end of the Cold War, Britain stands accused of failing to define its own agenda, and of following the US lead.

3. The strategic relationship remains extremely close today however and is manifested in a number of ways. For example:

- There is daily co-operation between the UK and US intelligence services and surveillance agencies, which is as valuable as ever at a time when both countries face a threat from international terrorism.
- The two countries are co-operating closely, with other allies, to ensure the Taliban and al-Qaeda do not re-take control of Afghanistan.
- There is co-operation on promoting stability in Pakistan, a country of real national security concern to both the US and the UK.
- UK and US diplomats engage in close co-operation within NATO in pursuit of an alliance that is both cohesive, and fit for purpose, in terms of the contemporary security challenges it must face.
- Advice from the Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence, if not politicised, is said to be considered the best in the world by Washington.
- Perhaps most strikingly, the level of co-operation between the two on highly sensitive military technology is well above the norm, even for a close alliance relationship. Admiral William Crowe, the former ambassador to London under President Bill Clinton, likened the US-UK nuclear relationship to that of an iceberg, “with a small tip of it sticking out, but beneath the water there is quite a bit of everyday business that goes on between our two governments in a fashion that’s unprecedented in the world.” The two countries exchange classified nuclear information, advanced technology and a range of materials under the 1954 Mutual Defence Agreement, renewed every ten years. The personal bonds between the US/UK scientific and technical establishments are deeply rooted.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE UK-US FOREIGN POLICY RELATIONSHIP TO GLOBAL SECURITY

4. In addition to being a foundation stone of UK foreign policy and national security, and an important alliance relationship for the United States, the relationship has also made a major difference to European and global security over a period of several decades. In recent times, the UK-US relationship has underpinned international resolve to reverse Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait, the intervention in Kosovo to prevent and reverse ethnic cleansing there, and action against al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan after the attacks of 9/11.

5. As a result, not only has the political and strategic value of the relationship to the UK over the years been enormous but, arguably with the exception of the invasion of Iraq, the relationship itself has made a long-term and positive contribution to wider global security.

6. However, the relationship is also more complex than the comments above imply and merely declaring its importance tells us nothing we might need to know about how to maximise its health, or value, from the perspective of UK interests. The UK debate on the special relationship often takes place either in a historical vacuum or on the basis of one-sided, often mythologised, accounts of war-time co-operation. This is despite the fact that a setting of the contemporary relationship within a longer term and more balanced historical context can be very valuable for understanding both the relationship’s role in UK policy and its potential future direction.

7. The relationship has not always been one of harmony. Even before the trauma of Iraq, and more recent disputes over the release of the convicted Lockerbie bomber, Ali Al-Megrahi, there were severe ups and downs. Suez, and periods during the 1960s when Harold Wilson refused to send troops to Vietnam and Edward Heath prioritised relations with Europe over those with the United States, were low points. Britain needs to be aware that other serious divergences will emerge in the future, and could flare up over such issues as climate change or Afghanistan.

8. Despite an often assumed sentimental basis to the relationship among many in the current generation of UK political leaders, moreover, the truth is that the relationship was attractive to UK policy-makers at the end of the Second World War for the hard headed political reason that it offered a strategy for protecting UK interests in the context of ongoing national decline.⁷⁸

9. Both of these previous features of the relationship are important today.

The first demonstrates that the long-standing importance of the relationship does not imply total and continuous agreement though the perception persists in some quarters that it does and that the relationship is one of almost total agreement and sentimental attachment that stretches well beyond shared interests. In fact, many in Washington wonder why Britain does not speak up more publicly in timely fashion to challenge

⁷⁸ This use of the relationship to manage the consequences of decline is visible in the combination of a “America in Britain’s Place” narrative on the promotion of a liberal international economic order after the Second World War and a “hug them close” strategy on national security in the same period. Both reflected British weakness and a belief that the US was best placed to provide an international environment conducive to British interests. Subservience to the US was also made more palatable by the linguistic, cultural and ideological similarities between the UK and US already outlined.

the US. When Britain over-rode US objections on Sierra Leone, its armed intervention there helped end the civil war. Earlier periods of disagreement also did not destroy the relationship and indeed the earlier low points have since been eclipsed by periods of intense personal warmth and close inter-state partnership.

The second serves to remind us that it was national strategy and interests, not sentiment, that underpinned the UK approach to the “special relationship”, and acceptance of a subservient role within it.

10. Today, both of these points appear to be more clearly understood in Washington than they are among the political class in London. The arrival of President Obama, with an outlook that appears closer to that of British and wider European attitudes on international affairs than that of the previous Bush Administration, may serve to sustain this situation, though it should not be allowed to do so.

11. Barack Obama’s comment in *The Audacity of Hope*, that Bush multilateralism amounted to a rounding up of the United Kingdom and Togo, and the US then doing as it pleased, is not reassuring in terms of how the UK is perceived in the US. Senior British diplomats that have served in Washington in recent years understand this reality, and express dismay at the failure of UK leaders to think in terms of hard edged national interest rather than increasingly misguided appeals to sentiment.

A CHANGING STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR UK-US RELATIONS

12. Some of the British illusions here badly need to be challenged, not least because behind the positive day to day relationship a process of power diffusion is creating long-term structural pressures which may result in a greater divergence of interests and greater strains in future.

13. There are three dimensions to this. First, as new powers rise in the East and the balance of world power changes, the US finds itself confronting stronger challenges to its leadership abroad while simultaneously suffering economic hardship at home. Partly as a result, its economic and political interests and concerns are not only intensifying but also geographically diversifying and Europe is becoming less central to the US world view than at any time since 1945. In these circumstances, and given both the collective failure of European leaders to show cohesive and strong international leadership since the end of the Cold War, and the widespread scepticism and even derision in the US in relation to Europe’s international role, there is now a real danger that the US will be less willing and perhaps even less able to invest in the military defence of Europe and specifically of the UK in future, as it has done for much of the last seven decades.

14. Second, the UK will have to take into account the arrival of a European President in its relations with the US. For the first time, if the Lisbon Treaty is ratified by Dublin on 2 October, Europe really will have a single telephone number, addressing Henry Kissinger’s historic complaint.

15. Third, as power shifts to some extent from state to non-state actors like terrorist groups that can operate across national borders, and issues such as climate change emerge as literally global in reach, there is an increasing realisation on the part of many that more effective multilateral co-operation to tackle transnational and global threats across a wide range of issues is going to be needed in future (IPPR, 2009). However, while this is now a widely accepted view in a medium-sized country like the UK, it is less widely accepted in the United States, where some (though thankfully not the current Administration) still believe a more assertive use of American power can bring the desired international results.

16. This is directly relevant to the UK-US relationship because when a US Administration seeks to pursue this more robust line, as it did during the first term of the George W Bush presidency and in relation to Iraq, this can fracture public opinion in the UK and place huge strains on the transatlantic relationship, leaving ministers feeling trapped between the demands of supporting their most important ally on the one hand, or reflecting domestic public opinion or an alternative viewpoint on the required strategy on the other. As globalisation and the need for more multilateral co-operation in response to it continues to develop apace, the dilemma here is likely to be exposed more frequently and to become more acute as a result.

17. Structural changes, therefore, in this early period of the 21st century have the serious potential to complicate and undermine a shared and cohesive account of UK-US strategic challenges, interests and responses.

IMPLICATIONS FOR BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

18. All of this has major implications for UK foreign and national security policy. There is an urgent need for UK policymakers to get beyond declarations on the importance of the relationship and to begin defining more clearly what the UK actually needs from it. To that end, we need a clearer and fully up to date statement of UK national interests to underpin policy and the approach to the relationship with the United States.

19. The government’s 2009 national security strategy update, *Security for the Next Generation*, offers an account of the UK’s international position which can be summarised as follows. The UK, it is said, is:

- an established democracy committed to the rule of law;
- an open economy, with a global, not only local and regional pattern of inward and outward trade and investment;
- a global hub for a number of activities and services including financial services, communications, transport, the media (partly as a result of English being a world language) and education;

- a country with a growing and increasingly diverse population in which international events can have a very direct impact on our communities domestically and in which international instability and tension can be played out on UK streets;
- a country with limited domestic food and energy resources;
- a leading member of a number of important international organisations (NATO, the EU, the UN Security Council, the G8 and G20); and
- one of the world's five recognized nuclear weapons states.

20. On this basis, it is possible to be explicit about three core features of the UK national interest.⁷⁹ These are that:

- *First*, as a relatively open economy and society, heavily bought into and dependent upon global trade, investment and people flows, *the UK has a strong national interest in building a rules based international order both to maintain these flows and to address a range of global and transnational security threats.*⁸⁰ The UK national interest, in other words, will be well served by attempts to strengthen international law and global co-operation across a wide range of issues, an agenda underlined by President Barack Obama when he chaired the Security Council session on 24 September 2009. As an outward-looking country with citizens and representatives well linked in to global events, Britain could use its relationship with the United States to encourage informed debate around how the west relates effectively to the rest of the world in pursuit of this agenda.
- *Second*, given the blurring of domestic and foreign policy boundaries and the UK's susceptibility to be impacted seriously by events elsewhere in the world, *the UK has a strong national as well as moral interest in tackling some of the long-term drivers of international instability* such as global poverty, inequality, health challenges, competition over energy supplies, and the increasingly evident and disruptive effects of climate change.
- *Third*, given its status as a nuclear power with a weapons infrastructure closely bound to the US complex, *Britain is in a strong position to seize the initiative and play a leadership role on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.* There is increasing cross-party support for this agenda in Britain and there is a chance to co-operate with the Obama Administration for real progress. As evidenced by a recent high-level Parliamentary delegation to Washington facilitated by BASIC and under the aegis of the APPG for Global Security and Non-proliferation, decision-makers in Washington are impressed when exposed to this unity, our best chance to influence crucial forthcoming debates on the Hill. President Obama has repeatedly expressed his understanding that progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually beneficial to each other, expressed most forcefully during his speech in Prague on 5 April 2009 and in front of the UN General Assembly on 23 September 2009. His opponent in the 2008 presidential election, Sen John McCain (Republican-Arizona), has also acknowledged the importance of US movement on nuclear arms control to revive global nuclear non-proliferation efforts and has called for a world free of nuclear weapons.⁸¹

The UK can take a number of steps here, beyond those already being taken. In particular, and following on from the repeated offer from the Prime Minister made at the United Nations on 23 September to reduce the number of submarines in the Trident fleet from four to three boats as part of the disarmament process, the UK can and should look to reduce the number of nuclear warheads it possesses further. This will require re-examining what minimum means in the context of the UK's minimum deterrent.

Arguably, though, it is even more important to consider how we might use the close relationship we have with the US to further the agenda promoted by the President in this area. UK scientists could be encouraged to share expertise and opinion relevant to CTBT ratification concerns with colleagues and members of Congress in the United States, and the UK could fund and support a major Track II nuclear disarmament diplomacy initiative among representatives of the P-5, plus India, Israel and Pakistan. The US Administration is ambitious on this agenda but also heavily preoccupied with the recession, Afghanistan and healthcare reform; and while the President can outline his vision, his Administration is going to need all the help it can get on this agenda, particularly from America's closest allies.

21. These illustrative features of the UK national interest suggest the need for a series of changes of emphasis in policy with regard to the US.

⁷⁹ Clearly, this is an illustrative and not exhaustive list.

⁸⁰ The issue agenda here is wide, ranging from human rights, global trade negotiations, and reform of the international financial system to a strengthening of the international regimes to deal with nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, global bio-security, and the increasingly important areas of cyber and space-security. On some issues, such as international institutional reform, the UK is well placed through its permanent membership of the UN Security Council to play a leading diplomatic role in trying to bring about change. On other issues, such as nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, the UK not only can and should seek to play a leading role as a member of the P-5 group of nuclear weapons states, but is also well placed to use its close relationship and history of nuclear co-operation with the United States to collaborate in efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation regime globally.

⁸¹ Elisabeth Bumiller, "McCain Breaks with Bush on Nuclear Disarmament", *The New York Times*, 28 May 2008 and see Sen McCain's Floor Statement on "A World Without Nuclear Weapons," 3 June 2009.

It is clear, for example, that the UK has an interest in re-balancing the relationship. The UK has an interest in a US that:

- values and seeks multilateral solutions to a range of international problems from nuclear proliferation to climate change;
- has some understanding of the importance but also the limits of what hard power can achieve;
- supports and seeks to build respect for international law; and
- uses soft power and persuasion to rebuild respect for the United States itself.

Where the US seeks to lead not dominate, and to pursue multilateral solutions and a rules based international order, the UK should actively support it. Where it does not, and where it engages in activity that is contrary to long-term UK interests, it should not. This is not an easy balance to maintain and an issue-by-issue approach is necessary. The Blair government stands accused of making a catastrophic mistake in relation to Iraq but managed to find its own voice on issues like climate change, where the UK position was radically different to that being taken up by the Bush Administration.

22. This suggestion for a re-balancing, and that the UK should be more assertive in the relationship with the US from time to time, sets alarm bells ringing for some. But it simply lacks credibility to claim, as some do, that any public disagreement with the US on a major issue would destroy the relationship. The history of the relationship tells us otherwise and there are examples of other countries, not least Germany and France, which have strongly disagreed in public with the US without any long-term and lasting damage to their relationship. Despite its often strident criticism of US foreign policy in the past, France still manages to co-operate with the US in important ways. Americans have little respect for subservience.

23. It is also important to bear in mind that at any given time the view of the US Administration is only one view among many to be found within the United States. There is always a vigorous foreign and security policy debate in Washington, with many analysts and politicians disagreeing with the incumbent Administration. If we allow debate and even disagreement with a US Administration to be painted as disloyalty to an ally we unnecessarily limit the room for UK manoeuvre and allow the UK national interest to be subsumed within that of the United States. Moreover, if we treat the views of the current US Administration as a permanent feature of the landscape, we fail to acknowledge the obvious point that US politics is itself dynamic and cyclical. Different parties come to hold Congressional majorities and administration positions obviously change over time, with implications for the UK, which need to be familiar with both the Administration and the power of Congress. Despite the undoubted importance and value of the relationship to the UK therefore, to simply agree with the United States in all circumstances is to agree to be buffeted by the prevailing political winds in Washington.

24. Beyond this, it also seems clear that there is a need to move beyond illusions of a special relationship between the UK and US and to acknowledge that, as William Wallace and Christopher Phillips recently noted: “The Obama Administration, even more than the Bush Administration at the end of its term, is interested in a partnership with the major European states *collectively* more than with the United Kingdom alone—let alone with the UK as interpreter and ‘bridge’ to thinking in Paris and Berlin” (Wallace and Phillips, 2009: 283). Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, in a speech to the Council for Foreign Relations in Washington on 15 July explained the administration’s approach to revitalize US relations with its “historic” and “bedrock” allies without mentioning Britain a single time. She specifically referred to improving relations with Europe and put special emphasis on major and emerging powers—China, India, Russia and Brazil, as well as Turkey, Indonesia, and South Africa.

As the United States faces new global challenges it will look more and more to the European states to both look after their own security and to make a more effective contribution to the maintenance of international order and stability. This in turn will mean that, to strengthen and sustain the transatlantic alliance for the future, European foreign and security policy co-operation must now be taken more seriously. If the Lisbon Treaty comes into force, it will be.

25. Finally, the required changes are not all about foreign policy. There is an important need to develop and allow a more open debate on the relationship with the US inside the UK itself. British policy-makers are often reluctant to allow such discussion for fear of facilitating an outflow of anti-American sentiment among a vociferous minority. However, there needs to be a recognition that whenever the relationship is allowed to lapse into either unconditional support for US positions, or unconditional opposition, the health of the relationship is in doubt. More debate is healthy.

26. The UK-US relationship can continue to make a vital contribution to the promotion of UK national interests, and to wider global security for many years to come. Sober judgments however, on where the interests of the two countries overlap, and the development of policy on that basis and no other, will be the surest way to ensure that outcome.

**Written evidence from Reginald Dale, Director, Transatlantic Media Network, and Senior Fellow,
Europe Program, and Heather Conley, Director and Senior Fellow, Europe Program,
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**A WASHINGTON PERSPECTIVE: THE FRAYING BONDS OF THE
SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP**

SUMMARY

There are two main strands to the special relationship between the United States and Britain, both of which are vulnerable to erosion in the coming years, although at differing speeds. One is the deep civilizational bond between the two leading “Anglo-Saxon” powers; the other the intense politico-military and intelligence co-operation between the two governments since World War II. Combined, these two strands have woven bonds of kinship and common interest that differentiate US-UK relations from those between the United States and its other leading allies. The first strand is a compound mixture of historical, cultural, linguistic and political ties that is relatively unaffected by ups and downs in inter-governmental relations. The second strand, however, is much more prone to the ebb and flow of foreign and security policies and changes in personal chemistry between the two countries’ leaders. Clearly, the multi-layered relationship has been of enormous benefit to the two countries over the past century.

While the relationship is obviously unbalanced in power terms, UK support has helped to allay charges of US “unilateralism”; Britain has provided significant military, intelligence and diplomatic backing to Washington; and the two have worked together to promote a liberal, free-trading global economic system. Although the special relationship fell into some disrepute in Britain during the Administration of President George W. Bush, especially over Iraq, most postwar British governments have considered close links with America to be a vital national interest.

Now, however, as both countries undertake reassessments of their future strategic roles, there is considerable danger that the politico-military and intelligence elements of the relationship will be weakened—both by an American shift in priorities away from Europe and by a continuing decline in Britain’s defense capabilities. The civilizational bond will endure longer, but it will also gradually diminish as memories of World War II fade and anglophile Americans of European origin become less dominant in US society. President Barack Obama, who has little personal or cultural affinity with Europe, is the most prominent example of this inexorable trend. Although we believe that the US-UK relationship will in many ways remain “special” for years to come, it is likely to become progressively less important to America.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

The phrase “special relationship”, although commonplace in British political and media circles, is seldom used by Americans outside a small core policy group in Washington, DC. But that does not mean that the broad historical and cultural relationship between the two countries, which began in Jamestown, VA, in 1607, is not special. On the contrary, Britain’s role as the “mother country” has been and will continue to be unique. Caucasian and many other Americans as a whole continue to be remarkably Anglophile, with the exception of big-city Irish-Americans in the North East. (As a general rule, however, Republicans tend to be more anglophile than Democrats, and those with military connections more so than civilians.) Throughout most of the postwar period, Britain has seen closeness to America, which supplies essential elements of its strategic nuclear deterrent, as a key global priority.

The two countries continue to have remarkably similar ideas about what is right and wrong around the world and to co-operate closely as permanent members of the UN Security Council and in other diplomatic and economic forums. British diplomats and officials have exceptional access to the policy-making machine in Washington, and the United States works particularly closely on intelligence with the UK (as well as with Canada and Australia). Britain has won enormous popularity among ordinary Americans as the main ally to provide troops to fight alongside US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, playing a loyal supportive role that many Americans have now come to expect. On the economic front, the two countries have adopted a similar approach to the global financial crisis, in contrast to the different attitudes and policies of most continental Europeans. New York and London are now so closely intertwined, both culturally and financially, that they are sometimes referred to as a single entity, “NyLon,” although this economic and financial solidarity must not be taken for granted.

The two countries continue to have fundamental common interests in global political and economic stability, supported by open markets and free trade, the rule of law, respect for human rights and the expansion of democracy. Although Britain has been drawn increasingly into foreign policy consultations with its EU partners, it still regards the United States as its principal like-minded ally. And conversely, the United States occasionally sees the UK as a first line of defense against some of the less desirable ideas that emanate from Brussels. Nevertheless, this close and usually comfortable relationship is likely to come under increasing tension as a result of short-term, medium-term and longer-term pressures.

SHORT-TERM PRESSURES

The two pillars upon which any strategic bilateral relationship are built are mutual trust and communication. Both pillars have come under strain over the past four months. There seemed to be a lamentable lack of communication between Washington and London when the United States placed four Guantánamo detainees in Bermuda without consulting Britain, which is responsible for the island's foreign and security policies. American trust has been challenged by Scotland's recent return of the "Lockerbie bomber" to Libya, although senior US officials have assured their UK counterparts that the Lockerbie incident in no way endangers intelligence and security co-operation. These short-term irritants have been exacerbated by resentment in Britain that the United States has more power to extradite British citizens to the United States than *vice versa*.

British hard feelings feed on a strong undercurrent of anti-Americanism in some UK circles, particularly among the leftish intelligentsia and the professional classes, that has been only partially allayed by the election of President Barack Obama. It is important to note that British grievances are often stronger at the popular than the governmental level. Such irritation nevertheless underlines the importance of maintaining the two pillars of the special relationship—mutual trust and communication. Without trust, all the other complex ingredients of the relationship would amount to very little.

America's sense of British loyalty could be harmed, for instance, if the UK were to reduce its military presence significantly in Afghanistan as a result of increasing opposition at home, while the United States soldiered on. But trust is already being dented by a popular British sentiment that the UK does not get much from the United States in exchange for its military support. Many believe that Britain will have to fight even harder to get attention from the Obama Administration (President Obama, for example, has not scheduled a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Gordon Brown on the margins of the G20 meeting in Pittsburgh), just like every other country without a recognized special status. There is clear evidence that Europe (and thus Britain) is much less important to the Obama Administration than it was to previous US Administrations, and the Obama Administration appears to be more interested in what it can get out of the special relationship than in the relationship itself.

Economic solidarity may also be diminished as both the United States and the UK struggle to find their footing in the global financial arena following the worst global economic crisis since the Great Depression. Although the two countries have a common interest in defending and enhancing the leading roles of the "Anglo-Saxon" financial centers in New York and London in such multilateral structures as the G8 and G20, prospects for a joint approach would be weakened if Britain were to move too far toward tight, new Continental-style regulations demanded by its EU partners.

MEDIUM-TERM PRESSURES

By far the biggest medium-term risk to the relationship is posed by the possibility that the next British government (whether Labour or Conservative) will cut defense spending in ways that make it impossible for Britain to maintain its military commitments effectively and oblige it to reduce its capacity for overseas intervention. The ability to fight alongside US forces is possibly the most important practical and tangible asset—along with US bases in the UK—that Britain brings to today's special relationship. The support of British troops not only aids the United States militarily, but also provides welcome international legitimacy for Washington's policy decisions and helps to counter foreign and domestic perceptions that the United States is acting "unilaterally".

Already, however, this co-operation has been endangered by what Americans (and many British officers) see as the British Army's poor performance in Basra, in Iraq, and by the Army's lack of appropriate counter-insurgency equipment to fight in Afghanistan—due to the Brown government's decision not to provide additional resources. As both major British political parties concede that big spending cuts will be necessary after the coming election to rein in soaring deficits, further downward pressure is likely on defense spending. Significant defense cuts could lead to a decline in Britain's international role and influence—and thus its ultimate utility to the United States. Brown's recent announcement that the UK will consider reducing the Trident missile submarines that comprise its nuclear deterrent from four to three is a sign of these growing financial strains. As long, however, as the Trident and a successor system continue to provide an effective deterrent, this should not do too much damage to the special relationship.

Another cause for concern in Washington would be cuts to Britain's "Rolls Royce" diplomatic service, still the envy of most other countries, which allows the UK to exercise disproportionate influence in world affairs. Cutbacks would be especially damaging if combined with simultaneous defense cuts, and would reduce Britain's weight in Washington more than in any other capital, not because of reduced effectiveness at the British Embassy but because of a wider scaling back of Britain's global clout.

As for the British public, stronger anti-Americanism could revive if the perception gained ground that Obama was continuing the trend of demanding sacrifices from Britain without giving much in return. British anti-Americanism is a recurrent threat to the fabric of the special relationship—especially when Americans get wind of it.

LONG-TERM PRESSURES

If Britain's world influence declines, and America continues to shift its priorities away from Europe to other more pressing geopolitical challenges, the special relationship faces a gloomy future. Britain's usefulness to Washington could increase if the European Union were to develop a more active global role. If the EU, for example, were to exert as strong an influence in international affairs as it does in world trade negotiations, Britain would be important to Washington as a potential force for steering the EU in policy directions that pleased the United States. The EU's external influence, however, is directly related to the extent to which its members agree on common policies, and US policy-makers currently see little chance of big steps toward closer integration in an EU of 27 nations. Moreover, few officials in today's Washington have a strong understanding of the institutional intricacies of the Lisbon Treaty and do not hold out much confidence in the EU's future as a strategic global power even if the Treaty enters into force.

Washington's diplomatic efforts are therefore likely to remain focused more on national capitals than on the EU institutions for the foreseeable future, with reduced expectations that Britain will be needed to "deliver" the EU on major issues of importance to the United States. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair's vision of Britain as a "bridge" between the United States and Europe was never a viable proposition, not least because Britain's European partners did not feel any need for help in communicating across the Atlantic or for British translation services. On the other hand, a move by Britain to distance itself from central EU decision-making under a future Conservative government would also reduce the UK's usefulness to Washington.

At the time of his celebrated "Year of Europe" in 1973, Henry Kissinger said that the United States was a strategic global power, whereas Europe was a regional economic power. Despite the huge steps taken to closer European integration since then, that analysis has not greatly altered in Washington 36 years later.

Meanwhile, demographic changes on both sides of the Atlantic in the years ahead are likely to work against traditional transatlantic ties. The United States, with its growing and increasingly diverse population, will assume a greater share of the West's inhabitants, and thus greater political weight in the Atlantic Alliance, as the populations of most European countries age and decline. As the proportion of Caucasians shrinks in the United States, the percentage of Americans with a natural feel for Europe as a whole and for the "mother country" in particular can only diminish, progressively undermining the civilizational foundations of the special relationship and British influence in America.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to staunch the loss of vibrancy that currently characterizes the special relationship, we offer the following recommendations:

- Despite the budgetary squeeze, Britain should at least maintain its current military spending at about 2.2% of GDP, and preferably increase it.
- Britain should step up its co-ordination with Washington on the nature and future direction of its defense spending to keep its forces interoperable with those of the United States and to reduce the growing capabilities gap between the United States and the UK.
- UK political leaders should do more to explain the advantages of the special relationship to the British public and counter underlying anti-Americanism.
- Contacts between US and UK armed forces should be further intensified at all levels.
- British leaders should make greater efforts to avoid offering the media gratuitous opportunities to report "the end of the special relationship."
- US leaders should make greater efforts to avoid conduct that can be interpreted as "snubs" to Britain by the UK media.
- UK leaders should avoid giving the impression that they are trying to ingratiate themselves with US leaders, and never appear to be "whining" about their treatment by Washington.
- The complex history of the US-UK relationship should be better taught in British (and American) schools.
- More exchange programs should be instituted for visits by Americans to Britain and Britons to America.
- British families should be encouraged to extend their contacts, and friendships, with US armed services personnel and their families at bases in the UK.
- Consideration should be given to the formation of a serious "British lobby" in Washington.

Written evidence from Professor Malcolm Chalmers, Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI)⁸²

DEFENCE AND BRITISH INFLUENCE

1. The purpose of this note is to offer some thoughts on the UK/US military relationship, together with pointers towards areas in which policy might be developed.

2. The relationship with the US will remain central to UK foreign policy for the foreseeable future. As the world's largest economy, and its largest military power by a significant margin, the US's support is critical for the achievement of the UK Government's main international objectives. In most areas of policy, most of the time, the UK and US hold similar positions. But they do not always do so. The two countries will continue to take divergent approaches on some issues, whether because of fundamental differences in national interests and priorities, because of the constraints that national resources or constitutions place on their ability to act, or simply because of differences in political judgements.

3. The defence relationship between the UK and the US is a central part of this wider relationship, and has its own particular features. Despite the withdrawal from Empire, the UK has continued to give a significantly higher priority to defence spending than its NATO European allies. This additional investment is commonly justified by the closer relationship with the US that, it is argued, the UK gets in return.

4. One of the key distinguishing features of the UK's contemporary defence policy is that its military capabilities—and indeed those of most NATO Member States—are now primarily designed to be used as contributions to collective operations, rather than in defence of uniquely national interests. Thus, for most of the more challenging types of operations, the UK only envisages committing its armed forces to operations if the US is also doing so. For example, despite claims that the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq over the last decade were vital to the UK's national interests, there was never any question of it being involved in these operations without US military commitment. Nor, despite the government's insistence on the threat that a Taliban-led Afghanistan would pose to the UK, is there now any realistic possibility that the UK would retain its armed forces in that country were the US to leave.

5. The Government's commitment to maintaining a position as the US's leading ally (previously in Iraq, and now in Afghanistan) has been a driving force in recent decisions to commit forces to major operations. It has also been a key driver in debates on how geographical responsibilities in theatres of operations have been shared, and on the extent to which the UK armed forces have been given operational autonomy over their area of responsibility. Each of the UK's armed services have sought to maintain a high level of interoperability, as well as something close to qualitative parity, with their US counterparts, a goal made all the more difficult by rapid technological change. None of this is cheap. As the time for a new UK Defence Review approaches, there is bound to be renewed scrutiny of whether the UK is getting an adequate return (in terms of influence on the US) in return for its defence efforts, and what this means for future defence priorities.

6. The UK remains one of the world's leading middle powers on a range of comparative measures, including GDP, development aid spending, and military capability. The diplomatic clout from its permanent seat on the UNSC should not be underestimated; and it has an important role (comparable to those of France, Germany or Japan) in shaping international policy across a wide range of issue areas, from financial reform to climate change to non-proliferation. It needs to be realistic about the extent to which it can shape US defence policy, given a defence budget that is only a ninth of that of the US. Yet the single superpower does attach political value to having allies, especially when (like the UK) they can bring some significant military and diplomatic capacity to the table.

7. In the light of recent experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, together with the forthcoming Defence Review, there is a strong case for a thorough review of how the UK can maximise the national political and security benefits that it obtains from its defence investments. There is still a common tendency to articulate the need for the UK to spend more on defence in terms of national honour and a generic need to maintain a strong role in the world. This is often underpinned by an assumption that the UK must accept the burden imposed by the altruistic and internationalist nature of its foreign policy, which (it is argued) contrasts with the more self-interested policies of other major powers. Considerations of honour and responsibility indeed do have a place in foreign policy. Yet there is a danger that, if not anchored in a clear calculus of national benefits and interests, these sentiments can lead to policy approaches of doubtful utility and unacceptable costs.

8. Although public support for the armed forces appears stronger than ever, levels of public support for the operations that they are being asked to conduct (in Iraq and now Afghanistan) have fallen to worryingly low levels. If that support is to be rebuilt, the Government will need to do more to reconstruct a clear linkage between UK national interests and the deployment of its armed forces on what are widely seen to be US-led "wars of choice".

⁸² Malcolm Chalmers is Professorial Fellow in British Security Policy at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI). He is also Visiting Professor in Defence and Security Policy at Kings College London. He is a member of the Defence Secretary's Defence Advisory Forum. This paper develops some ideas that were discussed in Malcolm Chalmers, "A Force for Influence? Making British Defence Effective", *RUSI Journal*, 153, 6 December 2008, pp 20–27.

9. So how should the UK shape its approach to US-led interventions so as to more clearly pursue its own interests, while accepting that those interests are normally still best pursued in an alliance setting?

10. First, where particular UK interests are at stake (eg terrorist threats to the UK from Pakistan), it should use the influence that it acquires through its military contributions to argue for US and alliance support for those interests.

11. Second, it should recognise that the point at which it can exert the greatest influence on the US (or other allies contemplating military action) is either when decisions to take military action are about to be taken, or when commitments to provide forces (or reinforcements) are being made. If the UK has reservations about how military operations may be conducted, or whether they should be conducted at all, it needs to be willing to link its commitments to a satisfactory resolution of its concerns. Sometimes, it needs to be willing to say no.

12. Third, it should recognise that, when the US is fully engaged and determined to take military action, the views of allies are unlikely to count for much in its decision-making calculus. This was probably the case in Iraq in 2002-2003. By contrast, the UK is more likely to have some influence in situations where the US, for whatever reason, is less willing to commit itself wholeheartedly to an operation. For example, when the UK was the leading ISAF power on the ground in Helmand in 2006-08, it had a commensurate share in shaping policy in that province. Once the US began to deploy large forces to the province in 2009, however, the UK's ability to set the ISAF agenda in Helmand, and indeed in southern Afghanistan as a whole, began to decline. One lesson from this is that the UK can often be more influential if it pursues an approach that is complementary to that of the US, rather than simply mirroring whatever current US priorities might be.

13. Other recent examples of the benefits of a "complementary" defence posture (as distinct from a "supplementary" one) were (a) the UK's national intervention in Sierra Leone, when no other NATO member state would have been willing to take on such a commitment; (b) the UK's championing of the possible use of ground forces in Kosovo in 1999, at a time when President Clinton was reluctant to do so. In both cases, it was the UK's willingness to take a lead in military action, or to plan for unilateral action, that was the key to its ability to help shape the strategic environment.

14. Finally, the government should focus defence investment in areas of national comparative advantage, where the gap in capabilities between the UK and US is less than that in overall military capability, and where a second centre of operational capability can accordingly bring greater influence. Capabilities in which the UK still claims to be relatively well-placed include special forces and intelligence services. Some might add a governmental aid machinery that is (compared with USAID) relatively well-g geared to working directly with local governments. Comparative advantages can often vanish remarkably quickly, given the US's ability to innovate and its massively greater resources. With the recent surge of doctrinal innovation in the US military, for example, the UK has now largely lost the comparative advantage in counter-insurgency that it had developed in Northern Ireland. In the coming period of defence austerity, it will be particularly important to be able to prioritise those areas where comparative advantage can be sustained, where necessary at the expense of those areas where this is not feasible.

25 September 2009

Written evidence from UK Trade & Investment

INTRODUCTION

1. The Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC) has announced a new Inquiry on "Global Security: UK-US Relations". The Committee has indicated that it wishes to inquire into the relationship between the UK and the US and the implications on UK foreign policy. As UKTI is responsible for the trade and investment work of embassies and other diplomatic posts, the Committee may find it helpful to have a separate memorandum on this issue. This memorandum specifically addresses the "basis of the bilateral relationship between the UK and the US".

2. UKTI, established in 2003, brings together the work of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) on trade development and promotion of foreign direct investment (FDI) into the UK. UKTI exists in order to help UK-based companies succeed in the global economy and to assist overseas companies in bringing high quality investment to the UK. There are clear economic benefits for the UK in increased international trade and investment. UKTI can intervene, providing cost-effective ways of supporting industry at the Government level.

3. UKTI works with a variety of partners, including the nine Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), the trade promotion and inward investment organisations in the Devolved Administrations (DAs), Partners Across Government (PAGs), trade associations and private sector organisations active in the field of business development. The shared goal is that our customers receive services tailored to their individual requirements, irrespective of where they are based. UKTI has 2,400 staff, of whom 1,300 are overseas working in 96 markets.

4. UKTI's strategic target objective, agreed with HM Treasury as part of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review settlement is as follows:

By 2011, to deliver measurable improvement in the business performance of UKTI's international trade customers, with an emphasis on innovative and R&D active firms; to increase the contribution of FDI to knowledge intensive economic activity in the UK, including R&D; and to deliver a measurable improvement in the reputation of the UK in leading overseas markets as the international business partner of choice.

5. UKTI has targets for raising revenue as well as Service Delivery targets for helping business. The key source of data to measure UKTI's performance against the set targets is the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, used by all teams across the global network. It provides the information used within the Performance and Monitoring Survey (PIMS), which is an independent survey carried out by a leading market research organisation. The findings demonstrate that trade customers reported an averaged annual total of £3.6 billion additional bottom-line profit, which they would not have achieved without UKTI support, which equates to every £1 that UKTI spends generating £16 of benefits to the UK economy.

6. Trade policy issues relevant to the USA are the responsibility of Europe, International Trade & Development (EITD) in BIS. Contributions from EITD and the Export Control Organisation have been included in this memorandum at paragraphs 25–26.

THE US MARKET

UK-US TRADE STATISTICS 2007-08

<i>Exports 2007-08</i>	<i>Imports 2007-08</i>
<i>Goods</i>	<i>Goods</i>
£34.7 billion Increase of 8.3% over 2006-07	£28.7 billion Increase of 9.9% over 2006-07
<i>Services</i>	<i>Services</i>
£36.2 billion Increase of 9.7% over 2006-07	£19.7 billion Increase of 7.2% over 2006-07

7. The US is the UK's largest single overseas market and is the leading destination for UK overseas investment. It has an integrated and largely self contained economy and every major industry is represented. With the exception of a number of import quotas, and some strategic industry ownership restrictions, there are no limitations on foreign firms seeking to do business in the US. The US has Federal laws applicable throughout the entire country, and State laws, which are passed by individual States, both sets of which apply in the business world.

8. The US is an attractive market to UK exporters and investors for the following reasons:

- Political and (relative) economic stability.
- Shared history and culture.
- UK goods have traditionally enjoyed a good reputation for quality in the US.
- US manufacturers often source components overseas.
- Wider market access to Canada and Mexico through the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

9. The US has consistently been the major single investor into the UK. In 2008-09, we successfully attracted 621 FDI projects to the UK from the US and they are a major source of growth and employment for the UK economy. The 621 projects (out of a total of 1,744), created 12,888 new jobs in the UK. There were 30% more projects from the US in 2008-09 than in the previous year. This figure was underpinned by the increase in companies locating their headquarters operations in the UK as a platform for accessing global markets in Asia and Africa.

SECTOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION

10. For the 2009-10 year, in tandem with business, UKTI has highlighted eight priority sectors for the US market:

Construction, Creative & Media, Energy, Environmental, Financial Services, ICT, Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals.

UKTI TEAMS IN THE US

11. The 120 staff working full or part time for UKTI in eight offices across the USA represent the organisation's largest overseas trade and investment team and reflects the importance of the market. UKTI has offices in Washington, New York, Boston, Miami, Houston, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco. The majority of the staff cover both trade and investment work. Sir Alan Collins, Consul-General, and Director General, Trade and Investment in New York, is Head of the UKTI US team. There are five UK-based Directors located in Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington and two in New York. Each of the teams at Post is led at operational level by a Locally Engaged officer (Head of Trade & Investment). Separate arrangements exist for help to the defence sector—see paragraph 22.

THE UKTI NORTH AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME

12. UKTI and co-sponsors, the Ellis Goodman Foundation and British Airways, offer UK SMEs a unique opportunity to attend the JL Kellogg School of Management in Chicago. The course aims to help UK companies understand the importance of effective marketing for the USA. There are two calls per annum for UK companies to participate in this initiative.

ACHIEVEMENTS

13. In 2008–09, the US UKTI team raised a total of £342,405 in revenue against a target of £265,000. 2,500 UK companies were significantly assisted in accessing the US market against a target of 2000. This was accomplished despite EU-US trade falling by 20% between January 2008 and January 2009, as a result of the economic recession.

SUCCESS STORIES

14. The Committee may wish to note a few examples of successful UKTI activity in support of trade development and FDI. Further examples can be submitted if required.

- In January 2009, Microsoft opened a Search Technology Centre in London. Employee numbers are expected to reach several hundred in the next five to 10 years.
- Guardian Industries Corporation, a worldwide glass manufacturer, launched a new £6m laminating line at its plant in Goole. The plant will produce safety glass used in schools, hotels and shopfronts.
- Pfizer, the world's largest drug company, announced plans to spend \$60m on a new stem cell research centre in Cambridge.
- CyberSource Corporation announced plans to establish an R&D centre in Belfast, employing up to 60 software development professionals.

US-UK DEFENCE EQUIPMENT COLLABORATION

15. The Defence and Security Organisation (DSO), which promotes defence exports is now part of UKTI. The UK enjoys a close relationship with the US which covers a broad range of joint capabilities and programmes spanning high-tech, state of the art equipment to off-the-shelf purchase of components. This delivers value for money and enhanced interoperability as well as helping to meet the UK's priority of securing the best equipment for our Armed Forces. The UK and US are partners in 22 collaborative equipment programmes, the most significant of which is the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) programme.

16. US Government and Industry have also provided invaluable support, which the UK greatly appreciates, in acquiring equipment, ranging from Reaper Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, to Mastiff Armoured vehicles through to desert boots, and in expediting export licenses to meet Urgent Operational Requirements in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

17. The US International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) control the export of equipment, technology and other information on the US Munitions List and can be bureaucratic for nations seeking to obtain US export licences. In 2007 Prime Minister Blair and President Bush signed the US-UK Defence Trade Co-operation Treaty, which seeks to ease the transfer of specified categories of equipment, technology and information. The President is awaiting advice and consent from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the Treaty, prior to ratification. This would allow the UK to access, more quickly, material required to support operations, help improve interoperability between our forces and enable our defence industries to work more closely together. The UK continues to work closely with the US Administration to prepare for ratification and subsequent implementation.

18. The principles of the two-way street are reflected in an intergovernmental Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (Declaration of Principles for Defence Equipment and Industrial Co-operation—signed 5 February 2000). Defence trade between the US and UK amounts to approximately \$2.8 billion per year. The US is the largest importer of UK defence goods after Saudi Arabia. The balance of US-UK defence exports is approximately 2 to 1 in favour of America. This is not surprising considering the scale of the US defence budget and defence industrial base and it reflects well on the performance of British companies in the challenging US defence market.

19. The US sources a relatively small proportion of its defence equipment from overseas and the UK is the biggest offshore supplier to the US military. Similarly the US is the biggest overseas supplier to the UKMOD. The two-way defence trade makes an important contribution to each country's military capability. UK companies have been very successful in meeting niche requirements such as avionics, vehicle communications, military bridging, howitzers, and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) defence equipment, and they have well established relationships with US primes. Platform sales have been relatively few. The Anglo-Italian AW101 helicopter was selected for the VH-71 Presidential Helicopter requirement in 2005, although the Department of Defense (DOD) recently announced its decision not to proceed further with the project because of cost escalation. Around 100 British companies are working on the JSF programme. UKMOD purchases of US equipment include Apache and Chinook helicopters, C-17 and C-130 transport aircraft, and armoured vehicles. UK companies have been successful in establishing themselves as valued parts of the supply chain through industrial participation agreements with a number of US prime contractors, who are suppliers to the UKMOD.

20. The transatlantic defence trade has also encouraged two-way investment in the defence industrial base. US companies who have established a presence in the UK include Boeing, Honeywell, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, ITT, General Dynamics, Harris, Rockwell and Northrop Grumman. They are an important part of the UK's defence and aerospace industrial base, contributing expertise and investment to the benefit of UK defence requirements and exports. In the US, BAE Systems, QinetiQ, Rolls-Royce, Cobham, Ultra and Martin Baker are examples of successful British investment with similar positive contributions to the US defence industrial base. UK companies employ around 117,000 people in virtually all of the 50 states.

21. An increasingly important focus for UKTI activity in the US is the homeland security market which is dominated by US suppliers but offers significant business opportunities for the UK security sector to provide niche solutions utilising the UK's innovative technology and extensive experience of dealing with security threats.

22. UK Government support to British defence and security companies in the US market is provided on both sides of the Atlantic. In the UK, DSO within UKTI provides support to UK industry campaigns and advice to companies pursuing business opportunities in the US. In the US, support for UK defence companies and UKTI is provided by the British Embassy Defence Trade Office in Washington, while Security companies are assisted by locally based UKTI staff.

UK & US EXPORT CONTROLS

23. UK export controls broadly correspond to US controls on military items (munitions) and dual-use goods. The US Munitions List (USML) and the UK Military List (UKML) are comparable both in scope and coverage of goods and technologies, though they take a slightly different approach in some areas. There is a high level of commonality between the USML and the UKML, and between US and UK dual use controls.

24. The UK and the US governments liaise closely on export control issues where appropriate, including the sharing of intelligence material to inform licensing decisions. We also share intelligence where possible with a view to preventing breaches of our respective controls. A delegation of export control officials from the State Department visited the UK for talks with their counterparts here earlier this year. We expect to see them again soon—possibly with a return visit to the US in the course of the coming year, for which we have a standing invitation.

TRADE POLICY

25. Trade Policy is an area where the European Commission negotiates on behalf of EU Member States, on the basis of mandates agreed with EU Member States. However, in line with the comments made on the global economy and other economic issues in the FCO's memorandum, and working closely with others (in Government and outside), the Europe and International Trade Directorate (EITD) in BIS leads on the UK engaging effectively with the US, including through the EU, both bilaterally and multilaterally. Some recent and ongoing examples of this are:

- the trade policy aspects of the G20 engagement and the reform of international institutions, mentioned in the FCO's memorandum;
- discouraging protectionism through the extension and implementation of 'Buy America' provisions, visas and Border Adjustment Mechanisms;
- seeking to avert new trade disputes and managing the downside risks of existing ones (eg. Boeing/Airbus); as well as
- engaging the US in relation to the Doha Development Agenda (DDA, the current WTO Trade Round).

26. In addition, the UK works to promote UK/EU-US economic co-operation, and address market access and regulatory barriers to trade and investment, including through the EU's Market Access Strategy, and inputting into and influencing the EU-US Transatlantic Economic Council. The FCO memorandum also mentions the objectives on Aid for Trade, Trade Finance and Development, which the UK is fully committed to and pursues actively.

22 September 2009

Written evidence from Frances G Burwell, Vice President and Director, Transatlantic Programs and Studies, Atlantic Council of the United States

BUILDING A US—UK “SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP” FOR THE FUTURE

SUMMARY

- Since the end of World War II, the US-UK “special relationship” has been one of the closest and most influential partnerships between two sovereign states.
- The special relationship rests on several different elements, including shared values, language, and culture; a dynamic and close economic relationship; and a level of government-to-government partnership not seen anywhere else.
- With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the September 2001 attacks on Washington and New York, that special relationship now must adapt to a more complex environment.
- The relationship itself is now suffering from diminished capabilities, especially in the UK capacity to keep up with US military power and with the limitations on UK influence within the European Union.
- Given these weaknesses, the special relationship can no longer be viewed primarily as a bilateral partnership; instead the relationship is now about multiplying influence and impact so as to effectively address global challenges.
- The best way for the US-UK special relationship to be effective in the 21st century is to serve as a foundation for a strengthened US-EU partnership and to reach out to address global challenges through multilateral institutions and frameworks.

BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Frances G Burwell is Vice President, Director of Transatlantic Relations and Studies at the Atlantic Council of the United States. Her areas of expertise include US-EU relations and the development of the European Union's foreign and defense policies, and a range of transatlantic economic and political issues. She is the principal author or rapporteur of several Atlantic Council publications including *Transatlantic Leadership for a New Global Economy*; *Transatlantic Transformation: Building a New NATO-EU Security Architecture*; *Law and the Lone Superpower: Rebuilding a Transatlantic Consensus on International Law*; and *The Post-9/11 Partnership: Transatlantic Cooperation against Terrorism*. She is the co-editor (with Ivo H Daalder) of *The United States and Europe in the Global Arena*. Prior to joining the Council, Dr Burwell was Executive Director of the Center for International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland, and also served as founding Executive Director of Women In International Security.

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE

1. During the second half of the 20th century, the close relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom was one of the most influential partnerships in the global arena. Based in part on three previous centuries of shared history, its immediate origins testified to the strong bonds between Washington and London—and between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill—during the Second World War. The partnership also reflected the passing of one global power and empire from predominance on the world stage and the emergence of another, with vastly superior resources but an uncertain history of engagement.

2. Over the four decades dominated by the Cold War, this “special relationship” benefited both parties and contributed much to the stability of the Euro-Atlantic space. The United States gained much by the connections and experience provided by the British in the far corners of the globe. Other former colonies, especially Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, also became close partners, in part based on the shared values developed through the British experience. Even in India—rarely close to the United States during the Cold War—the tradition of democracy initiated by the British laid a basis for later co-operation. In Europe, the main theater of the Cold War, the close relationship with the UK gave the United States a strong local partner, one that would take on leadership within NATO, not only by maintaining its own military, but also providing bases for significant numbers of US troops and material. Britain's membership in the European Communities after 1973 was also of great benefit to the United States, as it provided a window into this complicated, evolving institution.

3. The UK also benefited from the “special relationship.” For a generation or two of British policymakers, the partnership provided close access to the US leadership in a way not enjoyed by any other government. Even at lower levels, the access enjoyed by British officials has always been remarkable. The British have also been offered unparalleled access to US technology. Although certainly not without its limits, that willingness to share technology has allowed Britain to base its own nuclear deterrent on continued partnership with the United States. Although the US-UK relationship has not been trouble free—one need only recall the Suez crisis, or the British public’s protests over Vietnam—it did work very well for both partners in the 20th century.

4. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, however, the context of the special relationship began to change. Britain was still a key ally, but the focus of US concentration moved more to Germany. This was natural, as the momentous story of the 1990s was the unification of Germany and the freedom of its neighbors, and making this happen in a peaceful manner became a major priority for US leaders. The 1990s also saw the Balkan wars. Here again, the UK was a strong ally and individuals such as David Owen played key roles. But in the end, the effort to stabilize the Balkans was a multilateral effort involving NATO and the UN, as well as the EU, rather than a bilateral partnership. Perhaps the biggest change was the new world that emerged from these successes. The progress made toward creating “Europe, whole and free,” was significant, and for many in the US leadership, Europe as a continent no longer was the source of major security threats. This sense of Europe having successfully transformed was reinforced in 2004 and 2007 with the enlargement of the European Union to 28 members and NATO to 27. In an unbelievably short time, former Warsaw Pact countries became fully fledged members of the Euro-Atlantic community. Britain was a major partner in achieving that success, but the challenges facing the special relationship were now about to become far broader and more difficult.

5. Although it would not be fully apparent until after the September 2001 attacks, the United States was moving from a focus on European security to one on global threats. As a result, it would turn increasingly to Europe, not as an area to be secured, but as a potential partner in dealing with global concerns. For Britain, this was both good and bad news. To continue its close partnership with the United States, the UK would have to be active around the world. Britain had long “punched above its weight” on the global arena, and its diplomats and politicians generally have a broad international view. But Britain’s resources are limited. Maintaining the necessary military, diplomatic, and economic resources to deploy in combination with the United States would be a significant challenge to anyone.

6. Given the incredible changes in the international arena since the special relationship developed in the 1940s, and particularly the changes since the end of the Cold War, it is time to revisit the US-UK relationship. The Foreign Affairs Select Committee is to be applauded for taking on this difficult and sensitive task. In attempting to contribute to the Committee’s efforts, this witness set herself several questions. First, what is the nature of the “special relationship” today, and what is it that is genuinely “special” if anything? Is that something “special” likely to persist? Second, given its post-Cold War and post-September 2001 priorities, what does the United States need from this relationship? What will make a continued close relationship—with the extra attention that this requires—valuable to US leaders? Third, what does Britain want? What are British interests and what should be British priorities for the next decade or so? Should the UK continue to see itself as a bridge across the Atlantic, and, if so, why? Or should it take on the role of a European power, perhaps integrating more closely with its EU partners? Are these choices actually opposites, or are the notions of an “Atlantic bridge” or “European power” actually mutually reinforcing?

THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP: BOTH DEEP AND WIDE

7. The relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom is one of the densest conducted between two sovereign states. The relationship has an impact across all levels of government agencies (at least in the foreign policy and national security sphere) and also affects a broad swathe of the public in both countries. US-UK ties can be found in many areas, from cultural and business links to intelligence sharing and political consultations. This is not to say that everything is positive; close contact can breed misunderstandings and distrust as well as better communication and shared views. To give a more concrete sense of the relationship, however, it is worth commenting on the US-UK relationship in four general areas.

8. *Values:* At the base of the US-UK relationship is a set of shared values. The foundations of American democracy and market economy are rooted in the evolution of democracy and market economy in British history. Indeed, the American Revolution was caused in part by the perception of the colonists that they were being denied their rights as Englishmen, rather than by a demand for a different type of governance or society. After 300 years, there are differences, of course. The support for the death penalty among the US public and acceptance of relatively unregulated gun ownership for example, and the British support for universal, state-provided health care are perhaps the clearest examples of a persistent and strong individualism in US societies and a greater emphasis in the UK on social welfare. Nevertheless, among all the European allies, the strongest similarities in terms of values are clearly with the British.

9. *Language and culture:* Although often derided as “two countries divided by a common language” the US and UK do share this immensely strong bond. Even though both societies are becoming more diverse linguistically, the fact that governments and publics can understand each other with minimal explanation, allows much closer cultural ties. Whether it is a British crime thriller or

- period piece repackaged on “Masterpiece Theater,” or the latest American blockbuster movie, or Simon Cowell on “Britain’s/America’s Got Talent,” the level of shared popular culture is huge. Music stars, whether the Beatles or Michael Jackson, have enormous audiences in both countries. As for the written word, Shakespeare is a dominant figure in both countries, and any frequent traveler will have noticed the striking overlap of bestsellers on offer at airport bookstores, whether in London or Washington or New York. This shared popular culture is also reflected in tourism between the United States and UK. According to the US Department of State, in 2007, 3.6 million US residents visited the United Kingdom, while 4.6 million UK residents visited the United States.
10. *Business and economics*: While New York and London are sometimes portrayed as rival financial capitals, they actually represent two mutually dependent hubs—not just as cities, but as economic capitals of their nations—in an increasingly interconnected global economy. The United States and Britain have had an incredibly close economic relationship since the first representatives of the Crown showed up on Virginia’s shores. Even today, the US-UK trading relationship is still immensely strong, bested only by US commerce with China, Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Germany. In 2008, US exports of goods and services to the United Kingdom totaled \$117 billion, while US imports from the UK totaled \$104 billion. But it is in the financial arena where the “special relationship” is without par. The United States and the United Kingdom share the world’s largest foreign direct investment partnership. US investment in the United Kingdom reached \$399 billion in 2007, while UK direct investment in the US totalled \$411 billion. This investment sustains more than one million American jobs. (Figures on the economic relationship are from the US Department of State.) The recent financial crisis has only highlighted the importance of US-UK economic ties, from the vulnerability of British banks to troubles in the US economy to the need for strong co-ordination between the US Federal Reserve and the Bank of England (as well as the European Central Bank).
 11. *Government-to-government partnership*: Perhaps the most unusual aspect of the “special relationship” is the exceptionally close involvement of US and UK government officials in each others’ business. Rooted in the intense partnership during World War II and the postwar era, that close involvement has stretched across military services and intelligence agencies to embassies and foreign ministries, to the highest level of government. Simply put, in the US foreign policy and national security community, no government has better and more regular access than does the British. In the military and intelligence services, there is a habit of co-operation that has made the “special relationship” almost second nature. In Washington, British Embassy officials have access to US government officials with regularity that is unmatched by other embassies. And while the closeness of other partnerships was questioned because of differences over Iraq and the “global war against terrorism,” the partnership with the British perhaps grew even stronger. There were disagreements, of course, over British detainees in Guantánamo, US demands for extradition of individuals allegedly involved in the *Enron* case, and most recently, the release of the “Lockerbie bomber.” Nevertheless, eight years after the September 11th attacks, the US-UK official partnership remains strong.

THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP FOR THE FUTURE?

12. While today the special relationship is strong, it cannot be frozen in time. The question now is about the future—can this special relationship be sustained? Is it in the interests of both countries to do so? The answer cannot depend only on Washington’s wishes, but also on London’s preferences. Both parties must be more or less clear about expectations (nothing is ever totally clear between governments) and both must see benefits, at least over the long-term.

13. In discussing the future of the special relationship, it is useful to distinguish between those elements that are within government purview and those that are not. Government-to-government relations can change relatively quickly, depending on policy preferences and the personalities involved. Even “habits of co-operation” can be eroded over time, if other partners seem preferable or if the costs of such co-operation increase. But the foundation of the special relationship—values, language and culture, and business and economics—are likely to shift only slowly, and in response to changes overall in the two societies and the global economy.

14. Today, there is some risk that American and British societies may drift apart. Both societies are becoming more diverse, and their populations increasingly have ties to other areas around the world. In the United States, this greatest source of this diversity is Latin America, while in Britain, it is South Asia (although neither is limited to these two regions). The US also has a growing South Asian population, but it is primarily well-educated, middle class, and professional, while immigrants to the UK from South Asia represent an immensely broad range of the socio-economic spectrum. This increased diversity could pose a major challenge to the basis of the special relationship. However, successful integration of these minorities, whether Guatemalans in the United States or Pakistanis in Britain, will do much to reduce any erosion of the special relationship. New citizens should learn the values that are core to their new countries—and to the special relationship—even as they bring new traditions and connections with them. Similarly, English is likely to become recognized as essential for prosperity and professional achievement, especially among the first generation born in their new countries.

15. The persistence of the economic special relationship will depend on the continued value of US-UK mutual trade and (especially) investment, more than on the actions of new minorities or even of governments. There is always the danger that governments on either side of the Atlantic could place restrictions on trade or investment, for national security or other reasons. Investors in both the US and UK will undoubtedly participate more and more in the emerging economies of the BRICs and others. Whether this simply reinforces the strength of US-UK economic ties or is a zero sum game, moving money from one country to another, is far from clear. It is well to remember, however, that the current US investment in China, for example, is only 14.3% of US investment in Britain. The likelihood is that even if China, Brazil, or some other country takes on a higher percentage of investment, the US and UK economies will remain intimately linked to each other, for good and bad.

16. It is the close ties between the US and UK governments that are probably the most vulnerable elements of the special relationship. Although “habits of co-operation” can persist long after the rationale behind them has disappeared, they can also erode over time, especially if one party—or both—no longer perceives that co-operation as useful. Policymakers in both the United States and the UK face a constantly expanding global agenda that has brought with it enormous time pressures. Despite much rhetoric about the value of traditional partnerships, in such an environment, policymakers naturally gravitate towards those allies and partners who can help solve the challenges they face; especially on those issues that demand immediate attention.

17. It would be presumptuous of this US-based analyst to offer many insights on what the UK government wants from the “special relationship” beyond the obvious and basic. Clearly, the close relationship with the United States has provided London with enhanced status and influence during decades when the UK has been shifting from a global imperial power to a leading regional power, albeit one with global ties. Britain has been the ally most frequently and commonly consulted as the US government makes its decisions. This has not prevented some glaring breaches in consultation, as in the recent relocation of the Uighurs from Guantánamo to Bermuda. And it is extremely difficult to assess whether that UK access has altered US policies in any significant way. Nevertheless, such close involvement in US policymaking should not be dismissed as unimportant. For the UK, the relationship has also provided some more tangible benefits. The UK has also received access to technology and capabilities that have allowed the UK to develop and maintain the nuclear deterrent that is a key part of its defense posture. Not that the defense technology relationship is trouble-free, but Britain—and British defense companies—have better access than anyone else.

18. But Britain does have an alternative to its traditional gravitation toward the US pole. The European Union is now bigger than the US both in population and size of the economy. Particularly if Britain were to join the Eurozone and Schengen, it would be one of the leading members of an emerging world power. Given Britain’s strategic outlook (not shared by all Member States), it could be a major force pushing the EU toward a more global perspective and capability. Of course, these two options are not contradictory. A strong Britain within a strong, globally focused EU could find itself of even greater interest in Washington as that capital looks to the EU as a partner in meeting global challenges.

19. For the United States, the traditional answer regarding the value of the special relationship focuses on two elements:

- First, the United States sees the UK as a valuable partner in tough spots. No other country, especially in recent years, has been so willing to put its forces in danger alongside the US military. Across a broad spectrum of US opinion, from the military to policymakers to the public at large, Britain is seen as a country that has joined the United States in some very difficult and dangerous tasks. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair is widely admired in the United States for providing British assistance in Iraq, for example.
- Second, US policymakers have long seen Britain as a window into the increasingly important phenomenon of European integration. The United States has been a supporter of European integration since the very early postwar days. Yet, without a seat at the EU table, the United States is not privy to many key discussions and decisions that affect its European allies—and its own policy goals of a secure and prosperous Europe. Washington has looked to the British government to ensure that the US perspective is heard within the European Union, and, if possible, to ensure that US interests are not disadvantaged.

20. Both of these rationales for the special relationship are now open to question. The concurrent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have revealed the limitations of British military forces (as well as those of everyone else). The stress of frequent deployments and the loss of lives and materiel in such operations has exacted a high price not only from families of those involved, but also from allied governments who must cope with public concerns. At the same time, the increase in US military personnel in Afghanistan means that US forces will increasingly dominate the theater of operations. While US resources are not without limit, they are clearly well beyond those of anyone else. Allies and partners may wonder whether their contributions—a shrinking portion of the total force—are making a real difference, beyond the immensely valuable political demonstration of allied unity. Allied militaries, including the British, have long complained about the difficulties of keeping up with US military transformation and maintaining interoperability within NATO, and this problem has not lessened. Finally, the Afghan and Iraqi campaigns have placed enormous strain on defense budgets. Those budgets are under even greater attack because of the current international economic

downturn. According to a recent study, the British defense budget faces a best case scenario of a 10–15% reduction in real terms between 2010–16 (*Preparing for the Lean Years* by Malcolm Chambers, RUSI, July 2009). All together, these pressures are likely to make the UK less capable and less willing to be a significant partner in future military operations.

21. The idea of Britain as a liaison for the United States within the European Union has, in reality, never matched US expectations. Of course, the UK's first priority within the EU must be pursuing British interests, not those of the United States. Moreover, the perception that Britain might be a "stalking horse" for the United States has on occasion caused suspicion in the EU (and was central to de Gaulle's veto of UK membership). But Britain's ambivalence toward Europe has meant that its own influence has sometimes been limited. Prime ministers, such as Tony Blair, who seem very committed to an active European role initially, face domestic political pressures that make it difficult to maintain that close involvement. Other prime ministers, who are less committed to a leadership role in Europe for Britain, find themselves co-operating closely with European partners, but unable to highlight that co-operation as a success in the British political milieu. Prime Minister Brown has proven to be an adept and respected leader in Europe on the financial crisis, but outside of that issue, he is not viewed as a major political player within the EU. The approach of David Cameron toward the EU, should he become prime minister, is not altogether clear, but the decision to have Conservative MEPs leave the European People's Party/European Democrats group short-changed British influence within the Parliament by reducing access to parliamentary leadership positions. Finally, the fact that the UK is outside both Schengen and the Eurozone reduces the chances significantly for a British politician to be approved as President of the European Council, should Lisbon come into force.

22. While Britain's ambivalence toward Europe has continued, the US need for British guidance and suasion *vis-à-vis* the EU has lessened. The US policy community now has a much better understanding of the EU than in the past (although much more remains to be learned). The US government has become more attuned to the importance of the EU and puts much more effort into observing that institution and exerting its own influence. It can certainly be argued that the US government is not well structured to deal with the EU, especially on non-foreign policy issues, but neither is the US government as unprepared to deal with the EU as it was in the past. The United States has also developed relations with other EU Member States that at least ensures a good hearing for US views within EU circles. In recent years, US-French relations have reversed course and they are now excellent, with much close consultation. US relations with Angela Merkel are also very close, despite occasional tensions over German troop contributions to Afghanistan. Of course, both of these countries will first defend and pursue their own interests within Europe, and on some issues (ie, financial regulation, Turkish accession) their views have been quite distinct from those of the United States. A number of the new EU Member States have also been very close allies of the United States, and have demonstrated a willingness to put forward the US perspective at the EU table.

23. Does this mean that the special relationship is doomed? Certainly, continuing to rely on the old model of a strong bilateral partnership will doom it to obscurity. From a US perspective, however, there is still much value in close co-operation with the United Kingdom. A strong and vital special relationship for the 21st century would likely have to have the following elements:

24. *A continuation of the broader special relationship*, rooted in shared values, language, and culture, as well as a dynamic trade and investment partnership.
25. *A continuation of the strong partnership based on intelligence and military co-operation*. British budget forecasts make clear that the military partnership must evolve. Instead of being a partner that attempts to provide assistance across the board for all types of operations, the UK military should consider how its more limited resources might be best adapted to provide essential "add ons" to US forces (as well as to fulfill UK defense requirements, which is their primary purpose, of course). These would obviously involve more significant contributions than the niche capabilities developed by some new allies, and would undoubtedly be suitable for high-intensity warfare. The maintenance of a strong military partnership between the US and UK depends not on Britain fielding budget-starved units across the whole spectrum of operations, but rather being able to perform a more limited number of essential roles, maintaining the usual high-quality standards of the UK military despite budgetary limits. As for intelligence co-operation, some strains that have developed because of US practices regarding detainees may be reduced as the new Administration makes clear the unacceptability of torture.
26. *A strengthening of British leadership within the EU*. The critique advanced above does not mean that the level of British involvement in the EU is immaterial to the special relationship. If anything, it is likely to become more important in the future as the EU continues to develop competencies in an even broader scope of issues. Despite the renewed closeness of US relations with France and Germany—both powerhouses in EU policy circles—British positions on economic, regulatory, and foreign policy issues are still often closer to those of the United States. And if the bilateral politico-military partnership is weakened, this leg of the special relationship must bear even more weight. The potential distancing of Britain from the EU under a Cameron government would do nothing to strengthen the US-UK relationship; if anything, it would make Britain less relevant to the US goal of developing a more strategic partnership with Europe.

27. *A renewed partnership within multilateral institutions.* The Obama Administration has made clear its intentions to address global issues in a more multilateral framework. It has already taken significant steps at the United Nations, paying dues and joining the Human Rights Council. Multilateralism does not work, however, without strong partners who are willing to provide diplomatic and political assistance. The UK is a leader within many international organizations, from the United Nations to the IMF and World Bank and the OSCE. The strength of the UK within such fora has been demonstrated by Prime Minister Brown's leadership within the G-20 on the global economic crisis. As the United States reaches out in multilateral institutions, as well as in frameworks such as the Copenhagen climate negotiations and the 2010 non-proliferation review conference, it will need the partnership of such countries. If the US is to achieve its goals through multilateral negotiations, it will seek the support of others who share those goals and who have the diplomatic skills to be of assistance. The UK is frequently in the first category and almost always in the second.

28. The traditional special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom, focused on the bilateral partnership, is no longer sufficient in meeting 21st century global challenges. Both countries need more reach around the world, and they can only achieve this by moving their partnership into more multilateral frameworks, where their influence and impact can be multiplied. This will require less focus on whether US and British soldiers can always stand side by side in harm's way, and more on whether US and British diplomats can work together in diplomatic corridors. There will be times when military co-operation will be vital, but it must be reshaped to cope with budgetary realities. Intelligence co-operation must remain strong, especially in facing global terrorism. But in the 21st century, the key element of the special relationship must be building partnerships that go beyond the bilateral US-UK relationship. The European Union must be convinced to become a truly global player; and this will only happen with Britain in an influential leadership role. The US-UK special relationship can be one of the strongest sinews linking the United States to this emergent global actor. The US-UK special relationship can also be a partnership working within multilateral institutions and frameworks, working to tackle global challenges through diplomacy and political influence. In this way, the special relationship will continue to be a vital touchstone in the foreign policy of both countries.

28 September 2009

Letter to the Chairman of the Committee from Robert Budd

I hope you do not mind me writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, but I have a concern, and I have no confidence that a letter written to the Foreign Office will be taken seriously. I would like to ask whether perceptions that communications between this country and the United States have somehow been caused to become tangled have any substance, and whether this has been brought to the attention of the Commons Foreign Affairs Committee.

Most recently, the US President and Secretary of State have expressed dismay at the decision of the Scottish Justice Secretary to allow the return of Abdelbaset Ali Al-Megrahi to Libya on compassionate grounds. Yet, a letter has been shown to TV viewers that appears to express a preference by US Embassy staff for Megrahi not to be returned through a prisoner transfer. The very well publicised remarks of the Head of the FBI indicate that he was unaware of diplomatic communications between the US and the UK. Likewise, the comments of the US General Chief of Staff (which were clearly designed to be broadly heard) that, "it had obviously been a political decision", were completely at odds with the message coming from both the Scottish Devolved Parliament and the UK Government.

As a second example of the lack of clarity with regard to legal matters, I would suggest that of Gary McKinnon's extradition case. I hope that the Extradition Treaty between the two countries is now even-handed. I think those who had concerns with the Treaty will need to be given an explanation in due course, as to why this man is the only one out of hundreds who were hacking into US Government Departments during 2001 and 2002, to be prosecuted by the US prosecution services—why has this crime (which I do recognise as such) been described as, "The biggest military computer hacking of all time", in the US? Is this kind of hyperbole repeated and disseminated in disguise some embarrassing lapses in security by the US authorities? If so, why can they not find a more fitting person to use as an example in their legal prosecutions? Can the UK Foreign Office be actively engaged in this and the other matter?

There appears to have been a muddying of the waters between the US and the UK over recent years (or at least months). Perhaps, the Foreign Affairs Committee may be able to clarify these murky waters. I hope this is of some interest.

28 September 2009

Written evidence from Dr Robin Niblett, Director, Chatham House

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robin Niblett has been the Director of Chatham House (home of the Royal Institute of International Affairs) since January 2007. Dr Niblett's research has focused on European external relations, US foreign policy and transatlantic relations. He spent 10 years from 1997–2007 at the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) in Washington DC, where he was Executive Vice-President and Director of the Europe Programme and Initiative for a Renewed Transatlantic Partnership. He is the author of a number of CSIS and Chatham House reports, most recently *Ready to Lead? Rethinking America's Role in a Changed World* (Chatham House, February 2009)

SUMMARY

- The relationship between the UK and the US remains “special”, but is special principally at the tactical levels of intelligence sharing, nuclear deterrence and military co-operation, most clearly in the current operations in Afghanistan.
- The fact that Britain and the United States possess a uniquely close infrastructure for co-operation on two of the most direct and common threats to their national security—fighting violent Islamist extremists in general and in Afghanistan, in particular—will mean that the UK-US political relationship will continue to be among the most intimate for both countries.
- However, the UK-US relationship is becoming less special at the strategic level. The two countries look out at some of the most important challenges to their common international interests from different perspectives.
- European security is no longer at the centre of US security priorities. And the fear that the EU might emerge as some powerful counter-weight to US influence has receded. Many Americans would welcome a more co-ordinated EU in the areas of defence or energy, for example. The value of Britain to the US as an opponent of deeper European integration has receded.
- In a “G-20 world”, the US is one of the big players alongside China, India, Russia, and Brazil. They are all viscerally sovereign powers which resist the rise of genuinely multilateral forms of international governance.
- The Obama Administration is conducting increasingly intense diplomatic relations with these countries on multiple levels simultaneously, and not all of these levels contain the UK as a key US partner.
- Inevitably, this decline in its relative position also reduces the scope for British influence on US decision-making in its international relations.
- Britain finds itself in an awkward position, therefore. The US remains the world's pre-eminent power; its engagement and decisions are vital to nearly all priorities for British foreign policy—from negotiations to combat climate change and to control nuclear proliferation to stabilizing Afghanistan. It is natural for British policy-makers to want to be as close to their US counterparts as possible and to try to influence their policy choices.
- At the same time, it must be recognised that British and US perceptions of the nature of certain international risks and the appropriate policy solutions are not always in synch. These include dealing with the reassertion of Russian power, instability in North and Sub-Saharan Africa, the need to find a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the rise of China's power in East Asia.
- In many such areas of its foreign policy, Britain hews closer to the view of other EU Member States than it does to the current US approaches.
- Despite these realities, British politicians continue to talk up in public the country's overall “special relationship” with the US. In fact, this and future British governments should be as dispassionate in the way they approach their relations on matters of foreign policy with the US as the US has been with the UK.
- The British government needs to focus on specific areas when it will invest its effort and resources alongside the US, in order to achieve their common goals. Natural areas for strong continuing bilateral US-UK co-operation include Afghanistan, Pakistan, dealing with Iran's nuclear programme and re-writing international financial regulation and other new rules for the post-crisis global economy.
- Some areas where Britain should not assume it will share common interests with the US include the effort to “re-set” the West's relationship with Russia, dealing with China and India, and approaches to managing climate change, where the US body politic remains far more sceptical than the Administration. In these areas co-ordination with our EU partners needs to be the main priority.

 INTRODUCTION: THE EMERGENCE OF THE “SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP”

1. Much has been written about the origins of the “special” relationship between Britain and the United States. In essence, the UK-US relationship evolved gradually in the 10 years following the end of the Second World War as successive British governments realised that (a) they no longer had the capacity to protect or project British interests around the world, while the United States would take its place as the world’s dominant power, and that (b) the most direct threat to British and European security—that of Soviet military aggression and/or political subversion—could only be confronted if the United States were tightly woven into a transatlantic alliance whose principal focus was the defence of Europe and the broader Atlantic community.

2. A corollary and third driver of the special relationship has been the mutual suspicion in Washington and London about a deepening of European political integration that could come at the expense of US engagement and influence in the Atlantic community.

3. Throughout the Cold War and beyond, Britain was one of the most stalwart of America’s European allies, and the one best-placed to support the US within and outside the Atlantic area. This led to the building of an infrastructure of bilateral co-operation in the areas of intelligence sharing and nuclear and military co-operation that allowed each side to define the relationship as “special” rather than just close.

4. To be sure, there are also important cultural and historical connections between the UK and United States, especially as seen from the US. There are also some broadly shared values, principally a commitment to supporting democracy, individual rights and open markets around the world. It is worth noting, however, that popular attitudes in the UK and US towards religion, the death-penalty, the international rule of law, among other issues, are far more divergent than notions of a “special relationship” might suggest.

THE US-UK RELATIONSHIP TODAY

5. Today, the relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States remains “special”, but is special principally at the tactical level where the two countries still engage in unique bilateral interaction on matters of intelligence (including on counter-terrorism), nuclear deterrence (sharing the Trident system) and military co-operation, the latter manifested most clearly in the current operations in Afghanistan.

6. There are always risks of UK-US rifts at this tactical level—the unmasking of the plot in Britain to blow up transatlantic airliners in August 2006 revealed important differences in British and US approaches to counter-terrorism, and there is a growing gap between the extensive resources and troop levels the US Administration can deploy in distant military theatres like Iraq and Afghanistan and the more limited resources available to Britain.

7. But the fact that Britain and the United States possess a uniquely close infrastructure for co-operation on two of the most direct and common threats to their national security—fighting violent Islamist extremists in general and in Afghanistan, in particular—will mean that the UK-US political relationship will continue to be among the most intimate for both countries.

8. It is also a fact, however, that the UK-US relationship is becoming less special at the strategic level. In other words, leaders in the two countries look out at some of the most important challenges to their common international interests (both in terms of long-term prosperity and security) from different perspectives.

9. There remain, therefore, practical advantages to both sides of sustaining both the infrastructure and the appearance of the special relationship. But, without a more dispassionate assessment in London of the differences in international perspectives and interests between the UK and the United States and of the limits of British influence over US decision-making in the 21st century, disappointments will continue to outweigh the visible advantages.

THE US-UK RELATIONSHIP AS SEEN FROM WASHINGTON

10. The “bottom line” today, as Americans would put it, is that the second and third drivers that gave rise to the special relationship are no longer there. The threat to Britain, Europe and the United States from possible Soviet domination or destabilization of Europe has disappeared. Russian meddling and aggressiveness towards parts of central and eastern Europe is an important concern, but is outweighed in US perceptions by other more pressing international concerns, as will be discussed further below. European security is no longer at the centre of US security priorities.

11. And the idea that the European Union might emerge as some powerful counter-weight to US influence has receded. Many Americans, especially a number of senior officials in the Obama Administration, would welcome a more co-ordinated EU, including in the areas of defence or energy, for example—an EU that could be in a position to share more effectively the burdens of projecting stability and security within and beyond the Atlantic area. The value of Britain as a reliable opponent of deeper European integration in the security area and other areas, therefore, has receded.

12. This shift in US perspective has been under way for some time, certainly since the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the Clinton Administration. At heart, it is a reflection of the emergence of a more multi-polar world, where rising powers offer both opportunities and risks to US interests, and where European nations and the EU are of greatest value as allies that potentially tilt the bargaining advantage in the US favour, not simply as members of a static Atlantic Alliance.

13. In this “G-20 world”, the US is one of the big players alongside China, India, Russia, and Brazil. Although all are increasingly aware of their inter-dependence at an economic level, they are viscerally sovereign powers which resist the rise of genuinely multilateral forms of international governance at a political level. The UK is not one of the big powers and, although more deeply attached to its sovereign prerogatives than many other EU Member States, is bound formally and informally into EU positions on a range of policy topics.

14. Of course, the UK remains important in this emerging order as a US ally in NATO and in the UN Security Council—for example, on issues such as containing Iran’s nuclear programme—as well in advocating for open markets in the IMF and WTO.

15. However, as the apparent fiasco of the British government’s efforts to secure a bilateral meeting with President Obama at the UN General Assembly in September 2009 revealed (the latest in a line of minor, accidental slights by the new US Administration towards the Prime Minister), the Obama Administration is now conducting its diplomatic relations on multiple levels simultaneously, and not all of these levels contain the UK as a key US partner.

16. There are other more intangible forces at work in the UK-US relationship from the US perspective. A new generation of policy-makers are rising within American think tanks, businesses, law-firms and universities who look to Asia as much if not more than Europe for dynamic change within their areas of interest. European studies are in serious decline at America’s Ivy League institutions. And Anglo-Americanism is in decline in terms of demography and relevance alongside this gradual shift away from a Euro-centric US economic and political culture.

17. Inevitably, this decline in the “specialness” of its position also reduces the scope for British influence on US decision-making in its international relations. Such influence has been difficult to exercise even in the hey-day of US-UK relations (the Reagan Administration’s early decisions in the Falklands conflict were one case in point) and even under the most positive of personal relations between Prime Ministers and Presidents (Prime Minister Blair’s lack of impact on US policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict following his support for the Iraq war, for example).

18. But the more the US is focused on managing the shifting relations between the major powers in an emerging “G-20 world” the harder it will be for the UK to find a durable perch within US conceptual thinking and decision-making. US support for an increase in China’s voting weight within the IMF at the recent G20 summit in Pittsburgh, most probably at the cost of Britain and other European members, may be a minor harbinger of the future.

BRITAIN: STILL TALKING UP THE “SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP”

19. The US remains the world’s pre-eminent power; its engagement and decisions are vital to nearly all priorities for British foreign policy—from negotiations to combat climate change and to control nuclear proliferation to stabilizing Afghanistan. It is natural for British policy-makers to want to be as close to their US counterparts as possible and to try to influence their policy choices if at all possible. US policy-makers are not under the same pressure. There is an asymmetry of power, and we need to live with this reality.

20. At the same time, however, it must be recognised that British and US perceptions of the nature of certain international risks and the appropriate policy solutions are not always in synch. This was most apparent during the George W. Bush Administration, where the US position on the Arab-Israeli conflict, on combating climate change and on some of the techniques that needed to be used to win the “global war on terror” ran counter to British approaches.

21. The arrival of the Obama Administration appears to have narrowed some of the differences between the US and UK approaches, including on the three examples given above. In addition, British public opinion has swung behind President Obama.⁸³ Nonetheless, the panorama of global challenges that the US faces do not always look the same from a UK vantage point. There are four examples, among others:

- (a) British concerns about Russia’s growing influence in Central and Eastern Europe are based not only on the sorts of strategic considerations shared by US policy-makers, but also on immediate fears about the future of British energy security. There is considerable British scepticism about the potential for “re-setting” the West’s relationship with Russia as the Obama Administration is attempting to do now.
- (b) British concerns about political stability and sustainable development in North and Sub-Saharan Africa are based on more than fears about growing radicalisation—a principal driver for EU policies and actions on the continent. Britain will be one of the favoured destinations in Europe for the illegal migration that will accompany continued instability on the African continent.

⁸³ President Obama’s approval ratings in the UK earlier this year stood at 82% compared with the 17% for President Bush in 2008. In addition, 73% of those surveyed in Britain in 2009 expressed a favourable opinion of the United States, compared with 48% for the EU—German Marshall Fund “Transatlantic Trends Survey” 2009.

- (c) British insistence on finding a fair and durable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is based on more than a desire to help promote peace and prosperity in the Middle East. A resumption of conflict there could lead directly to a rise in extremist violence in Britain.
- (d) Britain does not share the same concerns about the rise of China's power in East Asia as does the United States, which has an array of military alliances and commitments across the region.

22. In many areas of its foreign policy, Britain hews closer to the view of the majority of other EU Member States on how to confront these questions than it does to the current US approaches. Despite its continuing close relationship with the Obama Administration on the centrality of Afghanistan and Pakistan, on nuclear disarmament or on dealing with Iran, for example, there are many other areas where Britain will be hard-pushed either to convince the US to alter its policy approach or to build a transatlantic consensus for action.

23. Despite these realities, more often than not British politicians appear determined to continue to talk up in public the idea of the permanence of the country's overall "special relationship" with the US. The gap between aspiration and reality, however, is becoming ever more awkward.

WHERE TO NEXT?

24. It is a fact that British politicians from both major parties are ambivalent about engaging more proactively with their EU partners in order to try to increase Britain's international leverage on issues of common European concern. Given the growing gap in strategic outlook between the US and the UK, however, Britain could find itself adrift between these two moorings of its foreign and security policy.

25. Whether British ambivalence about the EU should or will ease in the near future is not the topic of this paper. But it is also very possible that the EU's international influence outside its near neighbourhood or outside international trade policy (two areas where it can have real clout) will remain marginal, irrespective of how engaged Britain might be.

26. As it thinks about its relationship with the US, therefore, it is all the more important that this and future British governments be as dispassionate in the approach to their relations with the US as the US has been with the UK.

27. Most importantly, they should not cling to the notion of an all-encompassing bilateral special relationship—the US cannot honour this broad a concept, whatever the rhetoric they choose (or feel obliged) to offer in support of the notion. The United States can and does honour an intimate and even privileged bilateral relationship in specific areas (intelligence sharing and nuclear and military co-operation) and on specific policies (towards Afghanistan, for example). But there are limits to how far the US side of the relationship will reach.

28. Similarly, the British government needs to focus on specific areas where it will invest its political effort and human and financial resources, alongside the United States, in order to achieve their common goals. Natural areas for strong continuing bilateral US-UK co-operation—whatever the occasional disagreements—include Afghanistan, Pakistan, dealing with Iran's nuclear programme and re-writing international financial regulation and other new rules for the post-crisis global economy.

29. Some areas where Britain should not assume it will share common interests with the US include the effort to "re-set" the West's relationship with Russia, dealing with China and India (both on political and economic interests), and approaches to managing climate change, where the US body politic remains far more sceptical than its executive branch of government. In these areas co-ordination with our EU partners needs to be the main priority.

30 September 2009

Written evidence from the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy

"To reduce our warheads and stockpiles, we will negotiate a new strategic arms reduction treaty with Russia this year. President Medvedev and I began this process in London, and will seek a new agreement by the end of this year that is legally binding, and sufficiently bold. This will set the stage for further cuts, and we will seek to include all nuclear weapons states in this endeavor."

President Obama, Prague, 5 April 2009

1. SUMMARY POINTS

1.1 Due to a number of strategic and political factors, the historical relationship between the United States and United Kingdom is undergoing transformation, with potentially long-term implications. UK policymakers are more likely to evoke the term "special relationship", viewing the Atlantic alliance as fundamental for British security. For US policymakers, the UK is one among a number of significant allies, our relative importance depending on the specific context and US objectives under discussion.

1.2 This evidence focuses specifically on the nuclear nexus in the US-UK security relationship. Historically, the UK's nuclear weapon capability and its special relationship with the United States were linked with status and influence in international circles.¹ This is potentially a dangerous precedent for aspiring nuclear proliferators, who may perceive nuclear weapons as desirable for projecting status and regional or international power as well as deterrence.

1.3 The nuclear relationship may have been a crucial factor in the US-UK alliance during the Cold War, but it operated in the context of long-standing and deep cultural, linguistic and economic ties between the US and UK. Though these ties are loosening gradually, a change in the nuclear relationship now would not have the kind of negative impact on the US-UK security relationship that some UK policymakers seem to fear. This is because both countries benefit from the Atlantic Alliance and our close co-operation on a broad range of other security, defence and institutional issues, such as intelligence sharing, counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, joint exercises and other forms of collaboration. Britain is also viewed as a good market or partner for US defence contractors.

1.4 The UK is dependent on nuclear co-operation with the United States to deploy nuclear weapons that are characterised as an independent nuclear deterrent. This nuclear dependence has influenced and at times distorted UK foreign policy decisions. It has contributed to the reluctance of successive UK Governments to criticise US policy and actions, even where such actions appear to damage Britain's long-term security interests.

1.5 As both countries seek to implement a progressive vision of security, including President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Gordon Brown's stated objective of a world free of nuclear weapons, the US-UK nuclear relationship does not need to rely on collaborative nuclear weapons research or the purchase of US missiles to carry the UK's nuclear warheads. It would make better security sense for the US-UK relationship to focus more coherently on working together to strengthen the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to make progress on nuclear disarmament through unilateral, plurilateral and multilateral steps aimed at reducing the role and numbers of nuclear weapons nationally and globally and increasing nuclear security to prevent terrorist acquisition and possible use of nuclear weapons or materials (such as in a "dirty bomb" radiological dispersal explosion).

1.6 As the NPT approaches the critical 2010 Review Conference, which will take place in May, Britain has a historic chance to provide leadership and influence the future direction of international security by renouncing future nuclear reliance and setting forth a coherent plan for dismantling the Trident system and moving towards either virtual or non-nuclear deterrence. Working together with the Administration of President Obama, the UK could have a key role to play by:

- leading efforts to engage others and make progress on the shared US-UK goal of strengthening nuclear security and furthering the practical steps for building peace and security in a nuclear-weapon-free world;
- renouncing UK dependence on the continuous deployment of nuclear weapons and demonstrating confidence in alternative political, diplomatic and military tools for deterrence and security;
- deferring further decisions and contracts on replacing Trident, pending a strategic security review and further public and parliamentary debate about Britain's real, present and long-term security requirements;
- working with the US to devalue nuclear weapons and to reduce their role in military strategies, nationally and in the NATO alliance, through review of NATO's Strategic Concept;
- supporting further US-Russian Nuclear Arms Reduction talks, including engaging and facilitating the engagement of all the nuclear weapon states in nuclear reduction negotiations in the near future;
- developing further co-operation among the nuclear laboratories on disarmament and verification;
- promoting efforts to bring the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) into force and to undertake further measures such as capping fissile material production; and
- acting as a bridge between the US and Europe by articulating European security concerns and drawing France towards reducing the role and number of its nuclear forces as well.

2. THE CHANGING US-UK RELATIONSHIP

2.1 For geostrategic and demographic reasons, US foreign policy now places higher priority on relations with Asia and Latin America than Europe. Europe is still important, but it is not at the top of the list. The European Union (or at least certain European countries) is regarded as a useful ally, especially for supporting US objectives in Africa and the Middle East, but also an economic rival. As the US has become more economically vulnerable, concerns about China are not only that it is sizing up to be the next strategic rival but also its potential as an economic or military adversary. By contrast, US threat perceptions with regard to Russia are far lower than fears of Soviet Communism in the Cold War. Russia is still on the US threat horizon, but increasingly perceived as a European adjunct with specific characteristics stemming from its (still) large arsenal and potential for economic and military resurgence.

2.2 As Europe's importance for US policy shrinks, Britain's importance as the US's closest ally in Europe has also been diminishing, with Germany perceived as a more necessary and influential ally to have on side. This is due in part because of reunified Germany's size and economic strength, its geostrategic positioning between West and East Europe and its solid, leading role at the centre of EU politics and decision-making. Though popular in America, Tony Blair's eagerness to bind the UK close to the Bush Administration's decisions, notably on the war on Iraq, have had the unintended consequence of diminishing the UK's real value and influence as an ally. Conversely, the principled positions of more reluctant European governments, such as Germany and France, which sought to give critical advice based on alternative security analyses, appears to have increased their credibility internationally and consequently their value to the United States as allies. The petty animosity against these countries in some US circles at the time has proved short lived. Among the factors relevant to the weakening of Britain's importance for the United States is the UK's schizophrenic attitude towards the EU, as this tends to diminish the UK's authority and influence with other EU countries.

2.3 Notwithstanding these factors affecting Britain's "specialness" for Washington, the UK is still viewed as a loyal and dependable ally on military, economic and security issues, and many in the US value the UK's willingness to harmonise with their positions on challenges such as global heating and climate change, terrorism and transnational crime and trafficking in drugs, arms and people.

3. THE NUCLEAR NEXUS IN UK-US RELATIONS

3.1 During the Cold War, the UK's nuclear and military co-operation with the United States was considered to be at the heart of the "special relationship". This included the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement (MDA), the 1962 Polaris Sales Agreement (as amended for Trident), and the UK's use of the US nuclear test site in Nevada from 1962–92. It also includes agreements for the United States to use numerous bases in Britain, with the right to store conventional and nuclear weapons; agreements for two bases in Yorkshire (Fylingdales and Menwith Hill) to be upgraded to support US missile defence plans, and commitments to NATO missions including current operations in Afghanistan.

3.2 The 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement covers all aspects of nuclear weapons design, development and maintenance. Under this unique agreement, the US and the UK exchange classified information with the objective of improving each party's "atomic weapon design, development, and fabrication capability".² The work is carried out through Joint Working Groups, covering all aspects of warhead design, development and maintenance³ and through extensive visits and contacts between British and US personnel, including officials from government and industry.⁴ Co-operation under the Mutual Defence Agreement is considered to be of such importance to Britain's warhead programme, that the 2000 AWE Annual Report described it as being "a cornerstone of life for our nuclear weapons community".⁵

3.3 In July 2004—the year that the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement was last renewed—a legal opinion by Rabinder Singh QC and Professor Christine Chinkin of Matrix Chambers concluded that "it is strongly arguable that the renewal of the Mutual Defence Agreement is in breach of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty". Singh and Chinkin found that the Mutual Defence Agreement, as amended in 1994, was directed towards "improving the UK's state of training and operational readiness . . . [and] atomic weapon design, development or fabrication capability", which implied "continuation and indeed enhancement of the nuclear programme, not progress towards its discontinuation".⁶

3.4 When President George W Bush recommended the amended US text for Congressional consideration, he stated, "it is in our interest to continue to assist [the United Kingdom] in maintaining a credible nuclear force".⁷

3.5 When the MDA came up for its 10-year renewal in 2004, it was rushed through parliament using the Royal Prerogative and the Ponsoby Rule to avoid the debate in the House of Commons that had been requested by a number of Labour MPs and an Early Day Motion raising concerns that it could undermine the NPT.⁸ Similarly, Tony Blair's government refused to allow debate in the UK parliament of its 2002 decision to upgrade the Fylingdales base with tracking and targeting equipment for the Bush Administration's missile defence programme.

4. THE IMPACT OF US-UK NUCLEAR COLLABORATION ON FOREIGN POLICY AND THE NPT

4.1 The UK relies on Trident II D5 missiles manufactured by Lockheed Martin. It initially purchased 58 missile bodies (now fewer) under an arrangement that updates the Polaris Sales Agreement and is tantamount to leasing from the US missile pool. The UK conducts its missile test firing at the US missile test area off the US Atlantic coast. US personnel are assigned to 'tours of duty' at RNAD Coulport to oversee the missile handling and repairs, including the process by which British warheads are fitted to the missiles before being taken on "continuous-at-sea-deterrent" patrols aboard the UK-made Vanguard class submarines.

4.2 Because of the need to fit Lockheed Martin missiles, the UK Trident warhead is widely closely based on the design of the US Trident W76 warhead. UK nuclear policy and operating posture is closely coordinated with the United States through NATO. In an exchange of letters in 2006, President Bush and Tony Blair also agreed to extend co-operation and collaboration on future nuclear submarine platforms.⁹

4.3 The Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield) may be owned by the UK government but it is managed for the Ministry of Defence through a contractor-operated arrangement in which management, day-to-day operations and the maintenance of Britain's nuclear stockpile is contracted to a private company: AWE Management Limited (AWE ML). AWE ML is formed of three equal shareholders, two of which are US-owned: Lockheed Martin, the giant US arms manufacturer which supplies and refurbishes the Trident missiles, and Jacobs' Engineering, which has contracts with US nuclear-weapons facilities at Los Alamos, PanTex and Y-12. Jacobs' Engineering has also been involved in the construction of the Faslane shiplift; the RD57 Project at Rosyth, and the D154 Project at Devonport. The remaining one third is the UK management company Serco.

4.4 Concerns about UK-US nuclear co-operation have been raised on a number of occasions at NPT meetings, including during the 1995 NPT Review Conference, in Main Committee I, under the review of Articles I and II. Some non-nuclear weapon states parties to the Treaty, led by Mexico and supported by the non-aligned states, attempted to raise the issue, with the consequence that the draft report from Main Committee I noted that "among States parties there are variations in the interpretation of certain aspects of articles I and II which need clarification, especially regarding the obligations of nuclear-weapon States parties among themselves . . . which may have resulted in transfer of nuclear weapons in violation of the spirit and objective of article I".¹⁰

4.5 The US and the UK government interpretations are that the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement is an "existing security arrangement" that involves no transfer of actual nuclear weapons and that therefore it is fully in compliance with Article I. Whilst the US and the UK were careful when the NPT was negotiated in the 1960s to ensure that wording was found for Article I that would not explicitly rule out nuclear co-operation, states parties' interpretation of the NPT has changed, and the objections by non-nuclear-weapon states parties in 1995 and 2000 show that they do not regard the US-UK interpretation as appropriate for the present security environment, as such arrangements would not be acceptable if adopted by other states parties.

4.6 The US interpretation of the NPT is that "The Treaty deals only with what is prohibited, not with what is permitted." This interpretation has been used by the US to justify a range of nuclear co-operation programmes with NATO allies, including the UK. Such a loose interpretation of the NPT is dangerous, as the same argument might be used to claim that acquiring nuclear materials, technology and the capacity to develop a nuclear warhead is in compliance with the Treaty, provided that no actual nuclear device is assembled. Assuming that the central aim of the NPT is still to prevent nuclear proliferation, such a permissive and discriminatory interpretation is unacceptable.

4.7 The extent of US-UK nuclear co-operation means that Britain must depend on the United States if it wishes to deploy nuclear weapons. This nuclear dependence has influenced and at times distorted UK foreign policy decisions. It has contributed to the reluctance of successive UK Governments to criticise US policy and actions, even where such actions appear to damage Britain's long-term security interests.

5. IMPLEMENTING SHARED GOALS FOR NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT

5.1 In a marked change from his predecessor, President Obama has identified the goal of peace and security in a world free of nuclear weapons and begun work in this direction with the agreement of a framework for a follow-on to the START Treaty, UN Security Council Resolution 1887 and steps to obtain the Senate's ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty second time around.

5.2 In 2007–08, British ministers began to speak of the necessity for building security in a world without nuclear weapons, though the message was undermined by being tacked onto the March 2007 decision to replace Trident. In 2009, these aspirations were taken forward in the Prime Minister's initiative of the *Road to 2010* plan and the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs' publication, *Lifting the Nuclear Shadow*, which was subtitled *Creating the Conditions for Abolishing Nuclear Weapons*. The US and UK were the prime movers in achieving consensus on UN Security Council Resolution 1887 (24 September 2009), which addressed nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and security.

5.3 A key short-term objective for both countries is the successful outcome to the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. It is not clear what they mean by this: for some, success will be adopting a consensus final document, whatever it says; for some it will be getting substantive issues and commitments included in a forward-looking consensus agreement, which could be in the form of a decision or resolution, linked or separate from the final review document. Together with many non-nuclear weapon states, the Acronym Institute argues that to be regarded as successful, the NPT needs to debate next steps in the changing non-proliferation context and to look beyond 2010 at the actions that need to be taken to ensure nuclear security, which means making progress on both non-proliferation and disarmament—not just in language in a NPT document that will then be disregarded by governments; but in real commitments to undertake medium and long-term steps and to develop the mechanisms for implementing them.

5.4 In the run up to 2010, the British government needs to consider what initiatives it can take and what it is prepared to put on the table to support and make progress towards achieving the call for a nuclear weapon-free world that has been made by President Obama and Gordon Brown. To date, all UK nuclear disarmament steps have been undertaken as voluntary, unilateral steps, although the present government has specified that the steps are intended to be irreversible. In addition, the UK needs to refrain from actions

that will damage the fragile nuclear non-proliferation regime. In particular, the credibility of the NPT and the ability to deliver on the objectives set out in the *Road to 2010* and *Lifting the Nuclear Shadow* are undermined as long as Britain proceeds with plans for Trident replacement and continues to assert that Trident is indispensable for UK security.

5.5 As the US and Russia move towards lower numbers of deployed strategic weapons in the first phase of START Plus, they need to consider the second phase, which should comprehensively cut their aggregate arsenals: undeployed—stored—weapons as well as deployed; short and medium range—so called tactical or theatre nuclear weapons—as well as strategic.

5.6 As US-Russian reductions progress, the question is begged of when the UK government would be willing to participate in the next phase of strategic reductions with a view to bringing the UK into a verifiable, binding and irreversible process of disarmament, incorporating the significant unilateral disarmament initiatives already taken and providing a context for more. In previous rounds of US-Soviet nuclear arms reductions, Russian negotiators would frequently argue that UK (and French) weapons ought to be on the table as well. Alongside the United States, Britain could play an important role by becoming the first of the smaller nuclear weapon states to join the strategic arms reduction process and begin multilateralising nuclear disarmament. Since Britain deploys the same Trident missiles as the United States, and UK nuclear doctrine and strategy are closely co-ordinated with the US through NATO, this would facilitate rather than complicate negotiations following the first phase START-Plus treaty.

5.7 As the NPT approaches the critical 2010 Review Conference, Britain has a historic chance to provide leadership and influence the future direction of international security by renouncing future nuclear reliance and setting forth a coherent plan for dismantling the Trident system and moving towards either virtual or non-nuclear deterrence. Giving up the Cold War posture of continuous-at-sea-deterrence patrols would be a useful interim step towards understanding and demonstrating that national security is achievable without the constant deployment of nuclear weapons, thereby helping to lay the conditions for sustainable non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Initiating such actions before May 2010 would maximise their positive impact, and give Britain the moral and political authority to be taken more seriously when the government seeks to provide leadership, diplomatic initiative and technical expertise to reduce nuclear and proliferation dangers worldwide.¹¹

5.8 In his Prague speech, President Obama announced that, “To put an end to Cold War thinking, we will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy and urge others to do the same”. Given the close relationship between the US and the UK on nuclear posture, there is an opportunity here for Britain and the United States both to move towards a diminishing role for nuclear weapons in their security policies.¹² A political shift of this nature would feed directly into NATO’s current Strategic Concept review, which would also offer the opportunity for the allies to seek to engage France in such a move, difficult though that presently appears to be.

5.9 The UK’s Atomic Weapons Establishment has a close working relationship with the US nuclear laboratories. They already share sensitive weapons-related information and data, but this relationship now needs to be directed more productively to work towards disarmament. In particular, the UK should explore extending its disarmament laboratory and verification initiatives through deeper co-operation with the US nuclear weapons laboratories, building on the P-5 conference held in September 2009.

5.10 President Obama has called a Nuclear Summit to take place in Washington in March-April 2010 in the run up to the NPT Review Conference. The current agenda for this is focussed on terrorism and nuclear security, but in order to feed constructively into strengthening the NPT the agenda needs to reflect the understanding that as long as nuclear weapons exist and are treated as instruments of security, power or status, nuclear bombs and nuclear materials will continue to put our lives at risk, whether from accident, terrorist acquisition or intentional use. As a US ally and as one of the smaller of the nuclear-weapon states Britain is well placed to work closely with the United States to make this summit an effective mechanism to strengthen the non-proliferation regime.

6. MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 As progress is made on incremental steps, UK decision-makers and people need to think through what kind of relationship we want with the United States. We need to learn the lessons from what went wrong as—in the name of the Atlantic Alliance and special relationship—Tony Blair subordinated Britain’s security interests and intelligence to enable an ideological US Administration to pursue wars in Afghanistan and particularly in Iraq that were considered unnecessary and illegal by the United Nations Secretary-General and most nations of the world. Assuming that the US-UK alliance will remain strong, friendly and important for both sides, how can we reconstruct a more balanced relationship, with a more independent role for Britain. Acknowledging that the UK is the smaller nation does not mean UK interests should be subordinate nor our role subservient. Sycophancy actually reduces our value as an ally for the US, and it will take some time to build a more positive view of the UK’s contributions and overcome the stigma of having been the Bush Administration’s poodle.

6.2 Working together with the Administration of President Obama, the UK could have a key role to play by:

- leading efforts to engage others and make progress on the shared US-UK goal of strengthening nuclear security and furthering the practical steps for building peace and security in a nuclear-weapon-free world;
- renouncing UK dependence on the continuous deployment of nuclear weapons and demonstrating confidence in alternative political, diplomatic and military tools for deterrence and security;
- deferring further decisions and contracts on replacing Trident, pending a strategic security review and further public and parliamentary debate about Britain's real, present and long-term security requirements;
- working with the US to devalue nuclear weapons and to reduce their role in military strategies, nationally and in the NATO alliance, through review of NATO's Strategic Concept;
- supporting further US-Russian Nuclear Arms Reduction talks, including engaging and facilitating the engagement of all the nuclear weapon states in nuclear reduction negotiations in the near future;
- developing further co-operation among the nuclear laboratories on disarmament and verification;
- promoting efforts to bring the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) into force and to undertake further measures such as capping fissile material production; and
- acting as a bridge between the US and Europe by articulating European security concerns and drawing France towards reducing the role and number of its nuclear forces as well.

6.3 Finally, Britain is ideally placed to go beyond the 'nuclear-weapon-free world' rhetoric and take bold, visionary and transformative steps to devalue nuclear weapons and create the conditions for disarmament, peace and security. On the basis of Britain's present infrastructure, we could announce the intention not to replace Trident, a decision that would be welcomed around the world and have positive game-changing impact. If we feel the need for an insurance policy as we disarm and dismantle our nuclear arsenal, "virtual deterrence" could provide this without the kind of dependency on the United States that replacing Trident perpetuates. If the government chose, it could retain sufficient infrastructure, fissile materials and knowledge to be able independently to reconstitute or manufacture some basic nuclear bombs if in the future it appeared that threatening or using nuclear weapons might be a necessary or good idea for our security. This would require transforming the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, but it would provide a more credible insurance policy than renewing Trident, pending global, negotiated and verified abolition of nuclear weapons (at which point the infrastructure could be reconfigured or disposed of as safely and securely as possible).

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- ⁹ "Exchange of letters between the Prime Minister and the President of the United States of America", 7 December 2006, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmdfence/225/22514.htm>
- ¹⁰ "Report of Main Committee I", NPT/CONF.1995/MC.I/1, 8 May 1995. The 1995 Review Conference failed to adopt a final document, so this report was never formally agreed by states parties.

¹¹ These arguments have been made in numerous articles in *Disarmament Diplomacy* and elsewhere and are also set out in Rebecca Johnson, Nicola Butler and Stephen Pullinger, *Worse than Irrelevant? British Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century*, London: Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy, October 2006. www.acronym.org.uk.

¹² See Rebecca Johnson, "Security Assurances for Everyone: A New Approach to Deterring the Use of Nuclear Weapons", *Disarmament Diplomacy* 90, Spring 2009.

7 October 2009

Written evidence from Dr David H Dunn

SUMMARY

What is the basis of the bilateral relationship between the UK and the US?

- The UK and US share an internationalist world view and work diplomatically to advance a shared view of the global order.
- UK-US collaboration on defence policy within NATO and bilaterally is more integrated than with any other state.
- UK-US collaboration on intelligence is similarly unprecedented in its scale and its trust.
- When British and American political leaders hit it off the level of intimacy in the decision making process that can follow is also unprecedented.
- UK-US relations also matter in the context of wider Euro-Atlantic relations in that the UK is most valuable to the US when Britain is working at the heart of Europe and the US is most successful in Europe when its efforts are endorsed by US support.

UK and US views on the nature and value of the bilateral relationship and the contribution of the UK-US foreign policy relationship to global security; the extent to which "the special relationship" still exists and the factors which determine this; and the implications of any changes in the nature of the bilateral relationship for British foreign policy.

- Due to a variety of inter-related factors the nature of the UK-US bilateral relationship is under threat.
- The most significant of these challenges are structural changes in the distribution of power in the international system, symbolised by the growth of the G20 and the rise of the BRIC countries.
- These changes are augmented by the changing international issue agenda such as the growth of terrorism, climate change and proliferation of WMD.
- Financial pressures on the UK and its defence and international budgets in particular (including their effect on the Iraq and Afghan wars), may have a fundamental affect on the functional nature of the UK-US bilateral relationship. Great care must be taken to assess the impact of budget cuts in Britain's international and security budgets.
- In an age of summits and leadership diplomacy the disposition of political leaders towards each other matters. When private advice and public support are replaced by public criticism this has an impact on the overall relationship.
- The legacy of the Blair-Bush years was such that many people in the UK began to question the intrinsic value of the UK-US relationship.
- Gordon Brown's reaction to this period did further damage to UK-US relations without apparently building an alternative foreign policy model.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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What is the basis of the bilateral relationship between the UK and the US?

1. The UK-US bilateral relationship is multifaceted and multilayered and operates at many levels. For example there are 155,000 Americans living and working in the UK, and a large number of Britons live in the US. Many formats for new TV programmes shown across America originate in the UK while American popular culture from TV, music, film and fashion permeates British cultural life imperceptibly due to the common language and shared cultural heritage. One in seven chief executives of the FTSE 100 companies are American, and in 2006 4.2 million Britons visited the US.⁸⁴ Over 40% of British adults have visited the United States. Public opinion research show that cultural similarities mean that Britons and Americans hold each other in higher regard than any other close ally.⁸⁵ At a state to state level, however, the basis of the strong bilateral relationship is manifested in several distinct elements which include; a similarity of world view and consequent world role; defence; intelligence; leadership, and; role within Europe.

2. World view and world role

At its most fundamental level the UK and the US share a common interest in and commitment to issues of world order and global governance—or in Winston Churchill’s phrase “to freedom and the rights of man.” While other European states have largely eschewed such an approach in favour of a more limited or regionally focused approach to international relations the UK has continued to look outward with an internationalist perspective. Due to Britain’s historical role in the world, continued international obligations and permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council, Britain has maintained an active role on the world stage more commensurate with its former status than its present situation. In performing this role the UK believes that it acts in the interest of the collective good of the international community in order to promote peace, security, good governance and development. In fulfilling this role it seeks to advance its core values and approaches to the world many of which it shares with Washington in a way which is often mutually reinforcing of the other’s diplomatic endeavours. Thus at the UN and elsewhere the UK is often in a position to advance common interests with the US and as such is greatly valued in Washington. To have another great power sponsor or co-sponsor a resolution in the Security Council, or to state on the record, for example, that the Iranian breaches of the non-proliferation regime are unacceptable, reinforces the international quality of the position adopted by Washington and gives multilateral form to such a diplomatic initiative. In such situations it also allows the UK to have a magnified influence in that the resolution or demarche is written by the UK rather than by the US. One of the key assets that makes this role and influence possible is the high quality of the British diplomatic service which enhances the influence that the UK has on US foreign policy as a result. Although relatively small in number the extremely high quality of the British Diplomatic Service ensures that its analysis and London’s perspective are given more considerations than practically any other state on many areas of policy. This is not to say that these perspectives always prevail, however.

3. Defence Policy

The UK is the only European power apart from France with the continued ability to project military force on a global scale. It is the only European power that has maintained the range and sophistication of military systems to be able to operate alongside the technologically advanced US military in a number of military roles. Operating alongside the US military gives an international multilateral character to operations which might otherwise lack it. Thus in 1999 when a UN Security Council resolution was not possible in the Kosovo conflict due to the threat of a Russian veto, Operation Allied Force was conducted as an alliance operation, gaining its legitimacy from its nature as a NATO sanctioned operation. The fact that the UK was able to play a large military role in this operation gave credibility to the multilateral character of the mission. When hostilities commenced against Iraq in both 1991 and 2003 British cruise missiles were fired at targets in Baghdad and elsewhere making the operation an overtly multilateral undertaking. In Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan the British armed forces have played a military role second only to those of US forces. In doing so Britain has claimed a larger influence in the decision making processes on the future developments of those conflicts than any other coalition member. Britain typically has sought to send forces at least 15% the size of the US contingent. In so doing it has tried to ensure that British officers are appointed to second in command positions, as is currently the case in Afghanistan, thus ensuring British influence at an operational level in such operations. By doing so the UK has then sought to claim political influence at the strategic level of political decision making.

4. Intelligence

Britain has an intelligence sharing relationship with the US which is second to none. This has a number of mutual benefits for both parties. By agreeing to share intelligence gathered from different parts of the world both parties get access to better intelligence without the cost of duplicating each other’s assets and efforts. This is particularly the case with regard to signals intelligence where a degree of geographic work distribution is in operation. Each country, however, has its own unique assets and approaches giving the other access to material and perspective that it would not otherwise have. For example some foreign assets

⁸⁴ See “The Ties that bind”, *The Economist*, p 26, 26/7/08. and www.usembassy.org.uk/rctour.html. Unless otherwise stated all websites were accessed in October 2009.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

are more willing to talk to British intelligence rather than to the Americans for a variety of historical or other reasons. Thus it was the British intelligence service that brought an end to Libya's programme of weapons of mass destruction and it was British intelligence for example who recently brought to light the recent Iranian facilities near Qum. While there is obvious value in discovering things that the Americans have not there is also added benefit in non-Americans bringing intelligence to the world's attention. As well as intelligence collection there is also mutual benefit in shared analysis. The UK role here is prized second to none by the US. An example of this is the fact that on September 12th 2001 when US airspace was closed to all traffic an exception was made to allow the UK Prime Minister Tony Blair and the three chiefs of MI6, MI5 and GCHQ to fly into Washington for a conference meeting of their opposite counterparts. No other ally was treated in this way as no other ally was valued as much as the UK intelligence agencies are. Like the diplomatic service the very high quality of the intelligence services together with the world view that underpins their global role ensure that they have a disproportionate role with the US (and elsewhere) to both their size and budget, and to their counterpart operations.

5. Leadership

In part due to the historical nature of the bilateral relationship and in part due to the commonality of the English language, British Prime Ministers have over time had the opportunity to have an unusual amount of influence in Washington by virtue of the relationship they developed with the US President of the day. This aspect of the relationship is as apparent when the leadership role is in operation—Macmillan-Kennedy, Thatcher-Reagan, Blair-Clinton, Blair-Bush, as when it was not Wilson-Johnson, Heath-Nixon, Major-Clinton, Brown-Bush. The role and influence of a British Prime Minister in Washington is in large part a product of the way that she or he has related to the US President. What the US has historically valued in the relationship is private candour and public support. Public criticism by the British Prime Minister or his cabinet ensures a less intimate and influential relationship. Relations with the hegemon are highly sought after and there are many states which would wish to fulfil the close role that the UK has traditionally sought with Washington if that role was no longer valued by London.

6. Britain within Europe

With the end of the Cold War, Europe is no longer the major focus of US foreign policy and as a result Washington of necessity needs to focus its diplomatic attentions elsewhere. The growth of the European Union and the process of European integration also means that on many issues relations with Washington are conducted on a EU-US basis. Collectively this means that Washington increasingly looks to Europe to speak with one voice on matters affecting both Euro-Atlantic issues and international security issues more broadly. Given the similarity of world views between Washington and London the US has made it clear for a number of years that it would prefer the UK to be an enthusiastic member of the European project, shaping it and guiding its development along a path that reflects that world view rather than to be a semi-detached critic from the side-lines. Part of Blair's popularity in Washington and access to the White House was due to his attempt to act as a bridge between Washington and Brussels, to relate one to the other in an attempt to smooth out differences and create consensus. In Blair's words to the Labour Party conference in 2000: "standing up for Britain means knowing we are stronger with the US if we are stronger in Europe, and stronger in Europe if we are stronger with the US".⁸⁶ How successful Blair was in this role will be returned to below. A large and increasing part of the value of the relationship as far as the US is concerned, however, is Britain's role in taming what are seen to be anti-American instincts and attitudes in Europe rather than just being a staunch bilateral ally such as Poland. In thinking about the bilateral relationship it is important to remember this wider context not just in terms of what Washington regards as most useful but in terms of what it regards as being in the interests of both Britain and the EU too. In this respect Dean Acheson's words from 1961 still have relevance. While everyone remembers the first line of his famous quip, the full quote is much more revealing—"Great Britain has lost an Empire and not yet found a role. The attempt to play a separate power role—that is a role apart from Europe, a role based on a "special relationship" with the United States, a role based on being the head of a Commonwealth which has no political structure, or unity or strength and enjoys a fragile and precarious economic relationship by means of the sterling area and preferences in the British market—this role is about played out". His point was that the UK's relations with Washington can't be a substitute for integration within Europe because the US needs to deal with Europe as a global actor and that geopolitical weight of the latter ultimately means that intercontinental relations take priority. A more recent quotation from Lord Patten reinforces why the US wants Britain to play a more active role in Europe. "America wanted Britain in Europe, first, because she thought this would help Europe to work better; second, because she genuinely wanted Europe to share the burden of maintaining the world's economic and political stability; and third, because understandably she believed Britain would be a useful friend inside the European stockade".⁸⁷ The European dimension then works two ways if it works at all.

⁸⁶ Tony Blair's speech to the 2000 Labour Party Conference, see www.guardian.co.uk/labour2000/story/0,,373638,00.html#article_continue accessed February 2007. Cited by William Wallace and Tim Oliver, "A Bridge Too Far: The United Kingdom and the Transatlantic Relationship", in David M Andrews, (eds) *The Transatlantic Alliance Under Stress: US-European Relations after Iraq*, (Cambridge; Cambridge university press; 2005) p 166.

⁸⁷ Lord Chris Patten, "Britain's role: Has Dean Acheson's question been answered yet?" www.ditchley.co.uk/page/157/ditchley-lecture-xli.htm. Accessed October 2009.

London's influence in Paris, Berlin and elsewhere is greater when it has and is perceived to have influence in Washington and at the same time Britain's status in the US depends in part on whether it is seen in Washington as being capable and willing to shape events in Brussels.⁸⁸

UK and US views on the nature and value of the bilateral relationship and the contribution of the UK-US foreign policy relationship to Global Security; The extent to which "the special relationship" still exists and the factors which determine this; and the implications of any changes in the nature of the bilateral relationship for British foreign policy

7. Speaking in Washington in March 2003 Gordon Brown described the "special relationship" as "a partnership of purpose, renewed by every generation to reflect the challenges we face". Brown sought to portray the relationship as timeless and the evolution of the role as seamless. In reality, however, at this point in time there are a number of pressures on the relationship which bring into question whether or not it will continue in its previous form. These reasons include structural changes in the distribution of power in the international system, the changing international issue agenda, financial pressures on the UK and its defence and international budgets in particular (including those on the Iraq and Afghan wars), personalities and the relationship between private advice and public criticism, the legacy of the Blair-Bush years.

8. Structural changes in the distribution of power in the international system

The most obvious affect on the UK-US relationship is the structural impact of the end of the Cold War. Given the nature of the special bond between London and Washington in defence and intelligence co-operation this led many to speculate at the time that the importance of the bilateral relationship would diminish as other issues came to dominate the international political agenda. As it happened of course the 1991 Gulf War, the wars of the Yugoslav succession in Bosnia and Kosovo and other conflicts around the world ensured that the security relationship between the UK and the US remained strong and the US remained engaged in questions of European security. Focus on the enlargement of NATO and the EU also kept European issues on Washington's agenda even though their importance in global terms was diminishing. In the post 9/11 period the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq also kept the intelligence and defence aspect of the bilateral relationship to the fore. In doing so, however, these events masked just how much was changing and has changed in the international political system since 1989. The growth in geopolitical power of the rising economies such as Brazil, Russia, India and China (the so called BRICs) means both that US influence is waning in relative terms and the importance of the UK and Europe to America's wider diplomacy is diminishing in some spheres. This was symbolised at the United Nation's General Assembly special session in New York in September 2009 when President Obama's priorities were bilateral and multilateral meetings with powers other than the traditional US allies. Europe is at peace, secure, prosperous, has a remarkably similar view of the world, its problems and their resolution, there is much less need for US political attention compared to many other states on many other issue areas. This does not mean that the US and UK are less close, but the relationship is less important than it was during the Cold War, or even the 1990s.

9. The changing international issue agenda

While America's traditional allies such as the UK still play an important role in dealing with the rise of the terrorist threat, its role in relation to other powers is diminishing. This was most obvious in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in 2001 where the US invested heavily in its bilateral relationships with Pakistan, Russia and India in response to the need to address the terrorist threat. On the issue of global climate change too, US relations with China and India now of necessity take centre stage within US diplomacy. The rise of the BRICs more generally means that the focus of international engagement is shifting away from Cold War East West security dominated axis towards a North South economic, developmental and environmental axis.

10. Financial pressures on the UK and its defence and international budgets in particular (including those on the Iraq and Afghan wars)

The impact of the economic downturn on the UK economy has had an impact on the UK's standing in both the world in general and in the US. The fact that the British economy has suffered an economic slump that will be deeper and longer than any other advanced economy has raised questions about the UK's ability to portray itself as a first division power. Rumour in cuts in its public spending which may impact upon its international role are already the subject of speculation in Washington and elsewhere as to what this will mean for its foreign policy role. Much of the reaction to the release of the Lockerbie bomber by the UK, apparently in response to attempts to win favour for British oil and gas contracts with Libya was seen in this light. To some observers Britain now appeared too poor to be principled and was willing to release a mass murdering terrorist on the vague promise of foreign contracts.

⁸⁸ See Stephen Philips, "Little Englanders are of little use to America", *FT*, 5/10/09. www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a7a1e2a6-b1e6-11de-a271-00144feab49a.html

11. Britain's efforts to play an influential role on the world stage in the post Cold War world have meant that it has taken an active part in NATO and coalition missions in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere. It has also maintained a defence posture and military capabilities second only to the US within NATO. As part of this the UK has maintained a fleet of Trident ballistic missile firing submarines, an ocean going navy with its own organic airpower, nuclear powered submarines and a fleet of destroyers and frigates; an air force with global reach and the latest fast jet technology; and a professional and capable army able to be deployed independently in large numbers in mechanised units for sustained periods. Through these capabilities the UK has maintained close relations with the US military and won the latter's respect and trust. During this period, however, real defence spending has not increased in line with either these defence commitments or the operation tempo which has been asked of these forces, with the result that the British armed forces have been increasingly asked to do more and more with less and less resources. This has had an impact on UK-US relations in a number of ways. Firstly, the US military has become critical of the ability of the UK to undertake successfully the missions it has undertaken in Basra Province Iraq, and Helmand Province in Afghanistan. In Basra the criticism levelled is that the UK was deployed in insufficient strength to impose security on the province and instead cut deals with the local militia effectively abandoning the area to their writ. Only once the Iraqi government, with the support of the US Army, confronted this militia, this argument goes, was security restored to Basra. In this analysis Basra was a strategic defeat for the British Army. A similar argument has been advanced with regard to Helmand. That the British Army has been deployed in such a way and on such a scale that it stands on the verge of strategic defeat, and that only with the surge of US combat troops to fight in Helmand and elsewhere will the situation be saved. American criticism of this nature is not of the fighting skills of the British Army but of the way that they have been deployed, the resources they have had to do the job with and the subsequent limitations of role that this has implied.

12. It is in Afghanistan and Iraq that the issue of funding of the UK defence budget is most obviously apparent to the Americans but they are only the most visible manifestation of a wider structural problem, the attempt to fulfil many roles and missions without the apparent political willingness to devote the resources to commitments to make them work successfully. American think tanker Gary Schmitt captured the concern eloquently in a recent article in the *Financial Times*, under the headline "Defence cuts reduce Britain's value as an ally".⁸⁹ Commenting on the debate about the "sad state of Britain's defences" and reflecting on the fact that within that debate the consensus is that "the UK government is facing a fundamental choice. Should it build a military that can handle today's unconventional wars or attempt to sustain an increasingly thin semblance of a "do-everything" force?" he concluded by arguing that "if those are the alternatives and a choice must be made, we should be clear: the "special relationship" that binds Washington and London will not remain the same" because "Although there are many reasons for the existence of the "special relationship"—shared history, language, principles—the cornerstone of that relationship from its first days has been shared "hard power" in the areas of intelligence and defence. As such, will the US be as interested in hearing from Whitehall if British forces are only capable of working side-by-side with Americans in a narrower defence arena? And, in turn, will Whitehall continue to share a common strategic vision with Washington if its own interests are constrained by increasingly limited military capabilities?"

13. The lack of an increase in defence spending and the delays this has caused to their procurement has meant that many large acquisition programmes are now needing to be funded at the same time—the so called procurement "bow wave", which means that new money will need to be found from outside the defence budget to pay for all these defence needs—the two new aircraft carriers, the Typhoon procurement, the new A400M RAF Transport aircraft, new destroyers and submarines for the navy, and new armed personnel carriers for the Army and the replacement of the Vanguard class of Trident submarines—if they are all to be afforded. Rather than this increase, however, it is much more likely that the Armed Forces will be asked to make savings of between 10–15% of its overall budget, perhaps more if health and education are spared their share of the cuts.⁹⁰ The result will be that something has to give. Whichever cuts are made will likely amount to a dramatic reduction in Britain's traditional defence role, with wider foreign policy implications. The naval procurement plans are designed to give the UK the capacity to operate far from Europe and to partner the US on a global scale. Without the ships this will not be credible. The Royal Navy is already overstretched in its roles and missions and undermanned. It now has the smallest fleet in living memory. The Trident fleet is similarly designed to assert Britain's place at the forefront of the nuclear club. With the Trident missile system the UK has the capacity to target any target that Washington might also want to target. During the Cold War the UK sought the capacity to target Moscow—the so called "Moscow criteria"—so that the USSR would be deterred from attacking the UK homeland. In the post Cold War world the UK seeks to maintain influence in Washington and around the world with a nuclear system of global reach. In part this gives the UK the capacity to take part in a multilateral retaliation should one be necessary. This "Pyongyang criteria" is one of the reasons why a fleet based, and therefore mobile, ballistic missile system is desirable. Any alternative system would lack this capacity and would itself be vulnerable to pre-emptive attack. The RAF (and European militaries in general) lack strategic lift capacity, without a new replacement fleet of transport aircraft the UK armed forces lack independent reach. Without the

⁸⁹ Gary Schmitt, "Defence cuts reduce Britain's value as an ally", *FT*, 19/7/09
www.ft.com/cms/s/0/5dd45c64-748b-11de-8ad5-00144feabdc0.html

⁹⁰ See Malcolm Chalmers, "Preparing for the Lean Years", Royal United Services Institute, July 2009
www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/FDR_Working_Paper_1.pdf

Typhoon in sufficient quantities the RAF would lack the capacity for either independent or allies air operations. The Army is too small for its present commitments and operational tempo—which is one of the reasons why so many Royal Navy personnel are engaged in operations in Afghanistan. Without an expansion of the Army and proper equipment including more helicopters, the UK will continue to be viewed as a failing force of diminishing value to Washington. According to some commentators the UK faces a crisis in defence policy akin to the one that precipitated the British withdrawal from east of Suez in 1967. The result of this decision was calamitous for London's international standing and its relations with Washington. What impact the cuts in defence spending and military role have on UK-US relations are difficult to predict accurately, but they are likely to diminish British influence in Washington bilaterally. Given that the UK is the most capable and engaged European ally within NATO, it is also difficult to see how any such diminution of role would not also be damaging to transatlantic defence relations in general.

14. Personalities

As indicated above, in bilateral UK-US relations personalities matter especially so in an age of summit diplomacy. This much is also evident in the tenure of Gordon Brown as Prime Minister. While some observers predicted that Brown would be an “instinctive Atlanticist” in practice he moved to distance himself from the Bush Administration in particular and has been less supportive of the US in general.⁹¹ Speaking in 2003 he asserted that, “by standing up for British values and with our outward-looking internationalism, Britain can be more than a bridge between Europe and America. Our British values should make us a beacon for Europe, America and the rest of the world, building a pro-Atlantic, pro-European consensus”.⁹² What Brown may have been trying to communicate in this statement is a desire to set his own foreign policy agenda. The symbolism is telling, a Beacon not a Bridge—something to stand up and shine, not something to lie down and be walked over. It was clear from the outset that Brown wanted to distance himself in foreign policy from both Blair and Bush. Brown's most obvious and immediate effort to signal divergence from Blair in relations with the US came with his new cabinet appointments. He appointed and elevated prominent critics of the invasion of Iraq such as John Denham (who resigned from Blair's cabinet over Iraq) and David Miliband (a critic of UK policy in both Iraq and Lebanon)—the latter to Foreign Secretary. Most controversially, however, he appointed former UN Deputy Secretary General and outspoken Bush Administration critic, Mark Malloch Brown, to a position as Minister for Foreign Affairs, a move which was particularly annoying to both the White House and American commentators. Nor did Malloch Brown's appointment temper his penchant for being outspoken—calling for the US to negotiate directly with Hamas and Hezbollah. In a series of speeches Brown also allowed his ministers scope to criticise US foreign policy as practised under Bush. Thus Margaret Beckett, as outgoing Foreign Secretary, was sanctioned to make a speech in Washington calling for the complete abolition of nuclear weapons.⁹³ Douglas Alexander, Secretary of State for International Development, attacked US policy in a number of veiled ways in a speech at the Council of Foreign Relations. “In the 20th century a country's might was too often measured in what they could destroy.” Mr Alexander asserted, “In the 21st century strength should be measured by what we can build together. And so we must form new alliances, based on common values, ones not just to protect us from the world, but ones which reach out to the world.” He described this as “a new alliance of opportunity” adding “We need to demonstrate by our deeds, words and our actions that we are internationalist, not isolationist, multilateralist, not unilateralist, active and not passive, and driven by core values, consistently applied, not special interests”.⁹⁴ According to *The Guardian* a British source in Washington said that the Brown team was asserting its independence “one policy speech at a time”, adding: “It's a smarter way of doing it than have a knockdown argument”.⁹⁵

15. In his own major foreign policy address in November 2007, at the Lord Mayor's Banquet in London, the Prime Minister's speech was altered between release and delivery. While the original talked about America being “Britain's most important ally” in the delivered version this had changed to read that America was “our most important bilateral relationship”. Since relations with the EU or any of its 27 members aren't strictly bilateral relationships this is not saying that much. It was a slight of hand and a slight not lost in Washington. It was language very different to that of “the special relationship”. Similarly Brown talked broadly of the world being a more dangerous place when “Europe and America are distant from one another”, no hint of a separate role for the UK, special, bridge or otherwise.⁹⁶ In a line perhaps intended to chide at both Europe and the US, Brown also argued that “Europe and America [can] achieve historic progress [by] working ever more closely together”. Whatever the intention the signals were seen by Washington as an attempt to create distance.

16. Brown's clearest attempt to differentiate his approach to Bush from that of his predecessor was on display at his first meeting with the US President at Camp David in July 2007. Here there was very obviously no “Colgate moment”—the ice breaker of the Blair-Bush encounter where Bush joked about their common

⁹¹ C O'Donnell and Richard Whitman, “European policy Under Gordon Brown”, *International Affairs*, Vol 83:1, 2007.

⁹² Paul Waugh, “US relationship challenged by Gorgon Brown”, *The Independent*, 29 September 2003. see www.news.independent.co.uk/uk/politics/article88947.ece

⁹³ Patrick Wintour and Julian Borger, “Brown message to US: it's time to build, not destroy: Minister signals foreign policy shift ahead of PM's Washington trip”, *The Guardian*, Friday 13 July 2007.

⁹⁴ Patrick Wintour and Julian Borger, “Brown message to US: it's time to build, not destroy: Minister signals foreign policy shift ahead of PM's Washington trip”, *The Guardian*, Friday 13 July 2007.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Irwin Stelzer, “The Special Relationship is between Washington and Brussels”, *The Spectator*, 21/11/07.

brand of toothpaste. Brown was stiff, insisted on wearing a suit and tie and, according to one American official present, “went out of his way to be unhelpful”.⁹⁷ The meeting itself was only conducted after Brown had first met his French and German counterparts, Angel Merkel and Nicholas Sarkozy, thus symbolically downplaying the transatlantic tie. None of this amounted to direct criticism; it was instead a form of indirect signalling, dog whistles, to his political supporters that things had changed since Blair’s tenure. When asked, the British Embassy in Washington was briefed to deny that any offense or policy difference was being signalled. On policy the foundations of the relationship remained the same. Close military and intelligence co-operation continued and the harmony of outlook on many international questions remained constant. Only on Iraq was a substantial change of policy evident. In contrast to America’s surge in troop numbers the UK government announced its intension to half the British presence in Basra province and to withdraw the forces there to the air station in an “oversight” role. The politics of this announcement were obvious, that Brown was distancing himself from the operation in Iraq. Unlike the policy of the then new Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi, however, who withdrew his forces from Iraq on coming to office in 2006, the British effort was muted in both scale and purpose. Indeed Brown sought to compensate for it by announcing an increase of British troop numbers in Afghanistan to bring the total to 7,800. This appeared calculated to signal the government’s political ambiguity in its support for Iraq in contrast to the “good war” in Afghanistan; to demonstrate simultaneously that Britain is a good and loyal ally but that it doesn’t support this President in this war.

17. In other areas of policy however, Brown stressed the substantive support for American policy which the British government extended. And so in that same Guildhall speech Brown announced that the UK “will lead in seeking tougher sanctions both at the UN and in the European Union, including on oil and gas investment and the financial sector,” and that Iran, “should be in no doubt about the seriousness of our purpose”.⁹⁸ Britain remains the largest aid donor to both Iraq and Afghanistan, after the United States, and in many other areas of policy is America’s closest ally and supporter. Thus the steps taken to signal distance were more presentational than substantive. In adopting this policy the Brown government remained a long way from satisfying its more radical constituents. Brown was criticised from the left for not going further in repudiating the Blair position of support for Bush. The Institute of Public Policy Research, for instance, has urged Brown to reject “core elements of the Blair approach to international affairs” and to “engage seriously with either Damascus or Tehran over Iraq”, seek to lift the economic boycott of the West Bank and Gaza and apply “serious international pressure on Israel” and to achieve such a “values based” foreign policy by working more closely with European partners.⁹⁹ Clearly such an agenda is incompatible with the substantive policy positions of the Brown government towards the United States. Brown’s position thus amounted to a precarious half-way-house, a situation not unlike the anomalous position of the British forces at Basra Air Station at the time: a cut-back and partly withdrawn continuation of the previous policy. In Iraq, but with a reduced mandate and role; there but not there; neither fully withdrawn nor fully engaged; marooned at the airport amid the detritus of a policy of indecision and dither. Likewise, in its broader policy towards the United States the government found itself isolated between two poles. It attempted to be simultaneously anti-Bush and pro-American, managing in the process to achieve neither.

18. What was particularly odd about this position was its temporal context. The Bush Administration had moved on since the invasion of Iraq in 2003, in part precisely because of the policy failures that followed. It had moved on with regard to Iraq: where it has incorporated local Sunni support in its security strategy for the country; with regard to Iran, where it had largely followed the EU-led diplomatic path sending its own senior diplomatic envoy to the EU led talks with Iran in 2008; and with regard to North Korea, where it had reversed course to pursue intense diplomacy through the six party talks, with a reasonable measure of success.¹⁰⁰ As a result, in his trip to London in June 2008 Bush was able to argue, with only a touch of irony, that: “One of the things I will leave behind is a multilateralism to deal with tyrants so problems can be solved diplomatically.”¹⁰¹ The makeup of the Administration had also changed: Rumsfeld is gone from the Pentagon, Vice President Cheney is more isolated and Secretary of State Rice is energetically engaged in the Middle East peace process. Yet despite all this change, Brown made policy from 2007 as if it were still 2003, reacting to the events of Bush’s first term in the middle of his second.

19. This led to the oddity that Britain, which supported Bush in his war, was in danger of being supplanted in America’s affections by Germany and France, which publicly condemned it. By mid-2007, Germany and France had moved into their post-reaction phase with regard to Iraq. They were, in a sense, “over” the arguments sparked by that conflict, and having elected new leaders to replace Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schroeder were engaged in rebuilding their relations with Washington. Hence Brown found himself engaging with a new set of principal international interlocutors, most of whom were not in power during the 2003 Iraq crisis. Angela Merkel of Germany has replaced the more outspoken and undiplomatic Schroeder, while President Chirac has been succeeded by Nicolas Sarkozy who has pursued a more pragmatic and Atlanticist form of international politics, including plans to return France to the integrated military structure of

⁹⁷ Irwin Stelzer, “The Special Relationship is between Washington and Brussels”, *The Spectator*, 21/11/07.

⁹⁸ Patrick Wintour and Julian Borger, “Brown message to US: it’s time to build, not destroy: Minister signals foreign policy shift ahead of PM’s Washington trip”, *The Guardian*, Friday 13 July 2007.

⁹⁹ See David Held and David Metham, “Gordon Brown’s foreign policy challenges”, 8/10/2007. www.opendemocracy.net

¹⁰⁰ On the evolution of US Iranian policy see David Hastings Dunn, “Real Men want to go to Tehran: Bush, Pre-emption and the Iranian Nuclear Challenge”, *International Affairs*, Volume 83, Number 1. January 2007. pp 19–38.

¹⁰¹ Ann Treneman, “George Bush goes unplugged for the final elg of his farewell tour”. *The Times*, 17 June 2008.

NATO.¹⁰² As a result, the UK's belated negative reaction under Brown to Bush and his Iraq policy seemed out of sync with the rest of Europe, unable to grasp that time had moved on. To many American observers, Brown's apparent desire to re-run the Blair years and do things differently seems futile and as a consequence somewhat petty. To many Europeans it seems too little, too late and unhelpful to the new mood of reconciliation. Brown's actions seemed to presuppose prematurely that the Bush Administration was over. His policies seemed to be designed to send signals to the Democratic Party opposition in the US, expecting and awaiting their victory in the presidential and congressional elections in November 2008. In playing this long game, however, Brown undercut his relationship with the then present Administration even though it was to remain in office until January 2009.

20. A related and not insignificant further potential consequence of the current financial crisis is the prospect of funding cuts to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Intelligence services, particularly the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6). Since 2004 the FCO has closed 19 out of 300 overseas missions and reduced others to local staff only. Since then the FCO has cut staff from 6,000 to 4,000 and its £2 billion budget is rumoured to be under threat of being cut back to £1.6 billion. Given the need for savings in Whitehall it is also unlikely that the intelligence services will be spared financial hardship. Such small saving will have a large impact on the influence the UK has in Washington and elsewhere.

21. Perhaps more interesting than the particular effects of the Brown strategy on current relations between London and Washington is the question of what this episode tells us about UK-US relations in general and transatlantic relations more broadly. Certainly the absence of a close and cordial relationship between the British Prime Minister and the American President has been a gap the new French President, Nicholas Sarkozy has proven quick to fill. With his easy bonhomie and accommodating rhetoric Sarkozy has quickly become the "new Blair" in American affections. As a result, in his farewell tour of Europe, Bush spent two nights in Paris compared to one in London, and used the French capital to deliver the centrepiece speech of the tour—calling France "America's first friend"—a historical fact, but one rarely mentioned recently.¹⁰³ Remarkably, given the depth of the crisis between the US and France resulting from the Iraq crisis in 2003, Bush was also able to state that "When the time comes to welcome the new American President next January, I will be pleased to report that the relationship between the United States and Europe is the most vibrant it has ever been".¹⁰⁴ For Washington, according to a US diplomat, Sarkozy is now "the axis on which our relations with Europe will turn".¹⁰⁵ This is all rather different from the "axis of weasel" of five years ago. For France too "the frost is over" according to an Elysee Palace spokesman, "We want to show the warmth that now exists between the two countries after the friction of the recent past".¹⁰⁶

22. Sarkozy's transformation of Franco-American relations is also a remarkable illustration of the impact that a change in leadership can make. This is especially true given the nature of those changes, for Paris has not improved relations with Washington by focusing on that bilateral relationship, but by reconceptualising France's entire approach towards its international role. Unlike Brown, Sarkozy has adopted an ambitious internationalist foreign policy agenda which has seen him adopt a number of policy initiatives on behalf of both France and Europe. The Mediterranean Union summit in Paris in July 2008 was successful in bringing together the Palestinian, Syrian and Israeli leaders and in injecting European energy into the Middle East Peace process.¹⁰⁷ Similarly Sarkozy's announcement on his tour of the Gulf states in January 2008 that France plans to establish a permanent military base in the United Arab Emirates in 2009 was an effort to raise France's international and diplomatic role and convince Washington of Paris's global outlook.¹⁰⁸ Sarkozy has learned a lesson from the Iraq debacle which seems to have been lost on the Brown government that you can't hope to build a united Europe that is divided towards the United States. Sarkozy realises that the opposite can also be true, that by being pro-American he has actually aided EU cohesiveness and given Europe a larger role as result.¹⁰⁹ While it may not always be in agreement on every nuance of French led EU diplomacy, Washington has shown a remarkable propensity to allow Paris to take the diplomatic initiative on a number of issues. Most notably it was Sarkozy under the French Presidency of the European Council who took the lead in negotiating a cease fire agreement over the clash between Russian and Georgian forces in August 2008. While Gordon Brown and British Foreign Secretary David Miliband were echoing some of the more exited commentaries on these events in Washington demanding that Russia pay a price for its over reaction to events, it was France who brokered the terms of a deal that was acceptable to all parties in the region, Europe and internationally. Most interestingly Washington was happy to acquiesce in this leadership role and in the peace deal secured. Washington also announcing that it had no plans of its own to impose unilateral punitive action against Russia in an apparent abdication of policy leadership to Paris on this issue.¹¹⁰ Moscow too was happier to deal with Paris than to listen to the

¹⁰² John Kampfner, "Brown plans foreign policy shock: to put UK first", *Daily Telegraph*, 07/01/07.

¹⁰³ See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/7455156.stm>

¹⁰⁴ Tom Baldwin and Charles Bremmer, "After years of the special relationship, is France America's new best friend?", *The Times*, 14/6/08.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Eric Pape, "Mediterranean Bridge Building", *Newsweek*, 8/7/08.

¹⁰⁸ Molly Moore, "France Announces Base in Persian Gulf", *Washington Post*, 16 Jan 2008.

¹⁰⁹ See Roger Cohn, "France on Amphetamines", *The New York Times*, 17/7/08.

¹¹⁰ Thom Shanker and Steven Lee Myers, "US Rules Out Unilateral Steps Against Russia", *The New York Times*, 9/9/08.

diplomatic protests of Washington and London which it regarded as hypocritical in the wake of the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Thus in several substantive policy areas France has replaced the UK as America's leading partner in Europe in the wake of British foreign policy under Brown.

23. So what does this tell us about UK-US relations? It would seem that the more substantive aspects of British American defence and intelligence co-operation exist in a different dimension to the personal relationship of the political leaders and by themselves deliver no automatic position of favour at the personal level. It also seems to indicate that it is not possible to successfully separate relations with an individual leader from relations with a state as a whole: from the recent experience it would seem that the UK can be unparalleled in its commitment to Iraq, Afghanistan, the Middle East Peace Process and building a sanctions regime against Iran and still be downgraded in presidential diplomacy. From this it would seem, contrary to what realist theorists would tell us, that what matters in international intercourse is less about the absolutes of substantial policy and more about personal relations and the atmospherics of summit meetings and political rhetoric. Or perhaps more substantively—as in Sarkozy's case, the return of the prodigal son is more readily greeted with the fattened calf than his more constant brother. The fact that Sarkozy offered to return France to NATO's integrated Military Command Structure was enough for Bush to accept his case for a distinct role for the EU in relations with the Alliance. Similarly, the fact that the UK pledged significantly more money than any other country (apart from the US) to the reconstruction of Afghanistan seemed to matter less to Bush than Sarkozy's rhetoric that "We cannot give in to tortures".¹¹¹ This raises the question of whether US relations with Europe are less influenced by structure than by agency, and to what extent they are influenced by substantive issues or personal relationships. It also directs us to wonder about the relative influence of personalities as a dynamic in transatlantic politics. Is what we are witnessing the result of comparisons between Blair and Brown, or even Blair versus Brown compared to Chirac versus Sarkozy and thereafter Brown versus Sarkozy? Of course, separating style and charisma from policy differences is not always possible. The Brown government has sought to signal difference and was critical of the Bush Administration, however mildly, while the new French President oozed charm, offered more troops for Afghanistan and talked of rejoining NATO.

24. Another question prompted by this anomalous situation is the role of timing in transatlantic relations, or more precisely the relative tenures of office of the principal protagonists. The Brown government seemed to approach the Bush White House as if it was an interregnum Administration, counting down to its expiry date, without properly calculating that it must deal effectively with it until January 2009. In adopting this approach it over estimated its own position *vis à vis* America and inadvertently invited the Americans to take a similar approach to the increasingly isolated and unpopular Brown government. So what started off as Brown trying to wait out Bush has turned into the Americans waiting out Brown. It was an odd double interregnum, two lame ducks competing to out quack the other. Certainly the way that Sarkozy and Merkel have behaved has demonstrated that the White House, even with George W Bush as its incumbent, has no shortage of suitors for the role of loyal ally. What is interesting with this approach, however, is that it was predicated on winning favour with an incoming Democratic President in 2009. In practice, however, the frost in the UK-US bilateral relationship together with the opportunism of Merkel and Sarkozy mean that the UK under Brown has lost out to other European suitors of the United States.

The legacy of the Blair-Bush years

25. Blair was driven from office because of dissatisfaction with his government's relationship with Washington in two ways. First, there was frustration that Blair apparently had little influence over the Washington decision-making process yet continued to support its policies. Second, there was widespread rejection, especially in the ranks of the Labour Party, of America's foreign policy direction after 9/11. The oft-repeated insult that Blair was Bush's poodle—dependant, subservient, obedient and uncritical—is a conflation of these criticisms in the form of caricature. The fact that Blair was an advocate and exponent—in Kosovo and Sierra Leone—of the use of force in pursuit of humanitarian intervention before George W Bush was even elected is an inconvenient fact conveniently ignored.¹¹² And while Blair may not have pushed for the invasion of Iraq without Bush he supported the need to address the perceived threat which Saddam Hussein presented. The fact that Blair was pilloried for this support, however, illustrates that the rejection of his foreign policy is more about his particular approach to transatlanticism than about liberal interventionism as such. Blair's foreign policy was predicated both on being the "bridge" between America and Europe, and about developing a role within Europe "believing that by becoming more European, London could strengthen its role in the special relationship with Washington".¹¹³ What the Iraq crisis demonstrated for many observers, however, was that Britain was incapable of either delivering Europe to America or America to Europe. While Blair's relationship with Bush might well have displayed a unity of

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² As Matthew Jamison writes, "In reality the ideas that animate current Anglo-American foreign policy were first posited by Mr Blair in his Doctrine of the International Community speech of 1999, long before Mr Bush entered the White House. Indeed, the latter was an acknowledged sceptic about the merits of 'nation building' until 11th of September focused his attention". "Liberal interventionist or the return of Realism? The Curious case of Mr Cameron". 21 September 2006 see the Henry Jackson Society website, <http://zope06.v.serveloccity.net/hjs> Accessed 11/2/07.

¹¹³ Steven Philip Kramer, "Blair's Britain after Iraq", *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2005. volume 82, Issue 4, p 90.

values and beliefs regarding the conduct of international politics, the same could not be said of the wider relationship between Britain and America, or wider still, between European opinion and American policy. In Europe, public support for the Iraq war was weak or absent.

26. The value of the “special relationship” as a means of containing and curbing the worst excesses of American foreign policy was also seen to have failed during the Iraq crisis. The result was to bring into question the whole thrust of British relations with Washington in the post-9/11, post Iraq War world. The “special relationship” with Washington was premised on public support for America on the part of the British Prime Minister in return for private influence on policy. In the run-up to the war, Blair sought to persuade the Bush Administration to pursue a more multilateral and diplomatic path. Once this failed and war became inevitable, Blair sought assurances from Bush in return for British support—that the reconstruction of Iraq would be taken seriously and handled responsibly; that post war Iraq would involve the UN; and that Bush would address the Israel-Palestine issue.¹¹⁴ In both these sets of goals Blair’s influence and thus his strategy were widely judged to have failed. The critical consensus on his policy was that it had failed to deliver any demonstrable influence or advantage for Britain while at the same time damaging the UK’s relationships and position within Europe.

27. Blair’s foreign policy was a political balancing act wherein he sought to be America’s best friend and a committed European through his attempt to deliver Europe as a constructive partner to the United States. In Blair’s words to the Labour Party conference in 2000: “standing up for Britain means knowing we are stronger with the US if we are stronger in Europe, and stronger in Europe if we are stronger with the US”.¹¹⁵ The failure of this policy in the Iraq crisis was bad enough. When Blair gave unconditional support for the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 2006 this was enough for his tenure and his particular vision of foreign policy to be brought to an end. Given the nature of his political demise there was necessarily much speculation as to policies his successor would pursue across the Atlantic and Brown did not disappoint those who sought change—as demonstrated above. But in reacting to the Bush Administration in the way it did has this brought more influence for British foreign policy in Washington, Paris, Berlin or Brussels? The answer is an obvious no. Instead it created a vacuum in relations with Washington which France and Germany filled. Other than the moral satisfaction of being able to adopt a line independent from Washington it is difficult to see what benefit this foreign policy approach brings.

CONCLUSIONS

28. This piece has argued that the UK-US bilateral relationship has historically been unusually close and that it has served both parties interests over the post war period. Given that the UK has largely viewed the US as heir to its former role in global governance London has sought to direct US power towards British interests and values. This has been possible over a sustained period by virtue of the fact that those interests and values have often been viewed largely in common. Defence, intelligence and security actors from both states have worked hand in hand, therefore, in interests mutually conceived as being beyond purely national interest and instead as serving the wider purposes of collective public goods. Due to a variety of reasons including structural changes in the distribution of power in the international system, the changing international issue agenda, financial pressures on the UK and its defence and international budgets in particular (including their affect on the Iraq and Afghan wars), personalities and the relationship between private advice and public criticism, and the legacy of the Blair-Bush years after which the very value of the relationship began to be questioned within the UK, there are reasons to question whether this bilateral relationship will continue to function on the same basis in the near future. For a relationship to be regarded in high worth—in some degree as special—requires both parties to treat it as such. The Blair-Bush period led some to conclude that during this period the UK gave slavish support in return for nothing of tangible value save the knowledge that the support was given. Where that support was seen to be for the actor and not the particular action, the very value of that support was brought into question. Reacting to that period, however, the Brown government appears to have gained little from its attempt to distance itself from Washington except perhaps to be relegated to a less intimate position of influence in both the US and Europe. Taken together with the other pressures on the relationship it is less than clear either that this was intentional or beneficial. Without a clear alternative foreign policy strategy for promoting British interests and values in the world it is less clear that having less influence in Washington when other European powers are seeking it, would be considered desirable.

29. At a time of great and rapid change in the international system and in the issue agendas which dominate it the contest for influence on the world stage is becoming more and more competitive. While Britain must realise that it cannot always command top billing with the US at every forum and on every issue it must also take care not to squander the value of a relationship of trust and co-operation built up over many years. While UK-US relations cannot be seen as an alternative foreign policy to an active

¹¹⁴ See William Wallace and Tim Oliver, “A Bridge Too Far: The United Kingdom and the Transatlantic Relationship”, in David M. Andrews, (eds) *The Transatlantic Alliance Under Stress: US-European Relations after Iraq*, (Cambridge; Cambridge university press; 2005) p 172.

¹¹⁵ Tony Blair’s speech to the 2000 Labour Party Conference, see www.guardian.co.uk/labour2000/story/0,,373638,00.html#article_continue accessed February 2007. Cited by William Wallace and Tim Oliver, “A Bridge Too Far: The United Kingdom and the Transatlantic Relationship”, in David M. Andrews, (eds) *The Transatlantic Alliance Under Stress: US-European Relations after Iraq*, (Cambridge; Cambridge university press; 2005) p 166.

leadership role in Europe nor should the latter be seen as in any way incompatible with the former. The resource challenge and its implication for the UK's overseas role is potentially the most significant threat to the functional closeness of the two states in defence, intelligence and diplomatic relations. Care and consultation are therefore needed as to where cuts would be least damaging to UK relations with the US and within Europe. One obvious recommendation from the above would be to counterbalance defence budget cuts with increases in funding for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Intelligence Services to buttress those elements of influence at a time while other areas are in decline. Pound for pound this money could not be better spent elsewhere. Another recommendation might be that if the need for a defence review hastens the development of the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) then this must be done in concert with Washington and not in opposition to it. Although the US' position within the international system is one which is in relative decline, it remains the dominant power in that system and seems likely to occupy that position for the foreseeable future. Learning how best to relate to that power position in order to extract the maximum value possible for both the UK and the international system as a whole should be the guiding principle for policy.

13 October 2009

Written evidence from Professor Michael Clarke, Royal United Services Institute

THE NATURE OF THE US-UK RELATIONSHIP

The relationship between the US and the UK is an enduring feature of international relations. Every country's relationship with the United States, by definition, is somewhat "special". Given our 20th century history the UK feels, nevertheless, that there is somehow a deeper, and more consequential political bond between the superpower and its junior partner that should endure in the 21st century. The essence of the US-UK relationship is that it is top and bottom with rather less in the middle. It is politically high level and atmospheric at the top, in the personal relations between leaders; very specific and practical in its base foundations, and somewhat difficult to discern in the week-in, week-out middle range of everyday diplomatic life.

The rarefied atmospherics at the top of the relationship all revolve around the friendship, or lack of it, between the respective leaders. In the UK we take for granted that those relationships should be generally good. We are shocked and concerned when they are not; and baffled when they appear, as at present, to be somewhat neutral. Periodic anti-Americanism on the British Left, or the unpopularity of a particular US Administration, does not significantly alter this underlying national perception.¹¹⁶

At the other end of the spectrum, at the base foundations, the relationship is extremely specific and practical. It revolves around historic patterns of intelligence-sharing and nuclear co-operation, and close military liaison between the RAF and the USAF, the Royal Navy and the USN and the Special Forces of both countries. Current nuclear co-operation takes the form of leasing arrangements for around 60 Trident II D5 missiles from the US for the UK's independent deterrent, and long-standing collaboration on the design of the W76 nuclear warhead carried on UK missiles.¹¹⁷ In 2006 it was revealed that the US and the UK had been working jointly on a new "Reliable Replacement Warhead" that would modernise existing W76-style designs. In 2009 it emerged that simulation testing at Aldermaston on dual axis hydrodynamics experiments had provided the US with scientific data it did not otherwise possess on this RRW programme.¹¹⁸

Intelligence co-operation has traditionally been closest in the military spheres, and the UK has frequently been given exclusive access to US war planning on the basis of this intelligence collaboration. In the build-up to the 2003 war against Iraq, the UK was brought into the planning and intelligence-gathering processes some months before any other allies.¹¹⁹ Since 2001 intelligence co-operation between the two countries has also focussed on counter-terrorism; the British specialising in human intelligence assets, the US pre-eminent in communications intelligence. This is not to say that mutual police co-operation has been particularly good, or that successive spy scandals in the UK have not damaged the credibility of the security services in the eyes of the US. But government, military and security service intelligence co-operation between agencies in London and Washington has been a great deal closer since 2001 and appears now to be based on a higher degree of trust than might exist in other allied relationships. Even so, it does not always survive pressure. In 2006 the British Prime Minister kept the US President fully briefed on the development of the "Bojinka II" airline plot as it was developing, only to have the surveillance operation blown early, according to reliable accounts, from the top of the US hierarchy who saw the development of the emerging plot differently.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ See, Walter Russell Mead, *God and Gold: Britain, America and the Making of the Modern World*, London, Atlantic Books, 2007.

¹¹⁷ Michael Clarke, "Does my bomb look big in this? Britain's nuclear choices after Trident" *International Affairs*, 80(1), 2004, pp 50–53.

¹¹⁸ *Times*, 12 March 2006; *Guardian*, 9 February 2009.

¹¹⁹ Along with Australia. House of Commons Defence Committee, Third Report 2003–04, *Lessons of Iraq I*, March 2004, para 28–29.

¹²⁰ Ron Suskind, *The Way of the World*, New York, Simon and Shuster, 2008, pp 23–25, 43–49.

Military liaison arrangements, individual secondments between American and British officers, planning at CENTCOM HQ in Tampa, Florida and information-sharing in general remains vigorous and intense. The closest military relationships exist between the two navies and air forces; ground forces less so. But within the realm of Special Force operations there is good co-operation and unconfirmed evidence that in Iraq, UK intelligence and Special Forces played key roles in the neutralisation of al Qaeda-Iraq after 2006.

All such arrangements represent strong and practical areas of US-UK co-operation. It is harder to discern how this pays off in other, more general, fields of transatlantic diplomacy. British officials regularly report that they exert subtle influences on both the substance and presentation of US security and foreign policy, but hard evidence of these propositions is difficult to find. And Presidential favour only goes so far in day to day US politics. Commercial defence interests provide an interesting test case where the “top and bottom” of the relationship might most pay off in a closely related area. On such issues there is evidence of sympathy for UK positions but little practical effect. One example might be the requirement for full access to all software codes on the US Joint Strike Fighter project—a project in which the UK has invested heavily in financial and in opportunity costs and where technical autonomy that access to all the software provides is vital to the successive upgrades the UK would want to give the aircraft over its lifetime. Despite the support of the White House for the UK’s position on this, there has been little evidence of more than a strictly commercial approach on the part of the US Congress, still less the manufacturers.

The Defense Trade Co-operation Treaty: The Defense Trade Co-operation Treaty (DTCT), signed between the US and the UK in 2006, was the first of its kind and represents a model for other countries, such as Australia, in dealing with the US. There is unanimity between UK and US leaders that defence trade exemptions for British industries would be in the clear interests of both countries. Downing Street and the White House have long agreed on that point, yet Congressional opposition prevents that accord being given full effect. Some 99% of all UK applications for defence export licenses from the US are granted (about 7,000 a year), but the process is long and cumbersome, deters applications for the most sensitive technology and inhibits design for future UK exports to third parties.¹²¹ The UK has been striving without success since 2001 to secure a waiver to the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), despite a commitment going back to the Clinton Administration in 2000 to find ways of easing defence export licensing procedures for key allies. The DTCT would address many of these trade obstacles, and in particular would benefit the UK’s requirement for successive Urgent Operational requirements (UORs) to help fight the wars in which it stands shoulder to shoulder with the United States. The UK ratified the DTCT in 2008 but it still awaits US approval for ratification from Congress. In June 2009 the Obama Administration put the DTCT on its “Treaty Priority List” for Senate support as part of his effort to review all US export controls, but officials in Washington still warn that early ratification of the DTCT is unlikely.¹²²

In essence, it is true to say that there is some real substance in the US-UK relationship, either in genuine leaders’ friendships or in the specifics of nuclear, intelligence, counter-terrorism, security and military co-operation. But it is very context-specific. Scenarios and periods in which such co-operation is manifestly required tends to emphasise the “specialness” of the relationship; UK service personnel and operatives are trusted by their US counterparts, and so on. When the context does not emphasise these elements, however, or when they are not utilised successfully, it is difficult to discern what is “special” about the UK in the eyes of Washington. Wars and conflict tend to emphasise the vitality of the relationship; periods of detente, global diplomacy and an orientation towards economic policy tend to disguise it. And certainly, too much political capital is invested by UK observers, and by the British media in general, in the personal chemistry between US President and British Prime Minister. Friendship between Downing Street and the White House when it manifestly exists does not necessarily translate into influence with Congress or with the plethora of US governmental agencies.

THE LONG-TERM CONTEXT

In the long-term, it is evident that the United States will be more of a Pacific than an Atlantic power in the 21st century. As a natural two-front power, the United States always put its Atlantic interests first during the 20th century. The trends of the 21st century, however, emphasise the Asian dimensions of international power and influence and it is entirely natural that, while the US will remain a two-front power, it will regard its Pacific front as the first priority. Its economic relationship with Europe is both stable and roughly symmetrical.¹²³ The EU remains the largest trading partner of the US; largest in merchandise, even larger when services are taken into account. In 2008, \$1.57 trillion flowed between the US and the EU on current account—the most comprehensive measure of US trade flows.¹²⁴ The symmetry of the economic relationship is evidenced by the fact that the *net difference* in trade flows on both sides of the relationship is less than 10% of the total. All this may be a source of influence for the Europeans in persuading the United States to take Atlanticist positions.

¹²¹ Clare Taylor, *UK-US Defence Trade Co-operation Treaty*, SN/1A/4381, House of Commons Library, p 2.

¹²² Heritage Foundation, *Leadership in America*, 10 June 2009; Taylor, *op cit*, p 10.

¹²³ In 2006 and 2007 the stock of EU direct investment in the US was \$1.11 trillion—almost half the total stock of FDIs in the United States. US FDI stock in the EU at the same time was \$1.12 trillion; over half of all private direct investment outflows from the US went to the EU states.

¹²⁴ William H Cooper, *EU-US Economic Ties: Framework, Scope and Magnitude*, Congressional Research Service, 7-5700, March 2009, pp 6–7.

The dangers and opportunities presented by the Asian economies, including India, and the natural economic asymmetry between American and Chinese economic needs, on the other hand, suggest that the United States will give a great deal more attention to east Asia and the Pacific arenas of economic and trade activity. For example, China currently holds 83% of the US trade deficit in non-oil goods, some \$800 billion, while the US is the dominant market for Chinese manufactures—responsible for perhaps 50–60 million Chinese jobs: and all this while China’s currency is kept undervalued by anything from 20–30%—a huge protectionist trade barrier operated by Beijing that infuriates Congress.¹²⁵ These imbalances will not be righted quickly and suggest a volatile economic relationship that is probably structural. The internal dynamics of the United States’s own economy and its changing demographic structure also strongly suggests that west-coast and Hispanic concerns will tend to dominate east-coast and ex-European concerns in the minds of Congress and the US electorate.

This certainly does not mean that the US will disengage from European politics, but it does imply that the Americans will be much more selective in what they commit to in the trans-Atlantic relationship. US actions in the Balkans during the 1990s probably marked the end of an era of American involvement in Cold War, and post-Cold War, security matters of that nature. For the future, the US is likely to make an explicit calculation as to whether a European problem is sufficiently strategic to be worth its active involvement. In essence, if a European security problem created a true crisis with Russia, such that the strategic balance of Europe as a whole might be affected, it is reasonable to assume that the United States would regard itself as intrinsically involved. But further crises in the Balkans or even crises such as the Georgia war in 2008 are increasingly likely to be regarded as problems of Europe’s own back-yard. The fact that the United States no longer has to regard Russia as its single most important strategic adversary means that it will take a more nuanced view of which European interests it must support.

For the United Kingdom, the long-term perspective suggests that its natural influence with the United States will be diminished. The Cold War was undoubtedly good for Britain’s influence in the world and the present environment of disparate power and great uncertainty does not provide as relatively cheap and easy a vehicle for British diplomacy as did NATO in the Cold War. In itself, the UK has less to offer the United States in the present global environment as a partner, but could still be very consequential if it is able to harness European diplomacy more efficiently to address the challenges of international security co-operation. There is still a valuable, if somewhat changed, role for the United Kingdom as a principal interlocutor between the European powers and the United States and for the UK to offer both military and political frameworks which help create a more unified transatlantic stance on global security problems. Acting as a “bridge” across the Atlantic is too crude a conception of the United Kingdom’s present situation. A far more integrative approach to European security will be necessary for any country to act as an effective interlocutor with the United States. Nevertheless, the UK and France still stand pre-eminent in the realm of European military power and the UK, Germany and France are still the locus of political dynamism within the European Union. The internal politics of the EU—even the implications of the Lisbon Treaty—are ultimately far less important to Europe’s role in the Atlantic community than the chemistry and relationships between British, French and German leaders at any given moment.

THE OBAMA APPROACH

Commentators in the UK noted a different approach to US-UK relations by the Obama team even before he took office. Whereas the Bush Administration’s approach had been based largely on sentiment surrounding strong UK support after the 9/11 attacks, the Obama approach was at once more functional and instrumental. Hillary Clinton did not mention the relationship at all in her confirmation hearing statement, referring only to the UK in the broader context of relations with France, Germany and other European partners.¹²⁶ When Gordon Brown visited Washington in March 2009, the President’s official statement spoke carefully about “a special partnership”.¹²⁷ As the New American Foundation put it, the Obama approach was “all about putting a price on access and a price on the relationship”.¹²⁸ At the UN General Assembly meeting in September, it was clear that Gordon Brown was not favoured by the Obama Administration, though a very positive photo-opportunity was subsequently arranged; and on Hillary Clinton’s visit to the UK at the beginning of October, the phrase “special relationship between our two nations” was again in evidence.¹²⁹ Though the particular atmospherics may vary, however, it is apparent that this Administration has at least a different emphasis in its attitude to the United Kingdom, if not a different approach overall.

None of this is very surprising given that the Obama team are anxious to break with the recent past in foreign and security policy and are reluctant to inherit any “legacy relations” until they have assessed them anew. The Administration wants to push the “reset” button on many things bequeathed to it by the Bush

¹²⁵ Robert Shapiro, “The Fault Lines in the US-China Relationship”, NDN, 30 July 2009; Caroline Baum, “China’s Exports, Not Altruism, Fund US Deficit”, Bloomberg, 2 September 2009; “US Lawmakers See Efforts to Calm Chinese Currency Row”, Reuters, 29 Jan 2009; Dale McFeatters, “Reconciling US Deficit and China’s Surplus”, Scripps Howard News Service, 24 September 2009.

¹²⁶ *Daily Telegraph*, 14 January 2009.

¹²⁷ White House Press Office, 21 February 2009.

¹²⁸ *Daily Telegraph*, 28 February 2009.

¹²⁹ *Times*, 12 October 2009.

Administration. Though this is uncomfortable in the short run, in the long run it is likely to be an advantage to the UK since a more instrumental view of the partnership will tend to point up the practical value the UK can offer to the US, certainly in comparison with other European allies.

The renewed interest of the US Administration in a European defence and security identity may also, paradoxically, work in the same direction. When the US periodically shifts its focus to favour more integrative European approaches to security, the UK has tended to re-orientate itself to stay well within Washington's focal distance. On this occasion too, the UK will probably stand favourably compared with other European allies who, however enthusiastic some of the new Eastern members in particular might be on their US relationships, cannot deliver the practical value of the UK in most aspects of security and defence.

BRITISH INTERESTS

The international contexts that will matter in the future of US-UK relations are both long and short term, and their trends do not necessarily move in the same direction. There is a strong consensus in UK policy circles that the country should still seek to "position itself" alongside the US as much as possible in the coming era. This is not, in itself, a strategy—many other choices are required in making strategic judgements over priorities, commitments, ways and means—but it is an important assumption that underlies the greater part of British thinking about its future in the world.

There is literally nothing the UK can do to affect the long-term trends that will change US priorities in the world; it simply must adjust to them. This suggests the need to articulate a series of long and short term opportunities for the UK to make the best of a relationship that is "all top and bottom", and which is so context specific.

Long-Term Interests: For the long-term, there are two principal ways in which the UK could make the best of its strengths at the top and bottom of the spectrum.

US Multilateralism and European Leadership. At the political leadership level the UK could seek to facilitate multilateral US approaches to security wherever possible. British leaders should be wary of falling into a cosy bilateralism with US presidents, attractive as that can seem, if it ultimately undermines multilateral approaches to global security challenges. At a practical level the UK can further its interests by visibly taking a long-term lead in making European approaches to regional and global security more prominent and effective. This may include, but goes well beyond, initiatives to enhance European military capability, defence industry policy, or institutional reform in NATO and the European Union. Rather, it should involve British leaders being seen to embrace, and to invigorate, the essential triangular relationship between Paris, Berlin and London in the security sphere. It is a matter for the diplomatic machinery to draw in other, especially new, EU and NATO members to the security consensus, but the essence of diplomatic success is the sense of political leadership emanating from the three principal security players. Notwithstanding the prominence currently given to the G20 grouping (a forum which now stands in practice at 28), more is achievable in every forum when the "European 3" are strong and united.

In taking a lead at this level British politicians would be helping to further a multilateral US approach while at the same time proving the value to Washington of strong UK diplomacy. The UK's long-term interests with US leaders, and particularly with the Congress and staff at the agencies, are best served where British leaders are seen as the catalyst of change within Europe on matters of defence and security. During the Cold War, German leadership was the catalyst for such change, since the essence of the problem lay within Central and Northern Europe. In the present era the essence of Europe's security challenges are more functional than geographic, as domestic as they are international, and arise from the wilful embrace of globalisation as a route to peace and prosperity. The UK is well-placed to promote top-level leadership for this perspective on international security. It rests on a new interpretation of the "Washington consensus", not naturally shared by France and Germany, and in need of re-invigoration as the broader political effects of the world financial crisis play themselves out in the coming years.¹³⁰

Military Restructuring. The second way in which the UK can derive long-term advantage in its relations with the US is through military restructuring. In present circumstances the UK can no longer maintain its existing force structure alongside open-ended military commitments. A fundamental reappraisal is now facing UK defence policy-makers. In terms of the US relationship a particular imperative emerges. Rather than try to maintain a force structure that looks essentially like US forces on a smaller scale—in effect a beauty contest to encourage US policy-makers and public to take the UK more seriously—the objective might instead be for the UK to be capable of taking on a particular role in a joint operation and doing it independently, reliably and without recourse to significant US help. There are military niche capabilities the UK possesses which the US does not—such as certain aspects of maritime mine counter-measures, air-to-air refuelling, special forces reconnaissance or human intelligence assets—which help UK forces to "fit in" to a US battle plan, and British leaders have been keen to use the close military and intelligence connections with the US to make UK forces more interdependent with their American counterparts. The ability of UK forces to begin a battle alongside the Americans "on day one" with roughly comparable equipment of all categories has been a matter of pride for British leaders. But the outcomes have not always been happy or rewarding for the British. Better to be capable of doing a job in a US-led coalition, even if it is less prestigious

¹³⁰ See, Narcia Serra and Joseph E Stiglitz, eds, *The Washington Consensus Reconsidered: Towards a New Global Governance*, Oxford, OUP, 2008, chapter 14.

and does not begin on day one, but be trusted to accomplish it well. This implies a more radical approach in reviewing UK defence to produce forces that might be significantly smaller but more genuinely transformative; capable of changing in both shape and function within just a few years. They would cease to look so like US forces, or even the US Marine Corps, but would give the UK more feasible choices of what it might more effectively add to a joint operation.

Genuinely transformative armed forces would also provide a model for other European allies and partners facing similar pressures. This would help reinforce a more assertive political leadership role for the UK in the transatlantic arena and provide a practical link between smaller European powers with limited but useful military forces, and a US that is likely to continue, even in austerity, to spend 10 times more than the UK on defence, 3 times the combined spending of EU countries on defence equipment and 6 times their combined spending on military research and development. The UK can gain more influence by pursuing flexible complementarity with a US force structure of this magnitude than being a pale imitation of it.¹³¹

Short Term Interests: In the short term, British contributions to success in Central Asia, in Pakistan and Afghanistan, are the clearest mutual security interest of the two partners and probably the most effective way for the UK to remain “positioned” close to the US in security terms.

Afghanistan. UK forces in Afghanistan are given status by the appointment of a British 3-star general as Deputy Commander ISAF, and the new military constellation that sees Sir David Richards as Chief of the General Staff, General Nick Parker as the new DCOMISAF, the US General Stanley McChrystal as commander ISAF, and General David Petraeus as CENTCOM Commander above him. All this promises a new effort to run the operation more genuinely from Kabul rather than from national capitals, with a greater focus on genuine counter-insurgency operations, and a clear mission in Helmand for British forces to deepen their hold on the central areas—Lashkar Gah, Babaji, Gereshk—to make the “inkspot strategy” of counter-insurgency irreversible.

Nevertheless, UK military contributions to the Afghan operation have to overcome some legacy issues in the minds of many US military analysts and American politicians. The British operation in Basra from 2003–09 is seen as a disappointment; successful in the early phase but unable to cope fully when the operation became something different.¹³² US forces have always admired Britain’s ability to handle insurgencies in foreign parts, but US forces have learned fast in both Iraq and Afghanistan and are now capable of very effective and well-resourced counter-insurgency operations, while UK forces have struggled again to impose a successful counter-insurgency strategy in Helmand. US military professionals well understand that UK forces have borne the overwhelming brunt of the fighting since 2006, but also understand that the UK’s contributions in Helmand, still less in Kandahar and Kabul, are too small to be left to do the job alone, now that “support for nation-building” has turned into a small regional war.

After the Basra experience UK forces need to re-establish their credibility in the minds of US military planners and politicians. The Coalition cannot win the Afghan War only in Helmand, but it can certainly lose it there if the present strategy is seen by the world not to prevail. It is a vital short-term interest for the UK to make a success of counter-insurgency in the most populated, central areas around Lashkar Gah, using military, governance and developmental resources.

Pakistan. The present political crisis in Pakistan is extremely dangerous in itself, and has the power to undermine all the best efforts of the Coalition in neighbouring Afghanistan. The future of Pakistan, too, is a vital shared interest between London and Washington where the UK is even more the junior partner than in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, there are some elements of policy towards Pakistan that play to the UK’s comparative advantages.

Stability in Pakistan depends on the capacity of the Pakistani army to prevail in its present domestic struggle, and then to reform itself—ultimately breaking the link between army, politics and landowning wealth—that has been at the base of Pakistan’s politics and the source of so much of its instability.¹³³ The UK can contribute to both military and political re-orientation of Pakistan’s armed forces in ways that the US cannot, and without some of the stigma that attaches inside Pakistan to association with the US.¹³⁴ Pakistan also needs a bigger middle class to provide prosperity and more alternatives to “land-owning or poverty”; it needs a greater number of professional people who are not so dependent on the madrassas for their education and who have more cosmopolitan outlooks. This is a long-term aspiration, but short-term initiatives could be developed through the increasingly prosperous and professional Pakistani communities in the UK. The UK’s current Afghanistan/Pakistan strategic document has little to say on the specifics of the UK’s possible role in helping build stability in Pakistan, or on what it might do in closer co-ordination with the US. A more concerted short and long-term approach, making the best of the UK’s natural links with Pakistan and its advantage as a European, as opposed to an American, voice could help address the acute problems of the sub-region in a way that binds Washington and London more closely together.

¹³¹ Michael Codner, “A Force for Honour? Military Strategic Options for the United Kingdom”, RUSI, *Future Defence Review*, working paper 2, October 2009.

¹³² “Iraq Voices”, *The Observer*, 19 April 2009.

¹³³ See, Hilary Synnott, *Transforming Pakistan: Ways Out of the Instability*, London, IISS, 2009, pp 168–170.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, pp 28–61.

Counter-terrorism. The UK and the US share common interests in the realm of counter-terrorism, though the threat takes different forms in each case. Technical and intelligence co-operation can always be improved and all methods of counter-terrorism, as expressed in the US Homeland Defense Strategy and the UK's CONTEST documents, are pursued in a generally co-operative framework.¹³⁵ A more particular counter-terrorist issue, however, involves the so-called "Battle of the Narratives" between liberal democracy and alienated Islam—the sources of support for military jihad in different parts of the world. The West was very slow to engage in this battle and has been coming second in it ever since, chiefly because there was an evident gap between an assertive US "War on Terror" and a predominantly criminal justice approach on the part of the UK and its European partners. The US position has shifted much closer to the criminal justice view in the last two years and there is a good opportunity now to develop a positive American/British approach to strategic communication, not just on counter-terrorism, but more broadly on Western relations with Middle East and Central Asian Islamic societies. The UK has shared in most of the condemnation of Western policy throughout the Middle East and Central Asia. But if the Obama Administration adopts a more coherent policy than its predecessor on Middle East and Central Asian stability, the UK is in a good position to help explain it, build local support for it using diplomatic attributes which differ from, and complement, those of the US itself. A strategic communication approach to the Middle East and Central Asia depends on the creation of a clear and coherent policy position and on the ability to promote it at all levels, from diplomat to head of state.¹³⁶ This is an endeavour in which the UK could play a formative and useful role.

Non-proliferation. The greatest immediate threat of nuclear proliferation arises from North Korea and Iran. The UK takes positions on both issues, but it has little individual pressure to bring to bear outside the context of Europe and the less-than-satisfactory international efforts to address them. The Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference of 2010, however, represents a critical juncture in efforts to restrain nuclear proliferation and take a renewed approach to international stability. The Obama Administration indicates a willingness to move back to a regime-based approach to nuclear non-proliferation, as opposed to the more unilateral, counter-proliferation approach of the Bush Administration. This is not necessarily shared throughout the policy community in Washington or in Congress. The NPT Review Conference next year represents a final opportunity to rescue the 40 year-old (and broadly successful) non-proliferation regime. It is difficult to see the regime surviving another failure in 2010 after the 2000 and 2005 failures. But a success next year in making good on the bargain enshrined in the original NPT of 1968, finding ways of developing the regime through the IAEA, and enlisting broader international support for it as a whole, would be the best way to underpin more particular efforts to manipulate pressures and inducements on Iran and North Korea. A new approach to strategic arms control between the present nuclear weapons states would be intrinsic to any breakthrough at the Review Conference.

Anything the UK can do at the Conference, therefore, either to revitalise the grand bargain in the NPT between legal access to civil nuclear power and restrictions on nuclear weapons acquisition; or to help push strategic arms control among the nuclear weapons states, would make success more likely. Both these aspirations are contained in the UK's *Road to 2010* policy document.¹³⁷ They should be pushed as vigorously as possible and in as trans-Atlantic a context as possible to obtain greatest leverage.

Institutional Reform. NATO is in desperate need of institutional reform, operating now at 28. The EU's machinery for ESDP questions is similarly counter-productive. Institutional reform must, self-evidently, be a collective endeavour among all the members, which in the case of NATO includes the United States. There is only so much the UK can achieve in this regard and it has long championed drastic institutional reform in both organisations to streamline Europe's ability to make defence and security decisions. Nevertheless, the fact remains that defence and security increasingly requires agile and consensual reactions from Western powers and these are unlikely to be achieved within existing institutional structures.

The UK and the US have a powerful mutual interest in addressing these problems; the Europeans have an equally powerful imperative to ensure that the US remains genuinely engaged with European security structures. Institutional sclerosis will only increase the long-term trend towards US disengagement in European security. The problem is certainly not new, but it is now extremely urgent as there is very little time left to make an impact before defence budgets fall to unsustainable levels and Europe is perceived in the US no longer to be a player in global security, let alone collective defence. The UK can do no better than to redouble its efforts to promote institutional reform.

19 October 2009

¹³⁵ Government of the United States, *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support*, June 2005, Washington DC: Cm 7547, *The UK's Strategy for Combating International Terrorism*, March 2009.

¹³⁶ The government's strategy paper, *UK Policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan: The Way Forward*, April 2009, mentions strategic communication on p 26 but not as an international and collective endeavour with allies.

¹³⁷ Cabinet Office, *The Road to 2010: Addressing the Nuclear Question in the Twentyfirst Century*, Cm 7675, July 2009.

Written evidence from Professor Norman Dombey, University of Sussex

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

- After the Second World War the US passed the McMahon Act in 1946 in an attempt to preserve its monopoly of nuclear weapons. In 1958 the US amended the McMahon Act so that the US may transfer nuclear weapon design information, nuclear materials and specialised components to allies, that have made ‘substantial progress in the development of atomic weapons’. This means the ability to build thermonuclear weapons (H-bombs).
- The UK is the only beneficiary of this Amendment. In that sense the US-UK relationship for nuclear cooperation for defence purposes really is special.
- Under the Mutual Defence Agreement (MDA) of 1958 the UK is not allowed to communicate any information transferred to it by the US to third parties.
- US scientists noted after their first meeting with their UK counterparts after the MDA came into force in 1958 that ‘it appeared likely that certain advances made by the United Kingdom would be of benefit to the United States’. This referred in particular to the spherical secondary developed by Keith Roberts, Bryan Taylor and colleagues at Aldermaston.
- A second meeting of scientists from both sides under the MDA was held in September 1958. At this meeting actual “blueprints, material specifications, and relevant theoretical and experimental information” of warheads were exchanged. This allowed the UK to build US-designed weapons in this country.
- Aldermaston and the Treasury have subsequently learned that it is much safer to copy established US designs than to design a new warhead.
- Since 1958 all UK nuclear weapons contain elements of US design information and therefore those designs cannot be communicated to third parties without US permission. Hence it is not possible to consider sharing nuclear weapon information with France.
- The effect of the 1959 Amendment to the 1958 Agreement is to allow the US to transfer to the UK what Senator Anderson called “do-it-yourself kits” for making nuclear weapons.
- At Nassau in 1962 the Prime Minister suggested, and the President agreed, that some part of UK forces would be assigned as part of a NATO nuclear force and targeted in accordance with NATO plans. British forces under this plan will be assigned and targeted in the same way as other NATO nuclear forces.
- “During the Cold War, NATO’s nuclear forces played a central role in the Alliance’s strategy of flexible response. To deter major war in Europe, nuclear weapons were integrated into the whole of NATO’s force structure, and the Alliance maintained a variety of targeting plans which could be executed at short notice.”¹³⁸
- But even during the Cold War, the control arrangements for the UK’s Polaris fleet were not transparent.
- While Defence Ministers from NATO countries dutifully met twice a year in the Nuclear Planning Group after 1990 there was generally nothing to discuss other than disposal of old weapons. No communiqués were issued updating NATO’s new nuclear posture.
- NATO has radically reduced its reliance on nuclear forces. According to the NATO website ‘their role is now more fundamentally political, and they are no longer directed towards a specific threat’.
- I conclude that there is no meaningful assignment of the Trident force to NATO, since NATO no longer has a nuclear posture.
- NATO may not have a nuclear posture but the United States certainly does have one. Its Single Integrated Operational Plan or SIOP specifies how American nuclear weapons would be used in the event of nuclear war.
- It seems to me that the only possible meaning of “assigned to NATO” or the equivalent phrase “international arrangements for mutual defence and security” is that the UK Trident fleet is in practice assigned to the US: it operates in conjunction with the US fleet under SIOP or the successor to SIOP.
- By sleight-of-hand the Trident fleet is a national fleet and a NATO fleet at the same time.
- The US possesses a National Target Base of potential nuclear strike targets as part of SIOP or the successor to SIOP. These are drawn up at US Strategic Command [STRATCOM] headquarters in Omaha where there is a UK liaison mission. Any British plans can be incorporated if approved into the US operational plan. There is a Nuclear Operations and Targeting Centre in London which co-ordinates with STRATCOM. But the targetting software is provided by STRATCOM and its affiliates in the US. The software includes data which the UK cannot provide by itself.
- The UK could not target New York because STRATCOM would not prepare the target software.

¹³⁸ See para 2.7 below.

- It seems to me that while the UK may well have had good reasons in 1958 for entering into the MDA with the US, it needs to reassess the situation. It is very surprising that the MDA has endured for 50 years with only minor amendment to its terms. In my opinion it is very unlikely that it will survive the next 50 years.
- I hope that I have demonstrated that the US-UK relationship in nuclear matters is unequal. The UK is the perpetual supplicant and the US is the provider. This cannot be healthy: it means that the UK government lives in constant fear that the US may not supply or may restrict the supply of whatever it requires for nuclear defence.
- Today nuclear weapons are much better understood but the codes describing their behaviour were developed in the US, not the UK. Los Alamos and Livermore Laboratories would scarcely notice if Aldermaston gave up its work.
- If Scotland were to secede from the UK it is likely that England would have to give up possession of nuclear weapons. This would lead to the termination of the MDA and the Polaris Agreement. The Special Relationship would come to an end. It would be sensible for the government to make contingency plans for that possibility.
- “In sum, the benefits to Britain of its nuclear weapons are at best meagre and mainly hypothetical. What then of the costs?”
- The financial burden is not really significant (about 5% of the defence vote). However, the need for technological support is largely responsible for the country’s political dependence on America.”

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The agreement between the UK and US on co-operation on nuclear energy for mutual defence purposes (I use the US spelling because that is what was used in the original agreement signed on 3 July 1958 and is a pointer to the subordinate role of the UK in the relationship) originates in the Manhattan Project of the Second World War when under the Quebec Agreement the UK, US and Canada pooled their resources to work on nuclear energy for both military and civil applications. Following the defeat of the Axis powers, the US Congress which had not been informed of the Quebec Agreement passed an Atomic Energy Act [the 1946 McMahon Act] which severely limited the transfer of restricted nuclear information and materials to any other state. One of the major goals of British policy after 1946 was to resume the nuclear relationship with the US.¹³⁹ This goal was achieved in 1958 by the passage of an Amendment to the US Atomic Energy Act which allowed the transfer by the US of nuclear information and materials for military use to allies which have made “substantial progress” in nuclear weapon development. This was code for the capacity to make thermonuclear weapons (hydrogen bombs) in addition to fission weapons (atomic bombs).

1.2 Britain demonstrated that it had made substantial progress in nuclear weaponry when it exploded Short Granite in May 1957 in the presence of US observers which was followed by a meeting of US and UK nuclear scientists in August 1957 when the British were allowed to discuss their weapon designs: to the surprise of the Americans they demonstrated a compact two-stage thermonuclear weapon with a spherical secondary. Short Granite was a hydrogen bomb [a two-stage thermonuclear device] but did not attain the desired yield of 1 MT (equivalent to one megaton of TNT equivalent). Nevertheless the Grapple X test of 8 November 1957 did achieve a yield of over 1 MT and was followed by the Grapple Y and Z tests of 28 April and 2 September 1958 which refined the design and achieved the design target of a warhead weighing less than 1 ton with a yield of 1 MT.

1.3 On the political front the US amended the McMahon Act on 2 July 1958 allowing the first of the two agreements between the US and UK on co-operation on the uses of atomic energy for mutual defence purposes: the first of which was signed on 3 July 1958. The Agreement was amended the following year to include matters that were more politically difficult for Congress to deal with. The 1958 Agreement as amended in 1959 together with subsequent amendments which extend the time frame lay the framework for the US-UK Mutual Defence Agreement (MDA) which still is in force today over 50 years later. I would like to consider it in some detail.

1.4 The preamble of the 1958 Agreement is important as it outlines its basis in US law and thus how the US views the MDA. The first two clauses state (i) that both the US and the UK need to deploy nuclear weapons for their “mutual security and defense” and (ii) that requirement may well involve thermonuclear weapons in addition to fission weapons since both the US and the UK have made substantial progress in the development of atomic weapons. The third clause points out that both the US and the UK participate in “international arrangements” [code for NATO] for their “mutual defense and security”. The remainder of the preamble states that the transfer of information, equipment and materials allowed under the agreement will benefit their mutual defence and security.

1.5 Article I then spells out that the transfers allowed by the Agreement will promote mutual defence and security since both the US and the UK participate in “an international arrangement for their mutual defense and security”. Note that the agreement to co-operate is limited to “while the United States and the United

¹³⁹ J Simpson, *The Independent Nuclear State*, Macmillan, London, 1983.

Kingdom are participating in an international arrangement for their mutual defense and security” so that if the UK were to withdraw its nuclear forces from the “international arrangement”, ie NATO or its equivalent, the US would no longer be bound by the agreement.

1.6 Part A of Article II is a paragraph which is common to all agreements between the US and its NATO allies which allows those allies to receive classified information about nuclear weapons so that US nuclear weapons can be transferred to them in time of war when SACEUR, who is always a US General, would take command. By this means, allied air forces in NATO can practice with dummy weapons on board. NATO allies who can take advantage of these arrangements are Belgium, Germany, Greece, Holland, Italy and Turkey. Part B of article II is only for the benefit of allies that have made substantial progress in nuclear weapons, that is to say, Britain and France. President de Gaulle refused to allow France to participate in these arrangements, so Britain is the unique beneficiary. In that sense the US-UK nuclear co-operation arrangements for defence purposes really are special.

1.7 Part B of Article II allows the US and UK to exchange nuclear weapon designs together with information needed for the fabrication of nuclear weapons.

1.8 Article III concerns nuclear-powered submarines. Britain was able to launch its hunter-killer submarine fleet as a result of the transfer of a complete reactor propulsion plant authorised by Article III together with the transfer of high enriched uranium 235 to fuel the reactor. Note that Britain needs to pay for that U-235 under Part C and to indemnify the US against liabilities under Part E so that it is not correct to say that this Agreement has no spending implications.

1.9 Article VII does not allow the UK to communicate any information transferred to it by the US to third parties without authorisation by the US. In particular the US retains intellectual property rights for any nuclear weapon design information transferred by it to the UK under Article II Part B.

1.10 The effect of the 1959 Amendment is to allow the US to transfer to the UK what Senator Anderson in the hearings of the subcommittee of the US Joint Committee on Atomic Energy called “do-it-yourself kits” for making nuclear weapons. While Article II Part B of the original Agreement allows US nuclear weapon design information to be communicated to the UK, the new Article III bis allows complete non-parts of nuclear weapons to be transferred together with “source, by-product and special nuclear material, and other material, ... for use in atomic weapons” to be transferred. Special nuclear material refers to uranium 235 and plutonium; source material refers to natural uranium or uranium 238 while by-product material refers to tritium and lithium 6.

1.11 I will not pursue the matter here but this arrangement whereby as General Lopez for the US Department of Defense conceded at the hearings: “1. you can transfer design information, and 2. you can transfer non-nuclear components, and 3. you can transfer nuclear materials unfabricated if you apply all the sections of the law that are pertinent to the subject. Now, taking all these three things together, one could, if he got all of them, build himself an atomic weapon. I don’t think that there is any question but that this technicality exists. We would not say that it does not.” So as I concluded in an article written 25 years ago “in the future language of the NPT, the US-UK Agreement of 1958 [as amended] does not allow the direct transfer of nuclear weapons but it does allow the indirect transfer of nuclear weapons from the US to the UK”. Yet this is forbidden by Article I of the NPT which came into force in 1970.

1.12 Almost immediately following the passage of the Amendment to the McMahon Act and the 1958 US-UK Agreement on Co-operation a meeting of scientists from both sides was held in August 1958 in Washington. At that meeting there was an exchange of information on the gross characteristics of the weapons in stockpile or in production. The US noted that “it appeared likely that certain advances made by the United Kingdom would be of benefit to the United States”. This referred in particular to the spherical secondary developed by Keith Roberts, Bryan Taylor and colleagues at Aldermaston. The original Ulam-Teller design developed in the US involved a cylindrical secondary and the subsequent adoption of a spherical secondary by the US following the 1958 Co-operation Agreement allowed the US to build compact thermonuclear weapons as they do today.

1.13 A second meeting of scientists from both sides under the MDA was held in Albuquerque in September 1958. At this meeting actual “blueprints, material specifications, and relevant theoretical and experimental information” of warheads was exchanged. This allowed the UK to build US weapons in this country. Note that details of the XW-47 warhead were included: this was the warhead that was to be fitted to the US Polaris missiles in the early 1960s. This was replaced by the W-58 on US A3 Polaris missiles from 1964 until 1982 whose design would have been passed on to the UK under the MDA for use in the UK fleet. Details of the Mark 28 hydrogen bomb were also transferred: that was used by the RAF from 1961 onwards and called Yellow Sun Mark II [Yellow Sun Mark I was the high yield fission bomb referred to above].

1.14 The present Trident fleet is reported to use a version of the W-76 warhead first developed by Los Alamos National Laboratory in 1972. Indeed since the massive over-budget expenditure on the Chevaline project in the 1970s and 1980s which was the last time that the UK attempted to design its own warhead, Aldermaston and the Treasury have learned that it is much safer to copy established US designs than to design a new warhead.

1.15 Since 1958 all UK nuclear weapons contain elements of US design information and therefore those designs cannot be communicated to third parties without US permission. Hence it is not possible to consider sharing nuclear weapon information with France because unlike France, the UK does not possess

intellectual property rights over its nuclear weapon designs, unless it were to go back to the designs discussed in the 1958 meetings in the US. Nor is it possible to design a new warhead for a cruise missile, for example, in place of the Trident missile system without US agreement.

1.16 The MDA has now been extended many times, most recently in 2004.

2. POLARIS AND TRIDENT (1962–90)

2.1 On 21 December 1962 President Kennedy and Mr Macmillan issued a joint “Statement on Nuclear Defence Systems” at Nassau. The subsequent Polaris Sales Agreement is subject to that statement according to Article I of the Agreement. The statement includes:

- (6) The Prime Minister suggested, and the President agreed, that for the immediate future a start could be made by subscribing to NATO some part of its force already in existence. This could include allocations from United States strategic forces, from United Kingdom Bomber Command and from tactical nuclear forces now in Europe. Such forces would be assigned as part of a NATO nuclear force and targeted in accordance with NATO plans.
- (7) Returning to Polaris, the President and the Prime Minister agreed that the purpose of their two Governments with respect to the provisions of the Polaris missiles must be the development of a multilateral NATO nuclear force in the closest consultation with other NATO allies. They will use their best endeavours to this end.
- (8) Accordingly, the President and the Prime Minister agreed that the United States will make available on a continuing basis Polaris missiles (less warheads) for British submarines. The United States also study the feasibility of making available certain support facilities for such submarines. The United Kingdom Government will construct the submarines in which these weapons will be placed and they will also provide the nuclear warheads for the Polaris missiles. British forces developed under this plan will be assigned and targeted in the same way as forces described in Paragraph 6.

These forces and at least equal United States forces would be made available for inclusion in a NATO multilateral nuclear force. The Prime Minister made it clear that, except where her Majesty’s Government may decide that supreme national interests are at stake, these British forces will be used for the purposes of international defence of the western alliance in all circumstances.’

2.2 Following Nassau, the Polaris Sales Agreement was signed on 6 April 1963. Note that in addition to agreeing to supply the missiles including guiding capsules, the US also supplies missile launching and handling systems, missile fire control systems, ship navigation systems and spare parts, together with full technical documentation. Furthermore the UK is allowed to use missile range facilities in the US for test launches.

2.3 Note that Article XIV restricts any transfer of information relating to the missiles to any recipient other than a “United Kingdom officer, employee, national or firm” without the consent of the US. So the UK may have legal ownership of missiles provided under the agreement, but as with nuclear weapon designs it does not have intellectual property rights.

2.4 The NATO multilateral force never took place. But on the renewal of the Polaris Sale Agreement every government has affirmed that the missiles supplied by the US will be assigned to NATO barring exceptional circumstances when supreme national interests are at stake. For example when Britain decided to replace Polaris by the Trident I C4 missile in 1980 Francis Pym, then Defence Secretary stated to the House of Commons that the missile “Once bought, it will be entirely within our ownership and operational control but we shall continue to commit the whole force to NATO in the same way that the Polaris force is committed today”.

2.5 Similarly when Britain decided to replace the Trident I C4 missile with the Trident II D5 missile, Mrs Thatcher wrote to President Reagan that “Like the Polaris force, and consistent with the agreement reached in 1980 on the supply of Trident I missiles, the United Kingdom Trident II force will be assigned to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation; and except where the United Kingdom Government may decide that supreme national interests are at stake, this successor force will be used for the purposes of international defence of the Western alliance in all circumstances”.

2.6 Even during the Cold War, the control arrangements for the UK’s Polaris fleet were not transparent. SACEUR, always a US General, controlled US nuclear weapons assigned to NATO forces. SACLANT (an American Admiral) controlled the US fleet in the Atlantic, presumably including US submarines armed with Polaris or Poseidon missiles. If the British and an equivalent US Polaris/Poseidon fleet were assigned to NATO in normal circumstances, either SACEUR or SACLANT would be expected to have overall control although the British submarines would report to the Commander at Northwood.

2.7 NATO’s Nuclear Planning Group decided the posture of nuclear forces assigned to NATO. According to NATO itself “During the Cold War, NATO’s nuclear forces played a central role in the Alliance’s strategy of flexible response. To deter major war in Europe, nuclear weapons were integrated into the whole of NATO’s force structure, and the Alliance maintained a variety of targeting plans which could be executed at short notice”.

2.8 The nuclear weapons assigned to NATO were generally for theatre or non-strategic purposes. These were, for example, the US freefall bombs carried by allied airforces from the 1960s onwards and the cruise missiles and Pershings of the 1980s. It is therefore not clear how Britain's strategic forces fit into this scenario. Nor is it clear how US submarines assigned to NATO differed in their tasks from US submarines directly controlled within the US force structure.

3. POLARIS AND TRIDENT (1991–2009)

3.1 Once the Soviet Union disintegrated, the Warsaw Pact followed taking with it NATO's policy of flexible response. While Defence Ministers from NATO countries dutifully met twice a year in the Nuclear Planning Group there was generally nothing to discuss other than disposal of old weapons. No communiqués were issued updating NATO's new nuclear posture. The Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty of 1987 eliminated nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500–5,500 km from Europe and 846 US missiles were destroyed by 1 June 1991.

3.2 NATO has therefore radically reduced its reliance on nuclear forces. According to the NATO website "their role is now more fundamentally political, and they are no longer directed towards a specific threat". The latest document available on NATO's nuclear posture dates from 2002 and is entitled *NATO's Nuclear Forces in the New Security Environment*. It contains just two references to the UK's Trident fleet, namely:

- (i) "Not depicted on the chart [showing NATO's residual nuclear forces] are the sea-based nuclear systems belonging to the United States and/or the United Kingdom that could have been made available to NATO in crisis/conflict and
- (ii) "The chart also does not reflect a small number of UK Trident weapons on nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBN), available for a sub-strategic role.

3.3 So even though Tony Blair wrote to President Bush on 7 December 2006 repeating the usual pledge that the Trident force will continue to be assigned to NATO in all circumstances barring a threat to UK's "supreme national interests", I conclude that there is no meaningful assignment of the Trident force to NATO, since NATO no longer has a nuclear posture.

3.4 NATO may not have a nuclear posture but the United States certainly does have one. Its Single Integrated Operational Plan or SIOP specifies how American nuclear weapons would be used in the event of nuclear war. Since both SACEUR and SACLANT are US officers, it seems to me that the only possible meaning of "assigned to NATO" or the equivalent phrase "international arrangements for mutual defence and security" is that the UK Trident fleet is in practice assigned to the US: it operates in conjunction with the US fleet under SIOP or the successor to SIOP.

3.5 According to the Eighth Report of the Commons Defence Committee for 2005–06 the UK's nuclear forces were part of SIOP during the Cold War.¹⁴⁰ It seems to me that this situation persists. That would also explain why UK submarines do not collide with US submarines, although they have collided with France's much smaller submarine fleet.

3.6 If that is the case, the NATO link is purely formal: as far as I understand it the NATO command structure for Trident is based on the British Commander-in-Chief Fleet, having two roles just like SACEUR. He is CINCFLEET with operational headquarters at Northwood, Middlesex, where the UK's forces joint headquarters are situated. But a NATO Regional Command, Allied Maritime Component Command Northwood is sited there too. CINCFLEET is dual-hatted as Commander AMCCN. So by sleight-of-hand the Trident fleet is a national fleet and a NATO fleet at the same time. CINCFLEET has operational control of the Trident fleet and a missile cannot be fired without permission from the Prime Minister.

3.7 But how operationally independent is the Trident fleet? I discuss this in the next section.

4. AN INDEPENDENT DETERRENT?

4.1 I have already pointed out that the warhead used in the Trident fleet is a copy of a US design; that the missiles are made, tested and serviced in the US; and that the Fire Control system is provided by the US. Aldermaston is now principally operated by an American company. Nevertheless in the Eighth Report of the Defence Committee already referred to Sir Michael Quinlan gave evidence that "in the last resort, when the chips are down and we are scared, worried to the extreme, we can press the button and launch the missiles whether the Americans say so or not". Does that mean that the UK has operational independence?

4.2 I will argue that this is not the case. This is not a question of the US disabling the GPS system so that the UK's missiles cannot function for the Trident missile has an inertial guidance system, supplied by the US. The crucial point concerns targetting.

4.3 The US possesses a National Target Base of potential nuclear strike targets as part of SIOP or the successor to SIOP [the name keeps changing]. These are drawn up at US Strategic Command [STRATCOM] headquarters in Omaha where there is a UK liaison mission. Any British plans can be incorporated if approved into the US operational plan. There is a Nuclear Operations and Targeting Centre in London which co-ordinates with STRATCOM. But the targetting software is provided by STRATCOM and its

¹⁴⁰ Eighth Report of the Defence Committee, Session 2005–06, paragraph 44.

affiliates in the US. The software includes data which the UK cannot provide by itself: photographic information of the target; measurements of the gravitational and magnetic fields in the vicinity of the target and a catalogue of star positions for navigation are required and are provided by the US.

Furthermore day-to-day weather information needs to be relayed to the Trident fleet from the US Fleet Numerical Meteorological and Oceanography Center. So although the UK can suggest targets, it cannot insist on them, nor can it independently provide targeting software for the missiles, while the US can always withdraw support or include lines of code in the software it provides to limit the UK's ability to operate its missiles.

4.4 To take an extreme example which I have used before, the UK could not target New York because STRATCOM would not prepare the target software.

4.5 I therefore agree (at least as far as the words "British" and "independent" are concerned) with Chris Huhne who wrote that "Voltaire famously stated that the Holy Roman Empire was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an Empire. I suspect that Trident as presently constituted is neither British, nor independent, nor a deterrent".¹⁴¹

5. THE POLITICAL COST OF THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

5.1 I am a physical scientist not a political scientist and so I do not claim to be an expert on politics. Nevertheless I have studied the US-UK nuclear co-operation agreement for over 25 years and I have visited the US regularly for over 50 years since enrolling as a PhD student at the California Institute of Technology in September 1959. It seems to me that while the UK may well have had good reasons in 1958 for entering into the MDA with the US, it needs to reassess the situation. It is very surprising that the MDA has endured for 50 years with only minor amendment to its terms. In my opinion it is very unlikely that it will survive the next 50 years. I agree with William Wallace and Christopher Phillips¹⁴² that it is necessary for the UK to reassess the special relationship.

5.2 I hope that I have demonstrated that the US-UK relationship in nuclear matters is unequal. The UK is the perpetual supplicant and the US is the provider. This cannot be healthy: it means that the UK government lives in constant fear that the US may not supply or may restrict the supply of whatever it requires for nuclear defence.

5.3 In 1959, when I first went to the US, the British and American people and governments could still remember their common endeavour in the Second World War. Broadly speaking, the politics of both countries were strongly aligned. The UK was still a world power: indeed Mr Khrushchev visited the UK in 1956 paving the way for his visit to the US in 1959, which I remember well as I had just arrived in the US. Mr Macmillan and President Eisenhower were old friends. Resuming the nuclear co-operation of the Second World War made sense. Furthermore 50 years ago co-operation on nuclear weapons was not totally one-sided as I have shown. Today nuclear weapons are much better understood but the codes describing their behaviour were developed in the US, not the UK. Los Alamos and Livermore Laboratories would scarcely notice if Aldermaston gave up its work.

5.4 What one can say with certainty about the next 50 years is that they will be unlike the past 50 years. The US is no longer a similar country to the UK. In many areas of the US English is a minority language. The US is, moreover, a profoundly religious country—the majority of whose citizens do not believe in evolution: is it likely that the world view of the US will remain aligned with that of the secular and rationalist UK for the next 30 years? Already very different approaches to global warming, the International Criminal Court, international law, the death penalty and the treatment of prisoners have become apparent in the last few years between our two countries. Yet the extensions of the MDA and the Polaris Sales Agreement assume that US-UK relations will remain completely aligned over that time period envisaged, which is at least until 2040.

5.5 In Scotland a majority of the population is against the possession of nuclear weapons, but the UK's nuclear fleet is based in Scotland. Is this situation likely to persist over the next 30 years or could Scotland conceivably follow Ireland and become an independent state within the European Union? If Scotland were to secede from the UK it is likely that England would have to give up possession of nuclear weapons. This would lead to the termination of the MDA and the Polaris Agreement. The Special Relationship would come to an end. It would be sensible for the government to make contingency plans for that possibility.

5.6 The veteran NATO strategist and former naval officer Michael MccGwire wrote recently "In sum, the benefits to Britain of its nuclear weapons are at best meagre and mainly hypothetical. What then of the costs? The financial burden is not really significant (about 5% of the defence vote). However, the need for technological support is largely responsible for the country's political dependence on America".¹⁴³ In my opinion that has been demonstrated in spades over the past few years.

5.7 Britain's dependence and subservience to the US have resulted from its clinging to these nuclear agreements and the similar arrangements in intelligence gathering which also stem from Second World War co-operation. Examples of such subservience in recent years are the non-reciprocal extradition agreement

¹⁴¹ Chris Huhne, "There are better things to do than replace Trident", *The Independent*, 5 November 2007.

¹⁴² William Wallace and Christopher Phillips, "Reassessing the Special Relationship", *International Affairs*, 85 263 (2009).

¹⁴³ Michael MccGwire, "Comfort Blanket or Weapon of War", *International Affairs*, 82 639 (2006).

with the US; the UK government decision to occupy Iraq together with the US, and the current desire to increase force levels in Afghanistan. This should be contrasted with Canada which in spite of sharing many common security arrangements with the US has a strictly reciprocal extradition agreement with the US. Furthermore Canada did not join in the occupation of Iraq and it has decided to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan by 2011.

5.8 Given that major spending commitments to Trident renewal have not yet been made, it seems to me to be essential to reassess the nuclear special relationship in order to allow the UK to begin to free itself from its current political dependence on the US. In Michael McCgwire's words the UK needs to remove its American "comfort blanket" that senior British politicians assume is needed to survive in the outside world.

2 November 2009

Letter to the Chairman of the Committee from Mr Ivan Lewis MP, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Following my appearance before the Committee on 16 December, I promised to write on two outstanding points that arose during the evidence session; specifically Andrew Mackinlay's question regarding the number of Ministers that have held my portfolio since 1997, and his enquiry on the subject of the aviation Open Skies negotiations.

In response to the first point, it is worth noting that when changes of Minister occur, there may also be some readjustment of the portfolios for which they have responsibility. With this in mind, and given the scope of this inquiry, there have been 9 Ministers prior to my assuming the portfolio in June 2009, who have covered North America. In chronological order these are:

- May 1997—July 1999: Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean, appointed Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.
- 29 July 1999—June 2001: Baroness Scotland of Asthal QC, appointed as above.
- 11 June 2001—13 June 2003: Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean, appointed Minister of State.
- 13 June 2003—9 September 2004: Mike O'Brien MP, appointed as above.
- September 2004—May 2005: Douglas Alexander MP, appointed Minister of State for Trade.
- 11 May 2005—8 May 2006: Ian Pearson MP, appointed as above.
- 8 May 2006—28 June 2007: Ian McCartney MP, appointed as above.
- May 2007—October 2008: Dr Kim Howells MP; (he was serving in the FCO as Minister of State from May 2005, but only took on the American portfolio from May 2007).
- October 2008—June 2009: Bill Rammell MP; appointed Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

In respect of the Open Skies negotiations, it may be useful if I start with some background. On 30 March 2008 the first-ever Air Services Agreement between the EU and US entered into force. Five years earlier the European Court of Justice had ruled EU Member States' bilateral air service agreements with the US as incompatible with the Single Market. This led to the European Commission receiving a mandate in 2003 from the Council to negotiate on behalf of the Community.

After four years of negotiation, the deal that was struck partially liberalised the transatlantic market. It allows the airlines of one party to fly to any destination on the territory of the other. In addition, US carriers can fly between any two points within the EU, effectively offering an intra-EU domestic service (although they cannot operate between two points within the same Member State). Heathrow Airport was opened to every US carrier, whereas under the 30 year old bilateral arrangement with the UK, only two US (and two UK) airlines could operate in and out of Heathrow on transatlantic routes.

However it did not go far enough for the UK and EU, which was seeking a fully open agreement, allowing in particular for EU investors to own and control US carriers and vice versa. The current position is that US nationals must own 75% of voting shares and exercise actual control. Legislation will be required to change this position. The EU is ready to drop its current requirement for majority European ownership and control if the US does the same.

The 2008 agreement set out a clear process for moving to a fully liberalised agreement with an agenda and timetable for negotiations on a second stage. And, crucially, should Stage Two fail to produce an agreement by the end of 2010, there is a provision for the EU to withdraw rights awarded to the US in Stage One. Stage Two got underway on 15 May 2008 with the next round of negotiations in Washington 11–14 January.

Securing greater market access will not be easy in the face of arguments put forward by Congress and labour against further liberalisation, but we are working hard to try to influence the US in this regard. We believe that airlines should be given greater economic freedom to build viable global businesses, particularly when there are many other strategic sectors in the US where global investment has been possible without losing a proper level of national regulation.

You may also be interested to know that the Transport Select Committee also looked at this issue during their inquiry into the Future of Aviation. Their report was published on 7 December.

I hope that you find this response to the Committee's outstanding questions helpful, but please do not hesitate to ask if the Committee requires greater clarification on either of these points.

8 January 2010

Letter to the Chairman of the Committee from Mr Ivan Lewis MP, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

I am writing in response to further questions raised on the FCO's memorandum to the Committee on UK-US relations.

Sir Menzies Campbell raised a question about the Extradition Treaty in place between the UK and the US and whether it would be possible in future simply to put a provision in any such legislation to say that it should not come into effect until such time as the contracting party to the treaty has ratified the treaty and brought it into force?

I have taken legal advice from the Home Office on this question. Sir Menzies Campbell was correct in suggesting that the introduction of the Extradition Act 2003 did amend domestic law in a manner which complied with the requirements of the UK-US Extradition Treaty before instruments of ratification had been exchanged. Although it is government policy not to designate a country until instruments of ratification for the respective extradition treaties have been exchanged, the decision with respect to the United States was taken exceptionally for two important reasons.

Firstly, the only significant amendment to UK domestic law needed to meet the requirements of the UK-US Treaty, was to relieve the United States of the need to establish a *prima facie* case when making an extradition request to the UK. Some have suggested that this created an imbalance in the UK's extradition relations with the US. This is categorically not the case. The amendment simply redressed an earlier imbalance in our extradition relations with the US, which required the US to provide more evidence than they asked of us. The US was required to demonstrate a *prima facie* evidential case in support of extradition requests made to the UK, whereas the UK had to demonstrate "probable cause" (a lower standard).

Secondly, it is important to note although there was a delay in the US ratifying the Treaty, which we acknowledge, the introduction of the Extradition Act 2003 also saw the removal of the requirement on Australia, New Zealand and Canada to establish a *prima facie* case. Indeed, that requirement had already been disapplied since the early 1990s in relation to the UK's many partners under the European Convention on Extradition.

This reflected the fact that these countries and the United States are established extradition partners. The Government is absolutely clear that this was the right approach and has led to more effective and streamlined extradition arrangements with these countries.

As to the suggestion that the UK's extradition relations with the US are unbalanced, as the Government has made clear on a number of occasions, the information that must now be provided in order for a US extradition request to proceed in the UK is in practice the same as for a UK request to proceed in the US. It is important to stress that in both cases the standard of information which must now be provided for an extradition request to be accepted is the same as must be provided to a criminal court in that country in order for a domestic arrest warrant to be issued.

In the evidence session, Mr Hamilton asked about the US network and in particular a "strategic review". His question arose in the context of the FCO's briefing note which was kindly provided to the Committee in advance of its visit to the US in October. The Committee has asked whether it would be possible to clarify what this "strategic look" will involve and any relevant timescales?

In September 2009, the Board of Management at our Embassy in Washington agreed a number of measures to reduce expenditure, in order to meet exchange rate pressures on our local budget. These were set out in the FCO's memorandum to the FAC. No decisions have been taken about next year's budget or any future review.

29 January 2010

Further written evidence from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

UK-US CO-OPERATION ON PIRACY OFF THE COAST OF SOMALIA

The Committee has asked for more information on the modalities and extent of co-operation between the UK and US regarding piracy off the coast of Somalia.

The UK and US have been two of the key drivers behind the provision of effective counter-piracy military operations and wider efforts in the Gulf of Aden and the wider Indian Ocean.

NATO agreed in September 2008 that it should provide an interim counter-piracy operation, in particular to protect vulnerable World Food Programme food deliveries by ship to Somalia. The mandate of NATO operations has since developed and broadened, involving counter-piracy operations more generally and now including planned support for regional capability development to increase indigenous maritime security/counter-piracy capability. Both the UK and US have contributed regularly to these NATO operations, named Allied Provider (October-December 2008), Allied Protector (March-August 2009) and currently Ocean Shield. The operations have been commanded by the NATO Maritime Component Command Headquarters at Northwood, UK, under the overall responsibility of Joint Headquarters' Lisbon. The task force was commanded in the latter part of 2009 by Commodore Steve Chick from the UK.

The EU counter-piracy naval operation, Operation Atalanta, was launched in December 2008. Since the outset, the EU naval operation has worked closely with the other coalition navies, as well as other navies operating in the region. The EU operation commander is provided by the UK, first Rear Admiral Phil Jones and currently Rear Admiral Peter Hudson, based at a multinational EU headquarters at Northwood, in close proximity to the NATO headquarters.

The creation of Combined Task Force 151 (CTF 151) as a specific counter-piracy task force under the command of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) in Bahrain was announced in January 2009. Command of CTF 151 has been provided mostly by the US, but also by other contributing partners including Turkey and currently Singapore. Both the UK and US regularly provide naval assets to CTF 151. CMF are commanded overall by US Vice Admiral William Gortney, and the deputy commander is provided by the UK, currently Commodore Tim Lowe.

Under the joint guidance of the EU and CMF, a new co-ordination structure was created to ensure the closest possible co-ordination between naval forces operating in the Gulf of Aden and the wider Indian Ocean. The Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) mechanism meets regularly, and is co-chaired by the EU and CMF. This information exchange is supplemented by ongoing co-ordination between naval vessels in the region through use of the Mercury secured-access information-sharing IT platform, provided by the EU. The importance of the SHADE mechanism in effective military co-ordination has been recognised by the Contact Group off the Coast of Somalia, which is briefed regularly on the operational situation.

The UK and the US have also worked closely together on the political side of the counter-piracy effort. The US worked closely with the UK in the preparation of Security Council resolutions authorising and later renewing military counter-piracy operations, SCRs 1844 and 1851 in 2008 and SCR 1897 in 2009. The US convened the first Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) in January 2009, and continues to provide the secretariat. The UK and US were both founder members of the CGPCS, chair two of the key working groups underpinning the CGPCS, and work closely together to help ensure they deliver successful results: the working group on operational co-ordination and regional capability development is chaired by the UK; and the working group on shipping self-awareness/self-protection is chaired by the US. The US took part in the regional counter-piracy needs assessment mission led by the UK in September 2009, whose recommendations have been endorsed by the CGPCS as the basis for further detailed work to address regional counter-piracy capability development needs, with programmes now being implemented by *inter alia* the UN, the EU and NATO. The UK and US have worked closely to establish transfer agreements with Kenya and the Seychelles, enabling suspected pirates to be transferred to countries in the region for prosecution and potential imprisonment. The UK and US have both supported the establishment of the CGPCS Trust Fund, and have agreed to share their seat on the Trust Fund Board on a rotation (and consultation) basis. The UK and US have also recently co-sponsored a conference hosted by Interpol in January 2010 on financial flows related to piracy. Recognising that the solution to piracy can only be found in stability on land in Somalia, the UK and US also work closely together in the International Contact Group on Somalia. The US has confirmed its support for the planned EU training mission for Somali forces.

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