Members present:

Lord Howell of Guildford (Chairman)
Lord Forsyth of Drumlean
Lord Foulkes of Cumnock
Baroness Goudie
Lord Hodgson of AstleyAbbotts
Lord Janvrin
Baroness Morris of Bolton
Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne

Examination of Witnesses

Rt Hon Hugo Swire MP, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and Dr Andrew Murrison MP, Minister for International Security Strategy, Ministry of Defence

Q368 The Chairman: Ministers, good morning and thank you very much for being with us and for finding time out from your busy schedule. I should just say as a formality that you have in front of you a list of the declared interests of this Committee, which may or may not be helpful to you. I do not think there will be any Divisions, but if there were we would have to stop for five minutes.

It is really very fortunate for us and extremely useful that we have two senior Ministers from two huge central departments of state. We found in our evidence to this Committee—and this is the 23rd public hearing we have had—that the business of defence and the business of carrying out our international foreign policy are increasingly intertwined and wrapped up in the whole task of building our strategic narrative, using power and persuasion, and protecting our interests as our main policy thrusts. We feel that a new landscape has emerged in which these things have become even more closely woven together than ever before. It is excellent for us that we have the two of you from the two departments.

I will start with some questions mostly to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister of State, Hugo Swire. Then I shall come to Dr Murrison. We will find that these things weave together as we go along. My first question is one to which both departments could contribute a view, please. We are looking out on to a world of a great shift of power with the emergence of vast new regional powers in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. We are looking out on a world where there has been huge empowerment of the public, of lobbies, of non-state actors and of total connectivity through mobile telephones. In fact, there is a completely new international landscape.

Question 1 is a strategic question: how generally have the two departments adjusted to this huge change, which every witness who has come before us has confirmed is very big? In fact, we are more and more impressed with the size of the shift that has taken place. Perhaps I may start with Mr Swire and how you think, from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office’s point of view, you see that change and what is happening in the Foreign Office to meet it.

Hugo Swire MP: Can I say at the outset, Chairman, that I very much welcome appearing before your Committee and the work that you are undertaking. It is timely and I look forward to your reports with considerable interest. We do not pretend to have a monopoly
of wisdom on these matters. I think there has been significant shift, which I will attempt to articulate. I am sure that we have got things right in some places and can do better in others.

To respond to your question straightaway, there has been a huge shift in power and emphasis. The Foreign Office has responded to that with the rather unattractive phrase “network shift”. What is network shift? It is the redeployment of resources within a very tight spending envelope to better reflect the priorities of these markets, the emerging powers the BRICS: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. There, we have created additional positions in 23 emerging markets. We have put over 183 staff in front-line jobs in the emerging powers, which will rise to 300 extra staff in more than 20 countries by 2015. We have been reopening embassies, which I do not think has necessarily come across. We have upgraded or opened 20 embassies.

My responsibilities are rather strange geographically. They range from the Falklands and Latin America, central America, across to India and all the way down Asia, south-east Asia and the Pacific. I inherited the Commonwealth brief in excellent shape, if I might say so, from my predecessor. I will come back to the Commonwealth in a minute. In the past year, I have opened an embassy in El Salvador, which we did not have. We have eight1 people; the Americans have 8002. I was able to say at the opening, in front of the American ambassador, that it clearly takes 800 Americans to do what eight British people can do. I have opened an embassy in Port au Prince in Haiti. We have opened a consulate in Recife, Brazil. A few months ago, I opened an embassy in Asunción, Paraguay. These are all rather positive moves.

Our engagement in that part of the world really flows from the Foreign Secretary’s speech at Canning House when he said that our retreat from Latin America was over and that we were seeking to re-engage with the region. I think that has had real resonance. For those of you who follow these matters, I think you would agree that we are perceived to be back and in business in some of these highly important, existing and emerging markets, Brazil being the largest but other markets coming on tap hugely. Mexico is absolutely key, as well as Panama. There are all these other opportunities for British businesses.

How have we done this? We have reprioritised and reduced some of our secondary posts, particularly in Europe, where we already have representation through other means. We are reopening the FCO language school. It is almost staggering to believe that it was ever closed. We are reopening it so as to better train our diplomats in foreign languages. We are opening a diplomatic academy. We are also trying to make certain that a lot of our ambassadors going to post are seconded to private businesses so that they get some feel of private business. I was amused rather by our colleague Ken Clarke telling me when we were in Chile that he remembers 30 or 40 years ago going on a mission to, I think, South Korea. There were some businessmen there and the ambassador was throwing a reception. He asked the ambassador whether he could bring some of these business men and women along to the reception and was told most certainly not. The diplomatic world, the Ferrero Rocher gilded world, was certainly not going to be contaminated by vulgar commerce. I suggest that anyone heading up any post making that distinction today would be looking for alternative employment, and rightly so.

I have talked about the network shift, but there has been a mental shift as well within the Foreign Office. We are asking these people to do jobs that very often they did not come into the Foreign Office to do—I think on the whole that most of them get it—underpinned by the GREAT campaign, which we will no doubt talk about more in the future.

1 Note by witness: The correct number six.
2 Note by witness: The correct number is 600.
Africa is another market where we are doing much more joined up with DfID and there are others. That is not to say that we are ignoring our traditional friends. For instance, the Commonwealth is hugely important. The Foreign Secretary has said that he wants to put the C back into the FCO. I hope that we will get an opportunity to put some flesh on the Commonwealth issues of the day. We very much welcome the fact that your colleague Lord Marland is taking on the chairmanship of the Commonwealth Business Council. I was in Glasgow on Monday looking around the sites for the forthcoming games next year, which are very exciting. The timing is interesting, coming as it does. We are going to have a big British business presence there as well as a Scottish presence. It is not trying to replicate the British business embassy that we had during the Olympic Games because we do not need to have an embassy in our own country, so it will not be called an embassy, it will be called a business centre. It will be an opportunity to get more trade discussions going on, because we know that it is better for Commonwealth countries to trade with each others. There are huge savings in rationality, et cetera. That is important, as is working with the regions. Co-ordinating that better is important. On the whole, you are witnessing the early days of an enormously significant shift.

If I can end by quoting Ken Clarke again in an NSC meeting we had yesterday in Downing Street on the emerging powers, he said that no Government have ever attempted to approach all this in as co-ordinated a way as we are currently doing. That is why we clearly have not got everything right. It is very early days.

Q369 The Chairman: Thank you. There are a lot of points that we will want to come back on there. That was a very good initial overview. Can I ask Dr Murrison how the Ministry of Defence’s new strategic narrative, if those are the words for it, or the network shift, is working out? We have had a lot of evidence to this Committee, written and verbal, that, to put it bluntly, war is not what it was. The conduct of our security and defence operations needs to be interwoven with our foreign and international policy, and civilian activity, as never before. How is that coming through in the Ministry of Defence?

Dr Andrew Murrison MP: Thank you, my Lord, and good morning everyone. Can I start by agreeing wholeheartedly with Hugo Swire? From my own observation over the past 12 months travelling around the world quite a lot—not quite as much as Hugo but nevertheless quite a lot—I saw a sea change in Britain’s diplomatic effort, which is now geared very much around commerce and the prosperity agenda and with a mind to collocation wherever it is expedient to do that. That is a really positive development. I certainly do not recognise the Ferrero Rocher characterisation that I thought I was going to be expecting when I took up this role. We need to understand that our missions abroad are very much business focused, which is a very good thing indeed.

In terms of the contribution that defence makes, you are absolutely right that we must be wary of trying to fight the last war. I think that JFC Fuller at the beginning of the last century predicted the change of warfare as he then knew it. He was right, only he was several decades premature. We need to be ever so slightly wary about suggesting that we will not be required to do what you and I might recognise as war fighting in the foreseeable future. That would be a very risky proposition to sign up to, but I think we have to make plans for a pacific future in which our military is engaged in upstream conflict prevention and with partner nations. Indeed, we do that already. We are in the van of that among nations. I am thinking particularly of the international defence engagement strategy that you will know was launched in February 2013. I am thinking of Future Force 2020, the reconfiguration of the British Army, which is very much about adaptable forces focused on regions of the world
where we think we need to exert influence and where we need to skill our people in order to engage in those parts of the world.

I think we are very mindful of a future in which we are not actively engaged in what you and I would see as conflict but rather in prevention. Everything that the MoD has been engaged in over the past several months has been geared towards trying to configure ourselves for that scenario.

**The Chairman:** Thank you very much. A new mindset, a sea change—those are big and exciting words. We have a lot of questions, and Lord Foulkes is ready to put the first one.

**Q370 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock:** Can I say first that I have been forced into a position of having to praise the present Government for reopening embassies in places such as El Salvador and Haiti in particular. I am very pleased at that. We have had a lot of representations, however, about problems with visas, particularly examples of people from Lesotho having to go to Pretoria to get them and people from Tanzania having to go to Nairobi. This is causing some problems. What can be done to make it easier for people to get here—not just students but a whole range of people?

**Hugo Swire MP:** I think you make an extremely good point. I do not think there has been a failure of communication, but possibly we have allowed commentators to paint the visa regime as more of a problem than it actually is. You only have to look at the newspapers this morning to see the very large level of immigration that there has been in this country over the past decade. I think it was incumbent on this Government to get a grip of our border controls and to work out who is here and who is coming here. I think that on the whole it is working. The majority of people getting visas in China, for instance, get them very quickly. I think we did send mixed signals, particularly over student visas, when we were trying to tighten up on some of the courses here, which were frankly incredible. We wanted to stress that anyone coming to a credible course could still come. But I think that there was a bit of push-me pull-you going on.

**Lord Foulkes of Cumnock:** We keep getting China quoted to us, but I am more concerned about Africa and Latin America, one of your areas. I am not talking about people coming to live here. I am talking about people visiting here—businessmen and tourists coming here—and not being able to get visas in their own country.

**Hugo Swire MP:** I agree. That is something that we are looking at. I will give you an example from that part of the world. I was in Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic and one of the Ministers wanted to come here to see me. He was going to have to send his passport to Miami. He wanted to go elsewhere and was unable to travel during that period. That is plainly ridiculous. We are trying to look at ways of doing more with the mobile biometric visa collection service. I was talking yesterday to the new Foreign Minister of the Maldives. This is another issue for them. We have taken a machine—it is probably no bigger than a briefcase—and they can gather the information there.

The overarching thing has to be security and to work out who is coming here, but we need to work harder with our Home Office colleagues to ensure that it is easier to get people coming here, particularly Ministers, high-level businessmen and so forth, as well as tourists.

**The Chairman:** Can we just widen this a bit? On Monday, we had a video-conference with the US Under-Secretary of State, in which she said that the United States employs 3,540 public diplomacy and public affairs officers and that all US embassies have expertise in public diplomacy and dealing with all these problems, including visas, as well as dealing with the general public. She went on to say that they have been trained in the US Government’s
Foreign Service Institute in public diplomacy, social media and online business contact. Do we have the same kind of dedication? Do we have the same kind of staffing? Is that our story as well?

**Hugo Swire MP**: We certainly do not have the same levels of staffing as the Americans. Nor would you expect us to. We have tried to rationalise the visa system with a hub and spoke system. For instance, a lot of visas now can be done in Manila.

**The Chairman**: I was going wider than visas.

**Hugo Swire MP**: It seems to me that actually training people and diplomats should be about the public interfacing with the public. That is what diplomats do. That should be their default position. I take on board what you say, and maybe when we set up this diplomatic academy that should be one of the courses that people should subscribe to.

**Q371 Baroness Morris of Bolton**: I thank you both for very good opening statements and both departments for their activity. I do an awful lot in the Middle East and I know that everyone is very pleased with our interaction there. I missed the last three or four meetings of this Committee because I have been employing, I hope, soft power either here or in the Middle East. To pick up on Hugo’s point of business people at embassies, the only people I met at the embassy in Kuwait were business men and women. I think things have very much changed.

I am slightly concerned about the follow through. We are very good at big gestures, such as our GREAT campaigns and opening new embassies, but given that we have depleted resources and constrained budgets, which is why we now have to “network shift”, I slightly worry that we might raise expectations in some of our more traditional markets. Do we follow through when there are really good companies that want perhaps to trade? Do we have the resources to ensure that that happens?

**Hugo Swire MP**: Thank you for that. I have been reading the reports of this Committee and saw that John Major thought that the Foreign Office should have a far larger budget. Who am I to gainsay John Major? But I think the chances of us getting that in the immediate future are somewhat limited, so we must make do with what we have and deploy our resources as best we can.

In a sense the follow through blurrs over into the Venn diagram that is the FCO and UKTI. Of course, we have a new head of UKTI—we may say something about that in a minute—with Lord Livingston. I think that Stephen Green did a remarkable job and we should pay tribute to the work that he did. One of the things that Stephen has started, which we are rolling out even more now, is the transference of much of what UKTI has historically done to chambers of commerce in effect. Frankly, the great thing that has dogged this country in exports is that we do not have compulsory subscription to local chambers of commerce as they do in Germany, which in turn funds huge offices abroad. We are seeking to replicate that in our own way so that our chambers of commerce overseas will do a lot of the work, the gestation work, that UKTI has historically done. That would leave UKTI to do the more strategic work on tariff reform, the big issues, the work that you need for FTAs and things like that. The follow through will therefore work better.

I just got back from the biggest ever trip taken by any Prime Minister anywhere, certainly from the UK, to China. We went to three cities in about three days. About 140 companies came with us. Talking to them was very interesting. Reading the press about that visit when I got back, it did not seem to bear any resemblance to what had been done. Interestingly, just as an aside, not only did a lot of companies forge incredibly useful contacts with businesses
that will need to be followed through, there was a sort of in-house business exchange going on on the plane going there and on the plane coming back between companies that did not know each other. It all helps. We have to do more. We have to reach the significant targets that we have set ourselves. We are falling some way short. Of course, we are dependent on the global market economy. For instance, if we are doing badly in Europe, why? Is it because there has been a recession in Europe?

To answer the question, yes, it is very good taking a trade mission and introducing them, but how do you follow that through? At the end of the day it is up to the company, but that company needs assistance from UKTI or, in turn, these new chambers. I think that that will get better.

**Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts:** Slightly following on from Baroness Morris's question, when we open an embassy—I share the enthusiasm for us putting our footprint on the ground—do we set a minimum level of people and effort that we will commit to that embassy? I ask that because I have an interest in Madagascar, so I was very interested to see that we opened an embassy there, but I then discovered that it was an office in the Germany embassy with a single person. That seems to me to be almost worse than doing nothing because it looks as though we are a subset of Germany. What sort of analysis do we do before we open them? Do we say that we have to have so many people on the ground to make it worth while?

**Hugo Swire MP:** I am loath to disagree with Lord Hodgson but I could not disagree more on that. It is much better that we have a representation than no representation. Let me give you an example. Port au Prince is not a colonnaded, white regency building with a staff of 60; it is one person who is a chargé who used to work in Santo Domingo embedded in the Canadian embassy. In answer to your question, the question has to be: is it better to run Haiti and Port au Prince, particularly given the huge divisions which have emerged on the immigration issue between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, with our own man in Port au Prince, or is it still better to run it from Santo Domingo? I would argue that it is better to have our own man, small that it may be. Actually, it is the thrust of the Foreign Office, because we cannot be everywhere with the resources we have. We are seeking to do much more of this around the world with our traditional allies, the Canadians and the Australians. Where they do not have representation, we are inviting them to come on to our campus and we will go places where we cannot have representation on to theirs. It seems to me that that is a good use of taxpayers' money to raise British visibility at very little additional cost.

**Q372 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean:** We have had some evidence that the GREAT campaign has taken resources at the expense of the FCO’s public diplomacy efforts. Is that really sensible given your opening statement and the general agreement that there is about the importance of this? Secondly, going back to Lord Foulkes’s question on visas, on which we have had considerable representations, you say that you are addressing the problem and that you hope that technology might provide a solution. Is there a timetable and is there a set of areas of concern which it is proposed will be addressed by a particular time, or is just something that is under review and which will just continue to be important but at the expense of the urgent?

**Hugo Swire MP:** To take your second question first, it is constantly under review. It is an ongoing discussion.

**Lord Forsyth of Drumlean:** When I was a Minister, when we said that it is constantly under review, that meant that we were not going to do anything about it. It may have changed.
Hugo Swire MP: Many things have changed, and not all for the best either. When I say that it is constantly under review, I am not giving a Sir Humphrey answer—at least I hope I am not. I genuinely mean that this is an ongoing dialogue between ourselves and the Home Office. It is something in which the Prime Minister takes a very keen interest. Do not forget that all our efforts to co-ordinate these matters—I go back to what Ken Clarke said—this is the first time that any Government have attempted to co-ordinate these measures. These are chaired at National Security Council meetings by the Prime Minister. The issue of immigration was raised again with him here and the Home Secretary sitting opposite him. We are trying to fine-tune our offer. It is rather like constituents, of which you had many Michael, so you will remember that they are only too quick to tell you what you have not done. They never write to say what you have done. At least mine do not but perhaps yours did. The answer is that it is a better situation than probably is known. We need to publicise the achievements that we have made but we always need to make improvements and it is not something we are being shy about doing. We really need to get this right.

In one of your earlier Committee reports, I read about the GREAT campaign having sucked funding. It does not quite work like that. We had to have cuts in the Foreign Office. The money we had to reduce did not go into the GREAT campaign. The GREAT campaign has been hugely successful, and I can say that from practical experience. It is quite interesting and encouraging when you go to anywhere in the world where we are promoting the UK with similar posters and a similar campaign. I was at Bloomingdales in New York and it was blasted all over with the GREAT campaign. I most recently launched a pharmaceutical company in Mexico City surrounded by the GREAT campaign. I have done Hamleys in Kuala Lumpur with the GREAT campaign. Wherever you go, you have this extraordinary theme. We are now being asked by other countries, not least Japan and others, to tell them how we have done it, and I have instructed officials to give erroneous information. We certainly do not want them to emulate. It has been a huge success, which is precisely why we are going to continue with the GREAT campaign to 2016. The annual funding between 2014 and 2016 will be increased by 50%, which is up from £30 million to £45 million. That is in recognition of jobs and growth. I will not break down how we quantify this and how we study it but it is deemed to be a hugely successful campaign.

I asked my officials to print out when some next big things are. Unfortunately, I think your report is coming out in early March. But if you were minded to delay it—let me make clear that I am not volunteering funding from the Foreign Office for this—your Committee could do a lot worse than see a major trade expedition branded under the GREAT campaign in action. There is one between 10 and 13 March for the luxury retail food and drink market, which, looking at the Register of Members’ Interests, might appeal to some of you who have an interest in those markets anyway. It is in Hong Kong and Macao, and I think it would be incredibly useful for your Committee members to see for themselves how we do this. I hope that you would be extremely impressed by what we do and why we have given it additional resources.

On the back of that, we have also created these business ambassadors and ministerial trade envoys, some of whom are in this room, and more are to be announced shortly. Also, for instance, in my part of the world, Lord Puttnam does Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. He has been there. Baroness Bonham-Carter has been doing some very good work in Mexico. There is a real combined Team UK effort going on, and it probably is more co-ordinated by three things. It is co-ordinated ultimately by the Prime Minister chairing the NSC meetings. Our one yesterday was on emerging powers. The heads of post locally, the ambassadors, have responsibility for that. The GREAT campaign on whose board I sit is chaired, as you know, by the Culture, Media and Sport Secretary. It is pretty co-ordinated, and that is
before we talk about what we are doing for companies that are in the UK and about inward investment.

**The Chairman:** We want to come on to this co-ordination question. Lord Janvrin wants to talk about the GREAT campaign, and perhaps Baroness Nicholson wants to talk about the same thing.

**Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne:** I will come after.

**Lord Janvrin:** I might get on to co-ordination through the GREAT campaign.

**The Chairman:** Well, both you and Baroness Nicholson want to talk about co-ordination. In fact, we all do.

**Q373 Lord Janvrin:** You have rightly, in my view, expressed satisfaction with what the GREAT campaign has been doing and the co-ordination that that has brought within Whitehall. My question really looks further ahead at whether you think the Whitehall machine is looking wider and beyond the usual suspects of UKTI, the MoD, the Foreign Office or DCMS to, for example, local government dealing with diasporas or education obviously dealing with students and issues around that. Do you think that on the back of the GREAT campaign you can see a wider need to co-ordinate our soft power assets better?

**Hugo Swire MP:** We can always do better, but I do not think that we are doing too badly. Let me give one example where I have been unhappy, and we are doing something about it, which kind of answers your question on soft power and education. We have the Marshall scholarship programme, the Commonwealth scholarship programme and the Chevening scholarship programme. The Chevening alumni make up about 40,000 to 50,000 people around the world. The Chevening scholarship is a one-year postgraduate programme, and is incredibly important. Some posts have historically been better than other posts at maintaining a database of who these people are. That seems to me to be criminal neglect. To misquote the Jesuits, "Give me a boy at seven and I will give you the man". If you have someone in the UK for a year, on the whole they feel benign towards the UK for the rest of their lives. They rise up in whatever sector of society—civil society, politics, sport or business—and you have them, so you need to keep them. We are in competition with America and other countries that throw more resources at this than we do. I have asked the Foreign Office to do a piece of work on a co-ordinated secretariat for Chevening. I want to have a Chevening tie, and a Chevening scarf for the ladies, to brand it more, and to keep in touch with these people around the world. I want the Foreign Secretary to do a video, or whatever the modern equivalent is—not a selfie—to tell them what Britain is doing and to bind them in. That seems to me to be a co-ordinated approach—soft power at its best. Also, there has been a steady decrease in the number of Chevening scholars, and it is looking worse. I want that trend reversed and to increase the numbers to pre-2010 levels. Government cannot do that alone; that has to be done through the public-private partnership, as it were. Every company I speak to, in all the markets, agrees to do something with Chevening scholars. It is not the same as writing a cheque, I grant you. Some companies, such as HSBC, do a great job, while others are rather slow to come forward and many simply have not been asked. I think that we can dramatically increase the Chevening scholarship programme by getting in more private funding. We can better co-ordinate it and keep in touch. That is one small example of where we can polish what we have been doing historically. If you transpose that to other areas of what we are doing, that seems to be the way in which we should be thinking.
**The Chairman:** Baroness Nicholson, you would very much like to bring in the military side because the co-ordination there is crucial.

**Q374 Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne:** Just to take you back a moment, Minister, you raised the question of stronger links with our older allies. In fact, you were referring to two of the most prominent and powerful members of the Commonwealth. Is now the moment, therefore, for the FCO—to take the “C” in its title—to turn up the volume and talk up the Commonwealth? There are magnificent opportunities, as you rightly identified already, with those two, but there are others. What about India? What about some of the other major elements of the Commonwealth. Is not now the moment for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to push for the Commonwealth to be much more widely recognised, supported and understood and therefore co-ordinated with the Foreign Office? We get few mentions of the Commonwealth in anything public that the FCO says.

You also commented on one of our newer, slightly more recent very strong allies in Germany, perhaps our best ever ally in the European Union. Another one might be Denmark. Germany is so large and wonderful, yet we do not have the same chamber system as Germany; we have a very different one that is much more voluntary and very sporadic. While trade missions are wonderful theatre and provide a fantastic splash for the United Kingdom—I have watched them, they are magnificent—it is the follow up, as Baroness Morris has said, that is so important. While chambers of commerce are very useful, we just do not have the German system on which we can rely because we do not have the same society. What else are you thinking of that a prosperity campaign might in fact promote?

**Hugo Swire MP:** On the issue of the Commonwealth, it is worth pointing out that two of the BRICS are Commonwealth countries—India and South Africa. We do an enormous amount with India, where we have created 38 new posts. If you put India and South Africa to one side, as I said in my opening remarks, there are studies that show that intra-Commonwealth trade is both easier and more cost-effective for companies. The Commonwealth is something that we take enormously seriously on a whole range of issues. I very much welcome the energy that Lord Marland will bring to the business side of the Commonwealth. His first opportunity to do something big will be in Glasgow in July.

We need to constantly remind ourselves that of course we have a special responsibility in a sense for the Commonwealth but at the end of the day we are an equal member of what is a voluntary organisation. I am absolutely convinced that we have to tread a very careful line by not stepping over the mark and being seen to instruct or dominate the Commonwealth.

**Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne:** Just as a supplementary, I did not mean that. How can we use the Commonwealth for trade and aid?

**Hugo Swire MP:** There is a national fault-line in the Commonwealth, it is worth pointing out, which has been recognised by Lord Howell, between what I call the traditional old partners—New Zealand, Australia, Canada and us; we saw the most recent evidence of that at CHOGM last month—and the newer Commonwealth countries that want a slightly different vision of the Commonwealth. They are much keener to talk about development and so forth, rather than trade. We need to refocus it. We need strong leadership in the secretariat, and I think Britain has a role to play.

I am constantly interested in articles in the papers suggesting that the Commonwealth can replace the EU as a trading bloc. That is patent nonsense; the strength of the Commonwealth is in addition to the EU. We live in a world of multifora membership. We have ASEAN and the Pacific Alliance. Every country is a member of many different
organisations and the Commonwealth has to earn its place among them. It has no absolute right. That is something I am taking extraordinarily seriously and am bringing various people together in the not too distant future to have a deep dive on the Commonwealth on how we can get it back on course. That is a very interesting point—I will put it no stronger than that.

The Chairman: I want to bring in Dr Murrison, who has been sitting here very patiently. We have had a lot of evidence on the soft power implications for the conduct and disposition of our very considerable military budget. Any questions on that from colleagues would be welcome as this is an area we want to develop.

Q375 Baroness Goudie: I would like to talk about co-ordination between the Foreign Office, the military and DfID. These are three very important parts of Britain's soft power, working in parts of the world where, without our soft power, people would not survive. I worry about the co-ordination in particular with the Ministry of Defence, where there is the Foreign Office and DfID and sometimes the EU Commission, which has huge budgets, working with NGOs and others. There does not always seem to be joined-up writing with the Ministry of Defence. It is really important, because the work being done prior to the terrible atrocities over the past 10 or 15 years was very much soft power. How are you co-ordinating all three and some of the huge budget from the European Commission that is being spent alongside DfID and the FCO? If may not be possible to say just now, but what about long-term planning, because it is huge money and it can make huge change? I am very much in favour of what is happening, but I want to see that it is all joined up much better and that the NGOs are not duplicating some of the work that they are doing.

Dr Andrew Murrison MP: Shall I kick off? I am delighted to have the opportunity to talk on that very important point. The starter for 10 probably is the International Defence Engagement Strategy, which was published in February of this year. It was a joint FCO-MoD effort and is owned jointly by those two departments of state. I would resist the characterisation that you have proposed. From my own observation, the FCO and the MoD work very closely together, both informally at ministerial level and at official level. I am thinking of things like the Building Stability Overseas Strategy as an example of where officials work at a high level to ensure that DfID, the FCO and the MoD are hand in glove. I simply do not recognise the separateness that you are suggesting.

Baroness Goudie: I have seen some things on the ground so this is not hearsay.

Dr Andrew Murrison MP: I do not doubt that. All I can do is to report my experience.

Baroness Goudie: Of course. I am not arguing with you. I am just saying that I am not sitting just from here.

Dr Andrew Murrison MP: All I can do is agree that it is important that we do things in a joint way. That goes for government overall. I reach back to my earlier point about the collocation of government departments abroad, which I have seen happening and which, to my great surprise, was not already happening. That is quite an extraordinary thing that is now being remedied, which is clearly right.

I should like to touch upon the point made by Baroness Morris about the follow through of the GREAT campaign. Businesses that I have talked to, which tend to be in the defence and the security arena, are very positive about the way in which the Government are promoting British interests abroad. The defence and security sector tends not to be particularly forward in praising anybody, frankly, but it has been forthright in its welcome for a changing attitude by Ministers on promoting British security and defence deliverables abroad. That
has been quite gratifying and I believe it to be genuine. I will give the example of Libya, which I have visited three times in the past 12 months. It is clear that one of the attractions of the UK as a business partner in that country, which is clearly rebuilding itself after Gaddafi, is that we are in it for the long term. That is our pitch. It appears to be very welcome by the country as a reason for engaging with the UK and not with our competitors. Your point was very well made, and I am very pleased to note from my observation that that appears to be what is happening.

Hugo rightly rattled off a list of educational deliverables. Their importance cannot be understated, and I am pleased to pitch in with the defence contribution. You will be aware of the work of the Defence Academy, in particular its high-profile courses. A number of heads of state and heads of service have had experience of training in this country, and we have to understand that some of these countries have societies where the military plays a more prominent role than it does in this country. It is important that we make sure that that is not neglected in the future. I would also point out the large number of senior foreign personalities who have been through Dartmouth, Cranwell and Sandhurst. Sometimes I think that we fail to properly recognise the importance of what we do as a matter of routine. I am very pleased that defence is playing its part in making sure that those who can be expected to assume prominent roles in their societies in the future have a relatively benign view of the UK. Although Sandhurst, Cranwell and Dartmouth may at the time seem to be quite rough and ready, and you might expect the graduates of those academies to take a dim view of some of the robustness that has traditionally been associated with them, uniformly you can expect them, on talking to them some 20 or 30 years later, to recall their time in the UK with pride and satisfaction. We have to assume therefore that there is a significant benefit for the UK that is entirely uncosted, appears on nobody’s balance sheet but is vital nevertheless.

Q376 The Chairman: That is very interesting. Moving on to the combat area of military operations, we have had evidence from both sides of the Atlantic that nowadays the purposes of conducting military operations have to be interwoven with civilian efforts more intimately than ever. You are dealing not just with other states but with all kinds of non-state actors. You are dealing with a totally connected set of fragmented enemies. The whole scene has changed. At what level are you able to discuss that with your Foreign Office colleague or with other members of the Government, and what conclusions are you drawing?

Dr Andrew Murrison MP: I agree entirely. The exposition is in the way in which the Army is reconfiguring itself as a result of Future Force 2020. That is very much cognisant of the importance of engaging upstream. It follows that there will be a further skillset that members of the Ministry of Defence—soldiers, sailors and airmen—are going to have to assume if they are to engage in the world we envisage going forward. I am thinking of things like language skills and cultural awareness. I think that we are very sensible to the likely developing defence and security scene in the future. In terms of engaging with other government departments, all I can do is draw you back to my earlier remarks about the close working relationship we have with relevant departments, in particular the FCO and DfID.

Hugo Swire MP: May I come in, Chairman, on three things? First, to go back to Baroness Nicholson’s point earlier, which ties in with business trips abroad, their validity and the follow through, she is absolutely right about Germany. I said at the beginning that we do not have the luxury of compulsory chambers of commerce membership, which is why we are seeking to replicate them in our own way abroad. I read an article in the Spectator a few
months ago questioning the validity of these trips. It is not something I recognise. I have personally, standing in a room with a business and the President of a country, been able to unlock problems that have dogged that particular business for many years. Ministerial engagement on these trips is hugely valuable. We are going to do more of them and they are going to be bigger and glitzier. We reckon that that is the way in which we can penetrate these markets.

My colleague made a point about collocation earlier. It was something of a surprise to me. I do not think that it is too well known that what has happened right across the board is that you have this emergence of all kinds of departments having their unilateral representation in some of the capitals of the world. They very often employ local people on different terms, which exacerbates inherent tensions. You have people from DECC doing climate change. You have huge DfID organisations; and you have the military. You might say that I would say that anyway. My view is that the people who own the UK abroad are the FCO and everyone should come under our compound as closely on our terms as possible. That is not universally popular but we are beginning to do that and so better co-ordinate where possible.

If your Committee wanted to look at a country that is almost a template of how we are trying to work closely with DfID, the MoD and the FCO and align our shared interests, you could do worse than look at Burma. Burma has elections coming up in 2015. There are constitutional issues that currently prevent Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from standing. We are working in the international fora to try to get Burma to accelerate the speeding up of its constitution. The Speaker has been there. We have had its clerks over here learning how to draft legislation. This country is emerging from the dark shadows of an autocracy into what we hope will be a democracy. We have appointed a military attaché there at the request of Aung San Suu Kyi to liaise better with the military, which incidentally still has a guaranteed 25% of the parliamentary seats. They have that block which in itself is a problem. We are one of the biggest bilateral aid donors now in Rakhine, which I was the first western Minister to go to. I am going to Kachin quite soon. We have had more ministerial visits there. I have taken a trade mission there. All the different disparate arms of UK plc are trying to help Burma along the way. I think that that is a pretty good example of cross-ministerial and cross-departmental co-ordination.

Q377 The Chairman: This is a message that we have had from several other witnesses as well. Of course, it has an enormous implication flowing from it. Are we able to deliver the embassies on site in the various countries where the ambassador is required to be almost a polymath, co-ordinating the interfaces between cultural, creative, military and business activities locally on a more and more intense scale? Are our embassies all around the world, not just the hot areas such as Myanmar and Burma, being built up to cope with this new degree of a wider range of diplomacy and activity than ever before? Embassies cannot cope if they have to cut down their entertainment budget the whole time or weaken their travel and that side of things. They must be free to operate in a much bigger scene than hitherto. Is that recognised?

Hugo Swire MP: It is certainly recognised. Would it not be nice not to have to operate within the spending envelope that we do out of necessity? I raised this question with some officials yesterday. I said that I was not aware of any post around the world being unable to do something. Eyes were slightly rolled heavenwards and it is obviously not a view that some officials share. Certainly, the embassies that I have come across—I do not say this glibly—are working extraordinarily hard. I preface my remarks at the outset by saying I think that we
are asking our diplomats to do many things that they did not come into the Diplomatic Service to do. On the whole, they are doing it extremely well.

I should mention the support level put into the Prime Minister-led visit to China the week before last. What I had not realised, because no one said, is that the entire office was suffering from the Norovirus. That was not mentioned and they responded magnificently. Trying to co-ordinate 140 to 150 businessmen all over the place, the Prime Minister, the No. 10 press pack and all the other Ministers was a most remarkable achievement. They did it extraordinarily well. My sense is that when you press the button, they respond pretty well.

Of course, they will always want more resource. They have had pay constraints, which has an effect on morale. I think that some of the progress up the ladder at the Foreign Office needs to be looked at in terms of human resource and career management. All those issues are important. To answer your question, we are asking them to do a lot more than they have ever been asked to do. It is putting some under strain but on the whole they are responding magnificently.

The Chairman: How many one-man or one-woman embassies do we have—that is, one UK person?

Hugo Swire MP: Let me give you an example as I gave to Lord Hodgson. Port au Prince is one. In fact, it has been joined now by DfID in the same small office. But one is better than none.

Baroness Morris of Bolton: I completely agree with Hugo on trade missions. I think they are wonderful things and should continue.

Hugo Swire MP: Perhaps you should declare your interest.

Baroness Morris of Bolton: I declared my interest right at the beginning as a trade envoy. Having seen first hand, the great good that the trade missions do, they should continue. I want to pick up on something that you both mentioned about languages. Andrew mentioned it and Hugo said that the language school has been reopened. We have all heard stories of someone who speaks Arabic or whatever being deployed in other parts of the world and people being deployed to countries where the ambassador and the main staff do not speak the language. I know that that was a particular way of going about recruitment in the Foreign Office and that it was open to anyone to apply. I wonder whether there is going to be a shift in that. With reopening the language school and assuming that someone will go there to learn a particular language, will there then be every effort taken to deploy that person to where they have a particular skill?

Hugo Swire MP: I am not sure that I share your concern. Historically, you always had the Arabists, the others and those who went to Beirut and learnt Arabic and so forth. I think that has gone. I think people move around much more. People constantly go on language courses before they deploy so that they at least have a grasp of the language. We have many more people pre-deployment speaking Mandarin, for instance, than we have ever had. The diplomat rising up through the Foreign Office in a sort of silo—you are an Arabist, so you will always serve in Middle Eastern embassies—has gone. I am not an expert in this field, but recruitment right across the Civil Service seems to have changed. We have people coming into the Foreign Office. I do not know whether that is a good or a bad thing. I am not sure that we have not along the way lost something. That is what concerns me.

Dr Andrew Murrison MP: Defence attachés are an important part of our effort abroad. I have to say that we recognise the situation that Baroness Morris is describing and have decided that as part of our reconfiguration we should enhance the foreign service element of
our primarily officer’s career streams. We do not have the resources to do it in the elaborate way that the Americans do, for example, but we can reconfigure the defence attaché post so that it is seen less and less as an end of career post before you retire and more something that is inculcated throughout an officer’s working life. That might mean that he or she might expect to have a series of posts in various ranks proceeding to the most senior appointments for our most elaborate missions abroad. That really presupposes that we can inculcate language training and cultural awareness in people at a young age. That is woven into our thinking on the adaptable forces brigades that will be assigned to various parts of the world that are important to us. People will have that exposure throughout their careers, which means, we hope, that their senior people will be more adept than they are at the moment at occupying senior roles and that we will not, in quite the same sort of way, have to put huge effort into these folks right at the tail-end of their career. For difficult languages and difficult parts of the world, we will potentially be investing 18 months of training to enable them to do a two and a half or three year appointment right at the end before they leave the service.

Q378 Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: I have a couple of questions for Dr Murrison please. First, I have been very pleased, as I am sure we have all been, to see that we have been paying much attention and putting more finance behind looking after wounded soldiers and wounded former soldiers. How can you ensure that that continues? Is this merely an on the margins effort because of all the celebrations that are coming up and so on with the First World War? Given that so many more of our soldiers now survive thanks to in-theatre immediate surgery and the magnificent survival rate that was not true before, how can you embed in the thinking of British culture and successive British Governments, not just this one, that we must look after our wounded soldiers and former soldiers? Can you say that? Is there a reputational issue as well as a pure clinical and psychological issue?

The second question is perhaps slightly different. NGOs these days talk a great deal about “humanitarian space”, which means separation in the field from the military in any sense. From the way you are looking, I see that that has not quite crossed your desk. I wonder whether you have any comment on that.

Dr Andrew Murrison MP: I can certainly comment on it. Perhaps I can articulate some frustration that defence has with the issue that you describe in your last point. Of course, the Armed Forces do a lot of humanitarian work. Perhaps I can suggest that some of the things that we do add far more to the sum total of human happiness than the efforts of some other organisations that would say that they are entirely pacific and would rather not work with soldiers, sailors and airmen. I am thinking of disaster relief. I am thinking particularly of the Philippines recently where we performed magnificently. There is a sense of frustration for Ministers, bordering on annoyance, that this idea should have some sort of purchase.


Dr Andrew Murrison MP: Of course, the incentive is to comply with our 0.7% ODA target, complying with the OECD’s ODA requirements. Much of what we do is not ODA-able, which is annoying, given my previous remarks. We cannot count much of this stuff towards the targets that we have been set. I see no prospect in the immediate future of persuading the OECD to recognise the importance of the work that men and women in uniform do in the cause of humanitarian relief and development. That is a pity. I think that filters down to soldiers, sailors and airmen themselves, who are very pleased in this modern world to be doing that kind of work. They see that as part of the deal. Indeed, it is sold to them when
they join up that they will be doing this sort of thing. Then they find that they are not perhaps being given the recognition on the ground from other agencies.

Q379 Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: Do you have any suggestion as to how this Committee might propose that that recognition could be obtained and flaunted?

Dr Andrew Murrison MP: I think you can comment in general terms about the frustration that we feel, and hopefully you will share, that this is an issue. The solution is in the hands of organisations such as the OECD with the various humanitarian organisations. I have to say that we are working hard to build bridges with those organisations, some of which are culturally not exactly on the same wavelength as defence. But when organisations of that sort see our people in action on the ground, talk to them and have dealings with them, they realise that these people are concerned about the welfare of humanity, want to do good work and, indeed, find that an important intrinsic part of their work as members of the Armed Forces. We can break down the cultural barriers that often exist between defence and the various NGOs. We are actively seeking to do that in the way that we approach humanitarian situations. It would be a very good thing if you are able to underscore that in your report.

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: But one cannot expect the OECD to promote the cause of the good work of the British Army. Do you not have any suggestions for us that we could undertake from the United Kingdom?

Dr Andrew Murrison MP: No, I think it would be reasonable for the OECD to reflect on the important work that men and women in uniform do, not just in the UK but through the European Union, the UN and all manner of partner nations, and perhaps have a rethink as to how the cause of peace and prosperity can be advanced best. Very often that is by deploying, for example, a squadron of Royal Engineers to build a bridge or to engage in flood relief, as they have been doing recently. Those sorts of things are vital. They need people of that sort. At the moment, there appears to be a cultural resistance on the part of elements of the international community towards the recognition of the part that men and women in uniform play. I think that that is a great pity.

The Chairman: Briefly, can you say something on Baroness Nicholson’s second question?

Dr Andrew Murrison MP: There were two bits to it: disabled soldiers and World War I. You are tempting me to stray off the subject of today’s meeting. As you know, I can talk at great length about disabled soldiers, but I will confine my remarks to how this affects our international reputation. In this country, we have adopted a model of the military covenant that complies with what you might call the no-disadvantage precept that is shared by most countries internationally—not America, which goes for what you might call the “citizen-plus” model, meaning that as a member of the Armed Forces you can expect rather more than you can as an ordinary citizen. Our model is that if you are injured in the service of your country, you will suffer no disadvantage as far as we can possibly make it so.

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: Why do we not have the American model?

Dr Andrew Murrison MP: That is probably for another day.

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: No, there will not be another day. This is the evidence.

Dr Andrew Murrison MP: Chairman, if you would like me to talk at length on that I would be happy to, but I fear you may not have time to explore it entirely. I will exemplify the no-disadvantage thing by referring to two reports that I wrote before I became a Minister: A
Better Deal for Military Amputees and Fighting Fit, which are about amputees and those who had suffered the mental consequences of conflict. I wrote those reports expecting them to go the way of most reports that are written for government—into the long grass. They have both been implemented by this Government, for all intents and purposes completely and fully. I think that gives you a sense of the importance that the Government attribute to making sure that, so far as we can, we comply with the no-disadvantage model that has been adopted by the majority of our partners internationally.

You mentioned World War I. Again, I am more than happy to talk at length on this subject as the Prime Minister’s special representative. Lord Foulkes has heard me talk about this before but perhaps I could come back to that unless you particularly want me to pursue it now.

Hugo Swire MP: It is worth saying that the first service of commemoration will take place in Glasgow Cathedral. It is a Commonwealth service on 4 August.

The Chairman: That is over and above the Commonwealth observance on Commonwealth Day in Westminster Abbey.

Hugo Swire MP: That is separate.

The Chairman: We are running out of time. We have more questions. Lord Hodgson has to go so he wants to put a question quickly, and then I will call Lord Forsyth.

Q380 Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots: I apologise for having to leave. I have some amendments coming up at 11.35 am. I just want to talk about the World Service. We have heard a lot of evidence about the World Service from people who have written and spoken about it to us. Obviously it is about to go through a change in its funding mechanisms, and the Parliamentary Questions I put down about ministerial responsibility post the change obviously means that it is going to DCMS, but the nature of the answer was that clearly, Minister, you will be looking over the shoulder of DCMS in any actions that the World Services takes.

Could you update us on where we are with the negotiations and whether you are satisfied that the new funding arrangements will be sufficient for the World Service to play the clearly important role that our evidence suggests it does?

Hugo Swire MP: Yes, I will. It will move off our books, as it were, in April 2014, but we will continue to work together. The Foreign Secretary, not me, will retain a governance role for the World Service and we will continue to collaborate. I think that it is very timely. To answer your question on whether funding can be guaranteed directly, it has always been my view, and was when I was Shadow Culture Secretary, that the universal taxation, which is the licence fee, is more than enough to pay for a robust World Service. We shall have to keep the BBC up to the mark on that.

In the past couple of days, in an Urgent Question I was pressed on DPRK and the situation there with regards to the World Service and broadcasting. It is something that I know has been followed by many of your Lordships. At the end of the day we can suggest to the BBC what it does but we cannot insist. I think that that is the best way to put it. It is editorially independent and makes its own decisions, which is exactly how it should be.

Do I think that the World Service is a useful tool? Yes I do. Am I nervous about the financial withdrawal by the FCO of it? I am not particularly. Do I think that we need to be vigilant in ensuring that it does what it should say on the tin? Yes, I do. I think that none of us in this
Committee or in either House would want to see a diminution in the role played by the World Service.

**Q381 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean:** My question is on precisely this topic. Why are the Government content to see a very respected global brand, the BBC, overtaken by CNN, Al Jazeera and others, which have the advantage of having some recourse to private capital, instead of taking a view, “Well, we have to run this”, rather as we used to do with the old nationalised industries on the basis that the budget is allocated and has to be seen in the overall context of public expenditure? The opportunities for growth and developing the brand are therefore limited, and a certain culture comes in from that sort of funding. Why is it considered absolutely sacrosanct that the BBC World Service should not be run on a more commercial basis with all the advantages that that would bring to Britain—indeed, independent of government but at the same time exploiting its brand?

When the Minister says that the Government cannot tell the BBC what to do, that is one of the reasons why it is so successful. It is seen to be independent of government. Could we not be more ambitious in developing this brand and move away from the idea that it all has to be paid for by the licence payer?

**Hugo Swire MP:** Tempting though the invitation is to stray on to territory that was once familiar to me, I will try to constrain my remarks. I think that the BBC has some very commercial interests. The list of production companies and other TV companies that the BBC owns or has shares in is absolutely extraordinary. There has been tremendous mission creep by the BBC. The BBC has a huge amount of money and is in an unique broadcasting position, unlike any commercial broadcaster. It has guaranteed income year on year. It is not predicated on advertising in a competitive falling and squeezed market for advertising. The BBC has the luxury of being able to plan ahead because it knows pretty much the spending envelop that it has.

**Lord Forsyth of Drumlean:** I am talking about the BBC World Service and the opportunities there could be to develop that service. Whatever the BBC has, it is undoubtedly falling behind other international news agencies, which seems to me to be a huge loss for Britain as a whole.

**Hugo Swire MP:** I think that Al Jazeera is a remarkably good station. It is very interesting for those of us who follow things in that part of the world. Do I have an in-principle objection to the World Service taking on some kind of sponsorship of broadcasting? Inherently, no, I do not, but it is not my call and these matters are best addressed to the chairman of the BBC Trust, Lord Patten.

**Q382 Lord Janvrin:** I want to ask Dr Murrison a question about public duties in their widest sense. Are they seen to be part of our public diplomacy, if you like? I am thinking, for example, of soldiers marching around changing the guard et cetera as part of tourism attractiveness. Are ship visits abroad co-ordinated with the GREAT campaign? In other words, is there a link with some MoD public duties—I am not talking about participation in World War I commemorations, et cetera—as part of the public diplomacy side, or is it a difficulty for the MoD to find people to do it?

My last question is to both of you. Should there be a Minister of soft power, and, if so, in which department should he or she be?

**Dr Andrew Murrison MP:** Well, it sounds like a very attractive and tempting appointment. We would probably have to fight over that. I suspect that it follows what Hugo said, with which I agree. The FCO is the lead in matters that relate to things outwith the territory of
the United Kingdom, so we all doff our hat to the FCO. In defence, we implement the national security strategy through military tasks. There are a number of them and they are reasonably well known. It is probably true that the sorts of things we have been discussing today have always happened, only they have not really been described as anything particularly. The Navy, of which I used to be a member I am pleased to say, has been doing defence engagement for ever. Clearly, it sends ships abroad, and wherever those ships go hopefully we do work that is well regarded in the host nation. That is generally is the case but not always. That has been so historically and, I would hope, uniformly today.

When I was appointed a little over a year ago, my first job was to fly out to Cartagena in Colombia to join HMS “Dauntless”. We had what amounts to a trade fair on the back of that ship. It was a very early demonstration to me of the way in which defence assets can be used to project British influence abroad and extend in this case to the prosperity agenda. It was not simply about selling things but about talking to key figures in that country, a country that is important to us. That gives an example of how we use our assets wherever we can. We very much view engagement and the public duties that you describe as part of what we do, even if sometimes they are not clearly enunciated in the formulaic tasking that we receive.

Of course, ceremonial contributes to a military task, and I would not characterise it as tourism, as such, although I understand your point.

**Lord Janvrin:** Nor would I, but it contributes.

**Dr Andrew Murrison MP:** Of course it does and very importantly too. I do not want to be too sniffy about it. I think tourism is an important part of what we do nationally and in attracting wealth to this country. I would not want to downplay it in any way. But the ceremonial of course extends far beyond that. I think it is important for domestic consumption and domestic appreciation just as much as it is for the tourism receipts to which you refer.

Of course, we are committed to the SDSR process. We will repeat this exercise after the election in 2015 and we are preparing for it now. Apropos my earlier remarks about soft power and yours about representational duties, you can probably expect—perhaps your report might like to reflect on this—that these sorts of things will have an even more prominent part than they did in SDSR 2010.

**Q383 The Chairman:** We have come almost to the end, but that is a very important point. Will the SDSR replay, or continuation or renewal, be co-ordinated by the National Security Council with all the other soft power interests of the Government and other departments? Is that what will happen?

**Dr Andrew Murrison MP:** Yes. Defence technically is not in the lead in this, but it will have a very large part to play. The sorts of things that we have been discussing will certainly inform what we hope will emerge in 2015. It is worth pointing out that SDSR 2010 was, if you like, the bedrock SDSR. We needed to do this. The 2015 SDSR will of course take 2010 as the reference point and build upon it, so it is unlikely to be quite as fundamental as the one we had three and a half years ago.

**The Chairman:** Is that even though the world has changed in the ways you have both described quite dramatically since?

**Dr Andrew Murrison MP:** The world has changed of course. The world will always change. However, some of the changes we might have reasonably anticipated in 2010 and therefore factored into our long-term thinking, so the 2015 SDSR is likely to take account of those and
update them, and certainly tweak around the edges where it is necessary because of things that have happened that we had not foreseen in 2010. But I do not think that you would expect us to engage in the kind of wholesale review that you saw in 2010.

**The Chairman:** We are in extra time.

**Hugo Swire MP:** Does Lord Janvrin want me to comment on those things? Ceremonial state visits and ships visits are hugely important. There are those who still bemoan the fact that perhaps one of the greatest vessels in every sense for the projection of soft power was, of course, the royal yacht. Many consider that to be an absence from our armoury of soft power instruments.

As regards inward state visits, I am very passionate about ceremonial. I speak with all the authority of someone who went the wrong way on Changing the Guard once, so I know a bit about that. It is hugely important. It is part of what makes us different and what we do better than any other country. You only have to be on a state visit: you, of course, have been involved in many. A few weeks ago, President Park of South Korea was hugely impressed. It is something we do remarkably well. We also did the Korean war memorial. That buys us a lot back in the host country. Any attempt to reduce that, although I hope there will be no attempt to reduce it, would be shooting ourselves in the foot.

Should there be a Minister for soft power? Soft power is like breathing. It is what we do. It is our natural default position. Ultimately, the Minister for soft power is the primus inter pares. It is the Prime Minister. He is the one who chairs the NSC, which brings all these arms together. That is where it should reside. But all Ministers should get out of bed in the morning thinking soft power. After all, what is soft power? Hard power is sending in the military. Soft power is everything else. That is what we are trying to do.

**The Chairman:** Lord Foulkes?

**Lord Foulkes of Cumnock:** No, it is okay.

**The Chairman:** That is very considerate. We have kept you here for more than an hour and a quarter. You are very busy people. We are extremely grateful to you for the illumination that you have cast on the scene. There are many more questions that we could go on asking but we must obey the demands of time and let you go. Thank you very much indeed.