Examination of Witnesses

Dr Rudolf Adam, Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, His Excellency Mr Keiichi Hayashi, Ambassador of Japan, His Excellency Mr Roberto Jaguaribe, Ambassador of Brazil and His Excellency Mr Kim Traavik, Ambassador of Norway

Q187 The Chairman: Your Excellencies and Chargé d’Affaires, we are extremely grateful to all of you for coming to this Committee this afternoon to share with us some thoughts on a very large and important issue but one that is often not fully understood. The remit of this Committee, as we are a British Committee and a British Parliament, is to look at our own country’s overseas influence and deployment of soft power. A great many books have been written on what soft power is, on how it should be deployed, on whether it is growing as an element in the whole diplomacy and international relations, and no doubt there will be many more books to come.

If I may, I will first put to each of you the basic question: what is your understanding of the concept? How does it fit into your country’s foreign influence? You might have some examples of how your own nation is investing in deploying and considering the development of its soft power influence. That is the first and basic question.

Could I start from my left, your right? Your Excellency, I see that Brazil has been described in a newspaper article as the first great soft-power nation. Of course, journalists will say anything, but how do you feel about that?

Mr Roberto Jaguaribe: First of all, thank you very much, my Lord Chairman. It is an honour for me to be representing my country here. You have set up, as usual, a very intriguing and useful instrument for debating soft power in Parliament, which is, as we were saying outside, something that we do not have in our own parliaments but something on which we might follow your lead once again, because it can be a useful instrument.

Coming to your question, I think that Brazil has perhaps been occasionally recognised as the first big soft power because we do not have hard power, so it is easier to identify as a country that concentrates on one dimension. What do we perceive as the essence of soft power? This is a complex issue, but ultimately—of course I run the risk of simplification—it is the capacity to generate and to shape perceptions. You are building, either voluntarily or through an historical, cultural process, the capacity to generate images that are ultimately going to favour decisions that are going to be taken on the basis of the image and the perceptions that you generate. This can be carried out by different means. There is the
attractiveness issue. There is the role model issue. There are a number of areas of impact where perceptions are shaped, such as the environment, humanitarian issues, human rights, food security, global governance, internal governance, and political behaviour internally. All that is helpful in determining the perception that you generate.

The Chairman: Ambassador, I am going to have to rudely interrupt you for a parliamentary reason, which I can only apologise for: we have all suddenly been called to vote and I am going to have to suspend the session for five minutes. Then we want you to continue exactly where we left off. As I say, I can only apologise; it is the way our Parliament works.

Sitting suspended for a Division in the House.

Q188 The Chairman: My apologies Ambassadors, but that is the way it seems to work in this place. Your Excellency, Ambassador to Brazil Mr Jaguaribe, you were giving us a very lucid explanation. Please continue.

Mr Roberto Jaguaribe: Thank you very much. As I was saying, for us, the essence of soft power is the capacity to generate and to shape perceptions, and ultimately to set agendas. In the case of Brazil, this is a forming issue. We have many strengths as well as a number of weaknesses in this respect, but ultimately we have been able to increase our visibility because, as I said, we are exuberant really only in soft power. As you may know, Brazil has been at peace with our neighbours for the past 140 years. We have a very keen interest in the inter-integration process in the region, and we have been able to generate good will around. This is an issue that we will perhaps pick up a little later during our conversation.

To focus for now on the issue at hand, we think that essentially this capacity to influence derives from a number of issues that are related, as I said, to the attractiveness that you can be perceived as having and to being a role model on several important issues. The cultural dimension, the sports dimension—all that generates a good impact.

It is curious to see that many of the important elements of soft power cannot really be harnessed by government. If there are attempts to harness them they will probably lose some of their effectiveness. Hollywood, for instance, is an enormous source of soft power, but if the White House or Congress controlled it it would immediately lose its appeal globally. Sometimes it is wise to leave things as they are. At other times there are a lot of things to do.

I will make one final remark. There has been enormous variation, and the world today is much more complex than it used to be. There are more relevant actors. There is the so-called emerging group of countries, which Brazil is part of. The emerging countries are doing very well, but in one thing they are still emerging, and this is where the UK excels. Ultimately one of the essences of soft power is generating information. The UK is an enormous generator of information that is consumed worldwide. Of course, one must not confuse data with information. The UK is a big absorber and processor of data and a generator of information. Information, even when it does not try to, always has an ideological component. This is spread and consumed throughout the world. The UK has an enormous amount of soft power in many dimensions, but this is a fundamental one. Of course, this is derived from another point which I have not referred to but which is fundamental: the English language, which is the global language of communications today. Therefore the UK has a privileged position. This is true not only of the UK, obviously, but it
does have a privileged position because of that. That is my brief answer, so as not to exceed the two minutes that I was supposed to use.

**The Chairman:** Your Excellency, thank you very much indeed. That was extremely interesting. May I suggest that we go straight on and ask all our visitors to comment in the same way? Then we will come on to some questions and ideas.

May I turn to you, Dr Adam? As the chargé d'affaires, you have to carry the burdens of the ambassador, who has sadly gone. He was a great friend of many of us. You represent in Britain an enormously powerful country with huge interests around the world. What role does soft power play in pursuing those interests?

**Dr Rudolf Adam:** Thank you very much. As you are aware, Germany excelled in hard power in a rather dubious way in the last century, so we have turned to soft power ever since. I do not want to go over the things that the Ambassador has already said, because I am in full agreement with him, but they include influencing thinking, forming concepts and generating information. These are extremely important.

Let me just add one or two aspects that are characteristic of our experience. It is extremely important - as a nation that has been dominating world trade for such a long time probably knows very well - to set standards and norms, not only technically and industrially but legally, to generate good will, to generate attention for the way you do things, to invite competition in best practices and to set fashions not only in clothing but in thinking. Lastly, I would say that it is extremely important to generate the perception that you can make a positive difference in solving the world’s problems. That is the big difference with hard power: hard power makes a difference by destroying things, whereas soft power essentially resides in making a positive contribution.

**Q189 The Chairman:** Thank you very much for an excellent and concise opening statement. Ambassador Traavik, may I turn to you? Last week we talked to Professor Nye, who is a great authority in these matters. He mentioned your country as the perfect example of a country with a small population compared with your neighbours but nevertheless with fantastic impact. Is there some secret here that we have to learn from? Tell us how you see the soft power scene.

**Mr Kim Traavik:** Thank you very much, my Lord Chairman. I am a little humbled by being asked to appear before this Committee in the British Parliament’s House of Lords, Britain being a country that almost always comes out on top of the various indexes and ratings carried out on soft power, and being the home of great institutions such as the BBC and the British Council. It would seem that we had little to teach you about soft power, since you seem to be cornering the market, as it were.

Let me start by responding to the question that you asked at the outset and in the list of possible queries that you sent to us before coming here. How do we understand the concept of soft power? Let me start by making perhaps the obvious point that we do not have an official definition of the term “soft power”. We all know what we are talking about, but it is hard to arrive at a hard and fast definition that will apply to all countries in all parts of the world. You referred in passing to Professor Joseph Nye. His definition would seem to us to be a pretty good one to start with when he says that it is, “the ability to shape the preferences of others based on the attractiveness of a nation’s institutions, culture, politics and foreign policy”. But that is only the beginning. We would add that what is key when you are applying efforts to enhance your soft power is credibility. All the other terms used in Professor Nye’s definition would come to no avail if the policies on which any given nation
based itself did not have, in the best cases, considerable credibility, and we try to make use of that in the areas where we consider ourselves to have some credibility.

The second introductory point I would like to make is that although we are flattered to be mentioned in these ratings and indexes—in some cases we are fairly high up in them, although not as high up as the United Kingdom—we do not have a national policy for the creation or buttressing of soft power. Rather, it seems to us that in our case soft power is the end result of policies and forms of engagement that we would have pursued in any case. A case in point that we might revert to later on is the fact that we are seen by a number of people in the international arena as a nation that has been a force for peace. We have involved ourselves in a number of processes of conflict resolution and reconciliation all over the world. That has been perhaps the most important foundation for whatever soft power we have been able to wield in the last 20 years or so. However, that is not something that we have set out to accomplish as a means of building soft power. Rather, it has been the coincidental result of the fact that we became involved at an early stage in some conflict resolution processes. Following that, we have noted that people have come to us, as opposed to us coming to people, to ask us for our services, good offices, or whatever the case might be.

Finally—I am aware that I have slightly exceeded the two minutes that you have allowed me, but it is dangerous to ask diplomats to speak briefly—we also feel that another asset to us in building our soft power has to do with some key characteristics of the society that we have created: a stable democratic society that is in all modesty relatively well functioning and egalitarian; that is committed to equality, including equality between the two genders; and that is a well to do society that is richly blessed by nature but has also made some enlightened choices about the management of those resources, which is perhaps most clearly seen in the fact that we have a fairly substantial sovereign wealth fund, which has become a major investor in many countries in Europe and elsewhere.

So there are two aspects to this: first, our involvement, our international orientation; and, secondly, the character of the society that we have created, which cannot be copied by anybody else but that can perhaps inspire other countries embarking upon similar roles in development. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Q190 The Chairman: Thank you very much indeed. Your Excellency, Ambassador Hayashi, you represent a country that in sheer economic power is, I believe, the second largest in the world. I know the statistics say the third—these are matters for dispute—but nevertheless it is a huge influence on the world economy. We have the impression that Japan has spent a lot of energy and resource on dealing with the deployment of its soft power and image and on pursuing its interests by these means. Is that right? Is that how you see it?

Mr Keiichi Hayashi: My Lord Chairman, first of all may I thank you for inviting me to this session. In the opening statements, I’m the No.4 batter; in our popular game of baseball, No. 4 batter is always the most powerful. I am not sure whether that is the case on this occasion.

Concerning the definition of soft power, I do not want to repeat what has already been said. We would base Joseph Nye’s definition in our understanding. I would say that in the case of Japan, particularly post-war Japan, soft power has always been important, not just recently, because of the constitutional restriction on the use of hard power in the form of Article 9. Soft power has been given greater attention by the Government in recent years as an important tool, or even pillar, for projecting our national interest. The whole concept of
selling positive images of the country as well as concrete products is now encompassed in a policy campaign under the banner of Cool Japan.

Earlier, Japan's soft power focused primarily on cultural aspects, with the emphasis perhaps on tradition and exoticism. Now, more attention is being paid to contemporary manifestations of soft power, often called pop culture, while increasing emphasis is also being given to trade and export aspects. But here let me cite a good friend of mine who is an expert on Japanese soft power, Dr Yee Kuang Heng of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Affairs at the National University of Singapore. He said, "In light of the increasingly severe security situation around Japan, soft power would allow Japan to attract other countries who share the same values and interests. Japan has offered co-operation with Vietnam and the Philippines on shared interests and norms in maritime security and freedom to oversee lines of communication in the South China Sea. Prime Minister Abe's idea of active pacifism also helps make Japan more appealing as a country contributing to peace". So there are at least two kinds of soft power in discussion here. One is a primary focus on economic interests—the promotion of trade, exports, contents, or even food, fashion and other things. Also, there is a normative soft power that is being sought to make Japan an example to others and to bring other countries into line with the foreign policy that Japan is pursuing. In general, I must say that I feel the same as my Norwegian colleague: that Japan has learnt so much from the UK. In that sense, I would rather try to learn from being here than giving much to you.

The Chairman: Thank you very much indeed. That is a very useful start with four superb contributions. I would now like to ask my friends and colleagues on the Committee to ask some questions.

Q191 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: I have one for the Norwegian ambassador. The Nobel prizes are probably the best example of soft power anywhere in the world. When they were started, do you know whether they thought of it in those terms or whether they have just developed in that way? Were they consciously developed as part of Scandinavian soft power?

Mr Kim Traavik: I think they have become a symbol of that, of sorts, as the years have gone by. At the beginning, it was part of the last will and testament of Alfred Nobel. He decided that, unlike the other Nobel prizes, he wanted the Nobel Peace Prize to be awarded by the Norwegian Nobel Committee. The reason quoted for that was that he considered Norway to be a particularly peaceful society, which you have to read in the context of the political realities of those days. But, as you said, it has come to symbolise some special quality not only of Norway but of the other Nordic countries—an internationalist orientation and an engagement in trying to contribute to the resolution of the problems that face humanity, be they in Europe or elsewhere in the world. From that point of view, the process has been as you suggested.

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: This question is for the ambassador for Norway and for Dr Adam from Germany. From Norway's point of view, you stand alone, as my colleague has already said, in your excellence in so many fields that could be brought within the framework of soft power should you wish to do so. How much do you think that is attributable to your independence from the European Union? You can stand alone and make your own decisions, and you have a rock-solid democracy, egalitarianism and the qualities that you describe. Can you define for us whether that might be harmed if you were part of the European Union or whether it has been strengthened by your actual independence—and it is not merely that eating a lot of fish puts your brains a little higher up than the rest of us! For Dr Adam, I ask the very obvious opposite question. Germany has massive strength these
days, thank goodness, which is on everybody's lips. For example, the obvious point of having a permanent seat on the Security Council. Has this been helped by your leadership in the European Union? Can you attribute it to anything at all or is it merely an outcome of Germany's incredible hard work and great economic success?

The Chairman: Mr Traavik again first.

Mr Kim Traavik: Thank you very much. It's an issue on which I feel a certain compulsion to tread a little carefully in the light of the discussions—I am jesting. Indeed, the question is very, very important. For a number of years, there has been a discussion in both academic and political circles in my country about that issue. The balance of opinion seems to be that it can work both ways. As you suggested, there is the fact that we are not bound by the rules of collegiality and solidarity that prevail between the members of the EU when it comes to the exercise of the common foreign and security policy. That can sometimes place constraints that might have made it more difficult to play the sort of informal facilitator's role that we have had the honour to play on a number of occasions. On the other hand, it is very clear to us that being part of the European Union gives you an added weight in international politics that can also be extremely useful in informal processes such as the ones that we are talking about. So I do not think there is a hard and fast conclusion either way. It will probably vary from situation to situation whether the fact that you alluded to—that we are not part of the European Union formally speaking, although we are close to it—gives us an added margin of flexibility or deprives us of the resources and weight that could have been useful in a different situation. I hope that that answers your question.

Q192 The Chairman: Dr Adam, the reverse question: is the EU the secret of Germany's great strength or is it a bit of a burden at times?

Dr Rudolf Adam: Thank you for that question, because I was going to comment on the European Union. From our experience, the European Union has been the most remarkable example of soft power. Whatever happened in Europe after 1989-90 was through attraction and setting an example that other countries and people wanted to join. That was regardless of the fact—and we heard some comments last week—that there is a growing necessity for reform. We probably all agree that there is too much bureaucracy in Brussels, but the attractiveness of the European Union is unbroken, as you can see by the fact that countries are lining up to join and other countries are even in the process of joining the eurozone. On the second point, on Germany's position inside the European Union: when the European Union was founded, Germany was in a very particular, very different position from the one that we are in now. I think this has sharpened our awareness that fortune's wheel is still turning. My warning to you is not to overestimate our resources. We are at the moment in a position of strength, but more than 10 years ago we were the sick man of Europe and in 10 years that can happen again. We have taken on a lot of responsibility. We approach the European Union not in terms of leadership or hegemony. We are a large country at the heart of the European Union. We think that that gives us a particular responsibility for making sure that the European Union is a success. But, as I said, we cannot run the show on our own. We need people to help and go along with us. We hope that we still have some of those people.

The Chairman: Very wise words.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: Perhaps I misunderstood what Dr Adam said. When you referred to the events of 1990, were you referring to the end of the Cold War and suggesting that that was a triumph for soft power? I would have thought that it was largely an example of hard power that brought about the disintegration of the Soviet Union.
Dr Rudolf Adam: I was referring not to the period before but to the period after 1990, when we inherited a Europe that was divided between free economies and communist regimes. Nobody had an idea of what to do with it. I was on the planning staff in our Foreign Office in those days and there were a vast number of theories about how Europe could be configured. Very very few people, I admit myself included, could imagine that 13 or 14 years later all these countries would be stable democracies—market economies—under the roof of the European Union. It was a wise decision.

The Chairman: Can I ask Mr Hayashi what particular objectives Japan is presently considering when we read in the newspapers that more money is to be spent on promoting Japan’s image? What is the thought behind that?

Mr Keiichi Hayashi: I should mention that there are two aspects. One is the normative side—to try to mobilise support for the Japanese position on international issues in general. The other side is, I think, more mercantile or more conscious of the economic benefits that soft power can generate. That is called Cool Japan, which is borrowed from Cool Britannia, although I must admit that we do not have the tune of “Rule Japan”, so it may sound a little strange to you. At any rate, we have put greater emphasis on the potential economic benefits that Japanese soft power can generate. In recent months, under the leadership of the Prime Minister’s office, we have formulated our Cool Japan promotion organisation, and we are going to spend a very large amount of money—¥50 billion or ¥60 billion—on that promotion.

The Chairman: Would it be true to say, Ambassador, that Japan is slightly shifting towards a middle position between hard and soft power? You spend a lot on defence and feel that you face some dangerous threats in the area, not least from the activities in Pyongyang and North Korea. Whereas our American friends are telling us that they think they should move more towards soft power in promotion of their interests and defence of their security, you might be said to be moving the other way.

Mr Keiichi Hayashi: Certainly that has very little to do with the Cool Japan aspect. In the case of security, the cornerstone of our security policy remains the same under Prime Minister Abe’s Administration, which is a solid alliance with the United States. We rely on the extended deterrence by US forces deployed in the western Pacific, including Japan. What Prime Minister Abe has been saying when he refers to active pacifism is that Japan wants to be more active in contributing to peacekeeping and peacemaking. We have been constrained very much by the constitutional interpretation, perhaps overly so. As you recall in the case of Iraq, which is perhaps not a very fortunate precedent for you, we sent our forces for engineering and water supply services, but they had to be protected first by British and then by Australian forces. We would not have been able to reciprocate that protection for friendly forces. That constraint on the Japanese contribution to international peace and security is something that Prime Minister Abe wants to address. Whether or not that would have some bearing directly on the situation in East Asia, it is probably not the case. In my view, that is slightly different.

Lord Janvrin: My question continues on this theme.

The Chairman: Baroness Nicholson, do you want to come in again?

Q193 Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: I wanted to ask a quick follow-up question, if I could. This is really a question to all ambassadors, although I am naturally targeting Dr Adam, because this is where it came from. The enlargement process, which must have been what you were referring to when you talked about the post-cold war
collapse, has been such a massive success. The assumption that everyone is making is that hard power is only military. Just as the great market shows in Brazil—one of your huge strengths—and as the enormous trading power of Japan and of Norway shows, surely hard power needs redefinition. Is it not that sort of economic muscle, that sort of drive, that led the enlargement process, which was led by Germany and remains led by Germany? When we are defining soft power as an aftermath of high-value good work in that sense, is not hard power transferred from being heavyweight tanks and guns and so on into economic power and, I would suggest, numbers of people? The great market of Brazil is absolutely enormous. That is power. Could I ask perhaps for brief comments, Chairman, from the members of the panel as to whether they feel my thinking might be going in a relatively sensible direction on this?

The Chairman: Let us start with Mr Jaguaribe, because, as he rightly said to us, Brazil does not have hard power at all. Does that affect the way you would answer Baroness Nicholson's question?

Mr Roberto Jaguaribe: This is a very important issue, because this is a very imprecise and somewhat nebulous area and the differentiations are not very clear. You could perhaps generate methodologies that would be very precise in their definition, but ultimately if you exclude everything that is military, you will still find elements of strength that can be utilised in a forceful way without necessarily implying any bellicose attitude. As you suggested, closing the market is clearly one of those measures that is not necessarily friendly but can be extraordinarily influential. That goes for countries with big markets or big capacities in many areas. China, for one, is a very clear case. The United States, with its enormous hard power, also has enormous soft power, as we all know. This differentiation will depend on the assessment and methodology used, but ultimately, leaving aside everything that is related to the use of force or the threat of force, you can generally say that the other thing is soft power. I would say that having a big country with a big market is part of soft power.

The Chairman: Can we pursue this for a moment? We have had some very interesting evidence on this question of whether your soft power can work if you do not have hard power. You get into a trade dispute, let us say. If the opposite number, the counterparty, takes a very tough line and it really begins to affect your interests, is there not a thought behind it all that in the end you will have to give way because the counterparty might get really rough, interfere with your shipping and start escalating the whole thing into hard power?

Mr Roberto Jaguaribe: One of the benefits that we witness today is the evolution of global governance, despite its enormous imperfections and shortcomings. Today it has become increasingly difficult to utilise single-handedly the type of abusive power that was used in the 19th century and even in the early 20th century. Even for the sole superpower of the world, the United States, there are a number of constraints that are imposed both internally from their own perception of how things should be done and externally because of the general consensus that is necessary for a number of things to be done. As you know, the WTO has mechanisms for controversy solutions that are working wonderfully well despite the fact that it is not making progress in trade negotiations.

Just as an example, we had a long-standing issue with the United States in relation to cotton, which we have won. We do not want to exercise the authority that was given to us of imposing sanctions, because ultimately sanctions are not conducive to benefit to us. We are leaning towards other solutions that are generating positive impacts. I do not think that today a commercial quarrel would ultimately lead to non-soft power confrontation as it did in the past.
The Chairman: That is a very fair and interesting answer.

Q194 Lord Janvrin: I come back to a point made by His Excellency the Japanese Ambassador about the Japanese Government's involvement in evolving the soft power agenda. There have been some differences about the view that very often—the ambassador to Brazil presented this case very well—something is beyond government control. Ambassador Traavik, I think you suggested that you had no national policy. I wonder whether—this is a question for all four of you—your Governments are increasingly beginning to look at ways of developing this, evolving policies, looking at ways in which some of the thinking that is going on in this area can be used to greater influence and whether indeed there are agencies within your countries that are beginning to look harder at how to use soft power in a more organised way.

The Chairman: What are the instruments that we should all be thinking about building up in this new world! Who would like to start? Perhaps Ambassador Hayashi would like to go first.

Mr Keiichi Hayashi: In the case of Japan, there is no single government agency that deals with soft power as a whole. I doubt that there is a select or standing Parliamentary committee that deals with soft power as a whole. The different committees, the different government agencies, deal with different aspects of soft power. Should the cultural aspect be dealt with perhaps on the international side, the Foreign Ministry deals with it, together with the Ministry of Education's cultural agency. The promotion of economic interests would be dealt with by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. This economic aspect is given such a high priority that the Cabinet Office is now taking the lead. That is why I mentioned the Cool Japan Promotion Council, which was established in March this year under the leadership of the Prime Minister.

It is difficult to say whether we have a coherent single policy to deploy our soft power in relation to specific items, but the policy makers in Japan would perhaps look in numerical terms at how much we could earn out of this programme and how to enhance the export values of fashion, food and our content industry in a certain timeframe. That is one approach.

In relation to the promotion of the Japanese image and the promotion of good-will towards Japan in foreign policy and so on, I think the Foreign Ministry will take the lead and organise a number of projects, programmes and events in that direction.

The Chairman: I will call Lord Forsyth in a moment, but if the name of the game, as the Brazilian ambassador suggested, is generating information and language familiarity, could I ask the German chargé d'affaires what Germany is doing through its Goethe institutes and its other agencies to get into this business?

Dr Rudolf Adam: We lost tremendously as a result of the wars of the last century because the role of the German language has gone down dramatically, and I am afraid it is still going down on a global scale. It is by now the language spoken by the largest group of people inside the European Union as a native language, but of course it cannot compete with English, French or Spanish as a global language. So our answer is twofold. On the one hand, we have a large network of cultural institutions such as the Goethe institutes, we have an academic exchange programme, we have a programme under which we give scholarships to researchers of world excellence to study with us and to spend some time in Germany, but most of these things are now increasingly done in English, because we realise that the lingua franca of science is English and will remain English.
The other thing is that we try to teach German not only because of the importance of the language but because we are convinced that if you want to have a career in a German enterprise, which is quite attractive because German investments are globally quite strong, you should know some German, not only because it is a means of communications but above all, because only through the language do you come to grips with the mentality that is behind the language. There is nothing more fallacious than words if you do not understand what is behind the words.

Q195 The Chairman: Again before I call Lord Forsyth, Ambassador Traavik, what agencies is Norway putting its bets on in this new international landscape?

Mr Kim Traavik: I think the situation in my country seems to be quite similar to what was described by my Japanese colleague just a moment ago. We have no overarching agency responsible for pursuing Norway’s soft power interests; rather, the responsibilities are apportioned out among the various parts of central government. Insofar as the promotion of culture is concerned, that means that the Culture Ministry, the Foreign Ministry and the Foreign Service will be the main instruments of promoting our image and promoting exchanges with other countries. In terms of creating understanding and recognition of our policies and engagement activities, the Foreign Ministry will be mainly responsible with, to some extent, the co-operation of the Prime Minister’s office. That is the picture that I would describe in my country in that regard. A few minutes ago, you may have felt I slightly belittled the political priority given to soft power in Norway. I did not mean to leave that impression. I was just saying that there is no overarching or master plan, as it were, but we all recognise the importance of it. That can be illustrated by the fact that the number of staff involved in pursuing these matters has increased substantially in recent years and I expect that to continue in the future as well. There is an issue there. It is seen and recognised as important but there is no attempt to pull it all together and put it all under one roof.

The Chairman: Norway House off Trafalgar Square used to be the centre of Norwegian influence in London. That has now closed. You do not have agencies such as the Goethe Institut, the Chinese Confucius institutes, our British Council or anything like that?

Mr Kim Traavik: No, my Lord Chairman. We have integrated that responsibility into the various embassies. For example, in my embassy, I have eight or nine people who are basically responsible for promoting cultural exchanges, including language-related activities, music, the arts and so forth. So we do not have a separate branch of the Government responsible for that; it is integrated into the Foreign Service under the leadership of the Foreign Office and Ministry of Culture.

The Chairman: Does Brazil have anything like that, Ambassador? Brazil is obviously coming into our focus on the sport side because of your handling of the Olympic Games next time. You are emerging as one of the giants of the new international order. Have you brushed up some agencies to promote the Brazilian image?

Mr Roberto Jaguaribe: No, I believe not. I believe we have more or less the same institutional formation as my Japanese and Norwegian colleagues. We have multiple entities and agencies within the Government that have responsibilities that generate soft power. In the case of Brazil, one very strong element is associated with technical co-operation for developing countries, especially in agriculture and social development where we have had enormous success. That generates a lot of good will with our neighbours and in Africa, which are essentially the areas where we are doing that work. Because of that, Brazil has had the opportunity over the past 30 or 40 years to consolidate the perception of being among the leading countries of the emerging, developing world. That generates a lot of positive
benefits, such as hosting the Olympic Games or the World Cup. We were chosen because we generate good will in the people who are choosing. The candidates from Brazil tend to be elected. Brazil tends to be elected in all multilateral elections. All that has an effect: there is a combination of the elements pointing in that direction. But we do not have a single entity that deals with policy in relation to soft power. In our case, we have the social communication office of the presidency, which will probably be the single most relevant entity in Brazil for that purpose, together with the Foreign Office and the other entities that I have mentioned.

Q196 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: Whenever I try to think about what soft power is, it is a little like trying to put a cloud in a bottle: you touch it and it disappears. Can I just ask all of you a very practical question? I am interested in soft power as a means of advancing our commercial interests for British jobs and businesses. Could each of you explain how each of you would go about doing that from your own country’s point of view? That seems to be the essence of why we are all discussing this.

The Chairman: I am afraid that we must leave that question hanging in the air: we have to go away for five minutes. I apologise. We have two or three crucial questions before we can let Your Excellencies go.

Sitting suspended for a Division in the House.

The Chairman: Lord Forsyth, can you just repeat your question, and then we must carry on! Let us hope we are not disturbed again.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: I will summarise my question. I see soft power as being about getting influence for NGOs, jobs and orders for our businesses, and I wondered whether the four of you could very briefly talk about how you go about that task in your functions. That seems to me to be what in the end soft power is focused on.

The Chairman: Inside your embassies, really, just as we are familiar with our embassies. There is a lot of commercial activity in them. Indeed, there is an increased emphasis on that under the present Government here in London. Is the same sort of sentiment reflected in your various embassies? Where shall we start? Mr Hayashi.

Mr Keiichi Hayashi: First of all, the overall picture is that the Foreign Ministry and its agency, the Japan Foundation, spends about £100 million every year to promote public diplomacy and to sell a positive image of Japan. On the more economic side, METI leads the industrial support for export promotion in the soft power field under the banner of what I called Cool Japan, and it was involved in the creation of the Cool Japan promotion organisation, which was established by a government contribution of ¥50 billion, plus private sector contributions, which made it almost ¥60 billion all together, which is about £400 million, to provide support for overseas promotion projects for the creative industry and media content industry. The ministry also provided ¥15.5 billion, which is about £100 million, for an export promotion programme to support what is called the localisation of media content, because we have the disadvantage of the Japanese language, which you do not have. We have to translate our films and animés, among other things.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: I am sorry to interrupt you, Your Excellency, but I was really thinking of what you are doing in your job.
Mr Keiichi Hayashi: I will come to that. There is also tourism promotion, administered by the Ministry of Transport, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries promotes the export of Japanese foods and beverages. In response to all these, we in the embassy have organised a number of promotional events. First, we want to promote media contents, animé, manga, Japanese films or what is called the media contents industry, which are very much promoted in cultural events. I often host different events. Another example is our hosting of a railway seminar in the embassy recently, in which Japanese railway companies and manufacturers and 150 British guests participated. We also regularly organise tasting events for award-winning sake from the International Wine Challenge competition every year. We see great potential for sake exports. We also organise business seminars to promote Japanese businesses in Africa. A lot of our businesses are based in the UK, in London, and are responsible for overseeing the so-called EMEA region, so we are helping them to create networks.

I also co-hosted Japan Matsuri, which has been held every year since 2009 with NGOs such as the Japan Society and the Japan Association. As a result, we had 70,000 participants in a one-day event, a good response. During this festival, we promoted Japanese food, Japanese culture, Japanese products, and tourism.

The Chairman: So the answer is that you are doing a great deal. I have a problem as Chairman. I am very conscious of the time. You are all extremely busy ambassadors and you need to get away. I will aim for finishing before 6 o'clock, in fact, but I know that Baroness Goudie and Baroness Armstrong would like to ask one more question. You may wish to pursue some other points on the agencies that you are using, rather as the Japanese ambassador has just described to us. Baroness Goudie, would you like to speak now?

Q197 Baroness Goudie: Thank you. My question is aimed primarily at the Norwegian ambassador and it is on the role that Norway plays in peacekeeping, in particular the role that you have played over the last, say, 50 years in assisting countries that have been at war and that continue to be at war. You have been able through your channels to work with other countries that it would have been unacceptable for these countries to work with, which all of us who have been working on this are very grateful for. That is not said in a patronising way. Without you and the other Scandinavian countries, a lot of things that have happened in the Arab spring and at other times could not have happened. Do you see this as your role as a country, or as part of your influence on peace through soft power?

Mr Kim Traavik: I think we would see it as engrained in the national outlook on life, shared by many Norwegians and endorsed by the full spectrum of political parties, that it is our responsibility to try to help where we can—that perhaps sounds pretentious but it is not intended as such—to make a difference, for example in crises and conflict situations.

If you bear with me for a moment, we saw an impetus in the early 1990s when we became involved in the process that led to the Oslo agreements. There is this interesting phenomenon of seeming to succeed. In the aftermath we came tantalisingly close to facilitating a comprehensive agreement between the Palestinians and the Israelis, although we did not quite get there. But the fact that we seemed to be succeeding created a lot of interest in various countries where conflict situations or crises were under way or evolving, which forced us to up our game—you might understand what I have in mind—in the sense that we had to professionalise ourselves; we had to establish the necessary units in the Foreign Ministry and the necessary research avenues in Norway and abroad, and we had to make use of all the resources at our disposal. We receive many such requests each year, many of which we turn down for one or two basic reasons. One is that we take it upon
ourselves to do something in this area only if all parties want it, because the parties own any given conflict and they must own the solution to the conflict. The second is that if we feel that we do not have expertise that is commensurate with the demands of that situation, we will also turn it down. That happens. But we have become involved in at least 20 such situations in recent years. There are others that we cannot refer to, because we have to accept that in the initial stages there has to be a secrecy about these things. This is the backdrop. It happened in a coincidental way, but it was very much in keeping with basic policies that we pursue and with the basic internationalist outlook that most if not all Norwegians hold dear. We see it as a result of soft power on occasions, and that is all good because it makes it possible to have a dividend from it, but it was not something that we set out to do because we wanted to create soft power for ourselves. There is an important distinction here.

Baroness Goudie: I wanted to check the distinctions.

Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top: I am very tempted to follow up the business about secrecy in our current world, but I do not think we have time for that today.

I have a general question: how far do you think it is the actions of government that influence and improve soft power, and how far is it the actions and activity of civil society in its widest sense, or do they have to be linked?

The Chairman: Who would like to have a go at that? Mr Jaguaribe?

Mr Roberto Jaguaribe: As I said, I think there are different roles in different instances, and if you try to harness everything to the benefit of your vision from government you will probably do ill. There are some things that civil society has the strength and dynamism to carry out by itself, usually in relation to cultural manifestations and the like, but things that relate to global behaviour are usually done through policy and other government agencies and through private enterprise, which generates positive perceptions that can be extremely beneficial. The Norwegian case in the instance that has been called to mind is very obvious. Countries that have a tradition of being responsive to humanitarian requests generate good will. For the UK, the policy that is being followed of increasing official development aid obviously generates positive reverberations, and I think many countries follow on that path. Overall, the degree to which you are able to use negotiation and persuasion rather than imposition also generates good will. Those that have the capacity to impose can do so but they generate bad repercussions, not always but many times. So there is a distinction to be made between what can be done by government and what can be done by society. Even internally, to cite your own example, how you deal with issues of the democracy, transparency, human rights, education and cultural benefits can generate perceptions that generate role models and increase your capacity to become influential globally.

Q198 The Chairman: I know that others want to come in, but we are out of time. I want to ask the big final question, on which I would value a comment from each of you. You are all very senior diplomats indeed. There is an impression around, which is hard to crystallise, that the world has changed, we are totally digitally connected, every corner of the earth is bombarded with information, and connectivity is everywhere. As senior diplomats, has that changed your view of how to pursue diplomacy? Has it changed the whole nature of the tasks and profession in which all four of you are deeply involved? Let us have diplomatic views from diplomats. Ambassador Hayashi.

Mr Keiichi Hayashi: Last week I attended the annual ambassadorial conference in Tokyo, the conference of Japanese ambassadors stationed in Europe. I recall that maybe a decade or
two ago we were primarily discussing the security, perhaps hard power, aspect, what to do with the threat from the Soviet Union and how to deal with the threat of INFs—all these things. Last week we focused very much on public diplomacy, and emphasised the need for the ambassadors to come to the fore and keep sending out public messages, including using social media. I started tweeting recently. This was probably unthinkable a decade ago. There was also a big emphasis on the need to use the embassy facilities of the residence and the office for the promotion of specific business interests. Again, that was unthinkable, say, 20 years ago, because the Government were supposed to be neutral to business activities and it was up to the businesses to do their job. Now, things have completely changed. There is constant pressure on the public sector to support the private sector in a visible way. That is my impression.

The Chairman: Ambassador Traavik, has it changed your job?

Mr Kim Traavik: Before I turn to that question, could I say a few words in response to the question posed by Baroness Armstrong? It is an important point about the partnership between the Government and non-governmental organisations. We have been very attached to that idea for many reasons. One is that NGOs have recourse to resources, insights, experience and competencies that you do not easily find in the public sector. We have established partnerships, including on peace and reconciliation processes, that would probably not have been nearly as successful had we not embarked on that sort of partnership with NGOs and academic circles. I just wanted to add that brief response to what my Brazilian colleague said on that point. Have the new age and social media changed the exercise of the job of senior diplomats? I think that it has. I would broadly agree with my Japanese colleague on that score. We are also starting to tweet. To me it seems to be the final proof that you can teach old dogs new tricks, with varying degrees of success of course. We are very much in that reality. We spend a lot of time on keeping our homepages up to date and using Facebook, tweeting and all that. That will become even more important as we move ahead. I am quite certain of that.

Q199 The Chairman: Has it changed your job Dr Adam?

Dr Rudolf Adam: Of course it has changed, particularly for someone who has been in diplomacy for more than 30 years. I would slightly differ from what the ambassadors have said. I realise the technical possibilities provided by Facebook and Twitter and we use them, but I personally do not think that they will be all that effective. So many facts and figures are reported almost instantly all around the globe, but the value added that we can create as diplomats is not to report facts and figures: rather, we take a strategic approach and try to explain to my Government what is happening in the society and in Parliament in this country rather than only within this Government. Conversely, we are trying to explain the reality of Germany in its multi-faceted way to this country. We regard ourselves as spokesmen not for the Government any more but for the people.

Let me just come back to one thing because it is important to me. We also believe in subsidiarity when it comes to trade promotion. Our Government and embassy are not directly involved. We leave it to those who would know it best—our industry. That is why we have chambers of commerce. Vince Cable said last week in a public speech that the German chambers of commerce network is the envy of the world. We are very proud of it. It works very well because we get the people together who actually know the thing and who bear the consequences if they make a wrong decision. Our Government only come into huge projects such as Airbus and Typhoon that by definition require the involvement of the Government either because they are government-run projects or because government
credits are needed. But we do not intervene in the promotion of BMW, Mercedes, Audi or Volkswagen anywhere. Who would we promote at the expense of the other?

The Chairman: That is a very good point. Ambassador Jaguaribe!

Mr Roberto Jaguaribe: Of course, it has enormous influence. The internet first and foremost had an enormous impact on policy. Over the past 30 years, from the Government having almost a monopoly of the foreign service, it has transcended the Government and government agencies. Civil society is itself carrying out diplomacy through other means. It is very difficult today to say that we are able to concentrate all the capacities of diplomacy in all instances and that they are utilised to maximise general impacts and benefits. Especially with the internet, information gathering, which used to be an essential element of diplomacy, has practically lost its relevance because the internet does that for you. You do not need to go off finding out things that you can find out from your chair at home. Social media in Brazil is curious. We have just received a circular instruction to find out what other countries and other embassies do in relation to social media. I do not tweet and I do not intend to tweet. I do not Facebook either. I certainly do not intend to Facebook, but I might get an instruction to tweet, although not to use Facebook. We have found that Facebook is not adequate for diplomacy in Brazil, but tweets might be adequate. I might be forced to do that because of instructions from home.

The Chairman: I am very conscious of the time. Frankly, I would have liked another hour or two with you all because you have revealed so much to us and made so many profound points. However, we do not have that sort of time. It flies by. It remains to me to release you to your next duties, which I know stretch out into the evening ahead. Thank you all very much indeed for being so frank and illuminating in what you have offered us.