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The Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK’s Influence

Inquiry on

SOFT POWER AND THE UK’S INFLUENCE

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 Witnesses: Simon Anholt, Jonathan McClory and Agnès Poirier
Members present

Lord Howell of Guildford (Chairman)
Lord Forsyth of Drumlean
Lord Foulkes of Cumnock
Baroness Goudie
Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts
Lord Janvrin
Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne

Examination of Witnesses

Simon Anholt, policy advisor and author of the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index, Jonathan McClory, policy and place branding consultant, author of the IfG-Monocle Soft Power Index, and Agnès Poirier, commentator on politics and French-British relations

Q200  The Chairman: We are delighted that our witnesses could join us today in our inquiries and construction of a report to government on soft power and British overseas influence. Thank you very much for coming. There are in front of you the necessary declarations of interests, which we are obliged to put before you to tell you who we are. We are going to conduct this session between the whole Committee and all three witnesses, but I think I am right in saying that Agnès Poirier wanted to make a little opening statement first. Is that correct? In fact, you could all make opening statements if you so wished, but as you have asked first, Agnès Poirier, you will go first.

Agnès Poirier: Very good, but we have just discussed it and my neighbours here have not prepared a statement as such. It is really up to you.

Simon Anholt: I am very happy to improvise a statement if Jonathan does not mind either.

Agnès Poirier: I will keep it brief. I grew up in a country, France, where soft power—or, rather, as we once called it, grandeur—

The Chairman: Grandeur?

Agnès Poirier: I think you can use that word. We talk about soft power, but you and I used to talk about grandeur. It is an ordinary, everyday ambition, I think. Influencing others, shaping thoughts and leading the way in arts, fashion, gastronomy and foreign policy is at least in theory always the aim in France. You want to share your views with the world, and you hope that the world will then adopt your views. I think that is why France and the USA have a lot in common.

I will give just one example. France has the world’s second largest diplomatic network, second only to that of the United States. So why am I talking to you about France, or indeed the US, when our topic is the UK’s soft power and influence in the world? Perhaps it is because we do most things in opposite ways and perhaps we have a lot to learn from each other. British soft power is evident and huge, and along with another 300,000 or so of my compatriots I succumbed to British soft power as a student in the mid-1990s when I decided to come to London.
Soft power is about powerful images and potent feelings that one associates with one country or one culture. At the time, having studied English, Russian and Spanish, I could have chosen those three countries to finish my studies in. If I chose Britain it was not only down to the practicality of Eurostar; it had to do with powerful icons. This might surprise you, because I was a 22 year-old student, but I chose Britain in no specific order because of Shakespeare, Cadbury chocolates, the blitz, the BBC, because I was and still am a raving cinephile, Rex Harrison, George Sanders, Laurence Olivier and James Mason—all born before 1910; I was born in the 1970s. I also chose London because a young Labour Prime Minister was about to end 18 years of Conservatism, while back in France Jacques Chirac had just been elected to what felt to me to be seven very long years.

I will end here, except to say that 17 years later I am still here and I can fairly say that Britain, as much as France, has shaped who I am. This is, I think, a personal introduction to the UK’s influence in the world.

Q201 The Chairman: Thank you very much indeed. I should have put the first question more clearly to start with, and I will ask your neighbours either side of you to make the same sort of comment on it. What do other countries—we have just heard one example—find attractive about the UK, and maybe on the other side what do they find less attractive, and unattractive, about the UK, because we as a Committee will need to suggest to the Government that they may be pressing many buttons to promote soft power but perhaps are not pressing the right ones or perhaps are not pressing them hard enough. That all fits in with what you have just said. Thank you very much. Mr McClory, would you like to go next?

Jonathan McClory: To address the question just asked?

The Chairman: To start with, yes.

Jonathan McClory: Simon will probably be able to say in much greater detail what things people find attractive, because he has done a great deal of work in testing exactly what people find attractive about countries. The work that I have done looks more at the resources that allow countries to engage with international audiences and that ultimately will have some positive impact on how people see a country. I think it is worth highlighting that those resources are what goes into making the soft power of a country, and they start with the political values of a country such as free speech and a free press but also with the institutions that uphold those values. Right now, we are sitting in the mother of all Parliaments, so this very building is a form of soft power resource. Then there is the culture of a country, from high culture to pop culture—so everything from the British Museum to Old Trafford through to the English language all the way to Harry Potter.

The other pillar that Joseph Nye identifies is foreign policy. This is not necessarily just about how a country acts, which is very important, but about the diplomatic infrastructure. The UK has tremendous resources in that, with the British Council, the Foreign Office and the very strong networks which the UK is part of—from the UN Security Council to the European Union to the Commonwealth—as well as the BBC World Service.

Education is a huge strength of the UK and an important part of soft power. It is not only the ability to attract international students but the quality of universities, as well as the quality of the academic output, of a country.

Finally—this can almost drift into the world of hard power but I assure you it is not—is the attractiveness of a country’s economic model: its capacity for innovation, its friendliness to business, the quality of its regulations and the extent to which corruption exists. These five categories really cover what makes for soft power resources. It is very important that we
have a structured way to think about this. I have listened to people answer the question: what is it that is attractive about a country? It can go all over the place, but it is a fairly difficult concept to pin down at times and if we can add some sensible structure to it it becomes much more useful for policymakers to get to grips with and ultimately to try to use.

**The Chairman:** I would love to pursue all sorts of questions from that, but shall we just ask Professor Anholt to make an entrée to the issue?

**Simon Anholt:** Yes. I think it is worth asking why we are discussing soft power today. We do not often discuss hard power, because we are reasonably familiar with it as a topic. Soft power is a relatively new idea, and it is worth asking why it is new, where it has come from, why it has suddenly appeared. The reason is because in the past only hard power really mattered, because the only interactions between states that mattered were the interactions of statecraft. Hard power is a tool of statecraft; it is the currency that states use between each other. Soft power is a currency that comes into being, becomes necessary, when populations have to engage with each other. As a result of the spread of democracy in more and more countries, people power means that soft power becomes necessary; you cannot very easily wield hard power on populations except by invading them, and that does not always achieve the result that you want. It is good that we are talking about soft power, because it means that the world is a more civilised place than it was before soft power became necessary.

Having said all that, I have never been entirely happy with the term “soft power”. It seems to me to be quite a primitive term, and in some respects I object to both parts of it. I object to the idea of “soft” because that makes it sound pathetic, and when we talk about the BBC World Service or about culture more broadly there is nothing soft about that, and “power” suggests that it is an instrument for getting your own way. The moment you start talking about using soft power as an instrument for getting your own way, it fails, because people immediately realise that you are using it in order to get your own way. So I object to “soft” and I object to “power”; it makes the whole thing sound like a pillow fight, and it is does not really get us anywhere at all.

I am very interested in the idea of moral power. It sounds agreeably old fashioned, but there is a reason why I like the idea of moral power. I have been researching for nearly 10 years now the way in which people around the world perceive other nations in a survey called the Nation Brands Index, which every year since 2005 I have used to poll a sample equivalent to about 66% of the world’s population—ordinary people in up to 38 countries—on their perceptions of 50 other countries. To cut a very long story very short, I have now collected 164 billion datapoints about what people think about other countries and why. The answer is that there are two categories of country. There are the categories that are already famous, such as Britain, America and China, which come with their image and their attractiveness or otherwise formed by their history and by their past engagements with other countries. Whether they are good or bad, beautiful or ugly, they have images, a reputation. Of the remaining 192-odd countries, the ones that have a good image have an image because they are good. Moral power is the strongest determinant of an overall positive reputation. This is extraordinarily good news. If anybody wants to challenge me on this—I would not be at all surprised if you did—I would be very happy to respond, but in the meantime you might just want to take my word for it: people like good countries.

**The Chairman:** Right. That is a very good starting point. I do not know whether any of my colleagues would like to come in with questions.
Q202 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: I would just like to ask this. You do not like “soft power”. You said moral power, but you rubbished power for very good reasons, so what do you think it should be?

The Chairman: What are we talking about?

Simon Anholt: The model that I started developing about two years ago is called the MARSS model. You have to have an acronym otherwise nobody pays any attention. It is a bit more complex than soft and hard. M is morality: the perception that a country is good or bad, whatever that means for the subject in question. A is aesthetics: whether a country is perceived to be good looking or not. Because we are human beings we tend to see things visually; we have a picture postcard in our mind of what we imagine other countries are like—beautiful or ugly. R is relevance: does the country have any impact, any influence, to actually change my life, or does it not? The first S is sophistication: do I regard this other country as being a modern, technologically advanced country or do they still plough the fields with oxen. The last S is strong: the equivalent of the soft and hard power dimension. Is it a country with power—economic, military, territorial, population and so forth?

So rather than just the two-dimensional model of hard power or soft power, my model looks at those five dimensions which, based on the research, appear to be the ways in which people all over the world instinctively in their minds categorise and assess other countries. As I say, the moral dimension appears to be the most significant of the five.

Q203 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: That is really fascinating, and there are thousands of questions to ask about that, but the one I want to ask is this. You are measuring people’s perceptions. We are particularly interested in how they come to those perceptions. In other words, what are we doing that creates the right perceptions? What are we doing that creates the wrong perception? Rather than just measuring the effects of it, can you identify the causes?

Simon Anholt: In a word, it is a great many things over a very long period. It is ultimately to do with the amount of engagement that a country has with another country. One of the reasons why the United Kingdom has an extraordinarily powerful and positive image—in my survey, it is invariably one of the top three most admired countries on the planet—is simply the extent of our reach: the number of engagements that we have with many, many hundreds of millions of people all over the world over many, many generations. To know someone is to love them, and the curious thing is that even if our relationship with one or another country might not have been happy in the past, after a generation or two people seem to forget the nature of the relationship and all they remember is that they know us. The Indians, for example, would have every good reason to curse our memory but they do not. They remember that they know us and they think that they like us. It is a million different things over an extraordinarily long period. The biggest problem that I have in my day job, which is advising Presidents and Prime Ministers on this kind of stuff, is patience. They are simply not in office long enough to have any influence over these effects, which tend to be over decades and generations. One of the things that my survey has proved beyond doubt is that none of us likes to change our mind about countries, and we will resist changing our minds about countries even after the evidence becomes overwhelmingly that we ought to.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Why do we always do so badly in the Eurovision song contest?

Simon Anholt: Jonathan?
Jonathan McClory: I have already named the five major categories of metrics that go into creating the soft power index that I compile. One of those metrics covers the global music industry and using data that are very helpfully provided by—the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, which represents the global recording industry – it has a great deal of data on countries and their respective music markets. The UK has more top five albums in foreign countries for which there are data than all other countries put together. So to answer your question, the UK has a phenomenal heritage of creating music and selling it and is a global success, in many ways head and shoulders above others. The US might argue otherwise, but the UK is at the top, certainly.

Simon Anholt: The Eurovision song contest is about bad music, and that is why the UK does not do well.

Jonathan McClory: Exactly. We do not need the Eurovision song contest, because the actual music that the UK makes does very, very well indeed.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: There is a serious point behind the question. It is nothing to do with music; it is about people ganging up and forming alliances. So you have not really answered Lord Foulkes’s question.

Jonathan McClory: I think you see that with a few countries. You do not see it with all. Yes, Cyprus will always give 12 points to Greece and vice versa.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: I dare say I am getting out of my depth now.

Jonathan McClory: If we look at some of the noises that are being made politically about wanting to be in a club, it sounds as though Britain does not really want to be part of the Eurovision club anyway: hence, perhaps, it does not get too many points.

Q204 The Chairman: Perhaps we could move away from that particular point, although it seems vital. Indeed, the whole impact of our creative arts generally and our image in the world are important and, we hope, are now securing our prosperity and interests. At one end of the spectrum there is old fashioned hard power, or new fashioned hard power: lobbing missiles. It used to be gunboats and boots on the ground. Some countries have that capacity, including this one to some extent, America obviously to a vastly greater extent, France to a considerable extent. Other countries are much more reluctant even to contemplate hard power methods. Are they related? Are one’s image, power of persuasion and getting other countries to make one feel attractive and beloved, as it were, connected with the fact that behind you you have a very big stick? Do hard power and soft power go together, and if you separate them do they fall apart? That proposition has been put to us in evidence quite strongly.

Simon Anholt: My own view is that they are really rather separate creatures. I think that one has to go to the end of the argument and ask what we are hoping to achieve by the exercise of these powers. What do we actually want? Do we want more trade? Do we want economic prosperity? Do we want to engage more productively with other countries? If that is the end of the argument, I would argue that a different kind of hard power from the military is probably essential, and that is a combination of economic, commercial and population power: in other words, the combination of a large number of people, a large number of companies, a lot of money and a lot of experience that enables that country to expand itself commercially widely around the world. The United Kingdom has this commercial hard power to a great degree. Our businesses operate all over the world, our business people operate all over the world, our products are sold all over the world, and products from all over the world are bought and sold here. Through that process, we have
many, many engagements. Millions of people every day have an opportunity to engage with the United Kingdom in one way or another. That is our commercial hard power. If we did not have Trident, I do not think it would make any difference at all to that. The hard power I am talking about is economic and commercial. If the ultimate aim is to sell more stuff and to make more money, I do not think that military hard power is all that important. Military hard power is very important in order not to get yourself pushed into a situation where you cannot even trade. I am not saying that military power is unimportant; I am saying that it does not produce soft power as a direct consequence. It is not the sine qua non of soft power either.

The Chairman: I suppose I am saying that in history if we got into major trade disputes, as we have many times—our goods were halted or chuck in the sea at the Boston tea party—and if there was a gross offence to our commercial interests, in history our response has been, “Very well, send in the troops”. If our country has decided that it will never use that kind of military deployment, are its threats and negotiating powers greatly weakened? I think you have just hinted in what you said that you think they might be.

Simon Anholt: I rather thought I was saying that they are not greatly weakened. I think there is every cause for celebration that we live in an age when the use of military power in those circumstances is no longer really approved of, not even really tolerated. We are after all a member of the European Union, and long may we remain so. In Europe, it is regarded as not done to wave military power around in order to achieve commercial or political aims. That is the model for global collaboration, and as time passes I hope—I would like to think—that military power will become less and less an instrument of achieving one’s aims and more and more a backstop. In other words, it is about that word “defence”, which we have used for a very long time, and nothing much more than that.

Q205 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: Given your earlier remarks about the regard in which Britain is held around the world and the networks that we have, such as the Commonwealth, why, if you are right about promoting commercial interests, have we been so unsuccessful in penetrating markets outside the European Union and the US?

Simon Anholt: Have we been unsuccessful?

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: Half our exports go to the European Union. If we are looking at a global marketplace, and if we have this fantastic image around the world and the networks that we have, such as the Commonwealth, why, if you are right about promoting commercial interests, have we been so unsuccessful in penetrating markets outside the European Union and the US?

Simon Anholt: Two things can be said in response to that. First, it is certainly true that our reputation is best in the countries where we are historically best known. I am glad you mentioned the Commonwealth. One of the dynamics that is absolutely clear from my survey is that being a member of the Commonwealth is an enormous advantage from this point of view. The Commonwealth countries know each other and trust each other to a remarkable degree. In a country such as China, tens of millions of children grow up every year hardly being taught any European history at all and not really knowing very much about the United Kingdom. In one sense when we talk about China, all this means is that “branding”, to use that awful term, still has to be done because we are simply not very familiar to the Chinese. To educated Chinese we exist in a rather superficial way. To the vast majority of Chinese we are just another country in Europe, if that. So the task of introducing ourselves to the countries with which we are not historically associated still needs to be performed. That is a
very good reason for us not to rest on our laurels. It is one of the reasons why hosting the Olympics in 2012 was certainly a good thing for us to do, but one of the things my survey showed was that it did not actually improve Britain’s reputation internationally because our reputation was already just about as good as it could be. I do not really see how the Olympics could have caused us to be even temporarily more highly regarded than the United States. But, as I often say, a reputation is not something you own but something you rent, and that rent must continue to be paid. By carrying out operations such as the Olympics fairly regularly, we pay our rent and we teach emerging populations outside the Commonwealth that Britain is a rather special place and they should know something about it. So that is one answer to the question.

I think perhaps the other answer to the question is that we in this country have never been very good at marshalling our soft power. We have a lot of it, and I am sure that during the process of this inquiry you have seen abundant evidence of how much soft power we enjoy in this country. We are very lucky. But when I compare the UK with the 52 or 53 other countries I have advised over the last 15 years on these matters, we are by no means leading the pack in the way we marshal, corral and strategise for soft power. We tend to let the academic sector, the sporting sector, the private sector—all those other players in soft power—do their own thing. They do it very well, but it is nothing to the power that a country could have if the thing were better managed, if there were a common national strategy that said, “This is what Britain is for. This is our purpose in the world”.

The Chairman: I would like to bring Mr McClory in, starting with whether hard power has to go with soft power but going on to the very point that Mr Anholt has just made about whether we need a declared strategy.

Jonathan McClory: If we are talking about hard power as both military power and economic power, then yes, it is a prerequisite. On the military power side, no it is not. Russia, Saudi Arabia and India are third, seventh and eighth respectively in the world for military budgets. I have seen no index, not Simon’s, mine or any other that exists, that would put Russia, Saudi Arabia and India in the top 10 for country reputation or soft power. Having said that, a country has to be economically successful and sophisticated. It has to have the infrastructure, certainly diplomatic, economically or otherwise, to be able to engage with international audiences. In a sense, if a country is not successful economically, which we could classify as hard power, then no, they will not have soft power; they simply will not have the ability to engage. You have to be good to be liked, so you need to be a successful country.

Could you remind me of the second question?

The Chairman: We are opening it out into the broader question: should Governments have a strategy? But I know that Lord Foulkes wants to come in, and I want to ask Mademoiselle Poirier whether France believes that there is some strategic idea of soft power that it has developed. Lord Foulkes, did you want to ask a question first on the previous item?

Q206 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: I was getting slightly worried that we were getting carried away again with thinking how wonderful we are. That is not my experience. I do not travel as much as I used to, but I used to be berated regularly about the Iraq war, how disgraceful it was and how we should not have done it, and they are still doing it. I was at a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference recently, and the Members of Parliament from other countries said, “You are always lecturing us about morality and democracy”. We had a major division about gay rights, and they said, “You are lecturing us
now, but we do not like gay people now because you taught us this a hundred years ago when you ran the country for us”. Is this just the MPs and the leaders of other countries, rather than the people in other countries, who are critical and worried about what we are doing?

Simon Anholt: I certainly think there is always a big difference in the response that one gets when one talks to elites and when one talks to ministers. My survey very deliberately talks to ordinary populations, who do not tend to bother themselves very much or for very long about these kinds of issues. One of the great advantages of soft power, in particular cultural relations, is that it achieves this marvellous effect that people feel that they know you. As a consequence, while they can occasionally hate the things that you do, they cannot quite hate you. This is one of the things that we found over and over again in my research. For example, where the British Council is particularly active, people can get very annoyed with us and the things that we do—what looks to them like our constant interference—but it does not make them hate us, because they still feel that fundamentally we are okay.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: The other thing is language. We were talking earlier about the fact that one of our great advantages is the English language, because so many people now speak it. Is that not also a disadvantage in that we do not learn other languages? We heard that Agnès speaks Russian as well as Spanish, English and French. Is it not the case that, for the typical Brit, if someone does not understand us, we just speak louder in English? Does that not create some difficulties? Is this dominance of English not a double-edged sword?

Jonathan McClory: To go back to your first question, different places will react differently to what the UK is and what it does. Famously, Joseph Nye said that what attracts in Paris might repel in Riyadh. You always have to keep that in mind. The marriage equality Act was going to go down well with a lot of countries, but it was not going to go down so well with some. That is just a fact of the way this all works. In terms of the English language, it is really a question for our education system. Nobody would want to—I certainly would not want to—trade the advantages that the UK and the entire Anglophone world have with English as our native language and essentially the global lingua franca. That is a fantastic thing to have, but it does not mean that we should not be learning other languages. That is probably something for the education system. Perhaps it puts the FCO at a disadvantage, as many of our diplomats have to start learning languages at a much later age, when, as we know, it becomes harder to learn languages. But I would not consider it a disadvantage—it is certainly not something that we could not try to mitigate.

Simon Anholt: It is certainly not a good excuse for not teaching languages properly at schools.

Q207 The Chairman: I want to ask Agnès Poirier whether she feels from her experience that her country discusses these matters in terms of a French governmental, national strategy for promoting la France. This is perhaps rather controversial, but has it sharpened by any degree that sense of rivalry across the Channel and the remembrance of old epithets attached to this country such as “perfide”?

Agnès Poirier: Yes, it dates back a very long time. I would like to go back to different things before answering your question. First, Simon, you said that soft power is very recent. It seems to me that it is as old as hard power. I would argue that in history at least—even though now it is slightly different—the two went hand in hand together. Let us go back to the Renaissance, for instance. I am thinking of the first French king of soft power—François I. He was waging wars in Europe but at the same time he invented—at least in France—the
patronage of arts and even managed to lure Leonardo da Vinci and the “Mona Lisa” to France. Perhaps we owe to him the fact that Paris and France are the top tourist destination in the world. More recently, in the Second World War, the US managed fantastically to bank on its victory, not only with the Marshall Plan but with Hollywood. It was very interesting to read the transcript of last week’s session with the ambassadors. I disagree with the ambassador from Brazil, who said that the reason why Hollywood is so successful is that Washington and central government never interfere with it. Well, this is not the case. It is the cultural arm of central government. In the early 1930s, Hollywood was not producing films that would irritate Nazi Germany, but then it changed tack, because there was a battle for hearts and minds. It was a question of winning the American public for an intervention and it produced masterpieces such as “Casablanca” in 1942—and we love it. I do not know whether you have noticed but, more recently, American films have had a lot of Chinese characters in them. Why is that so? It is because Hollywood is trying to reach a Chinese audience. In China, Chinese people have the choice between Chinese and American films.

The Chairman: Or British television, so we are told.

Agnès Poirier: Well, I am not quite sure. The films abide by Chinese censorship. There is nothing that is controversial—action movies with a lot of Chinese characters. That is interesting, because Hollywood sells the American way of life and it will generate products, because people will want to consume American products. To finish with Hollywood, let me just say that, as you know, the MPAA—the Motion Picture Association of America—which is a powerful lobby, is trying through the trade negotiations between the EU and the US to get rid of the famous French cultural exception. The head of the MPAA is by tradition someone who is very close to the Administration. We had Jack Valenti, who was a close adviser to JFK. Christopher Dodd, the current head of the MPAA, is a former Democrat Senator.

Culture and the arts are very much part of this. You talked about pop music, but what are we talking about? We are talking about the market. In France, the view is that culture is not only an entertainment; it is also an intrinsic value and a way of reaching out and having a cultural reach in the world.

To go back to the story after this digression, France traditionally has an ambitious cultural policy, because that is the way we have done it since the Sun King—I guess France was the first. It has served France very well. Why should Paris, which is supposed to be rather a dead city compared to London, still be attracting 33 million people from around the world? I think it is about soft power, but it is also something that has been building for centuries. France is still a tourist destination, which I do not think is due only to the scenery; I think it is to do with culture. I will stop there. I am sorry; I have taken rather a long time.

Q208 Lord Janvrin: I want to come back to a point that you made, Professor Anholt, about the need for an overall strategy, which Agnès Poirier touched on. You said that this was holding us back. I have two questions. Is anything else holding us back? As my colleagues have said, there is a lot of talk about the assets and advantages that we have, but what else is holding us back? What else should we be looking at that we could do better in this field? Secondly, you identified the lack of a strategy as one thing that is holding us back. Can one actually have a soft power strategy when so many different players are involved—governmental, non-governmental and civil society? Is this really a practical proposition to put to us? I would like to ask that question to all three of you.

The Chairman: Mr McClory, why not answer that first?

Jonathan McClory: Sure. On the soft power strategy, I think that it is a terrible idea to have a discrete soft power strategy. The Government should perhaps replicate something
like the strategic defence and security review, which we had in 2010—I think it was a good thing to do, but it was only about the military. Where was the strategic diplomatic review, or whatever we want to call it? At the same time, in 2010, the US State Department put out the QDR—the quadrennial diplomatic review—which looked at the soft power side of things. It was a comprehensive overview of “civilian power”, which was the term that was used to get away from “soft power”. I would argue that you would want a cross-government strategy that takes account of everything that we have been talking about in relation to soft power but also connects the dots where they do not seem to have been connected. Let me just use one example, to get on to one potentially hot-button topic, I suppose. I am talking about a grand cross-government strategy around not just foreign policy or defence policy but all aspects of Britain’s international affairs, incorporating all the international economic objectives that the country might have—from foreign direct investment, increasing tourism and increasing exports through to worrying about security issues. Of course Britain’s influence would be crucial to this strategy and how people perceive it. If there had been such a strategy, somebody would have joined up the dots on what I think were called on Twitter the ‘racist vans’, when the Home Office was going to lock up illegal immigrants and drive that van around parts of London. Somebody in No. 10, the Cabinet Office or the Foreign Office would have had a phone call from the Home Office, saying, “We’re thinking about putting these vans out. Do you think it’s going to be a problem?”. Ideally someone would have said, “Maybe we want to think about this again”. I realise that this was a bit of storm in a teacup when it happened here in the UK, but the reason why I bring it up is that just last week—there was a bit of delay, which shows how long these things can lag—on the front page of CNN’s news website the featured story was about the Home Office’s ‘racist vans’. I do not know the exact figures—I do not have them with me—but a lot of people internationally would look at CNN.com and that was bang in the middle as the main-page story. Ideally, if you had a cross-cutting strategy that dealt with all those things, you would be able to avoid big mistakes such as that.

The Chairman: I am just going to make the observation—without defending, supporting or attacking what happened—that that is a softer way of telling people to go home than having the police knock on their door, dragging people out and chucking them on a ship or whatever. It is a soft approach.

Jonathan McClory: Not in terms of the way people would see it. I suppose that if people are not supposed to be there and the police show up at their door, that is fine—it is within the limits of the law and the police are doing their job. If the police have reason to believe that someone is there illegally and they are following due process of law, that is fine, but the issue is broadcasting it in such a way.

The Chairman: You are right that in the new conditions in which we are operating it came out as much worse than it would have been if it was done in the quiet of the night.

Jonathan McClory: Exactly.

The Chairman: It is very interesting.

Q209 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: Just on that point, Lord Chairman, I agree that it was a daft thing to do, but the idea, given all that happens in government, that somebody rings up some central body, perhaps No. 10, is not a strategy or a practical proposition.

Jonathan McClory: No, it is not a strategy at all, but I think—

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: You said that you were going to give us an example of how a strategy could work. I follow you up to that point, but it is not clear to me how these things
are tied together in practical terms. I cannot see your example working of there being someone central whom you ring up to ask, “Is this consistent with the strategy?”

Jonathan McClory: This is a problem that goes back to Fullerton or even to Northcote-Trevelyan and is about how silo-ed government can be, so maybe it was a bad example to use as an overarching strategy, but it is an example of something that government did that ultimately has an impact on influence.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: Could you give us an example of the sort of thing that could be practically achieved to meet the objective? It is great to say that we should have a strategy, but I find it very difficult to see what that would mean in practical terms.

Jonathan McClory: I think you would have to start by working out what the objectives would be. What is the UK for? What does it actually want to achieve internationally, or even here at home economically? I do not think we have answered that question really. I realise, with respect to the Foreign Office that—

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: Let us assume we have done that. We are talking about how we can use soft power to achieve it.

Jonathan McClory: One of the biggest things that government can do is to do no harm, which obviously they have not managed to achieve recently, I would say.

The Chairman: They have not managed to achieve that?

Jonathan McClory: If we take doing no harm as one example, yes.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: How about doing something positive? How would we achieve that?

Jonathan McClory: How do we achieve something positive? We stop doing what is negative, I suppose. I can pull out more examples: cutting funding to the BBC World Service or the British Council, or reducing Chevening scholarships, which I think is a big mistake. Let us take a look at the GREAT campaign—I am sure we will get on to it eventually. Some £30 million has been allocated to that campaign for 2013-14, while at the same time we are cutting funding for all these other things. I would take that money and invest it in relationship-building programmes in a country such as China, which, as Simon has said, we have not done that well breaking into because we do not have that much brand recognition.

We can do something more important around that, deciding where the priority countries or the priority markets are that we do not feel we have made the inroads into where we should have done and then starting to pursue programmes that help us to build relationships and ultimately to build up our reputation and thereby opportunities.

Q210 Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots: That has shot my fox, really, because it seems to me, when I hear you talking about it, that the soft power strategy is like those lovely soap bubbles you used to blow when you were a child. They were lovely bubbles, but the moment you touched them, they burst. I am still struggling with how you translate this bubble, with its lovely colours in the sunshine, into the realities. Professor Anholt, you have talked about this, but I still do not quite get how you move from the fact that it is there and it is happening, maybe despite what the Government are doing.

Simon Anholt: My experience suggests that anything that looks even remotely like a police force is unlikely to work. I cannot recall at the moment who asked the very valid question: can a large, rich, busy, prosperous, complex country like Britain really adopt happily yet another layer of bureaucracy? The answer is almost certainly not. A body that was hoping,
presuming, to vet policies from a range of different ministries and departments and saying, "You cannot do that because it is off brand", we know realistically would not be very popular and would not last very long.

Can it work? Lord Janvrin’s second question was whether strategy was even possible for a country like Britain. My honest answer is that I do not know, because the majority of countries that I have advised over the last 20 years have been rather smaller, some of them not much smaller and one or two of them even bigger. What seems to work is having some sort of central body that owns the grand strategy—the “everything” strategy—that answers these questions. What is this country for? What is its purpose in the world? If the hand of God should accidentally slip on the celestial keyboard tomorrow and hit delete and Britain went, who would notice and why? These questions might sound a little airy fairy, but in the age of globalisation we at least have to try to answer them. That central body owns that strategy and then it imposes it by providing services to the other branches of government, rather than acting as a policeman. In other words, instead of offering to vet people’s policies, it suggests actions that they could take that would be cost-effective ways of getting across the messages that people want to get across.

We had something attached to the Foreign Office called the Public Diplomacy Strategy Board, which later turned into the Public Diplomacy Board, on which I sat as vice-chair throughout its life. One of the things that I tried to initiate on that board was called the PD Lab—the public diplomacy laboratory. The idea was that it was a central creative facility that would look at the projects and the plans that ministries and agencies of government were undertaking and see whether it could come up with some creative twists on things, some new ways of doing things that would catch the imagination. The idea was that it would offer them as a service to government departments and say, “We know that you are trying to put on a trade show in Shanghai next year. We know it is costing you a lot of money. Here is an idea, free, if you want to adopt it, which will give more bang for your buck. It is more exciting, more original, less boring, less predictable, and it will connect you with a wider audience. It will get the social media talking about it, because it is more unusual and more unfamiliar to people”. These are not difficult tricks to perform if you know how to do them. The trouble is that most people working in government departments are not familiar with that kind of creative work. In a word, if one is offering useful value-added services to government departments from a central point, that makes it not only much more acceptable but also much more possible to steer the entire ship of state in one direction ultimately.

The Chairman: What happened to that public diplomacy initiative?

Simon Anholt: We were axed.

The Chairman: On the grounds presumably that they did not feel it was adding value.

Simon Anholt: I never found out the reason. This was when the current Government came into office, and presumably they decided that they wanted to look at it in a different way. The Public Diplomacy Board was dropped at that point.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: What did it achieve?

Simon Anholt: We carried out a number of pilot projects where we experimented with public diplomacy in Canada, Jordan and one or two other countries. That is all on the record; I will not waste the Committee’s time with it now. Some of those were quite effective.

The Chairman: Can we get a note, perhaps?

Simon Anholt: Yes of course. I will dig that out for you with pleasure.
Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Just talking about that particular body, the Cabinet Office had this behavioural science unit—the nudgers, as they are called. That is to say that they tried to show people indirectly how to behave better, live healthier and so on. Could one use behavioural science as a way of developing our reputation and our soft power?

Simon Anholt: I think it is a very important part of the discipline. In order to understand soft power, one needs to understand quite a number of different disciplines. It is one of the reasons why it is such a lovely subject: one has to be a bit of a sociologist, a bit of an anthropologist, more than a bit of a psychologist, as you rightly point out. This is complex stuff. We are framing this whole debate as though it were a series of enormous challenges for the United Kingdom, but actually it is an enormous opportunity for us precisely because the United Kingdom may not have very much hard power to wield in the future. It is tending to diminish. It is extraordinarily important that we become paragons of soft power. We should be leaders in this kind of stuff. That is why it is very important that we develop these skills, and it is very good that we are having this inquiry. We need to be better at it than we are. One of the reasons why I rather regret that the Public Diplomacy Board was disbanded was because we were beginning to have those all important theoretical discussions about what soft power consists of.

In answer also to Lord Forsyth’s question a moment ago, one of the other things that we looked at and which I think is extraordinarily important is measurement. I may be old fashioned, but if you are spending taxpayers’ money on this kind of stuff it is extraordinarily important that you should be able to set and define goals and measure your progress towards them. There is a lamentable habit in this area not to bother and just to say, “It sounds good so let us carry on doing it”.

The Chairman: At the beginning you yourself unpicked the concept of soft power and said that there were four or five aspects of it. Furthermore, you said that there are millions of different contacts with a now empowered populace. It is a people-connected world. It is a bit challenging, a further demand, is it not, to ask the government machine somehow to bring this all together. You are asking the impossible.

Simon Anholt: It is impossible to do it using existing structures. That is why, in the paper that I submitted to the commission, I argued for a new structure. I know that people’s hearts tend to sink at the idea of a new structure, but in my experience with a number of other countries I have never come across a country that is correctly configured to manage these assets, which we have been calling by various names. It has always been necessary for me to invent those structures and for countries to create them and adopt them. It does not necessarily have to be a vast additional burden on the bureaucracy, but most Governments struggle with systems and structures that frankly were invented in the 19th century, not even the 20th century. The world has changed around us, new systems and structures are required, and we should be looking into them.

Mr McClory, take us on to the difficult area of how we turn the soft power assets that we have—we are connected with almost every conceivable international institution, although some new ones we are not connected with—into a real benefit for this nation in the form of the ultimate requirements, which are that we can hold our head up in terms of prosperity and earning our living, which means the successful exports of goods and predominantly more and more services, and how we secure the security of our citizens by ensuring that we play our part in trying to prevent the growth of
terrorism and hostile feelings throughout the world. Those are the two ultimate tasks. How do we use this soft power to achieve those?

Jonathan McClory: I suppose that is the million dollar question. That is gold dust, and anyone who can answer that perfectly will have a very good living, I should think. It is quite difficult. We hinted earlier that as soon as government overplays its hand, people are quite quick to work that out, so trying to achieve tangible benefits has to be done with a very deft touch. Is that the Division Bell?

The Chairman: I am so sorry. I should have warned you at the beginning. I do not know whether it is our soft power or just our antiquity, but we have to break for five minutes.

Sitting suspended for a Division in the House.

Q213 The Chairman: I apologise for the interrupted nature of these sessions, but that is the way our system works for the moment, until constitutional reform changes it. I would like in these last few minutes to come back to the question with which we really began: what has changed? We have a sense in this Committee that really massive change has taken place, that the interface between nations is of a much more dispersed nature—between professions, between peoples, between lobbies and between interests. We would like your wisdom, all three of you, on whether that is so. Once you have established clearly that we are operating in new conditions, we can focus on the new instruments that we require to improve our performance and to hold our head up in an extremely competitive and dangerous world. So can I take all three of you back to where you began? Professor Anholt, you began with that theme: the hyperconnectivity of the world we live in.

Simon Anholt: Yes, it is true; things have become much more complex. They have changed enormously. It is important not to misrepresent the change that the internet and social media have created in this domain. There is a tendency among many Governments to see social media as some exciting new medium of communication via which they can somehow more effectively communicate their power or extend their influence. That is a misunderstanding of what it is all about. The reason why social media are so significant is that they have made a journalist of everybody. They enable ordinary people around the world to learn about our countries and to make their decisions about where to invest, where to go on holiday, which products to buy and so on, on recommendations from millions of friends.

The Chairman: But also to protest on recommendations.

Simon Anholt: Also to protest. That environment is a friend to Governments who know how to use it correctly. Perhaps “use” is a misleading word: you cannot use it; it is just there. It means that when countries behave courageously and imaginatively, and do things that are moral and helpful to people in other countries, the social media will communicate that message for them. One of the messages which I have been trying to get across ever since I foolishly coined the term “nation brand” back in 1998 is that this is not about branding. The term that I am accused of having coined is “nation brand”, not nation branding. Three letters make a big difference, because “nation brand” is just an observation that we live in a world where countries’ reputations are perhaps their most valuable asset. That is the basis on which we are judged. People do not know the facts; there are too many countries for them to know the facts. So they base their behaviours on perceptions. Therefore, when a Government come into power, they inherit a sacred responsibility to
look after the nation’s good name, because a nation’s good name is its most valuable asset. A Government are judged as being good if they hand on that reputation in at least as good condition as they received it to the Government who come next in office. The idea that one can somehow modify that reputation directly using the tricks of marketing or communications is entirely false. I have never seen any evidence that telling people how great your country is, or how beautiful, powerful, effective or successful it is, achieves any effect whatever. One of the great things about globalisation is that it has made propaganda impossible. Propaganda works only when you control all the channels of communication reaching your audience. In a closed society such as North Korea, it is still just about possible, but in the global environment it is a stark impossibility. However much money we spend on sending out a message to people saying that Britain is wonderful or great or super, it will immediately be contradicted by 1,000 or 10,000 other messages. Countries are judged by what they do, by what they make and by the company they keep, not by what they say about themselves. One should steer this image conversation away from bragging about one’s assets and asking “What can we say to make ourselves admired or loved?”, which is the wrong question. The right question is: what can we do to make ourselves relevant? What can we do as a country that will make other people in other countries feel simply glad that the United Kingdom exists? That to me is what we should be aiming for.

Q214 The Chairman: That is a very subtle difference. Mademoiselle Poirier, you mentioned earlier that, in a sense, the glory of France has been well projected down the centuries—there is nothing new to that. The skill with which France has combined being a highly effective centre of the European Union yet at the same time somehow portraying that it is all for France is much admired this side of the Channel. Do you feel that, despite what you said about your history, things have changed and that France needs to sing a slightly different tune?

Agnès Poirier: In what way?

The Chairman: That everyone is connected with everyone, that Governments are weaker, that connectivity has vastly grown, and that globalisation, communication and the information revolution have transformed the language of international relations.

Agnès Poirier: I totally agree, but it is also a big illusion. We are more connected, but we are also more fragmented. As you know, in France, we are quite suspicious of globalisation. We have not wholeheartedly embraced it, because we are quite aware of consequences. If you talk about the internet or the decline of the French language, it is quite obvious. Despite this and despite the fact that France has had economic decline ever since I was born—ever since I was born, I heard that the country was going to the dogs—it is still standing. Obviously, Germany is the powerhouse of Europe. We have not talked about Europe and we have not talked about Britain having greater assets. Britain has huge soft power—if we have to use that term. But in the past two years, because of this increasing insularity—that is how it is viewed from the continent—and this talk of Britain possibly leaving the EU, I think that its reputation has been undermined.

The Chairman: You think that Britain’s reputation is undermined by talk of possible withdrawal?

Agnès Poirier: Yes, absolutely, because you have to engage with the world in order also for your products to be bought. It has been a bad thing. I do not think that in China France’s image is better than Britain’s image. However, Chinese tourists flock to France. Why? It is because Britain is not part of the Schengen area and because it has very strict visa policies. That also has an influence on British universities, which are centres for shaping the thoughts
of the future elite in the world, yet a lot of foreigners have difficulties getting visas. At heart is the question whether Britain wants to be part of the EU. If it is not part of the EU, it can still have access to the single market—like Iceland, for instance—but it will not be within the Community and therefore is not going to be part of the decision-making. That would be a massive blow to British soft power. That is my personal opinion, but it is also an opinion from the continent.

Q215 Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots: Surely you are projecting the EU as a quasi-economic powerhouse. That is not part of our soft power; our soft power is something quite unique to each country. There is not a European soft power dimension, is there?

Agnès Poirier: Well, ask the Chinese. They go to Europe and they go to where it is easier for them to go. At the moment, they go to Paris. That is a shame, because, if they had a choice and if it was as easy, they would flock to London. That has consequences for the British economy.

Simon Anholt: I believe that we have just streamlined our visa policy for the Chinese in recent weeks.

Agnès Poirier: One of the Members—he is not now here—talked about languages. Languages are key, too, to Britain’s reputational influence. The English language is the lingua franca—there is no doubt about it—but we should not live under the illusion that the whole world understands it or speaks it. The teaching of foreign languages is very important. It takes two to tango; you need to understand others for others to be interested in you, otherwise there is a feeling that there is contempt towards the outsiders. A whole generation of linguists will be lost to Britain. Diplomacy is key in soft power. If British diplomats start learning a foreign language in their late 20s or early 30s, it is not very good for the country.

I think we are short on time.

The Chairman: No, we are fascinated. Please feel free to let it out.

Agnès Poirier: I will take just one example. It is a French institution created in 1946 just after the war called the National Centre for Cinema. In Britain, you had the Film Council, financed by lottery money—it does not exist any more; its functions are now with the British Film Institute. The National Centre for Cinema is an institution that works very well in France. I want to debunk a few myths, because in Britain we think that France’s art or culture is heavily subsidised and that it would collapse the moment this subsidy was withdrawn. That National Centre for Cinema does not rely on taxpayers; it does not rely on the state budget. It relies on regulations and on some taxes and levies; for instance, on every single cinema ticket sold. TV broadcasters have to invest a percentage of their turnover, and the centre manages the redistribution of those revenues. It has a budget of €700 million a year, whereas its Spanish counterpart has €43 million. As I think you will know if you go to the movies from time to time, French cinema is one of France’s big assets, but behind this there is policy.

The Chairman: There is a deliberate policy.

Agnès Poirier: Exactly. It sustains an industry of 400,000 people in France, but it works on both an economic and artistic level. It reaps rewards at all international competitions. For example, in 2012, “The Artist”, a black and white silent film, scooped five Oscars in America. It is a film that Britain would not have made, because unfortunately Britain often leaves it to the market to decide and such a film would not have been produced.
**The Chairman:** That is an extremely good example. Very interesting. Thank you very much.

**Jonathan McClory:** I want to pick up very quickly on the EU point. The EU’s eastward expansion is one of the examples that are held up as a great soft power success. It was not just access to a large single market; it was former Communist countries signing up to western values of a capitalist market and western political institutions. It is a good recent example of soft power versus hard power. Moldova and Ukraine are just concluding association agreements and free trade agreements with the European Union, and they are doing this against some pretty hard threats from Russia, which is trying to create a Russian-driven Eurasian customs union. This is a really great example of soft power triumphing over hard power, over coercion.

To come back to your question about how the world has changed, we could have looked at this at the very beginning and we have touched on it. Power moving from the West to the East is one of the major shifts that are happening globally. This is both economic and political power, but also power shifting away from states to non-state actors. The second big thing that is changing is the rise of networks, so now countries have to mobilise other states but also non-state actors to get things done. The third shift which we touched on is technology and the speed at which information moves. The democratisation of access to information is empowering to people, and we see that in all kinds of movements, from the Arab Spring to the Occupy movement. The fourth one, which Simon mentioned, is transparency or the death of propaganda. You cannot communicate one message to international publics while communicating a contrary message to your own people—it just does not work. I would say that the fifth—and we have not touched on this at all—is the process of urbanisation. We now have more than half the world’s population living in cities, which has big implications for the economy and for how innovation happens, how ideas spread, and how political movements start and manifest. It is not that soft power is changing the world; it is more that soft power is a response to these changes. The states that learn how to deal with these challenges through the use of soft power are those that will be more influential in the future. Right before we broke for the Division, you put the very difficult question to me of how we take soft power to meet objectives. There is no real clear answer to that one, or certainly not a straightforward one. There are two answers, I suppose. One is the academic one, which is we first ask what our objectives are, we work out what our soft power resources are, we identify the targets for these resources and we then deploy and hopefully see some kind of an outcome. But that is pretty abstract. I think the real answer is simply to be useful, to make good products that people want to buy, to provide good economic opportunities that people want to invest in. It is simply about being useful to the rest of the world and being good, and that is how you create those opportunities.

**The Chairman:** A couple of final questions, because I think that we are going to have another vote in a minute.

**Lord Foulkes of Cumnock:** We are okay.

**The Chairman:** In that case, we can be more relaxed. Jonathan, was the implication of that excellent summary of five things that have changed that we are going to see city talking to city more?

**Jonathan McClory:** We saw it, did we not, with Boris Johnson going to China?

**The Chairman:** We are living in a city state in London. Therefore, the international interface is going to be between city and city rather than between national Government and national Government.
Jonathan McClory: I think so. People are talking it up a great deal, and it will be interesting to see how cities respond to things where they cannot do without the state, visa policy being one. We know that Boris Johnson is not happy with visa policies, whether it is in respect of students or of skilled immigration, but he cannot do much about that as a mayor.

Q216 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: Professor Anholt, you talked about the death of propaganda and said how the internet world, Twitter and everything else would form their own views. That is the reality, but, certainly in Britain and elsewhere, there is a breakdown of trust in institutions, whether they are Governments, the police or whatever. We have ambassadors to communicate in 140 characters on very complex subjects.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: I have just done it.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: Well, George would no doubt have used each character very well. You said something that rather startled me. I forget the exact phrase that you used, but you said that they will always get it right. You get media storms—and we have seen it, for example, over Andrew Mitchell and the whole plebgate thing, where the whole world reached one conclusion that has now been turned upside down. I can see the power of social media, of course, but I can also see the negative aspects of social media, particularly in a world where people no longer trust institutions. They will take the view of half a dozen people whom they do not know but who have expressed an opinion on a website against the IMF or Michelin or other authorities that used to have soft power by virtue of their reputation. Am I wrong to worry about this? If I am right to worry about it, what is the remedy?

Simon Anholt: You are right to worry about it. Of course, the flipside of social media is mob rule, and it is very worrying sometimes. We all have to get better at understanding it; we have no choice. We need to get better at understanding what sometimes creates a firestorm on the internet and what does not. These things are not beyond understanding; I think that we are still a bit unfamiliar with it all. If the traditional voices of authority have lost authority, it is probably at least partly their fault. Another part of this examination has to look at what that process of loss of authority was and where it came from. Is it that people started losing faith in politicians merely because there was something more fun, more interesting or more democratic apparently available to them, or was it because those politicians too frequently showed themselves as being not worthy of trust and respect?

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: Sorry to interrupt you, but it is not just politicians, it is the police, the courts, the media—it is everything.

Simon Anholt: It is all of them, and as we have seen in the recent inquiries about the behaviour of the media, it is very easy to see how the media have lost their moral authority. It is not quite fair to say “the media” as if it were one thing, but you can equally well see how a member of the general public might start thinking, “Clearly we cannot trust the media any more, because clearly they have not behaved well. Clearly we cannot trust the politicians any more”. People simplify, and this is something that public opinion has always done. There is nothing very new about that. What is new is that these things can catch fire very quickly. The fires tend to die down quite quickly as well, but I am afraid the only answer is that we just have to get better at understanding it. Some of the work that is being done today appears to be making progress.

The Chairman: That sets a very big task for us. I will give Lord Foulkes the last word on this.
Q217  Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: I am honoured. I think it is one you will expect. Have you detected any effect of our constitutional discussions in the United Kingdom, either in relation to Scottish independence or withdrawal from the European Union? Have they had an effect in any way, either positive or negative? Have we dealt with that question?

Baroness Goudie: We did not deal with Scotland but we dealt with the European Union.

Simon Anholt: I have not tried to answer the question on the basis of whether my research tells us anything about that. The answer is no, and I have had this discussion with the Scottish Government on a number of occasions. In my survey, we have measured the image of Scotland as distinct from the rest of the United Kingdom, just to see whether it is independently viable in reputational terms. The answer is that it is: Scotland scores about the same as New Zealand—in other words, very high. It is a much admired country. If you force people to think of it as different from the UK, they do and it is positive.

I suspect the issue is that in the event of a real dismantling of the union—I should never make predictions about my own survey; I should have learnt this by now—it will not have a dramatic effect on either, because that is rather a technical issue. One of the things I often say about this survey—I know it is politically incorrect—is that when you are dealing with public opinion you are dealing with a seven year-old. I have tested this, by the way, with a group of psychologists, so to a degree it is scientifically proven that public opinion has a mental age of around seven. That seven year-old is not quite clear at the moment what the difference is between Scotland, England, Britain, the British Isles, the United Kingdom, London. It is all the same thing, as far as they are concerned. If one day they happen to read in the news that Scotland has become technically independent of the rest of the United Kingdom, the most likely reaction is going to be, “Oh, you mean it was not before?”. Then they will forget about it in a week.

The Chairman: That is a marvellous answer to end on. It raises other questions about whether the Republic of Ireland is really part of the United Kingdom as well—

Simon Anholt: There is a lot of confusion on that point too.

The Chairman: And other daring thoughts about the British Isles. Perhaps the British Isles has a future in a different context.

We must halt it here because we have kept you a very long time. It has been fascinating. We have to distil a lot of what you have said. It is not easy to put a wrapping around all of it very neatly, but Professor Anholt, Mademoiselle Poirier and Jonathan McClory, thank you all very much for your wisdom. We expected no less, and we have enjoyed the session. Thank you very much indeed.