SOFT POWER AND THE UK’S INFLUENCE COMMITTEE
Oral and written evidence – Volume 2 (H-Z)

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This evidence is being submitted in a purely personal capacity, drawing principally on the author’s experience in the Diplomatic Service (1959-1995); as a member of the UN Secretary-General’s High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (2003-4); and as a member of the House’s EU Select Committee and several of its sub-committees since 2001.

Introduction

1. The decision by the House in May 2013 to set up a Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK’s influence was a welcome one. Although soft power and the international influence it brings with it cannot be calibrated with precision, it is nevertheless real. A country’s soft power is a national asset which can either be augmented or reduced by actions taken by the government.

2. The concept of soft power, and indeed its label, is a relatively novel one. It therefore has no place in the historical record. A nation’s influence on international developments is a wider concept than that of soft power, encompassing, as it does, the use of both soft power and hard power. The boundary line between the two categories is often blurred and hard to identify.

3. Britain’s international influence has fluctuated quite widely in the past hundred years as have the relative contributions to it of Britain’s hard and soft power. For example one hundred years ago, just before the outbreak of the First World War, it would have been reasonable to single out the world-wide, hard power influence of the Royal Navy as far and away more significant than any soft power instruments existing at that time, which were in any case relatively few in comparison with the present period. But Britain’s international influence was certainly much greater then than it is now. Our influence will, in the future as in the past, consist of a combination of our hard power and our soft power; but the latter cannot simply compensate for a reduction in the former.

4. It would seem to make sense to assume that, in the period ahead, Britain’s relative hard power, in a world where a considerable number of countries which are growing economically faster than we are, or are likely to do, and which are devoting substantial resources to increasing their hard power assets, will decline. That points to a greater weight being placed on our soft power if we seek to sustain our international influence. But it is important to recognise that too rapid a reduction in our hard power assets, or in our willingness to make use of them, will undermine any efforts we make to increase our soft power and with it our influence.

The Multilateral Dimension of Britain’s Soft Power

5. In the period since the end of the Second World War there has been a massive expansion in multilateral diplomacy and in the activities of the multilateral organisations which have been established to manage, and in some cases to regulate and seek to control, international developments. These multilateral organisations vary widely in their effectiveness and in the ambition of their mandates, varying from genuine elements of rules-based systems such as exist in the World Trade Organisation’s trade dispute settlement
provisions or in the complex legal structures of the European Union, to much flimsier and discretionary systems. Successive British governments have tended from the outset to support strongly the establishment of such multilateral international organisations (in some cases such as the UN, the Commonwealth and NATO being among the founding fathers of them), calculating, correctly in the view of this author, that such structures would tend to increase Britain’s soft power and help it to secure outcomes which it could not have obtained by acting alone. That calculation remains today as valid as ever. The clear implication is that present and future British governments should be working to support these organisations, to increase their effectiveness and to extend the reach of rules-based international systems where that can be demonstrated to be realistic and desirable, for example in dealing with the challenges of climate change.

6. Britain’s membership of the United Nations, and in particular its status as one of the five permanent members of the Security Council has been, and remains, an important source of soft power. It is therefore a major national asset. Since that status can only be changed with our own agreement, it is not easy to see how it could become vulnerable (and there is no question of there being any link with our possession of nuclear weapons – four out of the five permanent members of the Security Council did not have such weapons at the time they became permanent members). But the soft power benefits which accrue to Britain from the UN and from its large family of global agencies depend crucially on how effective these institutions are at fulfilling their mandates. This is particularly true of the UN Security Council’s role in ensuring international peace and security and in exercising its responsibility to protect those citizens whose governments are unwilling or unable to protect them themselves. It is important therefore that, as the strains imposed on our military by operations in Afghanistan abate, we play a more active role in UN peacekeeping, in particular by contributing to the more sophisticated elements now required of modern peacekeeping operations. We should also be doing all we can to strengthen the credibility and the disciplines of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to support extension of the geographical scope of the jurisdiction and the activities of the International Criminal Court; and to ensure that the newly signed Arms Trade Treaty enters into force without delay and is implemented world-wide.

7. The Commonwealth also is an important potential source of soft power, although often under-utilised. It will be important to rid ourselves of two prevalent misconceptions. The first is that the Commonwealth is an alternative to, or a substitute for, our membership of the European Union; the second is that Britain somehow has a proprietorial role in the way the Commonwealth develops. If we can do that, it should be possible to build up the already substantial network of professional and cultural links which operate under the aegis of the Commonwealth, devoting more resources to the provision of scholarships, and not just to the developing country members of the organisation. It should also be possible over time to strengthen the systems of democratic government, the rule of law, the freedom of the press and respect for human rights as common rules shared by all members of the Commonwealth and promoted by them more widely.

8. Our membership of the European Union has greatly expanded Britain’s soft power, both within the borders of the Union and beyond them. We have been able to promote successfully the establishment of the largest single market in the world and to shape its legislation and regulation. We have championed major steps towards freer and fairer world trade, with the European Union an indispensable player in successive global trade negotiations and now negotiating free trade agreements with the United States and Japan.
We have been a leading supporter of successive enlargements of the Union which have helped to build solid foundations for democracy and free market economies in the countries of southern, central and eastern Europe, which were previously subject to totalitarian regimes. There remains a major positive agenda for reform still to be accomplished in all these areas and others. Should Britain withdraw from the European Union or come to play a purely marginal role in the shaping of its policies it is difficult to see any of these soft power benefits being retained.

Britain's main national instruments of soft power

9. The BBC, and in particular its World Service and its foreign language services, are clearly major, and still steadily expanding, instruments of Britain’s soft power, although their effectiveness rests on their retaining the highest professional standards and on their being seen to practice that genuine objectivity which is the hallmark of good journalism. In that context the severing of the Government's direct subsidy to the World Service should be helpful. But it will only be so if it is possible to ensure that the World Service is able to respond rapidly and flexibly to changes in demand arising from unexpected international developments and if it is not starved of resources by the demands of the BBC’s domestic services. It is far from clear that the arrangements made so far to secure these objectives are yet sufficient.

10. The British Council, along with the BBC, plays a critical role in capitalising on the soft power potential of the English language. It is hard to see English being challenged as the lingua franca of the twenty-first century. It is important therefore to ensure that the British Council is properly equipped and funded to play that role, and to compete with other nations, particularly those for whom English is their native tongue.

11. Britain’s higher education establishments have been a significant part of our soft power since the first generation of post-colonial leaders were mainly drawn from those educated at British universities. That soft power role has greatly expanded in recent years as our universities have grown and, by their quality, have attracted increasing numbers of undergraduates, post graduates and researchers from an ever wider range of countries. Britain’s higher education sector is now a major and rapidly growing contributor to Britain’s invisible exports; and Britain is second in a world market for overseas students which is set to grow in the years ahead. Unfortunately there is a real tension between the impact of the Governments immigration policy, which has already resulted in sharp drops in the number of students coming from a number of our main overseas markets, and the desirable objective of continuing to develop and expand this important source of future soft power. The sooner the Government can make it clear that the public policy implications of its immigration policy will not apply to genuine students, researchers and faculty the better. Otherwise not only will Britain’s universities be deprived of much-needed sources of funding but we will be forgoing an important source of soft power.

12. The continuing steady and significant drop in foreign language skills at our schools and universities may be in part a reflection of the global dominance of the English language. But, if not reversed, it will over time diminish our soft power right across the board, including in areas affecting trade and investment.

13. The commitment by the coalition government to bringing Britain’s Official Development Aid up to 0.7% of our Gross National Income has made both an indirect and a
direct contribution to Britain’s soft power. The indirect role has been reflected in the chairing by the Prime Minister of the UN panel set up to plot the way ahead on the post-2015 Millennium Development Goals; and by the contrast with a number of other developed countries who have fallen behind on their commitment to the 0.7% target. More directly our ODA remains needed and appreciated in a wide range of developing countries whose future prosperity will contribute to our own. But we should be doing more to work with those major emerging nations like Brazil, China and India which are beginning to become aid donors themselves and who have much valuable experience to impart. Such partnerships are likely to make a genuinely valuable contribution to our soft power with both donors and recipients.

Conclusion

14. This evidence has avoided covering areas in the Call for Evidence where the author has had no direct professional experience. That is not therefore a comment on the relative importance of those areas which are omitted. One general comment would be that the Call for Evidence rather underplays the contribution to Britain’s soft power made by its membership of and influence in the main international multilateral organisations.

September 2013
Lord Hannay of Chiswick, Lord Jay of Ewelme, Sir Antony Acland – Oral evidence (QQ 292-309)

Transcript to be found under Sir Antony Acland in Volume 1 (page 4)
The Henry Jackson Society is a cross-partisan, British think-tank which seeks to pursue, protect and promote the principles of free and democratic societies. It focuses on Foreign and Defence policy, a remit under which it publishes research and promotes policy debate. The below is a corporate view for the consideration of the Committee.

Soft power and the United Kingdom

1. Soft power is far less tangible than hard power - it has definitional elasticity to an extent - but is perhaps best illustrations in a few examples. For instance, the reach of UK culture is virtually incalculable: there are remote and poverty-stricken villages in Africa in which members of the male population can name the Manchester United starting line-up. Harry Potter and James Bond are the two highest grossing film series of all time. English is, and will likely remain, the go-to language of much of the human race when it seeks to communicate across borders.

2. The UK’s combined strength in language, sport, culture, diplomacy, business and education has allowed Britain to go as far as exceeding the reach of the US in the latest ‘Soft Power’ ranking.1 The UK does not lack soft power but less clear is if we have a sufficient focus on how to utilise it to achieve desirable ends, both in isolation and in concert with hard power.

3. When it comes to both culture and language no outfit represents the UK better than the BBC. Its brand recognition is exceptional and the BBC World Service has one of the widest global reaches in the world. However, budget cuts are already impacting the BBC’s global footprint and therefore reducing the UK’s soft power.

4. That said, the UK remains at the forefront of training foreign military officers (see below) alongside the U.S., combined with its impressive record in educating the world’s elites. Oxbridge and other excellent British universities are still very much at the centre of the knowledge nexus and this factor brings immense clout to the UK. Indeed, educating elites from around the world is really one of the crucial tenets of our soft power. Whilst this collides with certain valid notions of elitism and deeper questions of a moral nature at times in terms of the relationships it can involve, it is abundantly obvious that when it comes to bridge building, diplomatic horse trading and gaining accurate insight, an affinity for Britain on account of years spent here being educated - or indeed having studied together - is an undeniable asset for our own foreign policy elites. These sentiments are not intended as systemic value judgments, but as a description of a system that generates a very serious amount of influence we ought to recognise.

Hard power and soft power - a complex relationship

5. Soft power is difficult and time-consuming to generate and can often fail to accomplish the tasks to which it is set. At the same time, it arguably remains the most widely experienced form of power in international relations, and is almost always the most persistent. In contrast, hard power can be quickly generated, can compel changes ‘on the

ground’ that soft power often cannot, but at the same time is often lacking in enduring impact.

6. Arguably, the use of hard and soft power should be seen as complementary in almost any scenario in international relations. In peacetime, soft power should act as the dominant component of influence, with hard power acting as a distant but explicit capability. In times of conflict, hard power should act as the primary tool of influence, with soft power utilised to the appropriate extent to aid hard power in the accomplishment of overall goals. A methodology for linking the two is, however, difficult to identify, particularly as the nature of how the two aspects of power both develop and operate differs so greatly.

7. In peacetime at least, soft power is generally perceived to be something experienced by a country’s population, whilst hard power is primarily an issue that concerns a country’s leadership. The timeframe within which the two concepts of power operate is also different: the acquisition and application of soft power almost always takes place within a period that is longer than the acquisition and application of hard power.

8. The NATO-led Afghanistan operation is a relevant current example on the matter of the mix of soft and hard power. The experience the British military has acquired via its counterinsurgency efforts in Afghanistan has allowed for the development of an understanding of operations requiring both hard and soft power in an environment that appears representative of future conflict environments.

9. The key challenge is to institutionalise this knowledge. Evidence does exist to suggest that fundamental changes to the manner in which the UK armed forces engage in soft power tasks are taking place, for example the launch of the Defence Cultural Specialist Unit (DCSU) to support operations. Whilst tailored to operations in Afghanistan, the core concept of the utilisation of a team with specialist language skills and local cultural knowledge to support commanders on the ground is one that is potentially transferable to almost any expeditionary operation. More broadly, the Military Stabilisation Support Group (established in 2009), working in partnership with its civilian counterparts at the inter-departmental Stabilisation Unit (formed in 2007), provides the UK government with the ability to deploy mixed military/civilian teams in order to promote stability enhancing activities in conflict areas. This is an advanced approach - which carries the usual inter-departmental challenges nonetheless. Above it looms the fact that the Army in general is intended to be good at generating hard power. There is an inherent tension in the calibration of Western forces for counterinsurgency on account of the tension between hard and soft power in this context.

10. Another broader aspect of the interplay of British soft and hard power has been our alliance relationships. The UK’s alliance with the US is rooted in cultural affinity and genuine capability, but it has a broader effect via NATO, where there remains a core partnership with serious non-military effects in our ability to shape global governance. London hosting the 2014 NATO Summit is proof of both the importance for the UK and NATO itself of the British military’s place.

11. Soft power of a more subtle nature also exist: Sandhurst trains officers from across the world, and this allows for both the development of an understanding of British culture amongst future foreign military leaders, and the establishment of informal networks between influential individuals. However, these examples are the fruits of decades of investment, and the current cuts in capability for the British military could well have a detrimental effect in
this important soft power aspect also, if Britain’s role as a leading military power is in question.

12. Whatever the weaknesses of hard power actors as soft power generators, the recent case of Syria has starkly demonstrated the necessity of hard power, particularly military hard power, in an instance where soft power has failed. The UK is one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, acts as the base for a host of Syrian exiles, is the second largest donor of humanitarian aid to Syrians, and (in relation to hard power actions) has led diplomatic efforts to create economic sanctions on Syria and frozen regime assets within the UK. All of this ultimately failed to buy the UK, or the Western powers in general, influence in events on the ground in Syria. Only the threat of military force by the US, France and (briefly, implied) the UK has forced concessions from the Syrian government in the form of the surrender of its chemical weapons.

13. Through the prism of the Syrian example amongst others, a key potential source of soft power is the provision of humanitarian and developmental assistance. This is of course a far more ‘invasive’ form of soft power than culture and language. It is also one that requires substantial pro-activity and investment over many years. Indeed, the UK is a major player in fields ranging from disaster relief to international development, in terms of both the expertise we possess and the financial resources we devote to it. In absolute terms, the UK is the second greatest provider of international development assistance, behind only the United States. Whilst the simple act of supplying aid can be perceived as being a rather crude attempt to ‘buy’ influence, both emergency relief and longer-term development support can enhance more subtle aspects of Britain’s ability to shape events. At the most basic level, having British citizens who work for aid agencies on the ground supplies us with the resource of having access to individuals that have an intimate knowledge of the situation within the states in question. Whilst these predominantly non-state actors are limited in resources, they often live amongst the people they seek to support instead of returning to an embassy or military forward operating base every night. As a consequence, they are able to develop not just a familiarity with a particular area, but also informal local contact networks. At higher levels too, networks established with key individuals and groups can provide a unique insight into on-going events. For all the criticism the organisation comes under for the both its considerable cost and the perceptions of corruption in international development, the permanent presence of Department for International Development in so many developing states gives UK government officials access to elements of foreign states that are not usually a part of the conventional diplomatic network. No amount of hard power can accomplish any of this in the short-term.

14. Yet a key difficulty in uniting soft and hard power remains that institutions that need to work together in order to accomplish the utilisation of smart power – not just the military and civil service but academia and aid agencies – often have serious reservations about each other’s methodologies, and fear undermining themselves through collaborative work. But unfortunately in peacetime, many of the groups and individuals that should cooperate rarely do. In war, this lack of familiarity combines with the fact that each individual group has its own difficulties to deal with, and perceive themselves to have little time or incentive to take on the issues of others as well. Aid workers in particular often also have ethical objections to collaboration with the military on both ideological (they may believe military involvement is not the solution to the issue at hand and that they must remain neutral actors) and practical (they may feel that they will become targets if seen as being ‘agents’ of foreign armed forces) grounds.
Hard power

15. An appropriate appreciation of the realities of soft power as a concept rests on the recognition that all of the above would not be possible, if it were not for Britain’s hard power. Indeed, the UK retains significant hard power capabilities, as has been demonstrated during recent conflicts. The UK provided by far the largest contingent of ground forces during the intervention in Kosovo in 1999. In 2003, 46,000 of the roughly 265,000 personnel involved in the invasion of Iraq were British. The UK deployment in Afghanistan - which peaked at almost 10,000 personnel - has consistently been second only in size to the US element. In Libya, only France contributed more combat aircraft to the campaign to protect the civilian population from Colonel Gaddafi. The UK also retains the ability to intervene independently: in 2000, the deployment of less than 1,000 British troops on the ground succeeded in terminating the civil war in Sierra Leone, a goal that had eluded a UN peacekeeping force ten times the size of the British contingent. Even following the cuts of the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), it is planned that the UK will retain the ability to deploy up to 30,000 troops for a one-off intervention, or sustain a long-term deployed force of around 6,500 troops whilst simultaneously retaining the ability to perform an intervention on the scale of Sierra Leone. Key capabilities like nuclear submarines equipped with Tomahawk missiles, amphibious assault ships, state-of-the-art frigates and destroyers, modern fighter aircraft, a well-trained army and - crucially - the logistical assets to make them all usable where they are likely to be needed, make the UK a formidable military power.

16. Outside wartime operations, only the UK, US and Greece currently meet the NATO threshold for spending 2 per cent of GDP on defence. The UK is one of only five permanent members of the UN Security Council, and one of only five states officially recognised as a nuclear power. Britain fluctuates between being the world’s third and fifth largest arms exporter, with particularly strong ties to the Gulf States that are desperate to see Iran prevented from obtaining a nuclear weapons capability - a key faultline of our times and indeed a crucial national interest of ours. As well as NATO, the UK also plays a role in the development of the European Union defence policy, and maintains a strong alliance with Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and Malaysia in the Far East via the Five Powers Defence Agreement. Unlike almost any other power, the UK actually possesses a real expeditionary armed force that make it far more than just a ‘paper ally’.

17. What has traditionally made the UK an exception on the world stage is that, for all the talk of an ‘End of Empire’ and ‘Managed Decline’, it has retained the hard power ability to back up its rhetorical commitments. However, the most recent round of defence cuts will seriously endanger the UK’s status as one of the globe’s few serious hard power players. Post-SDSR, both a short-term operation on the scale of Iraq and a long-term commitment of ground forces of the size deployed in Afghanistan will simply be impossible. Whilst MoD literature states that the military will, post-Afghanistan, be re-orientating away from counterinsurgency and back towards contingency operations, the plan to do this is fraught with difficulty. Britain’s ability to deploy an intervention force of up to 30,000 personnel or sustain a long-term commitment of 6,500 troops in the field will depend in large part on both the availability and usability of a military reserve force that does not yet exist. More limited commitments fare little better. Whilst the rapid reaction elements of the army, navy and air force will continue to be staffed by full-time personnel, many of the promises made by the SDSR that are crucial to even many small, short duration commitments - most
notably the restoration of the UK’s aircraft carrier force - are conditional on equipment that has yet to be ordered, and funding reliant on both absent economic growth and the political need to mitigate the austerity measures which the UK’s finances currently require.

18. As a nation, we now face a very real choice with regards to our ability to influence world events through hard power. This is not simply an issue of national prestige: a United States that will by necessity have to become more focused on South East Asia in the coming decades will have little choice but to delegate many of its security responsibilities to its allies. At the very least, as in Libya, it will demand meaningful hard power commitments from its allies in exchange for its willingness to contribute its unique abilities to a conflict. The UK currently remains one of the few nations able to take on meaningful hard power tasks beyond its own shores, but retaining this ability beyond 2015 may demand a major alteration of the current trajectory of our defence policy.

19. Nevertheless, whilst the point about hard power as being elementary to soft power is crucial and the one we wish to make, it should be clear from the above that a grave concern exists about a potential failure to take stock of the very - hugely - serious assets this country holds as regards soft power. Our hard power, our diplomatic relationships and memberships, our cultural and historical ties, and our points of attraction in fields such as the rule of law or education are invaluable. We hope the Committee will make them more tangible through its work, all the while taking into account the above reminder that without hard power soft power is meaningless. For all the shaping of the environment by the BBC’s brand or more directly controlled elements like DfID, ultimately, a warrior may love Manchester United but still require to be compelled to join peace talks by undeniable force of reason - reason in the form of the ability to answer the eternal question of an international arena that is still more Hobbesian than anything else: “You and whose army?”.

We should never lose track of that.

11 October 2013
1.1 The Humanitarian Intervention Centre is a not-for-profit, independent foreign policy think tank based in London, which works with politicians, policy-makers, journalists and human rights activists to promote and engage in a debate about the consequences of action and inaction in war and conflict zones.

Foreword

1.2 The United Kingdom (UK) has long excelled in soft power, being, *inter alia*, one of the primary international actors responsible for promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law; the originator of many of the world’s best-loved sports; and a film, music and theatre hub that the entire world flocks to. Our historical, political and cultural legacies have allowed us to establish a well-known brand as the UK.

1.3 Our country’s soft power is one of its strongest comparative advantages. It is a force multiplier which enables us to consistently punch well above our weight on the international stage. It is of uttermost importance for the UK to maintain this capacity, particularly in light of the emphasis China is placing on projecting soft power globally.

1.4 The academic concept of soft power is well documented. Rather than regurgitate much of previous theories, the Humanitarian Intervention Centre (HIC) has endeavoured to look at more original angles, which may not have been addressed and covered as extensively as the obvious.

1.5 Below follows our understanding of what constitutes soft power, its interactions with hard power and vice versa, and an examination of the role played by the UK in the field of international law.

Understanding the concept of soft power

1.6 The HIC believes that it is difficult to isolate the concept of soft power from the contrasting concept of hard power. The Centre largely accepts Joseph Nye’s definition of soft power, which holds that it is the ability to use attraction and persuasion to convince others to act in a way desirable to oneself. It is the use of attraction rather than coercion – shaping the preferences of others, instead of using the carrot and stick\(^2\). In contrast to hard power, which uses economic or military threats or sanctions to influence others to act in a desirable way, soft power indirectly leads others to want what you want. In essence, soft power is a government’s ability to persuade other governments to agree with its position by using its culture, political values and foreign

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policies\(^3\). The global appeal of British cultural institutions, universities, the BBC, British sport, diplomacy and parliamentary democracy have led many to place the United Kingdom at the top of the global table of ‘soft power’\(^4\). The changing nature of global affairs and the instant dissemination of information due to the emergence of new technologies have led to soft power becoming increasingly important in recent years.

1. As opposed to hard power, soft power is difficult to manipulate, due to it being slower moving and less affected by policy changes. Many of the instruments of soft power are outside of the control of government. Contrary to foreign exchange reserves or military capabilities, soft power cannot be stockpiled and deployed at will in order to achieve desired goals. By its very nature, soft power involves the opinions and observations of the global public and influences of non-state actors. Governments, therefore, can only affect soft power through their values, institutions and culture.

1.2 Whilst this is true, soft power should not be so simply separated from hard power and it is vital for the UK to acknowledge the limitations of it, especially in comparison to organisations such as the EU, which, arguably, have an excessive normative-oriented policy approach to war and conflict zones. Often, military and economic methods are the most appropriate means of exercising power. But it can be the case that instruments usually associated with soft power can be used in hard power ways, and those associated with hard power used in soft power ways. Liberal intervention, military power and humanitarian relief can be used as soft power instruments to increase the UK’s legitimacy at home and abroad. On the other hand, the UK’s soft power appeal can be utilised by institutions of hard power to encourage states to act or not act in whatever way is desirable. From this approach, the distinction set by many between hard and soft power becomes blurred.

How do deployments of soft power inter-relate with harder and more physical exercises of the nation’s power?

1.3 Whilst military power is often associated as a core tenet of hard power, HM Armed Forces are also an integral part of the UK’s soft power strategy, but are currently under-utilised in this role. The Coalition has promoted Defence Engagement, stating that the strategy is underpinned by rewarding such a commitment with increasing British influence in the respective nations\(^5\). The policy would favour key allies and countries that provide the UK access, basing and over-flight privileges. Yet, despite this, the idea of hard power having a soft power legacy is very much under emphasised. The Centre wishes to promote this debate further by arguing that liberal interventionism and humanitarian relief can and should play a vital part in the UK’s soft power projection.

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1.1 Sierra Leone is one of Britain’s most successful hard power interventions, where British and supporting Nigerian-led ECOMOG forces concluded a bitter eleven year civil war and brought about the destruction of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Yet, in the wake of hard power, soft power has cemented the UK as Freetown’s ‘most important bilateral partner’6. The British Armed Forces and diplomatic personnel have transformed the heavily armed factionalised country into one of Africa’s most peaceful stable countries in just thirteen years, despite 60% of the Sierra Leonean population living in absolute poverty7. The International Mentoring Assistance Training Team (IMATT) and British Short Term Training teams have successfully supervised the foundation of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), which has the trust of the local population8 and has successfully deployed to Somalia and Sudan to aid peace enforcement missions with the African Union9. Furthermore RSLAF has become one of Africa’s most progressive military forces, with 10% of trainee officers and 26% of the recruits being female10. Females now account for 4% of the RSLAF in total, just less than half that of Britain11. These successes have led to enduring relations with RSLAF and the Sierra Leonean government, which in turn has translated into significant influence. As such, when Freetown assumed complete control of training of the RSLAF in 2011, the culture of discipline and military prowess which British soft power had created became ‘a culture that’s now self-sustaining’ being passed from each generation12. The BBC’s Allan Little has reported that Sierra Leone wishes Britain to take an ‘even bigger role’ in the country’s internal affairs and that British government officials sit in the main offices of state, monitoring and supervising the country’s transition13. As demonstrated in Sierra Leone a small detachment of just twenty five tri-service personnel4, supported by IMATT, have embedded British influence through soft power whilst also contributing greatly to the joint FCO and MOD conflict prevention and stability strategy15.

1.2 However, Sierra Leone is not an isolated example. Many will remember the jubilant celebrations that greeted President Sarkozy and the Prime Minister during their 2011 visit to Benghazi in the aftermath of NATO’s intervention. Since then the Foreign Secretary William Hague announced that the UK will train 2,000 members of the Libyan Armed Forces in the Bassingbourn Barracks16, in line with the trajectory of Sierra Leone exiting a civil war, it can be hoped that soft power influence will also be cemented in Libya.

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8 Gibson, Ali (26/06/2012) ‘Sierra Leone Armed Forces make progress’, British Forces News
10 Gibson, Ali (29/06/2012), ‘Making a difference in Sierra Leone’, British Forces News
12 Little, Allan (19/08/2010) ‘Can Britain lift Sierra Leone out of Poverty?’, BBC Newsnight
14 Gibson, Ali (30/08/2012) ‘Making a difference in Sierra Leone’, British Forces News
1.1 Beyond this, it is important to note the impression that can be made on rising powers such as the BRIC countries. Most of them have relatively young populations, who, as a result of globalised culture and media, are more exposed to Western values than older generations. A robust foreign policy that promotes liberal ideals and human rights abroad could have strong appeal and even plant the seeds of soft power in the years to come.

1.2 As such, the HIC believes adamantly that the UK should recognise that international and unilateral intervention can bring the UK a soft power legacy within affected countries in a similar fashion to that brought by humanitarian and disaster relief. The Centre also strongly believes that the Ministry of Defence can play a key part in the promotion of soft power abroad and that international training programmes are a relatively inexpensive method of directly influencing the key decision-making actors in developing states.

How are UK institutions and values perceived abroad?

1.3 The soft power of a country is to a large extent derived from its foreign policies, and particularly where those policies reflect the perceived legitimacy of the state and are a manifestation of its moral authority. This is undoubtedly true of the UK. On the international stage the UK is, for the most part, highly respected for its moral conscience and standing which is based to a large extent on its rigorous upholding of the rule of law, protection of human rights and engagement with the international legal system.

1.4 It is the HIC’s view that these qualities emanate in part from the operation of a highly sophisticated and developed legal system which is respected around the world and is supported by the great volume of world leading legal thought and practice that comes out of the country. Furthermore, such legal prowess affords the UK a high degree of legitimacy and credibility in the international arena which in turn gives its diplomacy great weight, efficacy and the power encourage cooperation and to build consensus.

1.5 The protection of human rights is seen as one of the fundamental hallmarks of a moral and civilised society. The UK has a highly developed human rights framework backed by legislation and the rights of individuals are rigorously enforced by the courts and other organisations. The UK also projects this on the international stage. It is a signatory to all of the major human rights treaties, the International Criminal Court, the Council of Europe and advocates for the
protection of human rights in Europe and across the world. This is most recently exemplified by its fierce condemnation of the atrocities committed in Syria and the work that it has undertaken in developing the “Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict”.

5.1 Our country is actively engaged in and contributes to the work of numerous international organisations and plays a leading role in international legal diplomacy, assisting with the development and implementation of international law. The UK is proactive in the United Nations Security Council and is also actively engaged with numerous other projects which seek to enforce international legal norms, maintain international peace and security, support capacity building and promote democracy and good governance around the globe.

5.2 The UK also continues to play a key role in the negotiation of international treaties, most recently leading the way in securing final approval of the UN Arms Trade Treaty by working to build a broad coalition of support\(^\text{23}\), something which it would not have been able to do without its moral and legal standing. Furthermore, the relentless and thorough commentary of and action on international legal issues by both the executive and domestic academic institutions makes a significant contribution to the development of international jurisprudence and customary international law and reflects the UK’s commitment to its role as an international power and facilitator of change.

5.3 It is the HIC’s view that the dissemination of the UK’s values through its involvement with, and contribution to, both the domestic and international legal realm makes a real addition to the country’s soft power and allows it to build consensus and gather support for its position on divisive international issues.

Conclusions

- The UK’s historical, political and cultural legacies have established a well-known, global soft power brand
- The strength of British soft power is far greater than its population and size would otherwise suggest and is a force multiplier on the international stage
- Hard power and soft power are difficult to isolate from one another and are often mutually reinforcing
- A strong hard power capability can add to a nation’s soft power appeal and hard power applications (e.g. humanitarian intervention) can lead to soft power gains and legacies
- Government is only partly able to control its nation’s soft power – non-state actors play a large role
- HM Armed Forces can be used for soft power projection through training and other engagement programmes abroad
- The UK’s active involvement with and contribution to both the domestic and international legal realm makes a real contribution to the country’s soft power.

30 September 2013

ICAEW – Written evidence

Introduction

1. Thank you for the opportunity a written submission in response to the call for evidence by the House of Lords committee on soft power and the UK’s influence. ICAEW would be happy to provide oral evidence on any aspect of this submission.

Executive Summary

2. ICAEW international capacity building projects drive economic development and inward investment. At critical stages of a nation’s development, the UK is a partner in prosperity and part of the solution to challenges including business support, corporate governance and tax.

3. Professional partnerships and mutual recognition between international bodies strengthens the UK’s soft power through locally owned qualifications, training and standards; in addition to the benefits for international business in recognised qualifications and standards.

4. ICAEW Chartered Accountants are often found as Chief Executives or Finance Directors of global businesses or as Senior Partners of international accountancy practices. Whether fully qualified or still in training, members and students are a major asset to UK commercial and cultural relationships wherever they work.

ICAEW and its members

5. ICAEW is a world leading professional accountancy body that promotes, develops and supports over 140,000 chartered accountants worldwide. We provide qualifications and professional development, share our knowledge, insight and technical expertise, and protect the quality and integrity of the accountancy and finance profession.

Soft power in people – ICAEW members

6. ICAEW Chartered Accountants are CEO’s and COO’s of global firms and Managing Partners of accountancy practices. 80% of UK FTSE 100 companies have one of our members on their board and over 54% of FTSE 350 companies have an ICAEW chartered accountant as their CFO, CEO or Chair. ICAEW members hold similarly influential positions in international business, government and regulators.

7. Of our members working in markets outside of the UK there are approximately 23 per cent in Europe, 17 per cent in the United States and 15 per cent in Greater China. To support our global membership we have offices around the world usually in major international financial centres. Over a quarter of ICAEW students are now living and working outside of the UK.

The soft power of professions overseas

8. In 1992, Lord Benson listed the criteria for a profession. These included:
• a governing body with an overarching public interest;
• educational standards for entry - with ongoing training;
• ethical rules beyond the requirements of the law;
• application of rules for the protection and benefit of the public, not member benefit;
• disciplinary action for unprofessional behaviour;
• providing wider leadership within their discipline;

9. These criteria form part of a long tradition of professionalism in British public life and beyond. They have informed Britain’s historic footprint in commonwealth nations and continue to be a key element within UK exports and relationships.

Soft power in structures - international capacity building work:

10. For almost 10 years ICAEW supported international capacity building projects to develop local expressions of professional bodies and related institutions. Such projects help secure the infrastructure that promotes inward investment and builds business confidence.

11. In all these projects ICAEW works in partnership with stakeholders, including professional accountancy bodies, financial regulators, ministries of finance and others such as the Auditor General and Accountant General. These relationships help strengthen counterpart organisations and regulators, but also provide opportunities for influence. ICAEW believes robust national accountancy institutes play a key role in wider business development and economic growth – thus enabling nations to fully engage in the global community.

12. To date, almost 20 capacity building projects have been completed or are in progress for the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, USAID, FCO and others in Africa and Asia. One example – assisting SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission) Nigeria to transition to IFRS (International Financial Reporting Standards) and to strengthen its regulatory procedures – has been funded by DfID and is managed by the World Bank.

13. Another example is a recently signed agreement in the Middle East to assist in the development of an Audit Quality Monitoring Programme to give advice on the creation of a Gulf Monitoring Unit. This agreement with the Gulf Co-operation Council Accounting and Auditing Organization - which oversees all accounting and auditing matters in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and UAE - is the first pan-national project of its kind.

14. ICAEW capacity building projects include:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICAEW Project Highlights</th>
<th>Aug 2007 to Jan 2010</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Bangladesh Strengthen the accountancy body, reform the qualification and introduce audit quality monitoring*</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Botswana Establish a professional accountancy qualification and strengthen the national professional body</td>
<td>Oct 2009 to Oct 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Croatia Assist the Ministry of Finance to establish an audit</td>
<td>Jan 2010 to Aug 2010</td>
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quality monitoring function compliant with the EU Statutory Audit Directive.

4 Ghana Reform the professional qualification, create an audit regulation unit and train the profession in IFRS*. Apr 2011 to Jan 2013

5 Malawi Establish a professional accountancy qualification and strengthen the quality and regulation of audit. Jul 2011 to Apr 2014

6 Myanmar (Burma) Develop a roadmap for strengthening the accountancy profession and run training in IFRS and audit quality. Soon to begin

7 Nigeria Strengthen the capacity of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria. Sep 2012 to Nov 2014

8 Nigeria Train 300 staff at SEC Nigeria in IFRS and guide the SEC in the procedures for regulating under IFRS. Sep 2012 to Dec 2013


10 Serbia Prepare a roadmap for the Ministry of Finance and World Bank, on a reform agenda for the accounting and auditing profession. Oct 2010 to May 2011

11 Sri Lanka Establish an audit quality monitoring unit and run training programmes to support a transition in Sri Lanka to IFRS*. Jan 2013 to Dec 2013

12 Tanzania Establish an audit monitoring unit, reform the professional qualification and run train-the-trainer in IPSAS/IFRS/ISAs. Apr 2011 to Oct 2013

13 Thailand Train and mentor SEC in regulatory procedures and processes. Apr 2011 to Jan 2012

14 United Arab Emirates Conduct audit quality monitoring of audit firms and mentor Dubai Financial Services Authority in how to do so. Nov 2009 & On-going

* Denotes two or more projects.

Soft power in partnership - Reciprocal relationships and partnerships with local professions

15. Professional partnerships and mutual recognition between international bodies strengthens the UK’s soft power and influence through locally owned qualifications, training and standards.

16. ICAEW has a range of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with professional bodies, regulators and Higher Education Institutes in a number of countries in Asia and Africa. MoUs reflect a commitment to work together to support the development of the accountancy profession in a country. In this way MoUs can be a first step to full contractual relationships.

17. ICAEW has reciprocal membership agreements with seven Global Accountancy Associations. This provides a degree of alignment between the ACA qualification and other leading international accountancy qualifications based on a shared platform of standards, quality and reputation. They allow ICAEW members working in key
international markets to join the local body without having to complete further examinations and allow high quality accountants from other leading bodies to join ICAEW, typically when working in the UK.

Soft power in learning - examples of qualifications partnerships

18. Commercial opportunities can sometimes emerge from these international relationships while at the same time maintaining professional values and standards. Some examples of these include the following:

19. In March 2013, ICAEW signed an MoU with TalentCorp Malaysia, the government department responsible for ensuring Malaysia has the necessary skilled workforce to meet its economic aims. Sunway-TES, a leading university and a number of Authorised Training Employers set up a Centre for Accountancy Training Excellence in Malaysia. This is the first such private-public partnership of its kind and aims to establish Malaysia as a training hub for the whole ASEAN region. This will also form a key part of Malaysia’s more immediate aim of delivering 5500 qualified accountants by 2020.

20. In July 2013 ICAEW launched a foundation programme that will allow graduates from non-accountancy disciplines to transition onto the Singapore Qualification Programme and to qualify as Chartered Accountants of Singapore. Hitherto, the Singapore QP was only open to candidates with an accredited accountancy degree. The Foundation Programme, based on ICAEW’s Certificate of Finance Accounting and Business (CFAB) will also credit students with nine of the fifteen papers necessary to qualify as an ICAEW Chartered Accountant.

21. Finally, ICAEW has run an Emirati Scholarship Scheme in the UAE since 2010, which encourages Emirati nationals with strong academic backgrounds to train and qualify as Chartered Accountants. The scheme, which is endorsed by HH Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak al Nahyan (Minister for Culture, Youth and Social Development) helps the UAE in its aim to encourage more Emirati nationals into the private sector, ultimately part of the drive to diversify the economy away from oil revenues.

Conclusion - soft power in action.

22. Partnership is central to the way we do business and our model is to work and support local accountancy and business bodies. This model results in long term sustainable relationships which are good not just for the accountancy profession but the UK economy as a whole.

October 2013
Independent Schools Council – Written evidence

The Independent Schools Council is a politically independent, not-for-profit organisation representing the eight leading professional associations of independent schools and their Heads, whose members comprise more than 1,200 schools of which more than 1,000 are charities.

“International education helps to strengthen overseas business, research, social and cultural links. People in emerging economies that have learnt English or studied for UK qualifications are more interested in working with, and doing business in, the UK than those who have not. The experience of students in UK education helps to create good relations that will enable successful engagement with the next generation of global leaders. More directly, delivering accredited courses abroad is likely to create additional demand for UK qualifications and/or educational equipment produced in the UK…”

“[S]chool-level education help[s] to provide a pipeline of prospective students who will study in the UK. A survey by the Independent Schools Council (ISC) found that 77% of international pupils at ISC schools go on to universities in the UK. This equates to 8,000 entrants per annum from ISC schools. Figures from the Council of British International Schools (COBIS) indicate that 39% of pupils that left COBIS schools in 2012 went on to study at a UK higher education institution.”

International Education:
Global Growth and Prosperity
HM Government
July 2013

Executive summary

The Independent Schools Council welcomes the call for evidence on soft power and the UK’s influence.

British independent schools are recognised as amongst the best in the world. Schools here continue to welcome overseas pupils, providing them with not only an excellent education but also an introduction, during formative years, to British culture, values and humour. British schools, both at home and abroad, are a significant pathway for overseas pupils embarking on higher education in the UK.

Links between leading international families and British public schools sometimes go back many generations and are an essential ingredient of the friendly relationship we enjoy with these countries; for example while I was the Headmaster of Harrow School I was able to see first-hand the historical links between Harrow and the Jordanian royal family. It was also notable that the business elite of Hong Kong often sent their children to British independent schools in great numbers, thereby strengthening our friendship with China. In 2012 Harrow International School Hong Kong (the third in the Harrow family of schools set up in the Asia region) was set up in a partnership with the Hong Kong government.
In these and many other ways the significance of British schools establishing links that can last a lifetime can be seen. We hope therefore that the Committee's report on soft power reflects the huge benefit of British independent schools to the UK’s standing in the world.

Barnaby Lenon
Chairman, ISC

1. Independent schools educate and attract a significant number of overseas pupils
   In ISC schools, there are currently 25,912 non-British pupils whose parents live overseas, meaning that overseas pupils make up around 5% of all pupils at ISC schools. This highlights the attraction of an education at a UK independent school to the global market and reflects the PISA findings from the OECD which rank UK independent schools as among the best in the world. This not only enhances the UK’s reputation for education, but also improves the international communities' view of the UK and consequently UK educated graduates will often be sought after. As HM Government’s recent Industrial Strategy publication notes, “Our independent school sector has been attracting students from all over the world for decades … Our schools are recognised globally for their excellence … Our schools have a long history of excellence and innovation, and a global reputation for quality and rigour.”


2. Independent schools allow British school pupils to forge relationships and links with international students for the future
   British pupils are more likely to have a better sense of other cultures and develop an international outlook and relationships when exposed to the international community at a young age. These links are likely to continue throughout their education and professional careers.

3. Independent schools are often the first links overseas pupils form with the UK
   The majority of overseas pupils studying at UK independent schools are boarders. They are therefore likely to become accustomed to the UK way of life and as stated in a recent research paper produced by the Department for Business Innovation & Skills, form “a positive understanding of the UK’s culture and values…. [and] become informal ambassadors for the UK”.

   This new generation of students, from various countries (including dominant international powers) will develop links to the UK resulting in a global influence over future professionals, business leaders and political leaders. Independent schools are therefore indirectly promoting the UK to pupils who may return to their home countries and end up in positions of influence taking with them relationships and business connections for the future and trust in the UK. For example, the Emir of Qatar (who came into power in June this year) was educated at two leading independent schools in the UK, Sherborne and Harrow.

24 http://www.isc.co.uk/research/Publications/annual-census (2013 Census)
4. **Independent schools lead overseas students into higher education in the UK**
   Approximately four out of every five overseas pupils at UK independent schools will progress to higher education in the UK.\(^28\) This makes independent schools an important pathway provider for our excellent universities seeking to attract the brightest and the best.

5. **An international student base at independent schools can broaden the minds of British pupils to international education**
   54% of ISC schools with pupils going on to higher education reported pupils going to non-UK higher education institutions. The USA was the most popular destination attracting 44% of ISC pupils going to overseas universities.\(^29\) Recent research commissioned by Maastricht University and based on a sample of members of the Headmasters’ and Headmistresses’ Conference, which represents around 250 of Britain’s leading independent schools, reported that 91 per cent of heads said sixth-formers had become more interested in applying to universities overseas this year compared with 2011. Chris Ramsey, head of King’s School, Chester, and chairman of HMC’s universities committee, says: “Thinking about higher education is more imaginative than it used to be. Young people are not taking for granted that they have to go to university in the UK.”

6. **Our competitor economies are tapping into this market/power**
   Other countries are aware of the benefits that student migration can bring and as a result they are relaxing their immigration laws to encourage this type of migration. The UK may therefore be hindering this type of growth by stringent immigration laws making the UK seem like an unwelcoming country to overseas students. Australia has recently reduced regulation for certain countries\(^30\) and Canada is also actively targeting international university applicants\(^31\). If independent schools can continue bringing students in at school level then those students are very likely to continue onto higher education in the UK.

7. **UK independent schools are operating overseas**
   ISC schools are developing ‘daughter’ schools overseas as a response to demand for high quality British education and values: Dulwich College (Shanghai, Beijing, Suzhou, Seoul, Singapore), Harrow School (Bangkok, Beijing, Hong Kong), Haileybury (Almaty, Astana), Brighton College (Abu Dhabi, El Ain), ACS (Doha), Bromsgrove School (Bangkok), Epsom College (Malaysia), Malvern College (Qingdao), Marlborough College (Johor), North London Collegiate School (Jeju), Repton School (Dubai), Sherborne School (Qatar), Shrewsbury (Bangkok) and Wellington College (Tianjian, Shanghai). Mainland China leads the league table for most British campuses, and the number of pupils educated on ISC campuses overseas is reaching parity with the number of overseas pupils travelling to the UK for education.

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\(^{29}\) [http://www.isc.co.uk/research/Publications/annual-census (2013 Census)](http://www.isc.co.uk/research/Publications/annual-census (2013 Census))


Beyond ISC schools, there are a vast number of British-style schools. The recent HM Government Industrial Strategy estimates 3.1 million pupils studying at over 6,300 English-medium schools worldwide in 2012. Of these, 1.4 million pupils were studying at nearly 3,000 British Schools Overseas (BSOs), where at least 50% of the curriculum is British. Student numbers at BSOs are forecast to grow to nearly 2 million in 2017 and 2.75 million in 2022, with fee income forecast to rise to £12.9bn and £17.2bn in 2017 and 2022, respectively.  

8. Independent schools not only bring in school fees but also contribute to the wider UK economy
Overseas pupils contribute to the UK economy in a number of ways, including paying school fees – estimated to be £750m each year³² - consumer spending and expenditure by visiting family. There are also “[d]istinct trade benefits to the UK aris[ing] from alumni as purchasers or consumers of UK products”.³⁴

9. Power can be strengthened without threatening UK immigration control
More than one half of all ISC schools hold a ‘Highly Trusted’ Tier 4 licence. The UKBA and the Home Office acknowledge that the independent school sector is considered a low risk area in immigration terms. There have been no findings of non-compliance in relation to independent school sponsors³⁵ and welcome, albeit limited, concessions have been granted to independent schools “in view of their lower risk and proven track record of compliance”.³⁶

18 September 2013

³³ Derived from total number of overseas pupils and average sixth form boarding fee
Ingenious Media – Written evidence

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In Joseph Nye’s classic account ‘soft power’ is the ability in international politics to attract, influence and co-opt rather than coerce, and to promote the national interest through cultural means broadly defined. This concept is a little fuzzy around the edges but has nonetheless been widely accepted as an increasingly important dimension of global politics. One highly visible form of soft power is cultural diplomacy. The practice of cultural diplomacy is linked, though in complex non-linear ways, to the global market for cultural goods and services. This market is growing fast according to UNCTAD – possibly by as much as eight per cent annually.37

1.2 Global cultural markets (live and recorded music, publishing, film, TV, advertising, handicrafts, cultural tourism and so on) are sometimes referred to collectively as the global creative economy. The UK is a major player in most of them, especially in media and creative content markets (music, film, TV, publishing and games). Ingenious is the largest independent investor in these markets in the UK.

1.3 By way of further introduction Ingenious is an investment and advisory firm based in London. We have some 5,000 investors including institutions, corporates and high net worth individuals from whom we have raised more than £8 billion to invest in creative assets since 1998. We recently extended the scope of our investment activities into leisure, sport and clean energy.

1.4 To date our partnerships have financed over 100 feature films, including such successful commercial films as Avatar, 127 Hours, Australia, Hotel Rwanda, Notes on a Scandal, Water For Elephants, X-Men: First Class, The Best Exotic Hotel Marigold, The Descendants, Girl with a Pearl Earring, Hairspray, Hot Fuzz, Night at the Museum, Shaun of the Dead, Stardust, Streetdance 3D, Vera Drake, Rise of Planet of the Apes and Trance. Some of these films are culturally ‘British’ within the meaning of legislation, some not.

1.5 In television we have worked with all the major broadcasters and produced more than 600 hours of prime-time TV drama, including shows such as Foyle’s War, Rev, Kingdom, Scott & Bailey, The Reckoning, Law and Order: UK, Monroe, Doc Martin, Primeval, Case Histories, Injustice, The Suspicions of Mr Whicher, Man to Manta, Zen, Neverland and Young Leonardo. Most of these programmes have been sold internationally.

1.6 Our experience of producing children’s animation includes Fleabag Monkeyface and Pajanimals. Through Ingenious Games we have invested both in consol based video games (for example Colin Macrae: DiRT and Fuel) and mobile games (like My Puzzler). We have previously invested in recorded music, including albums by Peter Gabriel and The Prodigy (a number one hit album), but now focus on music festivals and other live events.

1.7 We invest in early to mid-stage content businesses through our quoted vehicle Ingenious Media Active Capital (IMAC), a Media Opportunities Fund and a new fund for

creative start-ups. Previous investments include 19 Management (creator of Pop Idol), and Cream (operator of the Creamfields Festival), both businesses which have been licensed to travel the world.

1.8 Amongst other questions the Committee asks:

• What are the important soft power assets that the UK has? How can we make the most of these? What is the role for non-state actors?

• What parts do sport and culture play in the UK’s influence and soft power?

In this submission we try to answer these questions by reflecting on the role of the cultural and creative industries in transmitting soft power to the rest of the world and on the need for the UK to remain competitive in the fast-growing global creative economy if this power is to be maintained. We do not discuss sport per se, although the global market for sports rights is essentially media business.

2. CULTURE, SOFT POWER AND THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

2.1 On 16th November 1923 the then Prince of Wales, presiding at a lunch given by the British National Films League, remarked that it was well worth Britain’s while to take the film industry seriously, and to develop it “to the utmost”. He emphasised the value of cinema in advancing British imperial interests, observing that “trade follows the film”. He might have added that in using this phrase he was quoting word for word from an earlier speech delivered by US President Woodrow Wilson in 1918. The doctrine that “trade follows the film” has been pursued ceaselessly by US governments ever since: Hollywood is the greatest example of cultural soft power the world has ever seen, although it may now have peaked.

2.2 The way a country is perceived beyond its shores is influenced by many factors – some political, some economic and some ‘cultural’ in the narrower sense of the term. For centuries the power of the Venetian Republic was communicated to the courts of Europe and the Levant as effectively by painters, poets, architects and musicians as by its fleets and armies. In decline, the delights of Venice as an eighteenth century art market and tourist destination for the aristocratic rich were assiduously promoted by the British Consul there, Joseph Smith, courtesy of Canaletto and other Venetian vedutisti. This was a perfect marriage of art and commerce wrapped in the mantle of what we now call cultural diplomacy.

2.3 On a more philosophical and controversial plane, British and French impressions of Germany as the rising European power in the 1890s were significantly shaped in ruling circles by disputes about what it meant to be a ‘Wagnerite’. Like Goethe before him Richard Wagner became for a time a colossus of German soft power, achieved through the media of the printing press, the opera house and the literary salon. Soft power at this time was still primarily the power of ideas and ideals, although trade had followed art, and vice versa, long before the invention of film.

2.4 The development of the cultural and creative industries in the twentieth century harnessed the power of ideas and ideals to that of business on an altogether different scale: it transformed the capacity of governments to promote their values indirectly by means
other than politics or war. The first half of the century witnessed the huge growth of the film, music, radio and television industries boosting global trade in cultural goods and services exponentially, and especially the export of US movies. The spread of American values through mass media was mirrored in the Soviet Union by the diffusion of an entirely opposed world view, though largely though non-market mechanisms. At the height of the Cold War the two competing global powers used soft power so aggressively within and beyond their respective spheres of political influence that it was frequently indistinguishable from pure propaganda, occasionally humiliating great artists and for a time diminishing the effectiveness of simple cultural exchange in breaking down barriers.

2.5 In the early twenty first century the digital revolution has driven an even more bewilderingly huge step-change in the global distribution of ideas, media content and creative goods and services – and especially of intangible goods like music and games. Based on its radically different economics, the internet, which by its nature is transnational, has a transformational impact on creative businesses and the diffusion of soft power alike: in the analogue world the marginal cost of the reproduction of a song or book or film reflected the need for companies to operate warehouses and fleets of trucks and hold stock; in the digital world the equivalent cost is virtually zero.

2.6 The value chain of ‘old media’ business is disintegrating with value passing from analogue era ‘gatekeepers’, like record companies and publishers, to consumers and content ‘aggregators’ like Google and Facebook, most of whom outside China are big US technology companies. It can be argued that soft power in the digital age is becoming more concentrated in the hands of US gatekeepers and distributors – tech companies and media conglomerates who in their home market jostle with each other for commercial supremacy.

2.7 The digital shift has enormous consequences for rights holders, consumers and content producers – and for governments who, as in the case of China, Iran and Belarus, attempt to counter the exercise of internet-enabled soft power by attempting to control and/or censor the distribution of foreign material. The biggest impact is on consumers and is effected through social media and peer-to-peer communication. Peer-to-peer and similar technologies enable consumers to share their music, videos and web-links with each other across national boundaries – whether by legal or illegal means. These technologies and associated changes in consumer behaviour place great strains on intellectual property regimes worldwide: they have enormous implications for the future of copyright and copyright enforcement, and thus of creative economy trade flows and revenue streams.

2.8 The effectiveness of creative industry soft power is determined more by content, and especially high quality content, than by technology per se: creativity is the key. The UK has generally punched above its weight in creative markets. The 1967 television adaption of John Galsworthy’s *The Forsyte Saga*, for example, achieved a global audience of approximately 180 million. (It was also the first BBC TV series to be sold to the Soviet Union: this led a generation of Russian children to imagine that England was still stuck in the Edwardian age until disabused by the import of Beatlemania).

2.9 Forty years later British television enjoyed a global triumph on an even bigger scale when *Pop Idol*, with which Ingenious was closely associated, became the biggest UK TV export of all time having been sold to more than 100 countries. However the relationship between culture, commerce and soft power in these two examples was quite different: like most TV formats *Pop Idol* was completely reproduced for local markets (as *American Idol*,...
Afghan Idol, Russian Idol and so on) whereas The Forsyte Saga, as with innumerable other TV dramas subsequently, was adapted for international markets only by being dubbed or subtitled. Inspector Morse has presented to the world an image of Britishness that no winner of any British-derived Idol show ever could (or would wish to).

2.10 For reasons no-one can quite explain creativity and innovation are peculiarly British attributes. From Shakespeare to Pinter, Turner to Hockney, Wren to Rogers and Purcell to Birtwhistle, not to mention Andrew Lloyd Webber, Damien Hirst, Vivienne Westwood and countless icons of rock and pop, this is something we’re rather good at. That is what we tell ourselves - not without a hint of smugness, and to the understandable annoyance of some our European friends – but the proposition is supported by relevant trade figures. In 2011, for example, the UK’s trade surplus in film was £1 billion. The precise relationship between creativity, talent, cultural exchange, business and investment reflected in this statistic is exceptionally difficult to disentangle, but the scale of the impact on many levels, including creative industries’ employment in the UK, cannot be disputed.

2.11 The UK thus enjoys a comparatively advantageous position in the global soft power stakes. As the Observer put it in a leading article in July 2008:

“The truth is that we are a very old country with a stellar arsenal of fine art, ancient artefacts, literary genius, civic institutions and curatorial skill, all now bolstered by world-class industries from music to fashion. And rather than be ashamed by this cultural inheritance, we now at last have the confidence and economic resources to celebrate it as a national asset.”

That confidence may have taken a knock since the banking collapse, but the UK’s creative sector remains remarkably buoyant, boosted in part by the growth of the international middle class in countries like China and India – a class with discretionary spending power and an appetite for all forms of media and cultural content. The fact that 360 million people around the world speak English as their first language and that another 1.1 billion people speak it as a second language is a great bonus for UK cultural producers.

2.12 The English language is not always helpful in audio-visual markets in which niche British content competes with mass-market American content, but the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) is itself a substantial international business: the British Council has become a significant global brand in part due to its extensive TEFL activity in more than 100 countries.

2.13 In addition to its traditional cultural exchange programmes and language teaching business, the British Council has been able to build in recent years on the UK’s international reputation for innovation in creative industries’ policy-making. There is a high demand for British academics and industry commentators to speak on cultural and creative economy topics around the world, and a high demand to participate in associated activities like its Young Creative Entrepreneur programme. This work is carried out by the Council’s small Creative Economy Unit: this team appears to be under-resourced by comparison with the funding of more traditional arts based activities.

2.14 This is disappointing. It is also puzzling given that a recent Council report, Culture Means Business, based on opinion research in Pakistan, Spain, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Russia,

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Brazil, China, Thailand, Poland and India, explores the relationship between young people’s involvement in UK-linked cultural activity and their interest in doing business with us concluding that there is indeed a significant positive correlation between perceptions of UK artistic and creative output and of opportunities for trading and doing business.39

2.15 This finding is hardly revelatory, but does explain why the USA, France, Germany and Italy have poured so much taxpayers’ money into universities, language and cultural institutes around the world over the last 70 years or so, and why China is now trying so hard to catch up by funding Confucius Institutes in as many countries as will take them: “trade follows the film”! Given that the Creative Economy Unit lies at the heart of the Council’s work on the cultural and creative industries one wonders why this activity does not have a higher priority in the Council’s funding priorities.

3. INVESTMENT, CUTS AND COMPETITIVENESS

3.1 So, the UK is a great feeding ground for creativity of all kinds. The combination of a distinctive cultural heritage, the capacity to produce great content and the universality of the English language gives us a clear marketing edge in global creative markets. These are the foundations of British soft power in the contemporary world: they were brilliantly displayed by Danny Boyle in his opening ceremony for the 2012 London Olympic games. The risk is that we take these advantages for granted, cease sufficiently to invest in their continued vitality, and ignore the determination of others to contest them. Competitiveness is an issue in cultural and creative markets as in other global markets.

3.2 Creativity as a national attribute has developed serendipitously out of a long tradition of political tolerance, religious and ethnic diversity, public subsidy of universities, museums, galleries, art and drama schools, the BBC, libraries and the performing arts, all alloyed at different times and in many configurations with various forms of philanthropy, private investment, commercial sponsorship and fiscal incentives. The distinctive character of British culture reflects our particular history of public money working alongside private money in a mixed ecology of funding.

3.3 The economics of creativity and creative enterprise is not a sexy subject amongst economists, but is vitally important both to the future performance of the UK’s creative industries and by extension to the future of British soft power. The role of the private sector in much of the creative economy (referring here to the production of content, not the supply of services) is to back successful creative risk-taking. Many creative ideas are initially developed in work-shops financed through subsidy or otherwise by public funds. This is demonstrated in the film industry where the role played by the BFI, BBC Films, Film 4 and Creative England is central to early stage project development. The pattern is broadly similar in dance, the visual arts, classical music (but generally not musicals) and theatre, where the ‘R&D’ function which gave us a production like War Horse at the National Theatre is almost entirely funded through subsidy.

3.4 The informal relationship between public risk capital and commercial investment is crucial in the arts, culture and entertainment sectors which are all subject to the vagaries of unpredictable demand and shifts in public taste. We are in the ‘hits’ and ‘misses’ business,
and the hits have to pay for the misses. Against this background it is imperative to understand that we work within a delicately balanced financing ecology in which public and private funding combine to deliver high quality work, critical and commercial success and tax revenues. Making further cuts to the total level of public investment in the country’s creative infrastructure – cuts additional to those announced in 2010 and in subsequent spending reviews - could easily destroy this fragile balance.

3.5 There is a serious risk that the funding cuts already being implemented will result in less R&D, less creative risk-taking and fewer hits being created leading, in turn, to the attraction of lower levels of private investment and thus a fracturing of the mixed arts funding model developed since 1946, as well, quite possibly, as a downwards spiral in total UK creative capacity, though this would be exceptionally difficult to calibrate. If this were to be the outcome, however, it would likely be to the long term detriment of our international competitiveness in creative markets.

3.6 Amidst much talk about the need to ‘rebalance’ the UK economy, it would seem irresponsible not to take steps to ensure that we do remain competitive. To repeat, the global market for cultural goods and services is growing. However, as the CBI has pointed out, “international competitors are chasing our success”.40 We would be foolish to rely on our natural advantages in the face of determined attempts by our competitors to increase market share by means of heavy public and private investment. Cultural producers, policy analysts and investors must all be concerned with the issue of competitiveness. Competitiveness matters to the arts and culture sector not because it is a virtue in itself – in creative terms it clearly isn’t - but because it is the key to attracting investment.

3.7 The forces of competition reveal themselves unmistakeably to artists and producers: the demand for talent is intense and talent is highly mobile. We have a particular reason to know this in the UK: an astonishing 80,000 Brits live and work within a 50 mile radius of Hollywood – more than twice the number employed in the UK film industry. Our games and animation sectors have in recent years suffered a steady outflow of talent to Canada, France, Ireland and elsewhere due to a combination of factors including tax competition, attractive incoming employment packages and our own structural weaknesses. Talent goes where the work is, and some markets are intensely competitive.

3.8 We have lost many of the positions of global leadership we held in the 1950s and 1960s when the UK could boast two world class media and entertainment companies in EMI and the Rank Organisation. The reasons for this decline are not clear, but fifty years later we cannot boast a single player to rival Disney, Bertelsmann or Vivendi in global audio-visual markets. There are a few British success stories on the corporate front, but not many. Double Negative, Europe’s largest provider of special effects for the film industry (Inception, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2), is a rare current example of globally competitive business scale in the UK’s creative economy.

3.9 BBC Worldwide is another relative success story, though as a business the BBC is of course uniquely privileged through the licence fee. We also remain very strong in services like advertising, design, fashion and architecture. In general however, due to the decline or even disappearance of world-class companies like the Rank Organisation the UK is less

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commercially strong in global content markets than it was. Just as creatively we punch well above our international weight so, arguably, and notwithstanding our deep reserves of creativity and talent, commercially we punch below it. This is a subject that goes well beyond the Committee’s current remit but is ultimately linked to it in complex ways.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Although the relationship between soft power, trade flows and economic performance, including the performance of our cultural and creative industries, is a complex one, and should not be construed in crude linear terms, that such a relationship exists and bring benefits to the UK is not seriously disputed. Against that background the rapid growth of the global market for cultural goods and services should represent an opportunity for the UK given our historic strengths and ‘natural’ advantages, including our soft power pre-eminence in many parts of the world. The risk to the UK is that through a combination of higher public and private investment or, in the case of the USA, by virtue of the dominant position of its technology companies and the financial strength of its entertainment industry ‘majors’, other countries with a superior capacity for thinking long term and a greater appetite for increasing market share will progressively erode our competitive advantages.

4.2 In order to remain competitive, the UK needs an industrial strategy for its cultural and creative industries – one that is linked to, reflects and draws upon our existing soft power strengths.

Dr Martin Smith

Special Adviser

August 2013
Institute of Export – Written evidence

The Institute of Export & International Trade is a professional body representing international traders and providing education programmes from the age of 16 to a foundation degree with a BA and MA launching 2014. It was established in 1935 to offer British businesses an opportunity to build competence and skills when trading internationally. Its membership represents over 2000 companies with £306,830 million turnover in total. We have 500 + students studying full academic qualifications including staff from the major UK banks and many more taking advantage of short courses to introduce them to specific areas of international trade. Representing the Institute is new board Director and Trustee, David Maisey who is managing director and CEO of ICC Solutions.

ICC Solutions develops and supplies highly efficient test tools for Chip & PIN certifications with the payment associations, such as Visa and MasterCard. Between 2005 and 2010, the Company annual turnover increased by 80% and annual turnover attributable to international trade increased by 116%. In 2012, the Company exported to 63 countries with a team of 18 people. On average 75% of the Company business is overseas, with the dominant markets being US, Canada and China.

Positioning on Soft Power and the UK’s Influence

Soft Power is an advantage that should be used as part of a toolkit of British Business but it cannot replace sound research and a developed market entry plan.

UK business community should be engaging in a better and more effective way and researching new markets in the process to ensure that they have a full understanding of how to approach new markets and do it well.

Our work builds competence and additional skills in international trade that allows businesses to trade internationally by providing and maintaining professional education qualifications under OfQual accreditation standard as an awarding body.

We are not seeing a joined up approach from the Government. It appears to start with great ambitions and then runs out of time which leads to a compromise.

The Bribery law has created issues for all companies. When dealing in international markets the view is that the west engages in a lot of hypocrisy. What is bribery? If you want to do business in a local market then you should not ‘preach’ to the locals and try to impose some kind of cultural imperialism on them. If we want to pursue this policy for our own companies and in western markets that is fine but you cannot ‘force’ this on markets where this has not been the way of doing business for centuries. The definition in our culture of bribery may not be the same in other countries and vice versa.

The Commonwealth as potential trading partners needs to be explored and promoted more than it is, however are we spending too much time looking at past glories while we should be working on putting together the best business proposition and pricing model?

July 2013

Transcript to be found under Commonwealth Business Council in Volume 1 (page 305)
International Alert, Transparency International UK, Ian Birrell, Columnist and Foreign Correspondent and Jonathan Glennie, Overseas Development Institute – Oral evidence (QQ 126-151)

Transcript to be found under Ian Birrell, Columnist and Foreign Correspondent in Volume I (page 189)
International Alert – Supplementary written evidence

Written evidence submitted to the House of Lords Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK’s Influence

By Phil Vernon, Director of Programmes, International Alert

9th August, 2013

Acting as a witness to the Committee on 29th July informed my own thinking on the topic under discussion, leading me to submit this short formal note to the inquiry on behalf of International Alert.

1. Soft power is Joseph Nye’s rather precise definition of how to achieve one’s objectives through attraction and co-option, alongside or instead of other means such as coercion and purchase. For Nye, foreign aid is purchase power, and as such not strictly a soft power tool. Was he right?

2. It’s rather hard to examine power in the abstract, as it can only really be measured in relation to a specific policy goal or objective. The UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) is mandated to reduce poverty overseas – a difficult but relatively narrow purpose. But if you look at the actual policies and work of DFID, other UK government departments, the EU of which the UK is a leading member state, other international organisations of which it is a member, and other UK-based entities including NGOs and businesses, it is not a great stretch to argue that one of the UK’s international actual policy goals is an increasingly and sustainably prosperous, peaceful and liberal world. If such an unwritten goal does exist for the UK – and I believe it does – then it would ultimately be good for UK business, good for reduced UK defence spending, good for the achievement of globally shared public goods such as atmospheric carbon reduction, and good from a moral perspective as well.

3. So the debate about whether aid is an effective soft power instrument comes down ultimately to a debate about whether aid can legitimately be seen as soft power (rather than “purchasing” power as Nye would have it), and whether it actually does help create a better world.

4. Several conclusions emerged from the discussion which took place during the Committee’s public session on 29th July, informed by questions and comments from the Committee and fellow witnesses, as follows.

5. If the currency of soft power is values, institutions, culture and policy as Nye says, then soft power is exercised through the choices the UK makes and the actions it takes, and not only by what it says. While words are important means of communicating values, institutions, culture and policy, their impact is fatally undermined when they are inconsistent with actions.
6. Churchill is said to have called the Marshall Plan “unselfish and unsordid”. No doubt some aid is motivated by selfish concerns, and some may even have a sordid side. There are always tensions and trade-offs, as well as overlaps, between different policy goals. But he was right that aid is fundamentally an unselfish act. By allocating a chunk of the government budget to overseas aid – along with substantial amounts of private giving by UK citizens – we are sending a message of international solidarity that must increase the UK’s international stock, and thus its soft power to influence the directions and nature of progress in specific places and more broadly. For example, the main reason the UK was asked to co-chair and thus help frame the outcomes of the UN High Level Panel on Post-2015, was because of our prominent role in aid and our commitment to spend 0.7% of GNI as aid.

7. As a relatively prosperous, liberal, democratic and peaceful nation, the UK has much to offer a world wishing to evolve in those directions. It offers models from which others can draw ideas for their own political and economic evolution, while avoiding some of our errors. There is every reason to believe that those seeking to take the Arab Spring in these directions will be attracted to and reach out to the UK.

8. Incremental improvements towards peace, prosperity and liberal democracy are non-linear and as such cannot be “bought” or coerced. So if aid is an instrument of power and influence it must at least partly be a soft power instrument. But we should avoid focusing the discussion only on “aid” as money, and rather think about how the UK’s engagement taken as a whole, helps to create a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic world, including, e.g.:

   - Eliminating the money laundering and other nefarious financial practices which are still done in the UK
   - Contributing to improving international frameworks and systems for supranational governance and mutual support among nations
   - Improve the regulation of UK-listed businesses operating in developing contexts, so their behaviours contribute to the right kind of progress there
   - Working in partnerships with those in developing countries – governments, businesses, civil society – as well as other outsiders who have the capacity to influence outcomes there such as international donors and multilateral organisations.

9. Rather than limiting the discussion to the “UK’s soft power”, we should see it as an issue of “using soft power as part of an international approach to progress”, i.e. not to improve the UK’s standing, as some of the Committee members put it, but rather to use the UK’s standing in collaboration with others, to contribute to progress in the wider world.

10. In other words, the UK’s co-chairmanship of the High Level Panel on post-2015 development should be seen both as an achievement, thanks to UK aid policy, and as a means to a bigger end. This is itself served not only by the UK’s aid policy, but also by other governments’ aid, and not only by aid but also by a range of other policy instruments, choices and actions.
11. Progress towards a more democratic, peaceful and sustainably prosperous world is non-linear, and is by no means assured or even probable. It benefits from a long and sustained process employing diverse and complementary approaches whose effectiveness remains an article of faith to some extent: we do not (yet) have a well-founded set of metrics. This is because the non-linear nature of progress means we cannot be certain that seemingly promising changes are sustainable, or that apparent set-backs are not in fact opportunities. To illustrate using an obvious example: an apparently democratic election may or may not be a sign that democratic values are becoming embedded in society. We won’t be able to judge success for some years yet.

12. The UK’s sustained support of Rwanda’s government and people is a case in point. To some, Rwanda’s government is a repressive, undemocratic regime bent on maintaining the dominance of a single party and a single ethnic group, and as such undeserving of the UK’s support. To others, Rwanda’s leadership is very carefully managing a process which it hopes and plans will lay the foundations of a stable and democratic country, based on a realistic assessment that it is too early to liberalise fully. There is no way of knowing for sure, which of these scenarios is most accurate. The UK must carefully judge how to respond, and do so with all due care and diligence. This means *inter alia* that if it wishes to support progress in Rwanda it must deploy not funds merely, but also politically astute civil servants and diplomats able to *engage* with the government and civil society there and interpret events and processes as they evolve, tailoring UK’s engagement the while.

13. The risks due to this uncertainty – which is reflected in similar and different ways in all fragile contexts where the UK might wish to support development progress – seem worth taking, provided it exercises all due diligence and care in the choices it makes, and monitors and adapts its approaches along the way. This is expert, labour-intensive work. Diligence and care are not best served by understaffed government departments, which suggests that DFID’s drive to reduce transaction costs and the FCO’s drive to “do more with less” may be counter-productive.

14. Finally, if I am right in elucidating from its various postures and actions that the UK has an unwritten goal of contributing to an increasingly and sustainable prosperous, peaceful and democratic world, then perhaps the government should make that a more explicit policy goal against which it can test its policies, and for which it can be held to account. This would have the added benefit of forcing the UK to evaluate its contribution to the global common weal – and thus its long-term interests – alongside its promotion of the UK’s narrower and shorter-term interests such as trade.

August 2013
Introduction

1. International Alert welcomes this inquiry, which comes in the wake of fundamental changes by Her Majesty’s Government (HMG) since 2010 to the means and ends to which it exerts influence in pursuit of building stability overseas. These priorities are defined by the Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS) which is now a central tenet of UK development and foreign policy and enjoys cross party support.

2. This submission concentrates exclusively on the most effective ways in which the UK could or should exercise soft power in pursuit of that policy agenda. There is no single accepted definition of but these offerings by Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane (2004) would command general agreement. For them, soft power is the ability:

- “to get desired outcomes because others want what you want”;
- “to achieve goals through attraction rather than coercion”;
- “convincing others to follow or getting them to agree to norms or institutions that produce the desired behaviour.”

It tends to rest on

- “the appeal of one’s ideas or culture or the ability to set the agenda through standards and institutions that shape the preferences of others”;
- “the persuasiveness of the free information that an actor seeks to transmit.”

For Nye and Keohane, scholars in the realist tradition of international relations, the fundamental argument for soft power is that it works and therefore obviates the need to resort to costly military and economic instruments to achieve policy goals.

3. This submission looks at three instruments of soft power available to the UK which draw on the legitimacy of power, free information and international institutions. They are: intergovernmental leadership, a free and independent media and credibility by example. It applies them to the Government’s policy priorities for conflict affected and fragile states and suggests a recommendation for the Committee at the end of each.

4. BSOS accepts that the poorest and most vulnerable people in the World are those living in conflict affected and fragile states (CAFS). These states have made least progress since the Millennium Declaration of 2000 and are widely predicted to continue on this path should there be no significant change in the global approach to international development (Kaplan, 2012). This is not only a failure of development with dire human consequences for those concerned but also represents a clear security concern to the UK and other countries across the world, of which the attack on the Nairobi Westgate Centre was the most recent example.
5. The World Development Report of 2011 (WDR2011) found that some 1.5 billion people live in countries affected by repeated cycles of political and criminal violence – causing human misery and disrupting development to the extent that almost no MDGs have been met in any fragile state. It argues that to break these cycles, it is crucial to strengthen legitimate national institutions and governance in order to provide citizen security, justice and jobs – as well as alleviating the international stresses that increase the risks of violent conflict.

6. To address this, the UK needs to contribute to normative change at global and local level. Specifically, it needs to address the social and political factors that drive violent conflict, perpetuate widespread abuses and prevent the poorest countries from achieving sustainable growth. These are underpinned by a range of social and normative barriers preventing citizens from engaging and participating meaningfully with the governance of their countries.

7. By definition, addressing these issues requires the exercise of soft, rather than hard, power.

8. As the Committee recognises in its framing questions to this Inquiry, the UK cannot project norms independently, or exclusively with its traditional allies, without being vulnerable to charges of neo-colonialism from governments and others whose current policies and practices are challenged. It must thus work in partnership, in many cases new partnerships, with actors from a range of governments, civil society coalitions and multilateral institutions.

Instruments of soft power

9. The UK can draw on at least three sources of influence in pursuit of the need for change outlined above. They are inter-governmental leadership; culture and media; and long term demonstrative leadership.

Inter-governmental leadership

10. The UK has demonstrably engaged in inter-governmental leadership to significant effect in the past. Examples include the Gleneagles Summit of 2005 in which UK leadership resulted in substantial agreements on climate change (associating leaders from Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa) and reducing poverty in Africa (with seven African presidents taking part). Without sustained British perseverance and exercise of soft power these outcomes would have been highly unlikely (Bayne, 2005).

11. The current Foreign Secretary is himself currently pursuing an amendment to the Geneva Convention with the addition of a protocol explicitly classifying sexual violence as a “grave violation” of the convention, with 134 UN states currently confirmed to be attending a conference to adopt a declaration to this end41. That is two thirds of all UN States and as such illustrates the significance and capacity of UK intergovernmental leadership.

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12. More quietly, in the G8 context, the UK has joined with Germany in leading a shift of emphasis into recognising the linkages between the pressures of climate change, security risk and poverty and beginning to develop the first elements of an internationally coordinated response to these dangerous connections (Harris 2012).

13. There are other inter-governmental partnerships in which the UK is a leading player, such as the Open Government Partnership (OGP), which consists of 60 States and which met recently in London. The OGP agenda outlined by the Prime Minister, if enacted fully on the ground, would radically transform the barriers detailed above. They are:

- **Open Data**: Radically opening up government data for greater accountability, public service improvement and economic growth;
- **Government Integrity**: fighting corruption and strengthening democracy through transparent government;
- **Fiscal Transparency**: helping citizens to follow the money;
- **Empowering Citizens**: transforming the relationship between citizens and governments, and;
- **Natural Resource Transparency**: ensuring natural resources and extractive revenues are used for public benefit.

14. HMG should continue on this path by scaling up its investment in exercising soft power in support of redefining international normative and legal frameworks in support of building stability overseas.

**Culture and media**

15. The UK is a consolidated and well established democracy which enjoys widespread respect for its democratic institutions. It also benefits from the English language and mass appeal of the British media, particularly the BBC World Service in the context of developing nations. The BBC World Service and BBC more generally, is therefore a key basis of soft power.

16. Critically, however, this effect does not arise because the Service is a mouthpiece for British policy; in fact, it arises precisely because it is not. It is a critical and independent source of credible information accessed by populations who do not have alternative sources of independent information. It is thus an asymmetrical source of soft power. Returning to Nye & Keohane, on the importance of free information in building credibility through free information as a basis for soft power:

> “…credibility is the crucial resource, and asymmetrical credibility is a key source of power. Establishing credibility means developing a reputation for providing correct information, even when it may reflect badly on the information provider’s own country. The BBC, for example, has earned a reputation for credibility, while state-controlled radio stations in Baghdad, Beijing and Havana have not.” (Nye, Keohane, 2004)

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42 Speech by the Prime Minister David Cameron at the OGP London Summit, 31 October 2013
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/get-involved/london-summit-2013
17. British soft power, paradoxically, is therefore gained by a unique source of news from a British perspective that is frequently critical of the UK.

18. It is thus disturbing that the Government has significantly cut the BBC World Service since 2010, already resulting in a loss of audience of around 14 million and the cancellation of five language services. There have been four funding cuts in four years, with each presented as a “one off” cut by Government, with the latest involving a reduction of £2.22 million in 2013.\(^43\)

19. Applying Nye & Keohane’s analysis of the centrality of free and credible information to generating soft power, therefore, International Alert believes these cuts to be misguided and recommends that the Committee challenges the Government to justify its recent and future strategy towards the BBC World Service.

**Credibility by example**

20. The UK has gained significant credibility by being among the first to reach internationally defined targets for international development, such as the commitment to spend 0.7% GDP on Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). It has hosted initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership. It is supporting new and equitable partnerships with governments in conflict affected situations, such as the New Deal for Engagement with Fragile States (New Deal), and is one of the leading financial and practical supporters of the UN Peacebuilding Fund. As a result the UK is able to utilise its soft power in pursuit of the foreign policy agenda represented by BSOS. One consequence of this and a way of judging its success can be seen in the choice of UK Prime Minister to co-chair the recent High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, alongside the leaders of Indonesia and Liberia.

21. The UK has also demonstrably led the world in the provision of Open Government Data (OGD), increasing transparency and by so doing enabling active citizens and civil society to hold decision makers to account. OGD aims, by the provision of usable data, to achieve impact on government efficiency, transparency, accountability, environmental sustainability, inclusion of marginalised groups, economic growth and supporting entrepreneurs. This is a practical agenda which builds on the insight of WDR11. The UK came top of 77 nations currently committed to pursuing OGD programmes in the latest Open Data Barometer index.\(^44\)

22. This arguably results in the UK gaining more influence through soft power means than any deployment or the threat of deployment of hard power. Soft power is entirely separate and not dependent on hard power, as some political scientists have claimed. Nye & Keohane make the same observation in relation to other states who have engaged in similar leadership and thus gained credibility and soft power which bears little relation to their capacity to project hard power:

   “Canada, Sweden and the Netherlands have more influence than some other states with equivalent economic or military capabilities.” (Nye, Keohane, 2004)

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\(^{44}\) [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/pub?key=0ApqzJROt-jZ0dGxJa3g2Slg0MEhiQU11NkhOZy1GeWc&output=html](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/pub?key=0ApqzJROt-jZ0dGxJa3g2Slg0MEhiQU11NkhOZy1GeWc&output=html)
23. The Government should utilise the political capital it has generated to challenge other governments to follow suit. For example, while the US comes second after the UK in the Open Data Barometer overall, it scores poorly in the provision of company and land registration. Encouraging governments of wealthy countries towards greater transparency could be an important step towards reducing global tax evasion, another important HMG priority. To the same end, the Government should also prioritise supporting local civil society in being able to effectively use such data to hold those in power to account.

Conclusion

24. The UK Government is well placed to exercise significant soft power, relative to its peers. It has already demonstrated this, notably on changing norms and practices on good governance, sexual violence and open data. It benefits both from its active leadership on such agendas, in addition to the wider influence of the BBC World Service and historic links across the globe.

25. It has not yet, however, realised the full potential of this power and does not appear to take a systematic approach to doing so, as can be seen by short termism in cutting the reach of the BBC World Service.

26. The Government must therefore marshal its influence through the use of its intergovernmental leadership, the BBC World Service and credibility by example, and in so doing realise the combined potential of the soft power the government enjoys but whose value it is not yet fully utilising.

Written by Chris Underwood

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October 2013
Dear Sirs

Herewith I submit my evidence to the Select Committee, acting on an individual basis.

My perspectives are based on 25 years’ experience in international trade, commodities and in academia and in the private sector business and technology consultancy sectors. I have also worked for the Government Operational Research Service and have carried out consultancy studies for BIS, DCMS, European Commission and contributed to the UK Trade White Paper (Feb 2011).

I provide answers to selected questions in the Call for Evidence below but I make a general suggestion to the Committee that it should consider building a model of the soft power concept and how the UK’s soft power is perceived to have changed over time, and the way it is desired to change relative to other countries. Initially this would be a qualitative model but it may prove to be beneficial to quantify it. This can be done using the methods of soft Operational Research, systems thinking and formal modelling. A model would help to:

1. provide structure to the concept of soft power and indicate the drivers of change over time
2. provide a framework for aggregating the various intangible resources that together comprise the soft power concept and their inter-related, systemic nature;
3. locate the drivers and information flows in the UK’s soft power resources and the levers of influence;
4. build consensus on the concepts and practical actions through facilitated modelling sessions;
5. develop an overall strategy.

Multiple comments given in the oral evidence sessions give a rationale for this suggestion, eg:

1. A need to quantify / evaluate soft power. Lack of an overarching soft power strategy (Evidence Session No 1, Q9)
2. References to a lack of ‘joined-up’ government in Evidence Session No. 5 (Q98, Q104). Need for centralised, co-ordinated information.
3. A need to ‘restructure and recalibrate’ soft power (Evidence Session No. 5, Q98, Q104)
4. Soft power was emphasised as a structural concept (Professor Cox, Evidence Session No 2, Q25)

Yours faithfully

Dr Daniel Arthur
International Policy Dynamics
President, UK Chapter, International System Dynamics Society
Responses to the questions

1. The meaning and importance of soft power

1.1. Rather than using the Joseph Nye definition, I would re-word it to read soft power is ‘the ability to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes through attraction rather than coercion or payments’ in order to emphasise the two-sided and transactional nature of soft power.

1.2. Regarding soft power deployments, in some circumstances, soft power acts as an overlay on hard power but in many respects has a substantive existence – i.e. the underlying hard power is notional or not immediately relevant. An example is the attraction to the UK for international students. A precise definition of the functional relationship could be explored in the modelling work recommended: either soft / hard power can be treated as independent variables or soft power could be explored as an intensifier or multiplier of hard power.

1.3. A digitally connected world makes soft power more important due to speed and extent of reach of communications. Digital / mobile / tablet communications, social media etc are a democratising force and make actions using soft power resources much more readily apparent. The rise of cyber crime and exploitation represent both threats but also opportunities for bodies such as the International Cyber Policy Unit (Foreign and Commonwealth Office).

2. The extent and use of the UK’s soft power resources

2.1. The most important soft power assets have all been covered in the Committee’s oral evidence sessions: language, legal and democracy systems, the Commonwealth, cultural/media/sporting activities and heritage, history of international trade, academic and professional institutions, broadcasting, tradition of transparency and justice etc. It would be possible to put an index value on these intangible resources that together comprise soft power. This would allow it to be tracked as a variable which changes through time, which is a primary concern of the committee: is the UK’s soft power growing /declining, how might it change or be influence in the future? Doing so would be challenging because such soft variables have no fixed form and thus it would take some experimentation and consensus-building to validate any model. However, the discipline of constructing a model (initially qualitative and perhaps, subsequently, quantitative) and validating it amongst modelling participants would require precise definitions that would clarify the concepts and their inter-relationships.

2.2. Many soft power resources lie outside the ambit of UK Government. However, the Government has a co-ordinating and information-providing role to play as has been discussed in the oral evidence sessions (Evidence Session 5). Non-state actors can be encouraged to develop soft power by adhering to trade regulations and by involvement in their development where there are clear mutual benefits for other countries.
Bringing the soft power concept to the surface for non-state actors would help to sustain it.

2.3. Information on soft power could be part of the information briefing role of UKTI trade advisors. Government can help to generate return on investment in soft power by developing a strategy for soft power and then exploring ways to communicate it through the British Council, British Expertise, UKTI and the like.

3. **Soft power and diplomacy**

3.1. To respond to the more prominent role in international affairs played by non-state actors and emerging powers, the Select Committee should use the findings from this series of consultations (and any overarching strategy that is developed) on soft power to provide a briefing pack for these actors. In general, the landscape can be shaped by greater awareness of the components of soft power and how organisations, institutions and individuals have a part to play in its perception abroad.

3.2. UK institutions and values and commitments to the rule of law, human rights and freedom of speech are generally perceived positively. Where mistakes have been made in the past, the UK does well to be proactive in seeking redress and making formal apologies. A hindrance is the extent to which these values are taken for granted and therefore greater self-awareness of cultural and international political and institutional factors would be beneficial. The way in which institutions, history and values come together to form an overall soft power concept comes across in visits to the major museums in London or at the Olympics, for example, but it would help for the concept to be more widely articulated.

3.3. Where commitments to values have appeared to be unduly self-interested and not recognise equality and fairness, this undermines the UK’s influence. A drawback of the use of the English language is that familiarity with other cultural factors is lost when local language is neglected. Generally however, UK diplomatic services are highly capable and well-briefed.

4. **Aspects of soft power**

4.1. UK universities and research institutions play a significant role in contributing to the UK’s soft power – not least because those educated here develop an awareness and respect for UK culture, governance, institutions and history. They then go on to influential posts in government and industry in their own countries. The UK faces a significant threat from the US because it is seen by many as having a more entrepreneurial business culture and large fraction of the world’s top business and technology universities are in the US.

4.2. The UK does have a role in setting regulations, norms and standards for international trade. The UK is respected for its administrative capabilities, rule of law and respect for human rights and justice issues. This is an area in which the UK can demonstrate
leadership and influence greater than its economic or military scale. This can be done by being in the forefront of open access to information and responsiveness to charities and NGOs – of which the UK has a vibrant network. The Government Digital Service has a role to play via its Open Public Services agenda.

4.3. Reduced funding of the BBC World Service is detrimental to the sustenance of the UK’s good perceptions abroad.

4.4. The UK has multiple narratives that underlie its soft power and devolved administrations should tailor these narratives to the character of each region. A unifying theme could be its focus on adherence to international law, peace, democracy, human rights, trade justice and sustainable development.

September 2013
H.E. Mr Roberto Jaguaribe, Ambassador of Brazil, H.E. Mr Kim Traavik, Ambassador of Norway, Dr Rudolf Adam, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany and H.E. Mr Keiichi Hayashi, Ambassador of Japan – Oral evidence (QQ 187-199)

Transcript to be found under Dr Rudolf Adam, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Volume 1 (page 23)
Lord Jay of Ewelme, Sir Antony Acland and Lord Hannay of Chiswick – Oral evidence (QQ 292-309)

Transcript to be found under Sir Antony Acland in Volume 1 (page 4)
Professor Mary Kaldor, London School of Economics (LSE) – Written evidence

Professor of Global Governance, London School of Economics and Political Science

1. This brief note mainly addresses two questions raised by the Inquiry; these relate to the understanding of soft power and the relationship between hard and soft power. In particular it makes the argument that a shift from national security to human security could increase the UK’s standing in the world.

What is Soft Power?

2. There are two aspects to Joseph Nye’s original definition of soft power. On the one hand, he refers to the tools of power – communicative and cultural tools as opposed to money or weapons. On the other hand, he refers to the substance of power – power based on consent or attraction or legitimacy – what he called co-optive power – as opposed to power based on coercion and violence.

3. These two aspects are not the same. Military force is also a form of communication and can shape legitimacy. ‘Is not war merely another kind of writing and language for political thoughts? ’ wrote the strategist Carl von Clausewitz, ‘ In one word, the art of war, in its highest point of view is policy, but no doubt a policy which fights battles instead of writing notes.’ But by the same token communication can impose a dominant way of thinking that constitutes a form of coercion. As the French philosopher Michel Foucault explained: ‘[O]ne’s point of reference should not be to the great model of language (langue) and signs but to that of war and battle. The history which bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than that of a language: relations of power not relations of meaning…’

4. It is true that in the twenty first century there has been a profoundly significant shift from the use of military force to the use of communicative tools as instruments of power. This can be explained in a variety of ways: the declining legitimacy of military force as a consequence of the post-1945 strengthening of norms against war and aggression; the ineffectiveness and risks of using force because increased lethality and accuracy of all weapons has made symmetric war too dangerous and asymmetric war too unpredictable; and finally the technological revolution in travel and communication allows us to see the consequences of violence in different parts of the world and to empathise with distant others.

5. But the point is rather that what matters is the substance of power rather than the tools of power. What ideas and practices constitute power? The tools are relevant but they depend of what power is conveying. If the aim is to enhance the UK’s soft power in the sense of legitimacy as opposed to tools, then it is important to analyse the content of communication. There may well continue to be a role for the use of force along with other instruments but conceived in terms of the overall message being conveyed.

National Security versus Human Security

6. National security is about the defence of the UK from external threats and risks. Although the National Security Strategy conveys a wide range of possible risks, the tools are still focussed on conventional military forces designed to meet the threat of an attack by a foreign state. Human security is about the security of individuals and the communities in which they live and involves both physical security (protection from violence) and material security (protection from poverty, homelessness or environmental risks). Human security is what we enjoy in a rights-based law-governed society like the UK where emergency services such as police, ambulances or fire fighters are available to deal with extreme risks. Whereas a national security strategy focusses on international intervention to protect UK territory, a human security strategy would be about helping to extend the kind of human security we enjoy in the UK to other parts of the world.

7. A human security approach would require an array of instruments available to contribute to multilateral efforts (the UN, the EU, or the AU etc.) in order to enhance human security. These include development aid, policing, disaster assistance, healthcare support, and support for justice as well as military force. But military force would be used in quite different ways for international law enforcement rather than war fighting. This means the focus is the protection of civilians, the arrest of war criminals and the minimising of all casualties rather than the defeat of enemies.

8. Human security is often said to be a soft power option as opposed to national security. And yet conventional military forces nowadays are largely maintained for ‘soft’ purposes if by soft we mean communication: to enhance diplomacy; to retain a place at the top table; or to deter threats. In contrast an effective human security approach does require the use of force in robust ways for rights-based international law enforcement.

9. The UK has a comparative advantage in the type of instruments needed for human security. In particular, the current UK-led EU anti-piracy mission in Somalia, the intervention in Sierra Leone in 2001, the Northern Ireland experience, and the British role in Basra after the Charge of the Knights in 2008 are all good examples of missions that had strong human security elements. Unfortunately this advantage is in danger of being frittered away in part by the UK involvement in militant counter-terror efforts (the invasion of Iraq or the current drone campaign) and in part by defence cuts which are designed to preserve classic war-fighting capabilities.

Conclusion

10. Increasing soft power is not just about tools it is about how the UK is perceived and how it contributes to global norms and rules. A shift to human security could greatly enhance the UK’s role in this respect especially as it would build on the UK’s comparative advantages in aid, policing and robust human security interventions.

11. Other evidence to this Inquiry has stressed the importance of cultural institutions such as the British Council, the BBC World Service and British universities. I wholeheartedly endorse this view. Quite apart from the fact that these cultural industries are likely to become more economically important in a world of scarce material resources, their significance is precisely that they are global institutions rather than British institutions. Hence they contribute to global debates about the construction of rules and norms rather than conveying an insular national message.

17 September 2013
Professor John Kringe, Georgia Institute of Technology – Written evidence

1. I am a British citizen who has lived in the U.S. since the year 2000 where I teach in a leading public university. I publish extensively on American foreign policy, including Nye’s concept of ‘soft power’.

2. It is imperative to understand that soft power is a form of power, where power may be defined as the capacity to get other to do what one wants. This element is underplayed in Nye’s definition of soft power used in the briefing document, viz. ‘the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payment’ (so-called hard forms of power). It is not just a question of ‘getting what you want’: that is far too vague. It is rather a question of “getting others to want the outcomes that you want” (Nye, Soft Power, p. 5).

3. The successful exercise of soft power thus presupposes a clear idea of what outcome one seeks and a knowledge of the attractive instruments that one could lever to actually change others’ behaviour in substantial ways. After all it is an alternative to hard power, and has similar objectives.

4. Britain has many cultural assets that ‘attract’ others: a standard list includes the the Royal family, the Royal Shakespeare Company, Harry Potter, Mr. Bean, David Beckham and its pop music scene. The onus is on those who celebrate the cultural pulling power of these assets to prove that they are sufficiently ‘influential’ to change others people’s behaviour vis-à-vis Britain. It means establishing what durable change in behaviour will ensue upon, say, watching the Changing of the Guards or attending a performance of Hamlet by the RSC. That is a matter for careful research, not optimistic speculation.

5. In this regard Nye has come up with some very significant data. He uses Pew Global Attitudes findings in 2002 to show that, averaged over 43 countries, the U.S. is admired by 80% of those polled for its scientific and technological advances (Soft Power, p. 36). This far outstrips those who admire the U.S. for its culture, which vary from 30% – 60% depending on which aspect of culture is measured. The same trend is found in the Islamic world where no less than 70% of those polled admired the U.S. for its science and technology (compared to 40% that were attracted by its culture -- Soft Power, p. 42).

6. It is imperative that similar data be acquired for the U.K. if any realistic assessment of the use our soft power is to be made. Absent that some useful steps are still possible.

7. Elites who do not have the advanced science and technology found in western societies admire us for it and seek every opportunity to acquire it. They appreciate the fundamental importance of an advanced understanding of science and technology to the capacity to participate in the global marketplace. This suggests that Britain should actively promote its leading research universities and institutes on the world stage. They have something that we have and that others want.

8. The results of extended graduate training in advanced science and technology in the U.K., the ‘outcomes’ that one can reasonably seek include — in no particular order — (a) the acquisition of a critical attitude to argument and debate that is characteristic of scientific practice and an open society; (b) respect for the norms and customs of British society (notably its tolerance), and an antagonism towards those who abuse them or who seek to destroy them; (c) the building of strong
interpersonal ties with British researchers that will persist when the visitor returns to her/his home country; (d) familiarity with British research equipment and British research and management practices that will facilitate collaboration with British firms in the visitor’s home country; (e) enhanced ability to understand and speak English, with the personal, cultural and professional benefits that brings to both parties.

9. In sum, advanced training in science and technology in the U.K. is an invaluable form of soft power. It will educate an elite who, on returning to their home countries can serve as vectors of British values abroad, including in some of the most volatile regions of the globe. To be effective we must combine strong marketing of U.K. advanced education abroad with substantial financial support from government, philanthropies and private sources for hundreds of worthy candidates. These candidates should be selected from those regions of the globe where British influence is both essential and currently weak. By leveraging our scientific and technological assets we can mould the behaviour of others in line with our interests: by giving them what they want we can get them to do what we want. It is an exercise of ‘soft power’ not to be overlooked.

9 September 2013
Levant Education Consulting – Written evidence

How a UK government agency uses the umbrella of ‘soft power’ to compete for business unfairly against UK private enterprise

The UK government is permitting a public sector commercial enterprise, trading under the good name of the FCO, to stifle competition from UK private businesses. There is a clear conflict between its public service role and commercial activity that is often damaging to private sector specialists.

Summary:

- As the UK government out of necessity reduces funding for the British Council, the Council has been encouraged to ‘stand on its own two feet’. It is therefore increasingly seeking to exploit its position as a government agency with global reach to boost revenue-generating businesses such as language training and testing, consultancy, and international education marketing services. These sectors offer many opportunities for specialist UK companies, whose services contribute greatly to the estimated £400 million revenue generated for UK universities and over £16 billion to the wider economy. The presence of a UK government agency that is part FCO, part commercial entity, represents unfair competition for contracts to commercial service providers who may provide excellent services or products, but often lose out to the brand and government status of what is actually an aggressive commercial player, usually operating in the name of ‘soft power’.

- Soft power is effective when not associated with government policy or seen to be an alternative to military power. As soon as artists, writers, businesses or education institutions are seen to be part of government ‘soft power’ propaganda, their appeal / reputation is inevitably tarnished. The power is ‘soft’ precisely because of its independence from government policy.

- Countries looking to developed economies for models of private enterprise free of government interference will see in the UK that free enterprise is encouraged, but business opportunities occurring from the brand names of government agencies (such as the British Council and the FCO) are to be exploited in competition with (and at the expense of) private companies. This actually goes against the British tradition of supporting entrepreneurial business enterprise.

1. Levant Education Consulting has been providing schools and universities with international marketing consulting since 2009. We seek to help any education institution to maximize opportunities in the markets where we operate – Turkey, Iraq and Azerbaijan. The company was incorporated in the UK by David Mitchell, after 10 years experience in international education marketing, having worked in Taiwan, Korea, the UK, USA and Turkey.

2. Levant Education established the UK Education Tour in 2010 as a marketing and recruitment platform for UK universities and schools recruiting students from Turkey, the first such event since terrorist attacks in Istanbul in 2004. In 2011 we added Kurdish Iraq to the itinerary, establishing the first UK-focussed education exhibition in post-war Iraq (probably the first in Iraq ever).
3. In May 2012 we proposed cooperation with the British Council, rather than competition, in a report sent to David Willetts MP, Dr Jo Beall of the British Council, and Helen Silvestor, from the British Council (SEE APPENDIX 1) [Not reproduced here].

Education Exhibitions in Azerbaijan

4. In April 2012 Levant Education conducted a fact-finding trip to Baku, during which it consulted with the British Council and UKTI as well as local authorities and contacts. The British Council staff confirmed that, although they were only a small team concerned mainly with teaching English, they would like to work with us. UKTI provided an expensive, but effective, OMIS (market entry) service. The British Council, in response to our proposal that we engage cooperatively to avoid cannibalising the market, declined to do so but stated that it had no plans to develop ‘face-to-face’ exhibitions (the precision being made as it was planning to run online ‘exhibitions’) (SEE APPENDIX 3) [Not reproduced here].

5. After this research trip, we decided to go ahead with organising the first UK-only education exhibition, and successfully organised the event on November 24th 2012 with a dozen UK universities.

6. While only having a small presence in the market, we believed the British Council to be a potential ally in the market, as an arm of the FCO, and so we provided a free stand at our Baku exhibition. When it came to the event, a member of the British Council staff entered the hall, without introducing herself to us, the organisers, and approached the universities present about the possibility of a rival British Council-run UK education fair in 2013. The Council had never previously organised such a fair in Azerbaijan (SEE APPENDIX 5) [Not reproduced here].

7. The British Council’s Education UK fair was duly announced for November 2013, a decision taken, according to Helen Silvestor, British Council Regional Director for Turkey and Azerbaijan, in February 2013. We have written testimony from UK universities that a British Council employee approached them as mentioned above, at our event in November 2012. Therefore it appears that our event was used purely as research for launching a rival event in a market that does not need two UK education exhibitions.

8. The British Council’s charter allows for promoting “a wider knowledge of the English language” and “the advancement of education”. These are subject, however, to the overarching condition that the Council shall advance “any purpose which is exclusively charitable”. Promoting UK universities that charge market rates to international students does not seem to constitute charity. Universities run large International Offices, and contract agencies from Beijing to Baku, to support that activity.

9. We feel that the actions of the British Council’s employees in Baku abused our trust and actually contravene their own published ‘core values’, which include ‘integrity’, ‘mutuality’ and ‘professionalism’. We believe they also contravene the letter of their own charitable charter, as well as the spirit of ethical business practices, and the principal of private enterprise free of government interference/competition.

10. The British Council has, in the past, provided support for British arts, culture and
identity. But is it right to exploit that good name commercially, at the expense of British enterprise (providers of language course / English test / marketing services) purely because the Council needs to raise more money?

11. Our excellent record and feedback would usually be rewarded with repeat business in Baku. Instead, we are faced with competition from a government agency that has been told to act more ‘entrepreneurially’, in a market where we took the business risk, a groundbreaking British private company that paid another UK government agency (UKTI) for market entry only a year previously. We can compete on service and results, however government status and cache is harder to deal with.

**Business consultancy for UK Language Training Centres**

12. In July 2012 Levant Education Consulting was commissioned to write a report for the UK language training sector about the Turkish market. In the report we included a section about political issues in Turkey, issues about the rule of law, and the potential for political upheaval in Turkey. These issues affect any UK company working in Turkey, especially when these companies frequently send staff into the market and sometimes get into financial / legal disputes.

13. The British Council redacted that section prior to publishing in September 2013, citing its diplomatic role and need to avoid upsetting the Turkish government. This is understandable, but it also shows that the British Council cannot pretend to offer independent, accurate business advice to the education / training sector while also playing a role in UK diplomacy (SEE APPENDIX 6) [Not reproduced here].

**Attracting Scholarship Students from Azerbaijan**

14. Since establishing the UK Education Tour exhibition in November 2012, we have provided additional services to the Azeri Ministry of Education, State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan (SOFAZ), and British universities.

15. In March 2013 we arranged a London workshop for Azeri Ministry, SOFAZ staff and UK university International Officers to improve awareness of both the State scholarship programme and UK Higher Education. Nearly 40 universities attended, and the feedback was excellent.

16. In a surprise move, however, the Office of the Azerbaijan President reduced the number of UK universities approved to receive sponsored students to 27, from 40. Excellent UK universities were removed from the list, in a seemingly random fashion (actually motivated by the President’s desire to improve links with Turkey and Russia).

17. Levant Education advised the universities concerned that this was a matter for the British Embassy in Baku: the Ambassador should make direct appeals on behalf of the affected British universities.

18. However, as is typical for UK Embassies, UKTI and UK institutions promoting British business interests around the world, the Ambassador referred the matter to the British Council. Not only do we feel that this would be less effective in addressing the issue in hand, this highlights how the British Council is seen as a department of the Foreign Office; however that same office is competing on the playing field as commercial service providers,
making it an uneven one for UK companies that cannot so easily be part of diplomatic processes (SEE APPENDIX 4) [Not reproduced here].

The Role of UK Trade & Investment

19. The education marketing services sector consists of many specialist UK companies. Like any UK company, we can benefit from UK Trade & Investment’s (UKTI) global network and mission to support UK companies doing business abroad.

20. UKTI has been running a nice campaign called the ‘GREAT’ campaign, for example events and materials featuring Richard Branson promoting ‘Entrepreneurs are GREAT’. However around the world business enquiries and opportunities in the international education sector are routinely passed to the British Council. As mentioned above, Ambassadors and Consul Generals also refer education-related matters to the British Council. No other industry would accept this state of affairs – a government agency being fed myriad business opportunities and treated with preferred status. There is a common reaction one faces when speaking to UKTI or Diplomatic civil servants about education marketing: ‘That’s one for the British Council’.

21. What is the point in paying UKTI for market entry services (OMIS), when its sister agency the British Council will directly benefit from the results and compete with the company that commissioned the OMIS service?

22. Speaking as an entrepreneur, I feel that there is a serious conflict between the various roles of the British Council, an agency operating under the premise of supporting the UK’s ‘soft power’. Promotion of UK identity, arts and culture is a laudable mission (although these days UK arts and culture are certainly strong enough commercially to support themselves). That a government-funded agency is actively exploiting confusion that exists about its public role, and is raising funds that the taxpayer cannot provide by competing unfairly in the private sector (while seeking to avoid paying any tax at all) is hardly a great advertisement for UK democracy or UK government support for the role of enterprise and commerce free of government interference.

18 September 2013
John Dickie, Strategy and Policy Director, London First, Mary Rance, Chair of Tourism Alliance and CEO of UKinbound, and Professor Colin Riordan, Vice-President, Universities UK, International Unit and Vice-Chancellor, Cardiff University

Q246 The Chairman: I thank our witnesses very warmly for coming before us this afternoon. I should begin with a couple of formalities. I repeat that the Committee is concerned with the deployment of soft power and Britain’s influence overseas and how these matters can be strengthened and made more effective in a new international landscape. You have before you the declaration of the interests of the Committee, which we are obliged to put before you. It may be of some help in telling you where we are coming from. I have to warn you that if there is a Division we will have to adjourn for five minutes. The prospect of that today is reasonably unlikely, which is a great relief because they are very interruptive.

As I said, our concern is with many different aspects of so-called soft power, which runs alongside smart power, hard power and so on. You are all in key positions relating to a particular aspect of soft power, which is our image, our attractiveness and our power to persuade people that this country is a going concern, highly effective and a good place to come to. I begin with a fairly central question: what are the most attractive qualities that we ought to build on to persuade people to visit the UK and what are the more negative qualities that put people off? I am starting with a more general question, and perhaps in your opening answers you could set out your position. I shall start with Mary Rance from UKinbound, as you are sitting in the centre.

Mary Rance: Thank you. With regard to what attracts visitors to the UK, we remain a very attractive destination. Research by VisitBritain shows that what appeals to people is our rich
London First, Professor Colin Riordan, Cardiff University, Tourism Alliance and UKinbound, – Oral evidence (QQ 246-259)

and interesting history, our cultural events and attractions, a mixture of old and new—and shopping. In some of the emerging markets like China, Russia and the Middle East, shopping is actually a very important attraction for coming to the UK. The biggest deterrent, or perception of one, is that the UK is still a relatively expensive destination. The same VisitBritain research shows that a number of people still believe that we in the UK are very unwelcoming, although that has changed slightly following last year’s Olympics. That is important to set in the context of the discussions today about visas because we are coming at it from a perception already that people feel that we are not welcoming people into the UK. There are a number of other factors, too, not just visas. Things like air passenger duty again act as a deterrent, making the UK comparatively more expensive. In fact I think we have the highest aviation tax in the world, and things like that put people off. As a general scenario, that would be my summary.

The Chairman: Thank you very much. That puts it very concisely. Let me just turn to London. I heard the Mayor of London assert the other day that London was now “the” global city, the centre, which is of course an ambitious claim. However, there is quite a feeling that London is on the up and is a dynamic city of the world in a way that perhaps it has not been for the past 40 or 50 years. Can you expand on that a bit?

John Dickie: I think that is true. The comparative work that various organisations have done in contrasting the strengths of different cities routinely puts London either in the top position or, typically, boxing and coxing with New York for the top position, depending on what kind of set of metrics you choose. London scores very well as a place for world business to do business. There is a set of different kinds of strength that leads London to have that position. Some things are pretty immutable—our location, being equidistant between east and west, time zones, language, the rule of law and so on—but many of the competitive advantages that London has are hard-won as a result of good public policy decisions that have been taken over time and that make London the sort of place that people want to come to to do business. One of the things that worries us at London First and that worries business based in London is that we are not doing all we can to foster for the future the global talent hub that London has become, because we are making it increasingly difficult for people to come here to study, visit or indeed do business. We have seen something like 30 changes to the Immigration Rules since 2010 that make it very difficult for slightly smaller businesses to plan how they are going to bring highly skilled people in from abroad. We have seen the introduction of an interim cap and then a permanent cap on the flow of skilled migrants with jobs under tier 2, we have seen the abolition of other routes to come into the UK, and we have seen the introduction of a cooling-off period, which makes it very difficult—in fact, impossible—for someone on an intercompany transfer to come here and change job. We have seen all sorts of perverse effects, such as people having to go abroad for 12 months to cool off when they could get other jobs here. From the point of view of business, we are making it harder than we should to attract the really talented people that we need in order to continue to be a global and international business hub.

Q247 The Chairman: Thank you. Professor Riordan, university education in Britain has a fantastic world reputation. We hear news about university linkages, partnerships and the cloning of universities, and more and more admiration for the standards that we set, yet we have also heard about the feeling that students are being kept away, are not welcome and so on. Can you throw some light on this from your expert position?

Professor Colin Riordan: One of the key attractions that you have mentioned is the very high reputation of UK universities and higher education in this country right around the
world. Much of that reputation comes from the fact that over many years we have had very large numbers of students from all over the world to study in this country, and they then go back to their countries effectively as ambassadors for the UK. Alumni really are our greatest ambassadors. Whenever I meet them personally, they speak very highly of their universities. There is genuine affection and passion to be observed. A report done by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills shows that 95% of alumni are positively orientated towards this country. That is one key part of it—the reputation that is then spread by people who have studied here when they go back home. The English language is important, sometimes particularly the UK variant. I was at Columbia a few months ago with David Willetts, where they made the point that they wanted to deal with us because they had historical links with the UK and were specifically choosing the UK as the country they wanted to deal with. It is not just English generally; English in the UK is important. So are things that have been already mentioned, such as cultural attractions and heritage. Safety is mentioned in the surveys that we do. The UK is seen as a safe country with a rule of law that you can rely on. We are also seen as very good value.

The negatives have already been raised: the changes to the visa regime since 2010 have had a distinct effect, in that our student numbers from overseas have been growing strongly for 16 years but this year\(^{47}\) have dipped by 0.4%. We could have expected growth rates of 5%, 10%, 15% or even higher, which our rivals are enjoying at the moment. There are a couple of specific reasons for that, such as the increased cost of visas and the complexity of getting a visa to come here. Probably the biggest issue is the constraint on the post-study work option, which has put off a number of students. Along with that, a perception has been created in the overseas press that we are not open business for students and we are not welcoming to them. Irrespective of the reality of that, those are the types of headlines that you see consistently in India, China and other areas around the world.

**The Chairman:** Did I hear you say that we were expecting a 15% increase but in fact there had been a 4.2% decline?

**Professor Colin Riordan:** No, the decline has been 0.4%. Some of our rivals have had increases of 5%, 10% or more, which we could have expected.

**Lord Forsyth of Drumlean:** On the question of the 0.4% decline in numbers, you said that part of that was due to the increased cost of the visas. Is there an increased cost of attending university because of fees as well?

**Professor Colin Riordan:** In effect, for most countries in the world that has gone down because of the decline in the value of—

**Lord Forsyth of Drumlean:** For us, has it remained the same?

**Professor Colin Riordan:** For us in what way, sorry?

**Lord Forsyth of Drumlean:** You said that students coming from overseas to Britain faced increased costs because of visas, and that there had been a 0.4% reduction in their numbers. I am asking whether the fees that they have to pay for attending British universities have gone up or down or remained the same.

**Professor Colin Riordan:** No, they will have gone up as well.

\(^{47}\) Note from witness: “This drop relates to the last year for which figures were available at the time of the session (academic year 2011-12). It reflects figures for the number of non-EU new entrants to higher education in that year, as measured by the Higher Education Statistics Authority.”
Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: So why have you mentioned the increased cost of visas and not the increase in fees, and what is the relative difference between the two?

Professor Colin Riordan: Because when students are paying for their fees, the living costs and so on, that contributes directly to their education, whereas the cost of visas does not. The visa problem—

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: What is the number?

Professor Colin Riordan: The number?

Q248 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: What is the relative difference in cost? How much has it gone up in each case?

Professor Colin Riordan: I do not have the figures in front of me of what the average cost of fees would be, because each university sets its own fees and puts them up in line with inflation. I was previously at the University of Essex, where we froze fees for four years. The figure will vary from university to university and I do not have a figure for the whole of the—

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: And for visas?

Professor Colin Riordan: We are about to impose a £150 a year NHS surcharge on students, and in fact staff, as part of the Immigration Bill.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: I am sorry, I do not want to press you too hard, but you said that the numbers had gone down by 0.4% and you said it was because of the increased cost of visas. I am asking what that amount is, and I am guessing that it is relatively small compared with the increased cost of fees.

Professor Colin Riordan: Yes, it is.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: So why are you emphasising that and not the fees?

Professor Colin Riordan: I contest that I emphasised it. I put it in as one of the factors. Post-study work is easily the biggest matter that students would prefer to see, and our rivals have now reintroduced it. It is a perception as much as anything; however often we say that there is no cap on visas, any qualified student can come and we welcome them, there is a perception that has spread around the world that we do not welcome students, when in fact we do.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: If I may just finish the point, this is particularly true in Scotland, where students from any European country in effect pay no fees but from England they pay very high fees, and the universities have sought to compensate for that loss of revenue by recruiting more students from overseas at very high fees. I wonder whether that does not create a negative impression of our desire to have people come here and study in the same way, and these are much bigger numbers.

Professor Colin Riordan: The Scottish universities do not have to teach their students for nothing. They still get the fees; it is just that the students do not have to pay them. Under EU law—I presume that it is law; they are arrangements, at any rate—you cannot charge another EU country a differential rate from what you have yourself. If they are coming to England because English, Welsh or Scottish students studying at an English university have to pay £9,000, then so do others. That is the issue that is faced in Scotland. The universities will still get the money for the students.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: Forgive me, the grant has actually been cut, but I do not want to discuss the Scottish student issue. The point that I was making is that they are charging overseas students coming to Britain—this is particularly acute in Scotland, where the
difference between the domestic students who live in Scotland and overseas students is much wider—very much more in order to make up the income. Your whole argument has been based on the idea that this is very bad for Britain, so should the universities not be treating the overseas students rather more fairly than they are now?

Professor Colin Riordan: I really do think we treat them fairly. We have 435,000 international students studying in the UK today. The universities set a fee that they think is fair and that they think students will respond to, and indeed they do. We are successful in recruiting students, and we are saying that we could be a lot more successful if the visa regime were more appropriate with regard to welcoming students. That is the point that I am trying to make.

Q249 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: This exchange has been about the cost of visas, but a lot of the evidence that we have had talks not just about the cost but about the bureaucracy in applying for visas and how complicated they are. The question of bonds, having to go to capitals in other countries or centres a long way away from where they live—that all creates a problem. Is that true? Are you finding that as well?

Professor Colin Riordan: Yes, and things like having to be interviewed and take an English test. Universities impose an English test; we take only students who are able to take the course because their English is good enough, and we do not think it is necessary for immigration officers to test their English—they are not qualified English teachers. There is a whole series of measures, particularly the changes to post-study work, that were very attractive to students. Australia abolished and then reintroduced it, and that has made a big difference.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: This is a completely separate issue. I wondered also about the importance of the approach of universities and indeed independent schools in setting up campuses overseas, so that these students do not actually need to come here to get a British education but can get it on the campus of the University of Bolton or the University of Strathclyde in their countries. Has there been a sudden rush of that because of the visa problem, or for any other reason?

Professor Colin Riordan: It was happening already. Before the visa issue there were two campuses in China, one by Nottingham and one by Liverpool, both of which are thriving, but the visa problem certainly makes that a more attractive option in the sense that the students are then not faced with that whole issue. Of course, that is not the same as actually going to a country. My subject is German and I studied in Germany, and studying in your own country or a third country is just not the same as you are not immersed in the language, customs, traditions and life of the country you are studying, so it makes a difference. Still, it is clearly a more attractive option if it removes the visa issue.

Q250 Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: I wonder whether I might just ask a bit about how this all ties into our soft power and our native population. You say that we are going to increase foreign students by 10% or 15% a year. With that sort of compounding effect, we will have a huge proportion of foreign students very quickly. Does Universities UK have an idea of the level at which we start to crowd people out and therefore cause disaffection about the projection of our image abroad? I think it is fair to say that since 2000, the number of UK MA students have gone up by 4% while overseas students have gone up by 14%, and that therefore quite a lot of people may find themselves now rather unhappy about the way in which we are projecting ourselves.

Professor Colin Riordan: Because the proportion of international students is rising—is that what you are asking?
Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Because some perfectly competent UK students may find that they are refused admission on the grounds that you can get an overseas student who, as Lord Forsyth said—dare I say it?—is more profitable. At some point, universities are going to have to think about how you project this in terms of our soft power.

Professor Colin Riordan: It just is not that home students are supplanted by international students. The Government changed the rules on student number controls. Until two years ago, we had number controls, so you could not take any more home students than you were allowed to by the higher education funding councils in each of the home nations. That has now been relaxed in England so that you can take as many students as you can recruit who have at least AAB at A-level, or now ABB at A-level, so that has opened up a whole tranche by taking the student number control off the top tranche of students. Bristol University recruited an extra 600 students, while at Cardiff we increased our numbers by 700. There is no defined number of students beyond which you cannot go. Clearly there are some limits—you could not suddenly take another 4,000 students—but it really is not the case that home students are not getting places because international students are. You have to ensure that you have enough staff, facilities and accommodation to teach the students, and then you recruit accordingly. I do not know of any cases where home students have not got a place because of international students.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: The issue, as I have heard, is graduate students, not undergraduates.

Professor Colin Riordan: I have not encountered it among graduate students either.

The Chairman: I would quite like to spread the conversation to tourism and business as well as students, but that may not be possible. Baroness Nicholson is next.

Q251 Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: My question is to Mary and John. We are talking a lot about tertiary and university education, which is excellent, but what about the huge strength that Britain has in training and business—apprenticeships and not merely MBAs and so on but the volume of knowledge that we can offer in the City, business and industry? What are we doing to develop and promote that?

Mary Rance: My remit is obviously on the tourist side. Evidence certainly suggests that when people come to Britain as tourists, they will come back to study, invest or buy property here. We want to encourage as many people as possible to come here as visitors in the first instance to promote further investment in all that we have to offer.

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: I did not quite mean that. At the moment, for example, the Government are promoting apprenticeships. We have a mass of competence here in business and industry in professional training, law and so on but the volume of knowledge that we can offer in the City, business and industry? What are we doing to offer that to overseas students who may not wish to go to university or have already completed university somewhere else?

The Chairman: If this is a difficult question, could Professor Riordan answer it?

Professor Colin Riordan: We often go on overseas missions with the Universities Minister, the Prime Minister or others, recently the Chancellor. We usually have a skills representative with us—someone from further education or a representative of the Association of Colleges, who does exactly that sort of thing. That is part of what we do when we do these international trade missions. Some quite large agreements have been reached with India and other places for those kinds of things.

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: Big businesses such as PwC run massive training programmes for different sorts of students—in Dubai, for example.
London First, Professor Colin Riordan, Cardiff University, Tourism Alliance and UKinbound, – Oral evidence (QQ 246-259)

**John Dickie:** I think we are making it difficult for people to run the kind of graduate training schemes that they would like to run from the United Kingdom because we make it difficult for them even to recruit students locally to go on these schemes—that is the point about the work study route—but also to bring people in from overseas to be trained because they are unlikely to earn enough to be at the tier 2 level to come here and do work-based training. We are not exploiting our strengths as well as we could. An example would be an accountancy firm—not PwC; I will anonymise it—that had got into the practice of looking to recruit bright Indian graduates from UK universities who had come over here to do their first degree, to train them as accountants in the UK and then to send them to the growing subcontinent markets to work for it. Of course, you cannot do that if you are not allowed to recruit students from British universities to do those entry-level graduate jobs. Not only are we making it difficult for universities to attract the students in the first place relative to Canada, Australia, America or wherever but we are also making it difficult for British business to get what it would like to get from them once they have trained here in the first place.

**The Chairman:** That is a very helpful answer.

**Q252 Baroness Morris of Bolton:** I want to go back to the question about campuses abroad, and then I want to ask Mary a question. The University of Bolton has a campus in the UAE. The benefit is when those students come over to Bolton for a time and our students can go and study there. We also employ a flying faculty, which means that our faculty members go to the countries and their faculty members come back. That very much enriches the whole experience for students and staff alike. Could you comment on that? Do you think it might help if—I know that this has been mooted, probably by the Labour Party—students were taken out of the overall immigration figures?

**The Chairman:** That is a hot issue.

**Professor Colin Riordan:** On the first point about overseas campuses, you made a telling point: our students going abroad is just as important to us. We have a very major programme at the moment to encourage that across the country. I am chairing a group to come up with a national strategy for outward student mobility, and having campuses abroad helps in that respect. I know that UK students from Nottingham go and study at the Chinese campus and learn Chinese while they are there, but they study the programme that they would have studied had they been in Nottingham. There are big advantages to that, as you will know from your own local university.

On the second question about student numbers coming out of overall immigration figures, that is something that UUK has been arguing for consistently for a number of years now. Our view is that students are not migrants; they come here, they study and they go home. We can show that to be the case. There is a very high compliance rate with the visa rules. Even before the latest changes took place, that rate was 98% compliance, and we are sure that compliance will be even higher now because the checks are much more rigorous. We do not think that it makes sense to have students as part of the net migration statistics—we think it is misleading. The USA does not count students among those figures and we do not think we should do so here either. The Government have at least agreed to publish the figures separately, even though the target remains for net migration to include students.

**Baroness Morris of Bolton:** I declare an interest that Mary and I sit on the same advisory board for the World Travel Market. Last week the World Travel Market came to Excel. Fifty-six thousand people came to the UK. They transacted £2 billion of business in one week and £150 million was spent in and around London, which is more than the whole of
London First, Professor Colin Riordan, Cardiff University, Tourism Alliance and UKinbound, – Oral evidence (QQ 246-259)

London Fashion Week. Mary, why has tourism been so low down on the priority of any Government, of whatever colour, for many years?

Mary Rance: As you say, World Travel Market demonstrates both how important tourism is worldwide and how popular UK tourism still is in the level of activity that we saw around the UK pavilion at the World Travel Market. Inbound tourism generates £22 billion to the economy, we welcome 32 million visitors and it is the sixth largest export industry. We work closely with the Government to keep pressing for the importance of this industry and how much more it could deliver if only some of these barriers, such as visas and air passenger duty, were to be addressed. It is certainly the view of the Tourism Alliance that tourism should be very much at the heart of all government policy. It can create jobs, wealth and revenue for this country, and it should be very much at the heart of manifestos for the next election in terms of its importance to UK plc.

Baroness Morris of Bolton: Why does that not happen? Because it does not happen.

Mary Rance: There is no dedicated resource as such. Tourism currently sits in DCMS as part of a very wide remit of responsibilities for both the Secretary of State and the Minister for Tourism. At its heart, tourism does not sit under one person in government, which means that we as organisations have to work through different government departments. Although obviously the Secretary of State and the Minister will champion our cause, we have to work in quite a complex way in order to get progress on some of these issues.

The Chairman: All the Members of the Committee would like to come in now, but I would like to move the conversation on and ask, in pursuing this issue, whether we are noticeably more restrictive and rigorous than other countries, or whether it just that many more people want to come here. The next question on my list is Lord Ramsbotham.

Q253 Lord Ramsbotham: My question follows on from Baroness Nicholson’s as well as picking up a point that Professor Riordan made about the national examination of outward students. We have things other than business. I was a soldier and I am very conscious that we have a huge amount to teach people here, but if we overprice our military training of all three services, people will go elsewhere. Our military training, particularly in internal security and that sort of game, is recognised all over the world, along with medical training and other disciplines. If we have a national strategy for outward, I wondered whether we had a national strategy for inward, where all these organisations that are interested in bringing people in for what we have to offer come together and are able to put their feelings to government as a whole to make certain that they are represented.

Mary Rance: I guess that that would come under the remit of exports, because obviously tourism is very much an export industry, which would sit within business. At the moment there is no vehicle to bring together all the bodies that are interested in exports of some kind, whether they deal with students, tourism or business. That vehicle does not currently exist. The Tourism Alliance represents the bodies involved in tourism, with over 50 organisations and 200,000 businesses, but there is no vehicle as such for getting together on exports, as you describe.

Lord Janvrin: To pick up the point that you began to ask, particularly on the business and tourism side, what can we here learn from other countries about the way they do things in business and tourism? You have mentioned some of the difficulties around visas, air traffic duties and so on, but are there other things on your wish list that the Americans, the French, the Chinese or the Germans do that we ought to be thinking about? My second question comes back to the issue of government co-ordination, which is something that we
need to take an interest in. I get the impression from all of you that the Government are quite unjoined-up in this whole area. Would you care to comment on that?

**John Dickie:** I shall kick off. The start point might be that there is a fundamental lack of joined-upness in government. The Government simultaneously want to tell the world that we are open for business, we want the best and the brightest to come here and study, we want people with skills to come here and work and we want entrepreneurs to come here and invest. Simultaneously, members of the Government tell us that we have too many people coming here and we have a net migration target. Leaving aside the wisdom of having a net target, where you can control only a few of the smaller variables that make up the moves in that net target, we are telling people that we want to get that number down from the hundreds of thousands to the tens of thousands. You will do that only if you substantially reduce the number of people who come here to study and to work. So the mood music is at best confused, and you can see why some students or people thinking of investing here the business they will have the perception that it is a bit risky or volatile and they might be better off going somewhere else.

With regard to the different sectors, I could talk generally about business, and Mary has talked about the importance of tourism to the economy, but it is also worth reminding ourselves that education contributes more to the UK’s exports than the pharmaceutical sector. So the scale of inward resource generation that the whole supply chain of education creates for the British economy—especially the London economy, which has more international students than any other city—is substantial. Anything that we do to put that at risk by a lack of co-automated messaging policy by the Government is a source of concern.

**Q254 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean:** Perhaps Mary Rance or John Dickie would like to comment on this. I see the point about the difficulties with visas and so on, but I wondered—perhaps this is more for London—to what extent, as I have felt when driving from Scotland to London, the difficulties that people have at our airports were a factor in bringing in the kind of tourism and other investment resources that you were talking about earlier. I am not just talking about the congestion at Heathrow. If you are coming from outside the UK—this does not yet apply to Scotland—there are the queues, which we keep being told have disappeared and have been fixed but in my experience are still there. Are these factors that put people off coming to London at all?

**Mary Rance:** They are very much all part of the welcome for people coming to the UK, right back from the process of having to apply for visas and having to go to centres to be processed to the treatment of visitors when they arrive at Heathrow or any other airport. There were some issues last year with long queues, which were not helpful, but that was addressed by putting more people in to resource it. This whole question is very much part of Welcome to Britain, which is something that we work on to ensure that the process of visitors is as welcoming as possible. Every aspect is important for the visitor experience and the decision whether to come to the UK at all, or indeed to come back.

**Lord Forsyth of Drumlean:** How successful do you think you are? If I contrast that with travelling through an airport in the Far East, for example, they are scrupulously clean and unbelievably efficient, whereas when you arrive at Heathrow or Gatwick you may spend quite a long time circling in the air, and when you get down they are dirty. The contrast with the rest of the world is enormous. Does that matter?

**Mary Rance:** It matters very much. Working with the airport authorities is something that we keep a close eye on. There is a group called Welcome to Britain, which comprises organisations like the British Airport Authority, which keeps a close eye on all this. There
were big issues last year with long queues at the main airports, and that is something that we address collectively.

John Dickie: May I add a couple of points? One is that part of the difficulty around getting in and out of Heathrow in particular, and sometimes other airports in the south-east, is that they are very congested. Heathrow is running at essentially 100% capacity. It has no resilience if something goes wrong, and something goes wrong everyday because that is the nature of running an airport, so people are either stacked in the sky or waiting to take off. The only way we will fix that is by increasing capacity at Heathrow if we want to retain our ability to connect to the rest of the world—or possibly building a new airport somewhere else or expanding elsewhere; it does not have to be simply Heathrow. We need some action to deal with the lack of capacity in the south-east. Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted are all spending significant sums of money to improve their appearance. There have been great steps forward: there was Terminal 5 at Heathrow and now Terminal 2, while work is going on at Gatwick.

With regard to the queues, an important point to emphasise is that there is no trade-off between the security of our borders and the speed and efficiency with which we process people. It is perfectly possible to let people through quickly and politely if they should be let through, and to detain and question them and let them in or not if they should be detained and questioned. You do not need to manage that by having people waiting for two or three hours if they are coming in from long-haul flights. The continued resource of front-line border staff is an important thing for the public sector to focus on if it wants to give a good welcome for people coming here from overseas.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: I very much agree with what you are saying, but how important from your experience is it in making people not decide not to come at all? Have you done any work to quantify the impact? The relative costs of putting this right are modest, but I do not know what is on the other side of the balance sheet.

John Dickie: In the case of Heathrow, we have seen a substantial increase from the operator in both investment and focus on the bits of the passenger experience that it controls. For example, the speed and reliability with which you go through security have improved substantially over the past two or three years compared with five or six years ago. There are data to support that, and we get many fewer complaints about Heathrow hassle landside than we used to. As Mary said, there has been an increase in resource around the Olympics, which has been sustained in part, over processing people as they come in. However, it is a substantial source of angst when it goes wrong. If you have to wait for one and a half to two hours to go through immigration if you have just flown in overnight from the Far East or the United States, unsurprisingly that does not make you feel good and warm about doing business in Britain. It is a very straightforward and, in the scheme of things, cheap thing to fix.

Q255 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Sorry, we are a bit unjoined-up with our questions. I have a small supplementary to Baroness Morris’s question. You raised the question of APD as an important factor. We have not heard this before in the Committee, although I have heard it elsewhere, outside in lots of other lobbies. You said that we have the highest air passenger duty of any country. Is that true?

Mary Rance: I think that Chad may be slightly ahead of us, but we are pretty well up there. Our departure tax has effectively gone up year on year, to the point where it is now increasing quite significantly and obviously adding to the reality of the cost of coming to the UK.
Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: And you are getting feedback on this? You are getting evidence on it? People raise it as an issue, do they?

Mary Rance: Absolutely. It is very much an issue when it comes to people’s choice. Obviously they have choices and they do not have to come to the UK. They look at the relative costs of going to different destinations. They may come to the UK but there is increasing evidence that people are spending less time here, as part of an itinerary, in favour of departing from another European airport where the departure tax is considerably lower. There is a high level of activity at the moment. In fact, 90,000 visitors have expressed their concern about this in the campaign that is being run to try to regulate, or at least put a cap on, any further increases and a reform of the tax.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: And it is not just a marginal difference, it is a factor of two, three or 10 times, is it not?

Mary Rance: A family of four, for example, coming from one of the emerging markets and travelling in economy class, will be paying about £600 in air passenger duty, which is a not insignificant amount when added to the cost of the tickets and the whole cost of the holiday or visit to the UK.

The Chairman: And that would be much more than travelling to Paris or Amsterdam?

Mary Rance: Indeed, yes.

Lord Morris of Bolton: Have some countries actually taken the tax off?

Mary Rance: Ireland certainly found that taking it away increased the level of activity at that destination, and other European countries have done the same. It has a very positive result on visitor numbers.

The Chairman: I want to bring Baroness Armstrong in because you have all had a shot. Baroness Armstrong, it is your turn.

Q256 Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top: Sorry to colleagues, but I am going to move on. Mary, you mentioned the Olympics. My proposal would be that we were seen as a very opening and welcoming nation then, and that that should have brought us a lot of benefit. Do you think it did? If it did, is that benefit largely for London or is there enthusiasm to move outside London—or do the transport problems in getting people out of London get in the way, particularly if they arrive at Heathrow? Professor Riordan used to be at Newcastle and we had very good flights from the north-east to Heathrow, but they do not really have those any more.

Mary Rance: There is certainly evidence this year that inbound tourism revenue is up by about 11%, which is a very positive result. UKinbound recently carried out a survey of our members and found that the reason for that is not just the Olympics, although they were very positive in showcasing not just London but the UK. There has also been a bit of bounce-back in regular visitor numbers, as there is no doubt that in 2012 with the Olympics, people who normally come on holiday or on business here decided not to come that year. There is obviously increased demand for the UK as a result of the Olympics. It has also been a very good year for the weather, which has obviously helped some of the outdoor attractions. The success of the GREAT campaign which the Government are currently running, as well as VisitBritain, very much promotes the idea that Britain is great, heritage is great, shopping is great, all the issues that I outlined at the beginning that are relevant to the attractiveness of the UK. The cohesion of this campaign in international markets is beginning to bear fruit, and the industry itself has been investing in product and in business to attract more visitors to the UK, and it is the UK; obviously London is still the big hub, and over 50%
of visitors come to London, but there is very much a drive and itineraries are being
developed to try to move visitors around the UK so that they are not just spending time in
London.

The Chairman: This is an additional question from the opposite angle from the one that
my Committee colleagues are putting. Is there a problem of capacity? We talk about an
increase of 11% and at the same time about people being deterred from coming, while you
describe a picture of massive tourism. Is there a capacity problem with the rate at which we
can adjust to this demand to come here?

Mary Rance: Obviously there is a capacity issue at the airport, as we touched on earlier.
Heathrow is currently running at 99%. We aspire to having 40 million international visitors,
and one has asked where these visitors are going to come through. That is something that
we urgently need to address.

The Chairman: When they are here, where are they going to stay? Are they going to find
every tourist attraction so crowded that you have to book days ahead?

Mary Rance: There is a lot of investment in hotels in London in particular. We have more
than enough capacity in the number of beds to cope with the visitors that we have at the
moment, and that needs to be replicated in other key destinations such as Edinburgh and the
north of England. There needs to be investment in hotels and attractions to support the
visitor demand of the future.

Q257 Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: I think the statistics show that more or
less the only other place that tourists visit is Anne Hathaway’s cottage.

To ride off that, would your collective jobs not be made easier if Britain spent more time
and energy through the British Council and other arms such as Commonwealth countries in
promoting our language and culture? In our language I include Welsh, Gaelic and all the rest
that make up the whole of the United Kingdom. Do you think that we are rather allowing
our culture to sell itself and not doing enough to promote it, which would help all of you?

Professor Colin Riordan: That is really not my experience. The British Council does a good
job in selling British culture and the message gets out. It is a great attraction. In many ways it
does sell itself. The GREAT campaign is working really well, and we have the Education is
GREAT strand to that. The fact that we do not have to go out with a hard sell is beneficial
for universities, because it can put people off if you appear to be aggressively marketing
something like education or culture.

Mary Rance: I would agree with that. The British Council is very much involved in the
GREAT campaign and promoting Culture is GREAT, and that is now beginning to bear fruit.

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: And the English language, Welsh and Gaelic?
What about the language issue? Nowadays, we have the English language in 2 billion people
across the globe, yet in a sense that is our big strength and what we are all offering. What
should we be doing to keep in front on that?

Professor Colin Riordan: I think that we are very much ahead of the game with that, partly
through the British Council and partly through universities. We now have more students
studying for UK degrees outside the UK than in, so we are working very hard on all that. All
the universities have English language programmes, as does the British Council. In many
cases we have overseas locations where we deliver the English language, sometimes to
contract. Again, it is one of those things that has not really been a difficulty for us. It is a
happy chance that we have that asset. It is other areas that are causing us difficulties.
**The Chairman:** I believe that there are more Chinese learning English in China than the entire population of the United Kingdom.

**John Dickie:** I agree very much with what my colleagues have said, but I guess the question is whether we are achieving the potential that we could achieve. It is of course true, as we have all said when talking about the strengths that Britain has—its reputation, its image, its attractiveness abroad—that it has substantial strengths, but could we do more to communicate and emphasise those in order to connect people from overseas with them. I think the answer is that we could. One statistic in front of me is that we in London spend about £12 million a year on promoting ourselves to business and retail tourists, for inward investment and for students to come here. That is half what New York spends on tourism marketing, and New York is as well known a destination as London for this purpose. That makes the point that we could do a lot more to promote the United Kingdom and London, both in straight promotional terms and through some of the softer soft power metrics as the British Council does. The rate of return on British Council expenditure is almost certainly very high, but it is way off being maximised.

**Q258 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock:** I want to follow up on the GREAT campaign. Frankly, that title grates, if you will excuse the pun, with some of us because it sounds imperialist and old fashioned and as if we are lecturing to people that we are great. I am not suggesting that we should go back to Cool Britannia, but we asked some people who gave us evidence, last week I think, for suggestions. Some other suggestions came up that were more modern and up to date. Someone even suggested New Britain, which went down well with one or two of us. What do you think? Do you think GREAT sounds modern and up to date and the kind of image that we want to get over to people?

**Mary Rance:** It is currently well established, obviously people identify with it and it is a government campaign that is co-ordinated by different agencies.

**Lord Foulkes of Cumnock:** You, and we, do not have to accept what the Government are doing currently. We are going to recommend changes, improvements and developments. Do you have any ideas?

**John Dickie:** There is a flow-through point that I would make about having this kind of joined-up campaign, which is that you have to ensure that the image that you project accords with the reality. This goes back to queuing in airports. If you see posters telling you that Britain is great when you are standing in a long queue waiting to be seen by an official to get in, the message does not entirely chime, so making sure that we join up what we say with what we do for the visitor experience is a very important part of the role that Government should play.

**Lord Forsyth of Drumlean:** On the point about London, I think I know what the answer to this question is going to be, but do you think that we overemphasise the importance of London as a destination? Many parts of the country are very fine places for tourists to go to that perhaps do not get the same exposure, and certainly during the summer months if one works in London one has the feeling that we are at capacity in the numbers of tourists. It is certainly true around this building; just getting from one end of this building to the other is quite a challenge. Do you think that we are doing enough to bring out the merits of the rest of the United Kingdom? I am thinking not just of Scotland, Robert Burns’s cottage and Anne Hathaway’s cottage, for example, but of middle England, which does not seem to feature quite as much. I am with GREAT Britain but I do think it is important if you are going to do this GREAT Britain campaign that when you at the airport it feels like that. When you arrive
at Edinburgh airport, you get a big poster saying “Royal Bank of Scotland: Making It Happen”, which shows the dangers of corporate advertising.

Mary Rance: At this point, with the industry doing its best to promote other parts of the UK and to create itineraries to take visitors outside London, the problem with promotion is that some of the regional structures no longer exist to market them; those bodies are not there to promote the Midlands or the north-west in the way they were. It therefore takes time for the enterprise partnerships to be developed, so the question becomes: who is promoting those parts of Britain? VisitBritain obviously has a remit, as does VisitEngland, but co-ordinating that and ensuring that there is adequate promotion of other destinations in Britain is important.

The Chairman: I am going to ask you a final question which we would like all of you to try to answer. Perhaps we have not touched very deeply on this. The world has become digitalised. You are suddenly dealing with the prospect of 100 million Chinese tourists travelling the world, which was unthinkable 20 years ago, and the official forecast is that this will increase. So we are looking at a vast connected globe of information about this country on a scale that has never happened before. I do not sense in anything that any of you have said so far that you are quite geared up for the avalanche that could arise in this moment of travel, tourism demands, capacity demands, the insistence on access to universities and crowding London. Are you aware of this? Do you see this coming, and are you prepared for it?

Mary Rance: With regard to a “potential avalanche”, I would just touch on China for a moment, where outbound tourism has grown by 42 million. Arrivals to the UK have grown by only 36,000, so we are losing market share quite dramatically. We are losing 40% market share globally, the reason for which goes back to visa processing and the fact that we require people to go to biometric centres to be processed. There is no doubt that we must make it easier for people to come to the UK through the visa process if we are going to see the avalanche that you describe. While we have the difficulties that are in place at the moment, do not think that we will see that massive growth in visitor numbers. We are seeing a steady trickle, but it is certainly not an avalanche.

Q259 The Chairman: Thank you. Mr Dickie, is London geared up to that kind of world? We have heard Lord Forsyth saying that it feels a bit crowded at times.

John Dickie: London is going get more crowded. We are adding 1 million to the population of London this decade, it is forecast, taking us up to 9 million, so by 2020 London will be more crowded, bigger and with more people in it than it has ever had before. The latest forecasts suggest that we will add another million in the decade after that, so London is going to grow and the challenge for us is to make sure that we manage that growth in the interests of Londoners and the country as a whole. There is a whole set of issues around the quality of our infrastructure, not just the airports but the mass transit to get people around the city once they arrive here, and a whole set of issues around how we ensure that Londoners get into jobs in this city. Fundamentally, in a world of growing interconnectivity, we want to make sure that what is arguably the most global world city, London, continues to play that role, because it is an extremely important part of the wealth that we generate for the country as a whole.

Talking about tourism, there is a really big issue about how you plug tourists in London into the rest of the country, as we have been quite successful at doing in plugging other bits of the UK economy into the London economy. For example, functions that were once in London but are now in other UK cities are there because the head office might be in
London First, Professor Colin Riordan, Cardiff University, Tourism Alliance and UKinbound, – Oral evidence (QQ 246-259)

London but the bits of the processing value chain can be elsewhere. The fundamental issue for us is whether we want to be ahead of this curve, managing it and getting the kinds of people, the kinds of business, the kinds of students and so on, or whether we wish to be fully joined up, reactive and not managing our destiny as well as we might.

The Chairman: A very good way of putting the challenge. Professor Riordan, would you like to make a final comment on whether we are ahead of the curve?

Professor Colin Riordan: I think we are doing well. The universities have shown over the past decade, or longer, that we are very capable of expanding capacity when necessary. We do want to attract the brightest and best from across the world and we will continue to do that do the best of our ability.

Digitalisation is a critical feature for soft power, because we now have the ability, with social media, to stay in touch with, cultivate and keep relationships with former students, and staff for that matter. We have about 20,000 international staff at universities, because universities are globally competitive and you have to have a mixture of people from around the world if you want the very best. It gives us the opportunity to influence things and to create relationships that are lasting and profound and not to lose people, as it were, that we never had before. That is probably one of the most significant developments for soft power.

The Chairman: That is all extremely helpful. I am afraid that our time is almost up. There are many more questions that we would like to pursue, but I think we will call a halt there. Thank you very much indeed for giving us your time and for giving us an insight into an area of great challenge, and possibly of great growth, provided that certain obstacles are removed.
Q343  The Chairman: Sir John, welcome and thank you for agreeing to come before our Committee. We are very pleased that you were able to come. Just as a formality, in front of you is a list of the declared interests of this Committee, which may help you to understand one or two of the directions of our questions. I do not think there is going to be a Division, but if there is I would have to adjourn the whole business for five minutes.

This Committee is concerned with Britain’s standing, position and interest in the world and how techniques of protecting and promoting them are or are not—we think they are—being changed by new matters of communication, globalisation, the interconnectivity of the entire planet and the kind of power designated by Joe Nye as soft power, but it may also be a smart power, needed to promote and operate in these new conditions. That is our concern and the area where we are seeking to write an intelligent, useful and constructive report.

Can I begin by asking you a comprehensive question about the new conditions that we think, and our witnesses think, we are now facing? You held the highest offices in the land. Therefore, you are better placed than almost anybody else to express to us your feeling on whether we have entered this new phase. We have the rise of the non-western powers, the so-called “Rest over the West”. We have the information revolution. We have the emergence of non-state actors, fragmented forces and the difficulty of the whole idea of war beginning to dissolve. Has this changed things in the way I am describing to you? Do you feel that? As a result, if that is your line of thought, do you feel that our diplomacy and postures need to be altered and, if so, how?
Sir John Major: There are three separate questions inside that. The first and easiest part of it is, yes, it has changed. It has been changing for 20 years or more. It has changed, is changing and will change further and, if anything, the change is accelerating. I spend between four and five months a year travelling round the world, almost everywhere—rarely to Africa, maybe a couple of times a year to Latin America, but a lot to the United States, Europe, the Far East and the Near East. You can tangibly feel the change in which people see the world and, in some cases, the way in which they perceive the United Kingdom.

As far as power is concerned, hard and soft, I do not have very much doubt that, except in the most exceptional circumstances, the virtues of hard power are declining. I think the corresponding inevitability on the seesaw is that, as hard power declines, there is a greater importance in the use of soft power. When I say “hard power declines”, I mean it is becoming less usable except in the most extreme circumstances. In any event, most countries in the western world, including us, are less well equipped to use hard power than we might have been 20 or 30 years ago. It is necessary to increase influence to make sure that we are well equipped with soft power or smart power.

I am sure we will come later to the fact that there are occasions where the British interest is served by a combination of hard and soft power together, or perhaps consequentially, as was the case in the Northern Ireland peace process, for example. Generally hard power enforces and soft power encourages and smart power melds, in some indefinable way, the two of them together.

If one looks at the change that you referred to in the style of diplomacy, there is a little bit of background necessary before you can answer that absolutely directly. We are very fortunate in this country. We have some historic advantages—“fixed assets” you might call them—in terms of the use of soft power. Having read the evidence, I know many of your previous witnesses will have referred to them, but just let me summarise them very briefly. The fixed assets that I see are language; our democracy, the extent to which it has been copied; the rule of law, the extent of which that has also been copied in many countries to a very large extent around the world; and the monarchy. When people refer to the Queen almost anywhere in the world they mean our Queen. That is very evident when you travel around the world. We have other institutions that are important to the world’s perception of Britain, and that is crucial for soft power.

There is also the BBC, of course, particularly the World Service: not flawless, not remotely big enough, but immensely worthwhile; the City: damaged a bit by the financial crisis, but still probably the most respected financial institution anywhere in the world; the British Council; our think tanks like Ditchley and Chatham House; and some of our publications: the Financial Times you will find in every corner of the world, read with admiration, and the Economist as well. So it runs across quite a wide range.

Then there are the almost subliminal elements of British soft power, such as our theatre. I may be prejudiced but I think it is the best in the world. I am often in America. I see American theatre. It is extremely good. It is almost as good as ours, but not quite. TV and film: wherever you go, Bond will be known and these days so will “Downton Abbey”. It is an illustration; all of these reflect a favourable impression on Britain. So do other things, like our music. We have had over 20 British albums top the charts in countries around the world. It is not just the established stars like the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. You have Adele, One Direction, Susan Boyle. Wherever you go they are household names as well. They have an implication, the perception and thus the soft power.
So does sport. I have watched more Premier League football matches live from Hong Kong or Seoul than I have in the UK. They are broadcast live. So is cricket, although not in so many places. Many individuals, Lewis Hamilton and Andy Murray one should mention today as well, are relevant.

That is a background that few countries can manage in terms of profile. That is important for our diplomacy. It is important for our diplomacy for this reason. People see and think about Britain because of these elements of soft power, and because of our history there is, to a greater extent than people who do not travel may realise, a tendency to trust the British in diplomacy. It is very marked. I have had a number of lunches in different parts of the world when they have spoken extremely warmly of the Foreign Office—I know this is not typical for holders of my former office to do that, but I certainly do—and also of the present Foreign Secretary. That is all very helpful.

Is diplomacy changing? I think it is. I will elaborate on that now or later as you wish, but our style of diplomacy is changing and I think there are opportunities in our modern world for our diplomacy that we have not fully utilised in the past and could now. Since I do not want to enter into a monologue I will wait and see if you ask about it.

**Q344 The Chairman:** We will come to that. What you have said is very comprehensive and many of the points you have made are things that are being reinforced very strongly by our witnesses. We have had a lot of witnesses. In fact, this is the 21st witness session of this Committee and we have two more ahead. It sounds convincing and it is strongly supported by what we have already heard.

There are a whole range of points that we want to pursue. On your watch, the things from our memories that were highly significant were the fact that you were at the end of the first Gulf War, which was war in the hard power sense, and you were at the centre of the Downing Street Declaration. You have just been speaking on that in Dublin and made a very interesting speech and we want to talk to you about that in a moment. Just thinking about the hard power nature of Saddam’s first invasion of Kuwait, that was hard power that had to be met by hard power. Did you feel that was the end of an era and it had settled the matter of Kuwait and Iraq or did you feel it was the beginning of some new softer and more subtle approach in the future? How did you see it at the time?

**Sir John Major:** The purpose of the war was very narrow. It was endorsed by the United Nations. The purpose was not to depose Saddam Hussein and enter Iraq and then take over Iraq and run it, which had self-evident difficulties. It was quite simple. It was to expel the Iraqis from Kuwait. That was the alpha and omega of the first Gulf War. I will come directly to the point of whether it was a new phase of diplomacy and whether I thought it was the end of matters in a moment, but it is worth mentioning that it was a remarkable example of smart power by the first President Bush, George HW Bush. He had collected together the most extraordinary coalition of nations that we have seen since the Second World War. Very few people have observed the scale of it. We had representatives from every corner of the world, including many Arab states, joining in the coalition to expel the Iraqis from Kuwait.

It is also worth noting that, since that was under a UN mandate, had we done more than expel the Iraqis from Kuwait and had we decided to go into Iraq we would have broken up the coalition. Whereas President Bush’s word was trusted and so was mine at that time, had we exceeded the UN mandate I think it would not have been, but it is an indication there where hard power was absolutely necessary. The coalition was brought together by soft
power and it was succeeded by a series of soft power initiatives, some of which were more successful than others.

Did I think that was the end of the matter? The general feeling was that it was the end of Kuwait being attacked by Iraq and it was the end of Iraq being an international difficulty. What we did not foresee was that Iraq would then turn on the Kurds in the north, as they did, and proceed to slaughter them. That was when we introduced the safe haven policy, which was very much a British policy, supported by the Commonwealth and by the European Union, which encouraged the Americans to take part in an exercise that could not have been carried out without them.

We did not think it was the end of everything. We thought it was the end of their military adventures, but we had no feeling that it was the beginning of a new settlement right across the Middle East. There were too many other difficulties then and remain today for us to be so optimistic.

Q345 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: I am tempted to follow that interesting line, but can I go back to how we are perceived overseas currently? You said, and I completely agree with you, in Britain there is a truly shocking collapse of social mobility and you are recorded as saying, “Hard graft is no longer enough to reach the upper echelons of power”. Do you think our image has changed because a very small, privately educated elite is now running the country? Do you think that makes a difference?

Sir John Major: It has not been my experience that people have focused on that. What they have tended to focus on is the way in which we are tackling the deficit. That has been the subject of a great deal of focus around the world, and a huge amount of interest on what will happen with the referendum on Scottish independence and the referendum on the European Union. There is a huge amount of focus on that. If either of those were to be lost—by “lost” I mean if Scotland were to become independent—then whatever that may mean for Scotland, and I think it would be bad for Scotland, it would certainly be very bad for the United Kingdom as well. They would see a country beginning to fracture.

I am not the world’s foremost Europhiliac. It was me who kept us out of the single currency and declined to enter the Social Chapter. But I do not have a shred of doubt that we are better off in than out. In a world of 7 billion people who are binding together, for us to cut ourselves loose from our biggest market would be folly on a grand scale. I find that is the predominant view as you go round the world.

People focus on that. They have not focused on the internal workings of domestic policy. They focused on what they see as Britain’s place in the world, which they think will be diminished if Scotland was to leave and it would. We would lose the Scottish talent and we would see a country begin to fracture, and we would certainly be isolated if we left the European Union. By “isolated” I do not mean we would not survive. We are a big nation, of course we would survive, but you do not have to ask me whether people would be more or less likely to invest in Britain if we were not in the European Union. The Japanese have told us the answer to that, so have the Americans, so have the Koreans, and so, no doubt, in time will others. It is those things people have tended to focus on.

Q346 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: You have almost answered a question I was going to ask later about the European Union. I am very interested in what you say about Scotland, obviously, as you would appreciate, but it is also interesting what you say about not focusing on the internal workings and the education of our Government at the moment. It may not play to my agenda but it is very interesting. About Scotland, has that come up again and again as you have gone around the world? Have people expressed real concern?
Sir John Major: Increasingly so, and not just in Europe where obviously countries like Spain and Belgium have a direct interest in whether there is going to be a separatist part of the United Kingdom. There is plainly a matter of domestic interest for them, but it has come up more widely. It has come up in the Far East and it has come up in a number of countries, simply because they would perceive a country that was damaged and diminished if a chunk of it voluntarily chose to leave the United Kingdom. They are baffled as to why they should do so, but they observe that if that happened then it would diminish us in their eyes. It is hardly surprising. If we were to see a large chunk of another country disappear, we would take the same view.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: That is very interesting, thank you.

Q347 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: You have probably covered what I was going to ask you. In your very eloquent answer to the first question you described this fantastic image that Britain has around the world. Could you say a little bit about what you think the economic advantages of that are? In the context of this Scottish point, what would be your view on the sorts of things that we would lose? It might be that people around the world would think, “What on earth is going on in Britain?” but what would be the specific consequences for England and for Scotland? I suppose I am thinking economically here, but I am also thinking in terms of our position in the Security Council and our influence on global affairs. Many people, in looking at these questions of soft power, find it quite difficult to make the connection between soft power and how that relates to their immediate economic interest and the living standards and future of their families.

Sir John Major: How do they perceive us and why do these things matter? The perception of a country from its trading partners and others is crucially important. We have the gift of these ancient historic fixed assets that I talked about: language, culture, law, monarchy. We are seen as an extremely stable society, another reason why Scotland seceding would be so difficult.

We are seen as an exceedingly stable society. We are also seen as one of the, if not the, least corrupt nations in the world, and I do not just mean our business system. I mean our political system, our business system, our way of life. I hope I am not seeing this through tainted British eyes—I do not think I am—but people trust us. They may often disagree with us, but they believe we are to be trusted and they believe we deal honestly with them. The value of that to people who wish to trade or treat with us in any way is almost incalculable. That is a perception that is not the result of this Government or the previous Government or the Government before that. That has been built up over generations.

What would we lose in England and Scotland if Scotland were to secede? It is perhaps impertinent for an Englishman to tell the Scots what they would lose and I dare say there are one or two people, maybe more, around this table who would know at least as well I do. What would the United Kingdom lose? Apart from an extremely talented chunk of the United Kingdom disappearing, we would be diminished. That would put at risk our role in many international bodies. Our voice would be weakened. As to whether we would retain our seat on the UN Security Council, very possibly for a while but at some stage that is bound to be reformed. It is grotesquely out of date. The Security Council and the permanent members of it were fixed in the San Francisco Opera House in 1946 in a world that bears no relationship to today. Many countries that should be on the Security Council permanently are not. I think were we to lose in Scotland it may be open to doubt when that change comes whether we would retain our position.
It is not just the Security Council. We would find ourselves weakened in the IMF. We would find ourselves weakened in the G8, the G20. In every international gathering that there is the voice of Britain would not be growing stronger, as it should as the economy improves. It would be growing weaker because we would have had a political fracture of a most dramatic nature. That makes people wonder about the stability. If Scotland were to go, what would happen to Wales? What would happen to Northern Ireland? These are acute worries.

Let me take another point that I fear is quite relevant: the impact on Ireland if we were to leave the European Union. Our relations with Ireland now are better than they have been at any time in the long and tortuous history between those two countries, but suppose we left. Ireland would have legitimate causes for worry. Would we be so supportive of them in Europe? We could not be supportive of them in the European Union if we were not there. Would we get border controls on the border between north and south Ireland? Is that going to unsettle the Catholic community in the north?

There are all sorts of secondary effects, knock-on effects, from any form of fracture in the United Kingdom or any form of divorce of Britain from Europe. Heaven alone knows, there are a million frustrations with Europe, which irritate all of us. We know that. That is so, but we need to put those in a proper perspective of what it may mean for our country as a whole.

To summarise: we are perceived as a corruption-free, honest dealer, which is immensely valuable. People also perceive that our economy looks as though it is improving. They wonder how balanced the improvement is and they are looking carefully to see, but they see that we are improving and they see that the eurozone is not. From the purely domestic perception of the United Kingdom around the world, that is a distinct bonus for the United Kingdom. I do not think I need add any more on the England/Scottish point to those I have mentioned, but I have only touched upon the implications were Scotland to leave, both for Scotland and England.

I am wary to go on about Scotland, but the belief that, because they are in the European Union as part of the United Kingdom, they would automatically be there if they were to leave is fallacy. They would not. They would have to apply to rejoin at a time when the European Union is in no hurry about new members. I am sure they would get in, but it would take them 10 years and who knows what conditions of entry they would get. They do not know and I do not know. They say casually that they would use sterling. That is not their decision and if they think they are going to use sterling as a temporary interregnum for 10 years while they get themselves into the European Union, I do not know what the Prime Minister and the Chancellor can say, but I know very clearly what I would have said some time ago were that proposition put to me.

Let me touch on emotion, just for one second. We are coming up to the anniversary of the First World War. The Scottish National Party has chosen the anniversary of Bannockburn. There is another anniversary, that of the First World War, and how odd it would be on the 100th anniversary of the war in which Scots, Irish, English and Welsh fought together that we would commemorate that anniversary as separate countries. It seems to me to be folly on a grand scale for anyone even to contemplate that.

The Chairman: Let us turn from that part of the United Kingdom to the other part you have already referred to, Northern Ireland, and the other part of the British Isles, which is the Republic of Ireland, where the peace process started on your watch and one could argue that that was soft power replacing an agonising period, in which many of us including myself
were deeply involved, of violence of an excruciating and terrible kind. Baroness Armstrong, would you like to lead on this?

**Q348 Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top:** I wanted to ask you to explore a little more the relationship between hard power and soft power. I am not sure that it was a clear break between one and the other. My experience during the early years of the Labour Government was that it was still extremely fraught but it does seem to me that there was a relationship between the two and I just wondered if you could explore that a little more.

**Sir John Major:** Undoubtedly. Hard power bled into soft power. The fact that hard power had been there for so long was one of the reasons that soft power began to work. We had had hard power—that is the Army in Northern Ireland—for a long time and it led to a stand-off. It protected people. It prevented chaos and that was absolutely necessary, so we owe a great deal to the Army and the RUC for doing that. But it was when you got to smart power, that is the continuation of hard power allied to soft power, that we moved to a settlement.

I think the peace process proceeded and eventually succeeded for a range of different reasons. The first was war weariness among both the IRA particularly and the public at large. It was the use of hard power for a long time that brought about that war weariness. The IRA realised that after 25 years of violence they were getting absolutely nowhere and they were going to get absolutely nowhere, and that no matter who was in government in the United Kingdom, which party it was, they were not going to turn Northern Ireland away unless Northern Ireland wished to go. That realisation, reinforced by hard power, was crucial to the beginning of the peace process.

The second thing was that public attitudes were changing. The public were getting increasingly frustrated with a political problem that had not produced a political solution. Then there was the London-Dublin agreement for the first time, the Downing Street Declaration, which brought together a series of principles to which both countries subscribed. The importance of that was not in the opaque nature of the document; it may as well have been written in Gaelic for some. It was the fact that there was a unity between the two Governments as to how we should proceed. That robbed the men of violence, the nationalists and the unionists, of their support in their communities. They began to be seen as people who were continuing violence when there should be a political way through it, and that changed the atmosphere dramatically. We then had the framework agreement.

But what was also crucial and relevant to soft power? If you wished to have a solution in Northern Ireland you were never going to get one without the IRA subscribing to it. We needed to offer the IRA a way to climb down from the position in which they found themselves. That was the purpose of the early decisions to get rid of the restrictions to them broadcasting where you had an actor speaking their words. They were restrictions that were out of time and it was time they went.

We also had to reassure unionist and nationalist traditionalists that they were not going to be deserted during this process. All of that boxed in the people who were violent. It was hard power bleeding into soft power that started the peace process and it was immeasurably helped by the fact that the opposition parties in the House of Commons and Lords were very supportive of it. When I first talked to Neil Kinnock about it, he was supportive. So was Paddy Ashdown and so later was John Smith. They were all supportive of it and at no stage did anyone across the House play games with the peace process, and that was immensely helpful. They realised they were dealing with a united House of Commons as well as a particular Government of a particular colour.
Q349 Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top: Can I just follow that up? In your earlier remarks you said that you now thought that it was going to be difficult for powers such as the UK to use hard power for all sorts of reasons. Do you think we therefore are losing a lever that is sometimes important, as it was in Northern Ireland, in order to get to the conditions where people will negotiate?

Sir John Major: We still will use hard power from time to time, and we have done so quite recently and quite successfully: the Labour Government in Sierra Leone, the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Government in Libya. So we will still use hard power and we will certainly use hard power in terms of peacekeeping. Where I think it is less likely is in what I would call a proper war or an invasion of a country. That is getting increasingly difficult after the second Iraq war. That is going to be less used and, for a raft of reasons, there are parts of the world where it is not going to be used at all because it is politically not a practicality. That was what I meant when I said hard power would be used less. I do not discount it. I do not think we are safe to assume we can dismantle the Army or the Armed Forces at all. Far from it, I do not think we could or should do that because there will be peacekeeping in other areas where hard power will have an important role to play. I just think, in terms of what you might call small wars, they are going to be less likely. As for large wars, I think the integration of the world and the world’s economies make those immensely unlikely. For all the criticism one can make of the European Union, the concept of a European war now is almost beyond imagination.

Q350 Baroness Goudie: Just quickly on the back of what Baroness Armstrong was saying, let me ask about Northern Ireland, which a number of us were involved in, through soft power and the aftermath that is continuing through soft power. Do you see that method being used by us in other parts of the world in terms of at the peace table after the hard power is over? We should be doing much more of that than just walking out and leaving it, given the expertise we have, more than anybody else in and around soft power, because I do not think the Americans—

Sir John Major: I do. There are all sorts of areas where we can use it. It is quite interesting that people come and ask us about it. Aung San Suu Kyi was here recently speaking to people about the Northern Ireland peace process. No two conflicts are identical. You cannot write a template for how to deal with a conflict. The one thing I would hold absolutely beyond doubt is that you cannot reach an agreement and end a conflict without talking and having contact with the people who are in conflict. That is why I so strongly support what Senator Kerry is trying to do in Iran at the present time. It may fail. I recall Jack Straw going to Iran trying to do something and getting a very frosty reception and a black eye, but he was right to do that. I think Senator Kerry is right. So no two conflicts are alike, but the principles are very similar. The first principle has to be: you cannot reach an agreement if you do not have some form of contact, maybe direct, maybe subliminal, maybe through third parties. The second thing is not to expect someone to come out with their hands up and their weapons thrown away. You might think it is desirable that they should do so, but in hard political reality no one is going to do that. So you have to offer people a way out of the situation in which they find themselves and that sometimes is quite difficult and it is often counterintuitive, but it is necessary if the objective is to end the conflict.

There were many occasions when we might have dropped the Northern Ireland peace process, most obviously after the Warrington bomb, which murdered those two little boys, you may remember, on an Easter Sunday. They were out trying to buy some flowers for their parents on an Easter Sunday and they were just murdered. The pressure to end the peace process then, the pressure that said the IRA are lying to you, was very strong. But I
thought the argument against it was stronger in that, if you did that, there would be more Warringtons. If you did not make that gesture you may stop there being more Warringtons, and eventually the Good Friday agreement did that.

Q351 The Chairman: We have touched on the European Union a bit, but do you think that membership of the European Union helps Britain’s promotion and our reputation and pursuit of our interests in the world at large and, if so, in what particular ways?

Sir John Major: I think it does. It enhances it in a number of ways. We are seen as a big country in a bigger grouping and an influential country in a big grouping. We are seen as one of those who determine European Union policy. We are seen as someone who plays a lead part in some European policies—the anti-piracy in Somalia policy, for example. We are seen as the entry point for European Union investment as well. We are seen as part of a European Union negotiated free trade agreement and, of course, if we left the European Union we would have no free trade agreements. We would have to renegotiate every free trade agreement that we have ever had, and that would take a very long time and who knows what conditions we would get.

There is no doubt it enhances us, but there is a subliminal way of asking whether it enhances us as well. Consider the attitude of other people who look at us from abroad. Do the Americans want us in the European Union or out? They want us in because we can have an Anglo-Saxon influence on the European Union and be a counterpoint to some of the protectionist tendencies that exist there. The second point is this: no country has left the European Union. Even in its present difficulties no country has left it and countries are still queuing up to join it, which must tell you something about its value as perceived around the world. I think it undoubtedly enhances our position that we are in it, although some of the ways it does are subliminal.

Q352 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: A corollary of what you say is that the actions of UKIP and the Tory Eurosceptics must damage that image and influence in Europe and abroad. Is that right?

Sir John Major: Absolutely. I would like to be careful about the definition of Eurosceptic.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: You called them something else even stronger, I think.

Sir John Major: It was a moment of mental clarity when I did say that. It is perfectly permissible to be sceptical about Europe. All of us are. The people we are talking about are not Eurosceptics but Europhobes. There are some people who trade under the word “Eurosceptic”, but the plain truth of the matter is they want us out. It is as simple as that. Whether they are in UKIP or whether they are in any other party, in my view that is damaging and I have never made any secret of that fact. The argument that I hear so often is that Britain has always been pushed around in Europe, bullied by those nasty Commissioners and others. Like everybody else, we are occasionally outvoted and we have to accept things we do not like. That is certainly true of everybody in the European Union, but I would argue very strongly that we are not being pushed around in Europe. There have been great developments in the European Union since it started: the single market, which was a UK-led operation; enlargement, which was a UK-German operation; and the euro, in which we stood aside. I do not notice a great degree of us being kicked around or bullied in any of that. I think it is just a phantom argument.

Q353 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: As a Minister in your Government I remember, with affection, going to European Social Affairs Council meetings where we tried to prevent the working time directive being implemented, which was done as a qualified majority voting
measure because it was presented as health and safety. Do you not think that one of the difficulties is that our kind of vision of Europe, which is a free-trading open-market Europe, is very difficult to achieve within the European Union where in order, for example, to reverse the working time directive you have to get unanimity among all member states? I remember being at a lunch with Ministers and saying to them, “But, look, this is making us uncompetitive in the global market place”, and they said, “Yes, but we have coalition Governments and we are unable to change that and we are damned if we are going to have the British having a competitive advantage over the rest of us”. How do you deal with that in your vision of Europe in the context of Britain?

**Sir John Major:** Now or then?

**Lord Forsyth of Drumlean:** Now.

**Sir John Major:** You know how I dealt with it then. I declined to join the Social Chapter and vetoed the Maastricht Treaty unless we got our way on that.

**Lord Forsyth of Drumlean:** For very good reasons, and my question is—

**Sir John Major:** I said we are occasionally outvoted and that is absolutely true, but something has changed. It will not be perfect, but something quite dramatic has changed. During the periods Margaret was Prime Minister and I was Prime Minister the British were very often entirely on their own in their arguments as the European Union grew and developed towards 15 members. We now have 27 members and any British Government these days, certainly the present coalition, has allies that Margaret Thatcher and I could only have dreamed of having. They are no longer alone. They have allies in eastern Europe. They have allies in northern Europe. You now have the German Chancellor saying we do not have to do everything in Brussels. You have the Prime Minister of Holland, an absolutely core European country, saying we need a leaner and meaner European set of arrangements. You have a lot of public discontent with the pettifogging aspects of European countries right the way across the Europe.

We have allies we never had before, and we are going to have to utilise those allies. I am much more positive and optimistic about the prospects of being able to obtain some renegotiation than most people and I have done rather more negotiating with Europe than most people, but I am much more optimistic. I do not think Germany, for example, would remotely wish the British to be forced out of Europe leaving them surrounded as a free-trading nation by a larger number of protectionist nations. I am not going to give a list because every time somebody gives a list it becomes a demand that the Prime Minister achieve this. My intention is to support the Prime Minister, not make life more difficult for him, but I think there is a range of changes in Europe that are negotiable provided we go about it by seeking allies who have the same objectives as us and talking to them and lining them up beside us as part of our negotiation. This should not just be a negotiation of “Britain wants this, Britain wants that”. It needs to be a negotiation of how we change the European Union for the wider benefit, which would include us.

**Q354 Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne:** Given that, as I perceive it and the history shows, the European Union is an intergovernmental system with a directly elected Parliament grafted on to it, the tremendous weakness that is appearing is that the national Parliaments are somehow further and further away from being able to influence. I think perhaps the most important and powerful part of our soft power in the European Union context is the Westminster Parliament. How do you feel we should possibly try to shift the balance to bring back to national Parliaments, in some way or another, this offer that we certainly possess given the intergovernmentalism from top to toe of the European Union?
Sir John Major: It is a very good question and it is one being asked in other European capitals, which is helpful because, again, we would not be alone in pursuing that particular case. In retrospect, I think we made one significant mistake quite a few years ago. When we stopped the dual mandate of Westminster and the European Parliament we set up two rival institutions rather than having advocates for the national Parliament in the European Parliament and advocates for the European Parliament in the national Parliament. I think that was quite a dramatic mistake. It did not seem so at the time. People all thought it was very democratic, but things often turn out in a different way from the way that is imagined when, for the best reasons, they are done. I think that was a mistake. In some way we are going to have to strengthen the role of national Parliaments. There are different ways in which it could be done. Again, I do not want to speculate. I do not want to read in tomorrow's press that I am holding a pistol to the Prime Minister's head saying, “You have to negotiate this”. I have had a bit of experience of that and I do not want it to happen. I am encouraged that other people also see their national Parliaments being subordinated too much by a Parliament that has a lesser direct contact with the electorate they represent.

The Chairman: We are getting very tight on time. There are two other huge subjects I want to turn to but, Lord Janvrin, is your question on this or on something else?

Lord Janvrin: It was going to be on something else, so do you want me to come on after the other?

The Chairman: What we want to look at is one of the other great institutions, which involves the Commonwealth, and we want to look at the whole area of the creative arts and sport and so on. We might even get to cricket, if we have time.

Sir John Major: Not today please!

The Chairman: Baroness Hussein-Ece wants to come in on the Commonwealth.

Q355 Baroness Hussein-Ece: I just wanted to ask you how much of an asset you believe the modern Commonwealth can be in advancing the United Kingdom’s international standing and interest. In particular, do you think it is being used effectively to promote soft power, both within the Commonwealth and elsewhere?

Sir John Major: The Commonwealth is so diverse that it is quite difficult to think of it entirely as an entity. We often have different allies within the Commonwealth for particular things that are of interest to us and to them. Is it an asset? Yes, I think it is. It is quite difficult to quantify it but it has some practical and subliminal advantages for the United Kingdom. The Commonwealth is not a power bloc like the European Union and never will be.

Why is it of value to us? For several reasons. The world sees the UK as having influence because of the huge spread of the Commonwealth in every corner of the globe. Those who know these things observe that in 1952 the Commonwealth had four members. Today it has 54 or 55 members and it is still growing. There are still people who are not in the Commonwealth who may join the Commonwealth and they perceive Britain as a key component. We are no longer the maypole around which everyone dances, but we are a very influential member of the Commonwealth.

I described earlier safe havens. Our safe haven policy was born in No. 10, taken to a European Union meeting that morning, endorsed there and, while we were getting it endorsed in Europe, the Foreign Office was contacting every member of the Commonwealth so that the idea of safe havens was approved in the United Nations, with the support of the European Union and the Commonwealth. That was a practical area where we used the Commonwealth to advance a policy that we thought was right.
The other extent to which it is an asset is that we often find allies. Big countries are often looked at suspiciously. They are looking after their own interests, but if there are small countries that have the same interests in international bodies that is often quite an influential addition. It is more than a feather in the scales, and that often happens with different parts of the Commonwealth. It is hard to quantify but, yes, it is an asset. Diplomatically, in my experience, most of the members of the Commonwealth are pretty easy to work with and many of them instinctively have the same view that we have. If we are advancing something that is not widely popular elsewhere and if, for example, Singapore is with us, it rises to a different dimension. So in those ways, which are quite difficult to quantify, the Commonwealth is an asset towards our soft power.

The Chairman: When you were in Dublin the other day, did you get any sense that the Republic of Ireland might wish to join the Commonwealth?

Sir John Major: We did not discuss that, and I did not think it was a matter that I should raise. I simply observed, though, that our trading relationship with Ireland is significantly greater than that with China and India added together.

The Chairman: We are close.

Q356 Lord Janvrin: Right at the start you said, rather enticingly, that you thought the nature of diplomacy was changing and then stopped at that point. In the world that we have been describing, what did you mean by that? Could you expand on how you think British diplomacy should use the assets that you have mentioned in this new world?

Sir John Major: I will happily do that. There are several ways it is changing. I think it is changing in a desirable direction. First, despite financial restraints over the last few years, the present Foreign Secretary and the Foreign Office have been opening more missions—not a lot yet, but a significant number. As a general principle, as hard power decreases, in the interests of the United Kingdom we should increase soft power to maintain our influence in different parts of the world and that means being better represented both for political matters and also for trade matters around the world. I know you have taken evidence from UKTI and others. For the last 40 years—I emphasise that so it is again not seen as a criticism of the present Government—in my judgment, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has been under-provisioned in terms of the good it could do for our soft power. I think we should review it. To retrench from where we were would be utterly the wrong policy, and I am glad that William Hague is expanding it.

The second way it is changing is this, and the European Union is a case in point: during the 1980s and 1990s, whenever there was a European policy, by the time it surfaced it had been the subject of detailed discussion among other European heads of government before we British became part of it. Chancellor Kohl met President Mitterrand, Prime Minister Lubbers and Prime Minister Andreotti, and they informally discussed these matters at weekends that British Prime Ministers were too busy to go to and often had no idea were taking place. These things were discussed informally long before they got on the agenda. It is a case study of how the European Union worked then and it is changing. It is partly changing because the present Prime Minister has a lot of allies across Europe among his counterparts and that is very valuable. We should do that at all levels of Ministers. It is very important. I spoke to one junior Minister who said he spoke to his counterparts in three countries almost on a weekly basis, and it is very important that we do that.
We need to be much more active. We must not just form our position, say that is our position, trot up at the meeting and then deliver our position. We need to persuade and bring in people at an early stage. A voice that is echoed is a voice that is doubled and that is a form of diplomacy we have not traditionally utilised in Europe remotely to the extent that we should. I reinforce the point that these days a British Government, any British Government, would have allies in Europe that previous British Prime Ministers did not have. The other point is about how it is changing. My experience of the Foreign Office—and I see missions, embassies, high commissions, in every part of the world—is that the best of our diplomats are extremely good. I would like them to go front of house rather than back of house a little more than they have in the past.

I would like us to be a bit more self-confident and proactive in our policies. There is no reason why we should not launch our own initiatives. We are not some tiny little country pushed to one side. We are still a big country in the eyes of the world and a powerful and influential country. We should be more confident about launching initiatives on our own, if necessary, in terms of international problems. I think we would be surprised at how many takers there are for our position in different parts of the world. I do not think it would hurt us to take positions independent of our principal allies from time to time. If we have a slightly different view, I do not think it diminishes our alliances with them if we said so, whether that is Europe or whether that is the United States. We have a distinct historical view. In the Middle East, for example, the two countries that know the Middle East extremely well historically are the United Kingdom and France. I think we would be wise to use that historic knowledge and not be shy about using it in our diplomacy. Those are the ways in which it is beginning to change and perhaps in which it might change a little further.

The Chairman: We are going to spend the last very few minutes on a vast area, which is the non-governmental side that you touched on at the beginning: the arts, the business and trade, all the areas where we need to succeed. We have heard a great deal of evidence to show that we are in some ways succeeding, but how do we do better?

Q357 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: The question is: how do you see non-governmental agencies promoting the UK? Perhaps you could say a little about sport. Undoubtedly, the lottery, which was your idea, has produced a very considerable dividend, but how can we exploit those private non-governmental interests more effectively?

Sir John Major: With some of them we are doing very well. In others, there is scope for improvement. I caution, when I say that, that money is the root of all progress and we live in stringent times. You kindly mentioned the lottery. It has just passed distributing £30 billion to good causes and is still dispensing something like £1.5 billion a year. A good deal of this goes into culture, for example: theatre and music, buildings, museums, art galleries. They are instrumental in bringing huge numbers of people to this country and getting a favourable aspect of it, so that is extremely helpful.

Most sports were invented by the British. The British Premier League, for example, is probably the most watched league in the world and people want to look at it. If they are skilled, they want to come and play here. That is all helpful in the perception of us. The other forms of non-government sources are things like the British Council, the BBC and universities, about which I would like to say something. Even things like fashion are crucial, let alone music. Think of the influence the Beatles had or our most popular groups, like One Direction, have at the present time.

Perhaps I can pick up a little on two or three of those. I said earlier that the BBC World Service is a huge asset. People believe it and they listen to it, but, unfortunately, that is only
about one in 30 people around the world. When you see the huge investment that has been made by other countries—China most obviously, but also there is America, and Al Jazeera and the Gulf—it would very much be in the British interest for the BBC World Service to be dramatically increased. That is going to be a matter for the BBC Trust and that raises all sorts of subliminal questions. I simply observe it is in the British interest: it can do good; it is doing good; it can do more good; it should and it needs funding to do it.

The second point is universities. I take a rather different—I am trying to avoid using the term “left field” here—view of universities. We benefit enormously from overseas students coming to our universities—absolutely enormously. I go to the Gulf too often and to the Far East not to be startled by the people who are running things in those countries who came over here: they went to one of our schools, they went to one of our universities and they retain an affection for our country. The return in hard cash, let alone good will, for having the brightest and the best coming to spend some of their time in the British education system, and particular universities, is absolutely enormous. If that means easing the position on visas and helping the position on grants and encouraging scholarships and making it easier for foreign students to come here, it is in the interests of my children and my children’s children that we develop that. That is an absolutely key point to make.

The British Council also has a big role to play. I know we are running out of time so I will not elaborate on it. But, again, I am very conscious that when you talk of the BBC, universities and the British Council, you are talking money in stringent times. However, purely from the perspective of whether it is good for Great Britain, an enhancement of all those bodies is very much, in my judgment, good for Great Britain plc. You can say the same thing for UKTI.

**The Chairman:** Sir John, you have touched on a whole range of issues that are of huge interest to this Committee and you have cast light and wisdom, if I may say so, on a number of issues that are concerning us. We would like to go on for hours because we are dealing with huge areas of interest, but we cannot because we have a video coming in from America to tell us what the Americans are doing on soft power and what they think of us. We are delighted to thank you for your presence here, for the trouble you have taken in sharing your views with us, and to wish you well in the future.

**Sir John Major:** Thank you very much indeed.
The Concept of “Soft Power” and UK Influence

Abstract

There is everything to be said for adopting an inductive approach to the examination of the nature of "soft power", starting from the thought-provoking definitions employed by Professor Joseph Nye, and seeing where rigorous discussion fruitfully leads. A useful complementarity can be achieved by the adoption of deductive analysis, based on the experience of the vast expansion which has occurred in the notion of diplomacy. This suggests that in the twenty-first century almost any aspect of the national life can be relevant to the notion of soft power and to the enhancement of influence abroad. Especially is this the case with a country such as Britain, with its immensely wide and deep international involvement.

The best point of departure for an examination of “soft power” is an up-to-date definition provided by Professor Joseph Nye, the distinguished American academic and public servant who coined the concept some twenty years ago:

"fully defined, soft power is the ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes" (The Future of Power, p 21)

Such an absorbing definition does not beg a number of important questions so much as subsume them. That is not surprising. We are concerned with action, rather than contemplation, in a field of inquiry where the search for answers is almost essential to identifying the questions.

Nonetheless a supporting analytical framework has its uses. A rigorous description of what we do, and have done, in the management of our common affairs inevitably draws in its train questions of how we do it, and why we do it. How and why in turn feed back into what.

Like so many other issues in the public domain, “soft power”, however recent its seeming arrival on the international scene, has a long history. This memorandum surveys - in the bullet-point form which brevity demands -

(i) the widening over the years of the horizons of “diplomacy”;  
(ii) the transformation pari passu of the nature of diplomatic business;  
(iii) the broadly corresponding, yet much more rapid, evolution in the concept of “soft power” itself;  
(iv) the scope for mobilising UK soft power to enhance UK influence overseas; and  
(v) the positive-sum perspective on soft power
I  The widening of the concept of “diplomacy”.

The concept of diplomacy has developed spectacularly in the last hundred years in particular. It will continue to evolve in response to rapidly changing conditions:

- as originally conceived in the European nation state system which emanated from the end of the Thirty Years’ War, diplomacy was thought of as the art or the skill of those elite few who conducted, far from the public eye (and, in the public imagination, with a heady mixture of glamour and subterfuge), the occasional and very largely “political” business of one sovereign with another;
- since it is essentially a collective effort and not a matter of lone operators, the concept can easily be enlarged to refer to diplomats collectively, rather than to them individually, and hence to diplomatic apparatus and the diplomatic ambiance;
- it is equally natural to extend the definition to the manner in which the business is conducted: a classic definition of diplomacy is “the application of intelligence and tact to official relations between governments of independent states”;
- it is a further natural progression to a definition in terms of the conduct of business by negotiation (rather than by war, or shouting match, or by private or public posturing);
- it is a short step thereafter to the management of international relations, a more comprehensive notion which makes no distinction as to the manner in which, or to the method by which, the business is conducted;
- this can easily be thought of in the same context as the conduct of foreign policy;
- most comprehensively of all, diplomacy is often expanded to include the content of foreign affairs as a whole. In an interdependent world that is a vast subject.

Each of these definitions serves its purpose. All are in widespread current use, even if it is only from a study of the context that it becomes clear which of them is at issue.

II  Successive transformations in the character of diplomatic business

There have been similar developments in the substance of diplomatic business, as well as in the process by which it is handled. The two are, of course, inextricably mixed:

- an immense increase in the volume of business, as a reflection in particular of growing government management of the economy and world interdependence;
- a similar rise in non-governmental and public interest and involvement, as traditional society makes way, under the pressure of the information revolution, for modern times, and world interdependence is succeeded by the phenomenon of the global village;
- a basic change in the content of the business: values, as well as interests, are now at its core. Democracy and human rights have become central to international affairs;
- the consequent shift in the focus of international dealings from sovereigns to people, and from state sovereignty to the concept of the international responsibility to protect;
- the bitter experience of two World Wars, a mere generation apart, which has bred an overriding commitment to co-operate, and a commitment to avoid recourse to force. Both are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
- recognition of increasing difficulty in any case the deployment of hard power, which has to be distinguished from its significance as a credible threat.
To understand their significance for the management of international affairs today, these transformations need to be examined not only from the standpoint of their individual content, but also from that of their mutual relationship and their collective coverage.

III There has been a broadly corresponding evolution in the concept of soft power

Formulation of the concept of soft power has opened up something of a Pandora’s box. It most usefully encourages the study of links between phenomena previously regarded as unconnected:

- the concept could be said to have originated as an option for use instead of recourse to hard (military and economic) power;
- it naturally came to be used as describing the strategy involved in exercising that option;
- this inevitably encompasses examination of the wherewithal to implement the strategy, and the conditions in which implementation is most likely to be successful;
- this examination inevitably extends to the resources necessary to the successful implementation of the strategy, i.e. the ingredients of soft power;
- listing these ingredients has both objective and subjective elements: objectively it is necessary to be as clear as possible about what it is that others find attractive. This can be literally almost anything: animal, vegetable, mineral or abstract – the people and their disposition; their habitat and environment; their industrial and technological potential; and their ideas, creativity, culture, hospitality, language, institutions, history, tradition, humour, cohesiveness, dependability, steadfastness, and by no means least, their moral compass and the fundamental issue of faith;
- subjectively, the task may be to get others to take you at your own valuation of yourself, rather than at theirs. Those employing soft power need to be clear, moreover about the message they wish to convey, about how they can hope to gain the attention of the intended recipients, and about how far acceptance of the message may require of them a change of heart or opinion;
- drawing up a list of soft power ingredients which is anywhere near exhaustive is tantamount to writing a comprehensive guide book to the country as a whole. Virtually nothing can be dismissed as of no relevance, actual or potential, to the country’s soft power. Soft power in the international context comprises the total impact made on others. It is the country’s living international presence, of which official diplomatic representation is only a part, albeit an important one;
- soft power is thus everything except hard power when the latter is in use. It can, in effect, be described as “everything you are, except when you are attacking, threatening or bribing others”.

Emphasis on the comprehensive end of the spectrum of definitions of soft power outlined above in no way undermines the validity of the definitions at the narrower, more specific, end. They all peacefully, and usefully, co-exist.
IV Harnessing our soft power to increase our influence

It follows inevitably from the characteristics of soft power, as explored in this memorandum, that one needs to approach with an open mind the question of how to harness it to the national interest.

- every country has a distinctive soft power profile.
- the basic ingredient in profile, as suggested above, is presence, the automatic product of international involvement. In the case of the UK, continued extensive and intensive international involvement are essential to our chosen life style and way of earning a living. The more that involvement is seen by others to be constructive, the greater the influence its presence will automatically bring us;
- this automatic advantage is greatly strengthened by the adoption of regular official “programme” measures to increase our influence abroad, such as support of the British Council and the BBC Overseas Service;
- our influence is given coherence by firm statement of forward looking and outward looking statement of national purpose. The Coalition Government has been noteworthy for the clarity and comprehensiveness of its statements in this regard. Mr Cameron’s speech on June 10 at the London Gateway, under the title “Plan for Britain’s success is unquestionably one of the greatest Prime Ministerial utterances of recent years;
- government activity in promoting national influence overseas, whether by “programme” or by “project”, can usefully be disaggregated by sphere (United States, EU, Middle East, Commonwealth, United Nations system) or by sector (security, environment, human rights, development);
- a striking example of a “project” is the GREAT campaign launched by the Prime Minister in speech in New York on September 21, 2011, to promote Britain in the context of the Olympic and Paralympics Games. Our attractions, as listed in alphabetical order by the GREAT campaign, are countryside, creativity, entrepreneurs, “green”, heritage, innovation, knowledge, music, shopping, sport and technology. Creativity was judged to be primus inter pares.

The whole is greater than the sum of the parts. What we are, when we are at our un-self-conscious best, is our best advertisement: Shakespeare’s “happy breed”, the people of whom Goethe said that they had the courage to be what nature made them; the country of the Jublympics, inspired and drawn together by a matchless Monarchy.48

V A positive sum perspective on soft power

The temptation to make comparisons, on competitive and rivalry grounds, may be strong. However the soft power profile of each country is so individual that to contrast one with another has little practical value. Nonetheless it may have the indirect advantage of reminding us that the concept of soft power, in common with diplomacy, has its roots in a nation state system which pessimistically assumed a zero-sum relation between one country and another: one could only gain at the expense of another. It was thus a world for the pre-emptive strike, or for getting your retaliation in first. Soft power could be thought of as the fellow, rather than the antithesis, of hard power.

48 “Britain after the Jublympics”, The Round Table, the Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs (October 2013, Vol 102, no 5, pp 147-429)
The zero-sum approach was most clearly to be seen in the economic field. The doctrine of Mercantilism prevailed until the likes of Adam Smith and Ricardo showed that there was a better way of managing affairs, namely – by emphasising common interest and prompting enterprise and free trade. But they did not equate this with an uninhibited free-for-all. In 1759, seventeen years before “Wealth of Nations”, on the title page of which he is described as “formerly Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow”, Adam Smith published “The Theory of Moral Sentiments”. His fundamental doctrine was that all our moral sentiments arise from “sympathy”, which “leads us to enter into the situations of other men and to partake with them in the passions which those situations have a tendency to excite”.

Diplomacy did not really catch up with this enlightenment until the world had suffered two catastrophic World Wars, a mere twenty years apart. The centenary of the outbreak of the Great War is already pressing on us a poignant awareness of the ultimate futility of unconstrained hard power. The positive-sum international community came into existence under the United Nations Charter. With all its present problems and faults, it is a change very much for the better. We have learned the advantages of confronting our problems rather than one another.

It follows that we should be ready to think in terms of the deployment of soft power not simply against others, but also with them and for them. This opens up a fresh world of possibilities, in particular for the UK, with its immensely wide and deep international involvement. It highlights the importance of integrity, of dependability, of trust, of talking to, not at or past, one another. It reminds us that democracy is a system for counting heads rather than breaking them.

W S Gilbert, a shrewd observer if the British scene concludes his eccentric review of the Parliamentary system in Iolanthe by proclaiming that “it’s love that makes the world go round”.

October 2013
Jonathan McClory – Written evidence

Summary

This submission to the House of Lords Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK’s Influence, while submitted on behalf of the author alone, draws on research from the Institute for Government’s series of reports, The New Persuaders, which established the first methodology for measuring the soft power resources of countries through a composite index. This document provides evidence on the meaning of soft power, the UK’s soft power resources, target audiences, and the importance of networks in leveraging soft power.

Meaning and Importance of Soft Power

In international relations, power has traditionally been treated as a predominantly realist concept. Consequently, power tends to be framed in Dahlian terms: one actor using its material resources to compel another actor to do something it would otherwise not have done. But as International Relations studies evolved and expanded through the 20th century, competing schools of thought challenged the realist perspective and its rigid interpretation of power. This expansion, and the subsequent development of a diverse set of theoretical approaches, has led to an extremely competitive environment. Indeed, the study of International Relations can be viewed as a constant struggle between realism, liberalism and a host of other critical theories. Without wading too far into theoretical debate, it is important to note that no single definition of power will suit all purposes.

Accepting some level of ambiguity on the definition of power, it is important to establish a broader, more inclusive definition: power can be understood as influence over – as well as with – others. In terms of projection, we can divide power into two categories: hard and soft.

Hard power is the exercise of influence through coercion, relying on strategies like military intervention, coercive diplomacy, and economic sanctions. Soft power, on the other hand, is the “ability to affect others to obtain preferred outcomes by the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuasion and positive attraction”. Soft power strategies eschew the traditional foreign policy implements of carrot and stick, working instead to affect the preferences of other actors by using networks, developing and communicating compelling narratives, establishing international norms, building coalitions, and drawing on the key resources that endear one country to another. “Hard power is push; soft power is pull”. Ultimately, soft power is getting others to want what you want, and behaving accordingly.

Why is Soft Power Important?

International politics are in the process of a fundamental transformation, throwing up a host of new challenges for policy makers and diplomats. The global transition currently underway is being driven by five primary factors.

The first is the diffusion of power, which is happening on two fronts. Power is moving between states, meaning the global centre of power is drifting from West to East. At the same time, power is shifting away from states altogether, as non-state actors play more significant roles and wield greater influence in world affairs.\(^{56}\)

The second factor affecting international politics is the communications and IT revolution. The speed with which information is disseminated throughout the globe and the subsequent democratisation of access to that information creates a more informed – and increasingly activist – global public. The effects of this shift are demonstrated in the Arab Spring, the rise of Wikileaks, and the border-spanning #Occupy movement. The rapid movement of information across networks has made individuals more powerful than they have been at any point in history.\(^{57}\)

The third factor is the rising influence and prevalence of international networks. International networks may comprise a diverse set of actors including states, civil society groups, NGOs, multilateral organisations and even individuals. They may form to tackle complex, trans-national collective action problems like Climate Change, or take up single issues like banning landmines.

The fourth factor has been difficult for many foreign ministries to accept: propaganda as we know it is dead. Governments no longer have the luxury of offering domestic audiences one message whilst feeding another to the international community. With information speeding across borders, the inconsistencies between a state’s policy and messaging are more conspicuous. In today’s networked world of instant information, global publics are smarter, more engaged and likely to dismiss propaganda when they see it.\(^{58}\)

The final factor is the mass urbanisation of the world’s population. For the first time in human history the majority of people around the world live in cities. This trend will continue, and the proportion of people living in cities will march on. The process of global urbanisation has implications for how information is shared, the diffusion of technology, cross-pollination of ideas, innovation, and the development of political movements.

For HM Government, the above challenges are compounded by significant cuts in funding for virtually all of the public institutions that play a role in generating and projecting the UK’s soft power. This is worrying as the above trends will make the tools and approached of soft power more, not less, important to achieving foreign policy objectives, from security to prosperity.

The UK’s Soft Power Resources

The IfG Soft Power Index sets out a useful framework for understanding the resources that contribute to a state’s soft power. The framework groups these resources into five main categories:

- Political Values and Quality of Government
- Cultural Production
- Diplomacy
- Education
- Business Attractiveness and Innovation

The IfG framework captures the objective side of soft power resources, measuring things as diverse as the number of international students studying in a country to the number of multi-lateral organisations to which a country is a member.

The sources of soft power are still subject to academic debate, and will continue to be for the foreseeable future. However, what is most important when considering the factors that contribute to the soft power of the UK (or any country) is the extent to which they elicit a positive attraction.

Soft power resources are either inherently attractive in and of themselves, or serve to draw the positive attention of international audiences to a given country. With this in mind, the most important soft power resources at the disposal of the UK can be split into four groups according to their sources of funding, and (at least partially) the level of state control.

Publicly funded and state controlled resources include major institutions like the BBC World Service, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the Department for International Development.

Private sector resources include all those contributing factors existing outside of the state, which are far too numerous to list exhaustively. However, important examples include Britain’s creative industries, from art, film, and music, to architecture, design, and fashion. Major sporting institutions like the Premier League, as well as highly respected business brands like Rolls Royce.

Civil society organisations comprise the third group actors contributing to British soft power. Like the private sector group, civil society is extremely diverse, including a range of organisations from charities, NGOs, the religious community, through to cultural institutions and even trade unions. Some are obviously more international facing than others, but the whole of civil society is crucial source of soft power. As a point of comparison, China’s lack of a free and dynamic civil society is a soft power weak point juxtaposed with the UK.

The final group is an almost uniquely Western group of mixed-funded bodies. The British Council in some ways could be included, or the Arts Council. Even the UK’s esteemed universities could be included in this group. These are the bodies that benefit from some government funding but cannot rely exclusively on public funds, and enjoy some level of autonomy from government.

Fortunately for HM Government, the UK is amongst an elite group of states that manages to boast an impressive array of resources across these three groups, and across all five

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categories of the soft power framework set out above. The latest version of the IfG Soft Power Index scored the UK top overall, but it also placed in the top ten in four of the five sub-indices as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Diplomacy</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Business/Innovation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Norway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>UK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perhaps the UK’s greatest soft power strength is having achieved a balance of assets across all of the key contributing factors to soft power – whether they are derived from large, publicly funded institutions, or organisations that exist entirely outside of the government’s control.

Involving Non-State Actors in Soft Power

As outlined above and in the New Persuaders series, non-state actors have a significant role to play in the generation and leveraging of the UK’s soft power. For HM Government to maximise the potential non-state actors have to build Britain’s soft power, the most important thing they can do is to build a coalition that allows for meaningful communication and coordination. In doing so, listening to non-state actors is as important as instructing. The FCO have gone some way in doing this already. In 2011, the FCO formed an external panel under the Diplomatic Excellence programme, which is comprised of business leaders, other departments, universities, and NGOs. Such a structure provides a useful blueprint for how HM Government could build a meaningful coalition of non-state actors. In a country as large and complex as the UK, forming a coherent group of non-state actors for the purposes of generating and leveraging soft power is difficult, but it should be done in a structured, as well as adaptive, way.

Generating Soft Power Resources

In terms of generating – or consolidating – the UK’s soft power resources, the challenge is threefold. First, HM Government needs to think seriously about the implications of spending decisions on major soft power institutions and programmes. This includes things as diverse as funding for the BBC, which reaches an international audience of over 200 million people (unrivalled by any other state-funded broadcaster), through to Chevening Scholarships which bring future leaders to the UK to study.

This issue is not simply a question of Foreign Office budgeting, but a question of HM Government’s overarching priorities. It is an issue that can only be addressed through the comprehensive spending review process, and should involve a full appraisal of the UK’s international strategic objectives over the long term. While all areas of government are
facing a challenging fiscal context, the reduction of budgets in the key publicly funded soft power institutions of the UK should be cause for serious concern. Soft power is far easier lost than it is gained. In most cases chipping away at the key pillars of British soft power to derive short-term savings will likely prove a false economy in the long run.

While the first issue is a question of straightforward funding, the second challenge is building the best possible eco-system in which the non-state actors that contribute greatly to British soft power can thrive. This is a complex issue. It means looking carefully at a range of organisations and the challenges they face in meeting their objectives and reaching, attracting, and influencing international audience. It requires thinking about major cultural institutions, creative industries, universities, businesses, and NGOs in a comprehensive way. Dealing with this challenge alone could warrant its own separate line of enquiry.

The third challenge, political messaging and communication, is an area where HM Government have been disappointing ineffective and often contradictory. As the IfG Soft Power Index reports, the UK has a wealth of soft power resources at its disposal, but these resources do not exist in a vacuum. HM Government have given strangely conflicting messages around Britain being ‘open for business’ to the world, whilst at the same time delivering very heavy anti-immigration rhetoric. Moreover, the discouraging of international students could create long-term problems for the UK’s soft power – let alone the economic impact of fewer international students attending UK universities.

The complexity of these three challenges, and their importance to the UK’s future international influence – and by extension its security and prosperity – warrant a review similar in scope to the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review, but focused on diplomacy and soft power.

Target Audiences and Using Soft Power

The question, ‘who are the target audiences for the use of the UK’s soft power?’ depends on the objective at hand. The first step in the process of leveraging a state’s soft power is to ask, ‘what is the objective?’ Only with an answer to this first question, can a state begin to think about who the target audience should be.

There are some foreign policy objectives that lend themselves to a soft power approach and those that do not. Objectives where soft power is a viable approach tend to be large-scale, multilateral challenges. Examples include, dealing with climate change, non-proliferation efforts, trans-national health issues, etc. Moreover, issues that require setting new international norms, rules, or even creating new multi-lateral oversight bodies are especially amenable to the use of soft power. However, goals that tend to be self-motivated or involve direct conflict are often not going to be achievable through soft power.

If a given objective seems within reach through a soft power approach, then the question of what audiences should be targeted is likely to have several dimensions. The first is geographic. Depending on the target state, different soft power resources will create different reactions. The second is state vs. non-state. In some instances HM Government should directly target the government or elite decision makers, whereas other situations will require engaging more with non-state actors. The final dimension that bears consideration is temporal. Is the audience today’s decision makers, or future leaders?
Figure 1 below gives a simplified illustration of how soft power might be used to influence a state, and the audiences involved in leveraging that power. Again, depending on the given objective, the audience will differ, but a non-exhaustive list of potential audiences could include:

- Governments
- Multi-lateral organisations
- NGOs/Civil society groups
- Media
- International publics
- Business community
- Educational institutions
- Thought leaders/Opinion formers
- Think tanks

**Figure 1**

Leveraging soft power effectively is far more difficult than deploying hard power tactics. For governments to effectively leverage their soft power assets, they need first understand what exactly those assets are, whether they can be mobilised by the state, and – if so – where they might be deployed. Too often there is a rush to answer the question ‘how can we use our soft power?’ before understanding ‘what soft power do we actually have?’ I would argue that HM Government and the FCO have not yet gone through the process of understanding exactly what resources the UK has, where they are likely to be most effective, and how these resources can be matched up with the FCO’s objectives.

**Soft Power and Diplomacy**

The future of international influence rests in transnational networks. Power with other actors is becoming as important as power over them – and it is certainly more plausible to exercise power in such a way. The ability to build and mobilise networks of state and non-state actors towards the advancement of an objective is what will separate successful and unsuccessful states in the future of foreign policy. Being a central actor across multiple
networks allows the UK to shape the preferences, debate, procedures, rules, and ultimately outcomes of decisions that can only be taken multi-laterally.

Fortunately for HM Government, the UK is a very well networked state. Only France and the United States are members of more international organisations than the UK. Moreover, the Foreign Office’s diplomatic service is admired around the world, which is crucial to putting those networks to good use. Of the eighty multilateral organisations in which the UK is a participant, the EU is among, if not the most important, to the UK’s influence. Because the European Union has the potential to affect the full spectrum of British foreign policy goals, from prosperity to security, it should be seen as the UK’s most important multi-lateral membership – despite the tone of current domestic political debates.

The EU is a readymade network of like-minded countries that share the same values and often preferences, which means the UK is well placed to marshal EU states when required. The EU also serves as one of the best example of leveraging soft power over the long term. With the collapse of the iron curtain, the EU’s eastward expansion has been an incredible soft power victory, bringing the whole of Europe in line with a system of values, principles, and norms that uphold free markets, democracy, and individual liberty. Despite the Euro-crisis the EU still holds considerable power of attraction. The recent EU-Ukraine negotiations to establish an association agreement and free trade deal attest to the resilience of the EU’s soft power. That Ukraine has defied very stern warnings from Russia and looked to build better ties with Europe is a considerable victory for the EU, and by extension, the UK.

Another major multilateral organisation in the UK’s considerable cache of networks is the Commonwealth. Owing to its relatively low visibility, the Commonwealth is often overlooked and underestimated, but it is an important organisation and should be given higher priority by HM Government. While the Commonwealth holds a great deal of potential, it would be wrong to think of it as a potential replacement for Britain’s EU membership. Unlike the EU, Commonwealth members are an extremely diverse set of states, having achieved varying levels of development. Many subscribe to different values, priorities, and ambitions.

While HM Government should look to develop and better leverage its position in the Commonwealth, doing so is not a straightforward task. First and foremost, the Commonwealth needs to serve a greater purpose for its members. The Commonwealth can only be an effective body for influence if all members feel that it is a worthwhile forum with something positive to offer each state. As the natural – though unofficial – leader of the Commonwealth, the UK should devote more time and effort to establishing greater clarity of purpose to the Commonwealth. While the EU is one of the primary forums for developed economies, the Commonwealth could be used to help HM Government build better links and opportunities with emerging powers.

Britain’s status as an UNSC permanent member is indeed important, but as recent diplomatic failures over the Syrian civil war have shown, the diversity of countries and their subsequent interests make the UN a difficult forum to achieve foreign policy objectives. This is not to say it is impossible to achieve objectives in the UN, as the Arms Trade Treaty has shown.
Learning from Others

The exercise of soft power is often characterised by enthusiasm for the concept outpacing understanding of how to deploy it. This is true the world over. However, there are some examples of either generating or using soft power that serve as helpful case studies. While Switzerland has generally benefited from a positive international image, the country experienced a wave of negative sentiment in the late 1990s. Questions around Switzerland’s financial services industry with respect to transparency, assets held by dictators, and even questions over practices dating back to World War II led to a fall in the Alpine nation’s global image.

Switzerland’s response was the establishment of a programme called ‘Presence Switzerland’ in 2000, responsible for managing the Swiss image abroad. In response to the challenge faced, Switzerland did not opt for a short-term “fire-fighting” approach to crisis management public relations. On the contrary, Presence Switzerland was the implementation of enduring image cultivation over the longer term. The focus was directed towards the general dissemination of knowledge about Switzerland as well as the establishment and cultivation of relationship networks.60 Core to the programme was a process of ‘listening’ to international publics. Presence Switzerland made use of public polling to test their messaging and progress over the years, adjusting their approach in key countries as required.

China’s investment’s recent investment in public diplomacy and soft power has received a great deal of attention. China has established over 300 cultural institutes around the world in less than ten years. At the same time, China’s state-owned broadcaster, CCTV is launching an ambitious push into English-language markets, building new studios in Washington DC, Nairobi, and Europe.61 This investment has come off the back of a $9 billion injection of funds into public diplomacy projects in 2010. Recognising the need to counter the growing concerns around its meteoric economic rise, China is building the capability to project the best possible image to the world. While British soft power far outstrips Chinese, HM Government should take note of China’s investment in public diplomacy and image projection capacity.

Branding Emerging Powers

There has been growing interest in ‘nation branding’ in recent years amongst governments, researchers, and professionals. Increasingly, emerging powers are trying to shape a single narrative about their country. Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore all provide examples of trying to shape a single narrative and image for international audiences. For emerging powers, this is a viable option to boost soft power, but is usually pursued to increase foreign direct investment and tourism – rather than achieving specific foreign policy goals. Because there is often an information deficit about them, emerging powers are able to launch new campaigns aimed at raising awareness and cultivating a specific image.

For developed powers, however, this is much more difficult. International publics often have pre-conceived notions of major powers like the UK, and shifting those perceptions can be difficult. While it is important for the UK’s international communications to be coherent and

consistent across departments and agencies, the benefits of a ‘branding campaign’ for Britain should be viewed with some level of caution. For a nation with an already high visibility, actions will speak much louder than advertisements.

September 2013
Jonathan McClory, Agnès Poirier and Professor Simon Anholt – Oral evidence (QQ 200-217)

Jonathan McClory, Agnès Poirier and Professor Simon Anholt – Oral evidence (QQ 200-217)

Transcript to be found under Professor Simon Anholt in Volume I (page 68)
Lord Moynihan, former Chairman, British Olympic Association, Premier League and England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) – Oral evidence (QQ 274-291)

Transcript to be found under England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) in Volume 1 (page 361)
National Asian Business Association – Written evidence

1.0 This submission is on behalf of the NABA, an umbrella body representing the following British Asian business organisations:
   LABA – Leicestershire Asian Business Association
   ABDN- Asian Business Development Network (Yorkshire)
   IAB – Institute of Asian Businesses – Birmingham
   HABA- Hertfordshire Asian Business Association
   BABA – Bedfordshire Asian Business Association
   BACBA- Black Country Asian Business Association – Dudley
   NeABA- Newcastle Asian Business Association
   ABA – Asian Business Association – London
   YABA – Yorkshire Asian Business Association (Leeds)

1.2 NABA welcomes the House of Lords Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK’s Influence review. The British Asian communities have a significant business, cultural and educational traction with the Indian subcontinent, East and Central Africa, the Middle East and the United States. In times of austerity and a multimedia driven globalised world the British Asian communities are keen to be active citizens in leveraging soft power advantage for the United Kingdom.

2.0 The caveats

2.1 The Paradigm shift:

2.2 British Asian communities are fully integrated British Citizens, whose loyalty and commitment to a prosperous and dynamic United Kingdom remains steadfast.

2.3 Recent Economic challenges have changed the nature and scope of UK’s soft power engagement. Rebuilding and re-calibration of this will require a wider involvement of diverse British citizens.

2.4 The British Asian communities have a pool of leaders who are already leveraging comparative soft advantage for the UK. Most of them operate in isolation or with tokenistic recognition by government departments, the corporate world and institutions.

2.5 Whilst the representation of British Asian communities at Westminster has been progressive in both Houses; this is still in its infancy. This needs to be improved by encouraging leadership in public appointments based on merit.

2.6 Overseas visits by Ministers, Peers and Members of Parliament to enhance trade, inward investment and research links are useful and important. However, legacy based follow up after the visit, or maintaining a long term relationship, cannot be sustained by the government apparatus alone. It needs a wider shared ownership, and the opportunity to further enhance the relationship.
2.7 The openness and inclusion of British society presents us all in a beneficial light. But British nature being what it is – modest to the point of self-deprecation- is challenged by over-burdened orthodox diplomacy. This is coupled with a very real perception by many British Asians that upper echelons of diplomacy, trade and inward investment promotion are in narrow established hands, for whom diversity in Britain has only comparatively recently been accepted as relevant. This notion needs to be resolved as the centre of economic gravity moves from the West to the East.

3.0 The Key issues:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How does a nation’s soft power relate to how it trades?</th>
<th>In a world of choice, 24/7 multimedia, niche based communication platforms a nation is judged and valued in real-time values (RTV). RTV’s bear no context to historic values. Entrepreneurs should heed this cogent argument. Respect is earned and lost on our actual and perceived values.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Given the UK’s soft power resources, should UK companies be doing better at engaging with new markets?</td>
<td>One of the most powerful inside tracks in terms of soft power for new markets rests among British citizens who have family, culture, religious, entertainment, arts, and trade and investment links with new markets. Tap into this synergy and UK will have a powerful comparative advantage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the advantage of being a British company, if there is one?</td>
<td>The main advantage of any British company is that it is run under an open and transparent regulatory frame-work with world class checks and balances. Whilst over regulation is a burden, Better Regulation is United Kingdom’s real Unique Selling Proposition (USP). That is the reason why British products and services are valued overseas. This USP has to be maintained and exploited; as it will be subject to competition like any other commodity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do companies from other countries want to invest in the UK?</td>
<td>NABA’s core mission remains to promote United Kingdom as the best place in the world to do business with and invest in. The reasons the world wants to invest in the UK are because they share or would like to share our democracy, language, sense of humour, sports, culture, values, courtesy, integrity, charity and consideration for the needs of others. Overseas companies having social, academic and cultural links to the UK will naturally feel comfortable in investing in the UK. The challenge that faces UK is whether we have the prerequisite soft power to remain in the first league for inward investment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do British laws, standards and values help or hinder companies working abroad, or inward investment?</td>
<td>Better Regulation is and will remain the United Kingdom’s real Value Proposition. This USP needs to evolve in the context of a competitive world. Britain has historically led in Law-making, standards and values. However these attributes need re-burnishing, especially in a global and competitive market. Consolidating our previous USP with World Class models and frameworks will once again give United Kingdom soft power lead in academia, training, governance, professional networks and engagement with new and emerging markets. This will also add real soft power values leading to inward investment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the Government doing everything they could to make it an advantage to be a British company, and to make investing in the UK attractive?</td>
<td>Whilst significant progress has been made in the UK and at British Missions abroad for supporting British companies to export; NABA’s advocacy to all the political parties still remains – that the support for export and international trade and inward investment ought to be a legacy based core government function and not outsourced. The BBC, the British Council, BIS, FCO and UKTI still lack any Non-Executives or senior policy input from the British Asian communities. NABA’s recommendation to the House of Lords Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK’s Influence is that this challenge needs to be rectified. NABA is relatively new to engaging with government and with select committees at Westminster, and welcomes a two way dialogue with the government, the opposition and the senior civil servants rolling out policies and programmes on international trade and inward investment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the Government do things that make it less of an advantage to be a British company, or less attractive to invest in the UK, do they give due consideration to those consequences?</td>
<td>The US Department of Commerce and in particular, its agency for minority businesses MBDA (<a href="http://www.mbda.gov">www.mbda.gov</a>) has several decades of experience of best practice in involving policy level engagement with the Minority business communities in the US. NABA has a long-standing links with MBDA and would welcome UK government support to disseminate relevant MBDA best practices in the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are other countries doing this better?</td>
<td>The key recommendation of the NABA in this submission is to engage British Asian businesses at a senior level in government and institutional organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can the UK mobilise its soft power resources to boost trade with other countries and foreign direct investment in the UK?</td>
<td>The Media is key to utilising soft power and can boost trade links between the UK and abroad. This is also reinforced by previous comments of the lack of real racial diversity in our boardrooms. The media industry is the most vivid and prescient way of illustrating the concept of “soft power”, especially in this digital age. A Holy Grail for many broadcasters is racial diversity. The Creative Industries in this country have been wrestling with the paradox for generations: why is it that when one in eight Britons is non-white,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Could soft power resources and relationships be used to influence key participants in the negotiation and rule-making of the international trade order?

only one Fleet Street editor Amol Rajan, is of colour and not one real decision maker in broadcasting is of Black Minority Ethnic origin?

The question arises: should the BBC, paid for by the public, lead the way? And if we accept this premise, then why is it failing so badly in our opinion?

Using the Freedom of Information Act, a recent study at the University of Lincoln discovered that:

i) Over a decade from 2000, when the then Director-General Greg Dyke admitted his organisation was “hideously white”, to 2010 the total proportion of BMEs in BBC News rose from 8.2% to 9.7%. That’s 1.5% in ten years.

ii) Over that same period, BBC News promoted just three people of colour to Senior Management positions out of ninety posts. The BBC argues that this is because it is in a period of retrenchment. Even so, in our view it shows how little the BBC is willing to share its power and with whom.

The BBC’s own figures show that there is no real critical mass to get BMEs to positions of real influence: an examination of the grades below Senior Management level shows that as of the 31st of December 2010, only 30 out of 500 staff had any chance of becoming people of influence according to our assessment.

NABA’s investigation shows that in the Asian Network, as an example, there is not one single Asian in its senior management team. Little wonder then that it often misses the mark when covering South Asian stories and producing content which have a wider appeal to its market. The message that the BBC sends, we feel, is that it does not have any Asians worthy of leading a station short listed this year for the Radio Academy Awards as station of the Year.

The BBC will point to Mishul Husain, George Alagiah, Clive Myrie, Matthew Amroliwala and other front line staff. To us this seems like window dressing. Unlike America, presenters do not make editorial decisions and have no power, soft or hard.

How are UK values (democracy, rule of law, ‘fairness’) embedded in trade rules?

The need for a natural link between our national values and trade has been made throughout this submission.

Could these values be promoted in a way that could influence

The challenge, which is attainable, needs diversity in its formulation, promotion and roll-out.
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National Museum Directors’ Council – Written evidence

This submission is made by the National Museum Directors’ Council (NMDC). The NMDC represents the Directors of the UK’s national and leading regional museums and collections. For a full list of NMDC’s members, please see www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/members.

1 Summary
NMDC welcomes the House of Lords review of soft power and the UK’s influence overseas, and is keen to take the opportunity of the Committee’s Call for Evidence to provide Lords with information about the contribution made by the UK’s national and larger regional museums.

The international work of the UK’s national and leading regional museums and collections contributes to the UK’s soft power ability and influence overseas. It creates channels of communication, a positive impression and the conveying of different perspectives which may not be achieved through more conventional forms of diplomacy. The position of UK museums as working at arms-length from the Government allows them to create mutually beneficial relationships and build trust based on commonalities between institutions rather than them being viewed as a centrally-controlled arm of Government.

International activity can take many forms, and many of the UK’s larger museums have long-held international links derived from the focus of their collections, their expertise, their audience or location. Loans, academic study, acquisitions, peer support, special exhibitions, research, staff exchanges and maintenance of the permanent galleries all provide the means by which international links develop. Although there will be periods when the partnerships focus on high profile projects, the relationships are sustained by ongoing less publicly visible activity.

However, museums find it challenging to embark on this sort of valuable work without seed funding, and the impact of recent public funding cuts mean that there are both fewer sources of external funding and less core funding which can be used for this purpose. The Government should consider building on the excellent work of the World Collections Programme and Stories of the World by making funding available to broker the international work of national and leading regional museums in support of the GREAT campaign. Furthermore, the visa regime can sometimes prove restrictive as museums seek to invite leading artists, curators, research and administrators to visit and work with their institutions.

2 Soft Power
Soft power is the influence achieved through activities which are not formally organized by Government. These activities are those where there are likely to be more immediate purposes, such as the organisation and delivery of a major sporting or cultural event. Exercising soft power is to work with a larger audience and seek attitudinal change over a longer period of time. Genuinely collaborative and independent cultural activity makes a significant contribution to a nation’s soft power, as does tourism and science. Soft power is also the result of long-term sustained engagement, although relationships may include periods of very high profile activity.
The healthy and vibrant relationship between UK museums and their Russian counterparts demonstrates the ability of museums to be able to good working relationships when more formal channels of communication face greater challenges. There is a long-standing relationship between Russian museums and their UK counterparts and the basis of this is derived from the similarities between collections. 2014 will see the UK/Russia Year of Culture, which is being organized by the British Council. The highlight of this will be the major Cosmonauts exhibition at the Science Museum, which is only possible because of the large number of partnerships the museum has been able to develop with Russian organisations including the Museum of Cosmonautics (Moscow), Polytechnic Museum (Moscow), Moscow Aviation Institute, Roscosmos, Russian Ministry of Culture, British Embassy and British Council Russia.

Cosmonauts is just one of a number of reciprocal exhibitions that have entertained and informed audiences in the UK and Russia recently. Royal Museums Greenwich also worked with British Council Russia and Rocosmos to relocate the statue of Yuri Gargarin to the Royal Observatory; the National Portrait Gallery’s Man Ray exhibition (which also featured works from the National Galleries of Scotland collection) will tour to the Pushkin Museum in 2013; Tate’s touring exhibition Pre-Raphaelites, including loans from Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery (9 artworks), Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums and Manchester City Gallery, also toured to the State Pushkin Museum, Moscow; the National Museums Scotland exhibition Arctic Convoys at the National War Museum included a number of loans from Russian collections; and the Museum of London has an MoU with the Moscow City Museum. The V&A’s partnership with the Kremlin Museums has seen The Magnificence of the Tsars and Treasures of the Royal Courts come to London, and the 2010 exhibition Diaghiliev: The Golden Age of the Ballet Russes led to a new relationship with the Ekaterina Foundation. To illustrate the reciprocal nature of cultural agreements, the V&A toured two exhibitions to Moscow in 2008 and 2011 respectively: Two Centuries of British Fashion and Decode.

The V&A has long-standing relationships with academics, curators, museums, art galleries and heritage bodies across China. These relationships have developed from work on their Asian collections and have been sustained by academic collaboration and staff exchange. This basis of trust and understanding has formed the bedrock from which higher profile projects have then developed. These have included the 2008 China Now exhibition at the V&A, several touring exhibitions (such as Olympic Posters) to venues in China, a joint British Museum/V&A/National Museum of China porcelain exhibition in Beijing in 2012 as part of the UK Now season and, most recently, the V&A Splendours exhibition at the Palace Museum. This latter exhibition demonstrated the value of the V&A’s long-term engagement in China (and similarly India) when it provided the opportunity to bring together Chinese officials and the Indian and UK Ambassadors to China. Furthermore, the level of trust and recognition of the V&A in China is now such that it was able to host the People-to-People dialogue in 2012 and they are now regularly approached by Chinese museum developer for advice, guidance and consultancy services (which are offered on a commercial basis).

Science is an important part of soft power. The Natural History Museum employs 300 scientists and is one of the world’s leading research institutions. Their collection, including the vast reference collection, enables them to develop relationships with universities, research institutions, museums and government bodies across the world as they work on research which allows for better understanding of the natural world and human interaction with it. Examples include the study of biodiversity in Borneo pests and insect-borne diseases.
using specimens of the Brazilian blood-sucking blackfly. Similarly, National Museum Wales has led the study of Molluscan Biodiversity in East Africa, whilst the Wallace Collection has been part of an international research project studying the metallurgy of steel using their Asian arms collection.

3 International Development
There is a role for culture, and museums in particular, in international development. Although the recognition of the role of culture in the development of major bilateral partnerships with rapidly growing economies and new tourism markets has been recognized by the UK Government and reflected in their political and diplomatic support for specific activities and the inclusion of museum directors in ministerial delegations, the role of culture in international development is not acknowledged to the same extent. Nevertheless, the impact of such activity is remarkable as it is another method of demonstrating soft power.

One area of UK Government which has supported international development via museum activity is the Scottish Executive via their provision of funding for collaborative activity between National Museums Scotland and the National Museum of Malawi. Malawi is the Scottish Government’s priority country for international development and consequently supports a wide range of collaborative activity. The museums programme, called Museums As Agents of Change, initially focused on bicentenary of the birth of David Livingstone and developed from National Museums Scotland’s desire to mark this with an exhibition, David Livingstone, I presume? However, the project developed into something much wider and mutually beneficial than a loan agreement to borrow objects from Malawi and now includes ongoing staff exchange, a reciprocal exhibition about David Livingstone in Malawi, research by National Museums Scotland with source communities and the provision of museums skills training for staff in Malawi (including of scarce skills such as taxidermy). Museums are consequently a central part of the international development work of the Scottish Executive, and could provide a model for DFID to consider in England.

Some national museums have undertaken work which should be considered as international development, although this becomes increasingly difficult with cuts to core funding which may have previously covered some of the initial costs. Where third parties have helped broker this work museums have been able to play a significant role. The V&A worked in partnership with British Council Libya to mount the first exhibition in Benghazi since the revolution in April 2012. The exhibition, Street Art from the V&A and Libya featured works by Libyan street artists as well as works from the V&A collection by internationally re-known street artists such as Banksy. Exploring the visual language and techniques of street art, the exhibition also examined the social and political significance that the work holds. As a vibrant visual expression and democratic language, street art in Libya has flourished since the Arab Spring and revolution in 2011. The spontaneity and immediacy of street art has allowed artists to articulate opinions outside the conventional channels of political debate.

Similarly, both the British Museum and British Library used their long-held academic relationships with colleagues in Iraq to maintain contact and support throughout the period of British Army deployment in the country. Very small amounts of funding from DCMS allowed both institutions to provide support in the form of training, advice and equipment. The British Museum continued to develop relationships with archaeologists and museum directors in Iraq and, from 2008 worked closely with the British Army stationed in Basra to
conduct archaeological site evaluations and work on the long-term re-development of a museum in Basra as part of the post-conflict regeneration.

4 Impact of digital technology and rapid global change

Soft power is more important in an increasingly digitally connected world. Mass communication is quicker and less centrally controlled than ever before. The proliferation of smartphone technology and social media, and the vast increase in digital content have fundamentally changed the way in which people find out about the world. Museums have embraced this and they now welcome far more visitors online each year than they could ever accommodate if they came over the museum threshold. Major museums’ websites provide layers of interpretation for the collection and ways in which the online visitor can engage independently or as a group. The entire National Gallery collection is available to view online, as is a 360 degree tour of 18 of their galleries. Both the V&A and Tate operate their own online channels through their websites, with constantly updated digital output about special exhibitions and the permanent collections. Imperial War Museums (IWM) has recently launched Lives of the First World War, which is an interactive digital platform to bring together material from museums, libraries, archives and family collections from across the world together in one place to build a permanent digital memorial to those who served in uniform and worked on the home front during the First World War and a means to explore their stories.

Museums have embraced social media and taken this beyond utilizing it for just domestic marketing. The IWM and Royal Museums Greenwich Twitter feeds both have “on this day” features which link to historic stories with a connection to their collections. Museums across the world, including a large number from the UK, sign up to #askacurator day where Twitter users are able to ask questions of curators from over 300 museums in 32 countries.

The way people engage with cultural activity has changed markedly, and so has exposure to different forms of cultural exchange. Audiences are not passive recipients of museum activity, and experiencing the cultural output of another country or culture is no longer the preserve of an elite few. Fuelled by social media, the internet, smartphone technology, rolling news and more accessible international travel, cultural exchange is more immediate than ever before. Areas of the world with rapid economic, social and political change are now familiar and visible to a UK audience, making the UK public more curious about their culture, history and heritage. The reverse is also true – in countries where UK museums have not historically had an audience, UK museums are building partnerships with organisations.

A number of UK museums are developing partnerships with Brazilian organisations and focusing some of their programming on the culture and history of Brazil. In the presence of the Brazilian President, the Science Museum Group signed an agreement to work with the Ministry of Culture in Brazil to provide advice and content for a network of Science Museums in Brazil. Tate has a long-standing partnership with Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo which informs their acquisition of Latin American art, prompts staff exchanges and reciprocal loans including for the forthcoming Mira Schendel exhibition at Tate Modern. In 2013, the Horniman Museum in South London hosted a season of Brazilian films and an
exhibition, *Amazon Adventure*, about the natural environment of the River Amazon, and the Natural History Museum held a large retrospective of the work of Brazilian landscape. UK museum professionals will travel to Brazil in the Autumn with the British Council as part of a large programme of activity designed to encourage greater collaboration and cultural exchange between Brazil and the UK.

5 The unique position of UK museums: collections and expertise

The objects in museums’ collections tell stories about people, places, nature and thought. The stories told by these objects, brought to life by their study and display, help more easily explore common themes and threads through history and relate these to the present day. Some of the most comprehensive and internationally significant collections of natural history, ethnography, social history, technology, art, literature and design are held by UK museums. The stories these museums tell are world stories. Consequently, to maintain their international pre-eminence, national and major regional museums have to maintain high standards of scholarship, collections care, visitor experience and engagement, and display. To do this, these larger museums have to work with their international counterparts.

The recent success of projects such as the Fitzwilliam Museum exhibition *Search for Immortality: Treasures of Han Tombs* (the largest loan of treasures from the Han tombs to a Western institution), Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums’ partnership with the Nelson Mandela Bay Museums, and the *We Face* Forward festival of West African art and music at the Whitworth Gallery and Manchester Museum demonstrates that this sort of international activity is now part of the business of leading regional museums as well as very large nationals. Museums loan and borrow thousands of objects every year from institutions overseas. In 2011-12, Tate lent 516 works to 132 venues in 25 countries.

The collections provide the reason to build international networks. Piri Reis University, Istanbul have set up an international association for maritime studies – with 20 founding members from different countries and an agreed constitution. The National Maritime Museum is one of the founding members. Organisers will hold a biennial congress, publish research about Mediterranean history and set up an online network. Beamish is a member of a European network of open air museum and a number of large national museums are members of the international Bizot Group of major international museums.

Conservation of objects and the sharing of expertise is the life-blood of long-term partnerships between UK museums and institutions with like interests across the world, and because of the diversity and quality of museums’ collections the breadth and geographical reach of these partnerships is substantial. The RAF Museum is involved in joint aircraft restoration programmes in New Zealand and Eritrea. The latter is a tripartite project with the Italian Air Force Museum.

Museums with an international collection seek to develop good relationships with source communities to ensure that the objects are handled sensitively and that a body of knowledge is developed about them. Brighton Museums work closely with communities in Myanmar (Burma) and Papua New Guinea, Bristol Museums and Art Gallery is working with Museo Nacional de Antropología on Mexican objects in the Bristol collection, and *Across the Board* is a Tate-wide initiative to deepen their engagement with art in Africa. This will include performances, seminars, conferences and events in London, Lagos, Accra and Douala, and will be supported by acquisitions and two exhibitions in Tate galleries: *Ibrahim El Salahi* and *Meschac Gaba* (all 2013).
6 Impact

Good but less formal relationships developed or sustained through cultural activity can create a positive context within which more formal trade relationships can flourish. The UK has been ranked 3rd in the world for cultural resources by the World Economic Forum. The British Council reports *Trust Pays* and *Culture Means Business* demonstrate the impact of cultural activity, and there are many examples of high profile cultural exchange between museums in countries and regions where more formal channels of communication face greater challenges.

Museums are uniquely able to present objects and exhibitions in a contemplative environment, allowing visitors to explore their own culture, history and identity, as well as that of those they see as “other”. The central position of Imperial War Museums in the UK’s commemoration of the First World War, and their ability to have encouraged more than 400 UK and international organisations to join their First World War Centenary Partnership, demonstrates this and the trust placed in these institutions.

An important part of UK museums’ international work is the impact on the domestic audience as museums seek to be the place to explore the world around them. The involvement of British troops in Afghanistan has made the UK audience more familiar with that country than previously. The British Museum, Tate and the British Library used the World Collections Programme funding to develop public programming for both UK and Afghan audiences which looked at ancient, historic and contemporary Afghanistan and drew links through periods of history. *Afghanistan: Crossroads of the Ancient World* at the British Museum in 2010 proved to be very popular as audiences wanted to explore the ancient history of Afghanistan and see the ancient gold treasures protected by museum professionals at the National Museum in Kabul from the Taliban. At the same time, Tate commissioned photographer Simon Norfolk to conduct workshops with young photographers in Afghanistan as they sought to recreate the 19th century photographs taken by John Burke (which are in the collection of the British Library). The resulting exhibition, *Burke + Norfolk*, was mounted in Kabul and at Tate Modern. The third element of the project was a British Library exhibition of the reproductions of the John Burke photographs staged in Kabul and Herat (and visited by thousands of Afghans). That exhibition was accompanied by a catalogue (printed in English, Dari and Pashtu) which was sent to educational establishments in Afghanistan. In each case, the seed funding provided by the World Collections Programme then levered in additional support from various sources including Bank of America, British Embassy in Kabul and the Aga Khan Foundation.

It is also important that museums’ international work filters into work in local communities. The National Media Museum in Bradford holds an annual International Film Festival, and in 2013 this coincided with their showcase of *One Hundred Years of Indian Cinema*. The museum works with local Asian communities on public programming for the festival, but also hosts English classes for local Pakistani immigrants.

7 Trust and Reach

Museums’ international activity, including extensive programmes of touring exhibitions and partnerships, raise the profile not only of individual museums and collections but the UK as a whole. Research by the British Council demonstrates that international cultural
relationships build trust in the UK and are associated with increased levels of interest in visiting the UK as a tourist, studying here or doing business with the UK.\footnote{Trust Pays: how International cultural relationships build trust in the UK and underpin the success of the UK economy, British Council, 2012.}

The unique position of the UK cultural sector as a trusted broker was illustrated by the Culture Ministers’ Summit in 2012. The event, co-organised by the Scottish Executive, DCMS and the Edinburgh International Festival, was an opportunity for culture ministers from across the world to meet and discuss international collaboration against the backdrop of an internationally re-known event. The Summit dinner was held at the National Museum of Scotland and was an opportunity to showcase not just the international work of the museum, but the refurbished building, remarkable collection and provide an opportunity for staff to meet officials from across the world.

Our leading museums work with press agencies around the world to promote their exhibitions. The Natural History Museum’s Veolia Environment Wildlife Photographer of the Year Exhibition consistently has a wide international media reach. The 2011/12 campaign attracted approximately 93 articles internationally, in addition to over 200 in the UK. The 2012 exhibition was featured in press articles in Russia, Brazil, USA, China, India and France. A feature on BBC TV World News was broadcast in South East Asia, India, Pakistan, Europe and North and South America, and an interview with the competition winner, Paul Nicklen on BBC World Service Outlook radio programme reached 145 million listeners across the world, sparking particular interest across North America.

The British Museum’s collaboration with the BBC on the radio series *A History of the World in 100 Objects* has raised the profile of the museum around the globe. There have been over 30 million international downloads of the programme and the book has been sold in 12 countries including France, Germany, Spain, Russia, China and India. The British Museum estimates that the series brought an additional 266,000 visits to the Museum in 2010.

The British Museum sent 13 exhibitions on tour to 9 countries in 2012 including the USA, China, India and Russia. When the British Museum borrowed high profile objects from Xi’an for the hugely successful *First Emperor* exhibition (2007) and took their touring exhibition *Britain Meets the World* to Beijing in the same year, there was a noticeable increase in visitors to the British Museum from East Asia: there was much greater awareness of the British Museum brand in China.

### 8 Funding

The World Collections Programme, Stories of the World and specific programmes coordinated by the British Council and the London 2012 Festival all show the impact that can be achieved by the national and leading UK museums with comparatively modest seed funding from the public purse. Many of the activities – including *We Face Forward* and *In Search of Immortality* – were part of the Stories of the World programme. Tate’s programme in Africa, now supported by Guaranty Bank Trust was initiated using World Collections Programme funding, as was the collective work in Afghanistan, the British Museum International Training Programme (now also independently funded and involving seven regional museums) and the V&A’s initial touring exhibition to venues in India, *Life and Landscapes*. An impact of the recent public funding cuts may be that, as the cuts take effect,
museums have to be more selective about the international work they undertake focusing more on less challenging or commercial activity.

The UK Government has invested in the GREAT campaign, and this investment in the positive legacy of the London Olympics is welcome. Nevertheless, the most effective advertisement for British culture is the cultural activity itself and seed-funding the sort of activity which the World Collections Programme and Stories of the World enabled would support the aims of the GREAT campaign.

Museums have to be more selective about their international work, and increasingly rely on external funding to be able to deliver this activity. They may narrow their focus on income generating international work such as commercial touring and consultancy. Whilst the largest national museums, such as the British Museum, may attract private investment in their international activities, it is far more difficult for museums outside of London to raise funds in this way (as recently published statistics from Arts & Business illustrate).

9 Tourism
Museums and galleries are the UK’s most popular visitor attractions. There are over 50 million visits a year to national museums alone, and over half of the UK’s adult population visited a museum or gallery in 2012. Museums are at the heart of the UK’s cultural offer which is frequently cited as the main reason to visit. UK museums lend high profile objects or complete touring exhibitions to venues in all of VisitBritain’s top 20 markets for projected growth (2011–2020). The cities where UK museums exhibit, lecture and collaborate with artists are no longer just in their familiar regions of North America and Western Europe, but in Kuala Lumpur and Kobe, Moscow and Mumbai, and Riyadh and Rio de Janeiro. International visits to the UK’s leading museums have almost doubled in the past decade. Museums’ international touring exhibitions and loans ensure familiarity with those institutions and their collections in both established and growing overseas tourist markets.

Overseas visits to national museums have increased by 95% in the past decade, with over 19 million overseas visits in 2011/12. Museums are a key strength for the UK’s international brand and a motivator to visit, and are a popular activity for both domestic and international visitors. The Natural History Museum recorded a 234,000 increase in overseas visits in 2011/12, compared to 2010/11. The museum has seen a significant rise in international visitors over the past 5 years. The largest growth in numbers has come from Europe but it is clear new markets are also opening up. Visitors from Africa, Asia, South and Central America increased from 6% of overseas visits in 2010/11 to 11% in 2011/12. This trend is not just restricted to London. The Wordsworth Trust, which runs Dove Cottage in Grasmere, makes special provision for Japanese visitors and overseas visitors accounted for 25% of their visitors between April and July 2013.

USA, Commonwealth and the EU
The commonalities of history, collections and language can make it easier to establish relationships with institutions within the Commonwealth. UK museums relationships with Indian institutions have been eased by some of the familiarities of the Commonwealth, and

63 Visitors from overseas made over 18.7m visits to the 17 museums sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2011-12. Overseas visits to these museums have increased by 95% over the past decade, from 9.6m in 2001-2. Overseas visitors also make a significant number of visits to our national museums in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and to those sponsored by the Ministry of Defence.
64 Culture and Heritage Topic Profile, VisitBritain, 2010
the forthcoming commemoration of the First World War has shown that the common understanding of networks like the Commonwealth and the EU allows for a less polarized study of history. Bristol Museums and Art Gallery is using the Commonwealth as the basis for a major exhibition in 2014, *Global Conflict*, and in doing so are building relationships with organisations for loans and research.

The European Union creates a helpful structure within which to engage internationally, provide funding and some common understanding. The visa regime between members of the EU also helps to deliver museum activity, and in contrast with the difficulties some museums face in securing visas and work permits for the overseas visitors, artists, curators and staff required to run pre-eminent institutions. The challenges that the visa regime presents is one barrier to museums being able to engage in some international activity.

The area with which there is greatest exchange between museums is the United States, and this is likely to be driven by similar histories and collections, a common language and the familiarity with each museum sector.

**Universities**

UK museums work closely with UK universities and there are hundreds of research and teaching partnerships in place. Many of these have international dimensions. City museums which are located close to a university tend to develop good relationships, such as that which exists between the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Exeter University. University museums are able to seek the benefits of the wider international relationships their parent body develops whilst also maintaining some of the UK’s leading collections. Universities are also sometimes the most appropriate partner for major research projects. Royal Museums Greenwich is working with the University of Cambridge on a 5-year joint AHRC-funded research project on Longitude. Whilst the main partners are UK based, this project is of global significance. One outcome of the partnership has been a fully digitised archive of the Board of Longitude papers and wider collections material. This information is now *electronically available* for the benefit of scholars and researchers across the world.

**Devolved Administrations**

It would be helpful if there was a more co-ordinated or joined-up approach with the devolved administrations. It is important to be able to maintain different but complementary narratives for Scotland, Wales, NI and England. That diversity is one of the attractions of the UK and would assist Government moves to encourage investment and tourism beyond London.

September 2013
Dr Robin Niblett, Chatham House – Written evidence

Soft power, Hard foundations:
The future of the UK’s International Influence

Chatham House (the Royal Institute of International Affairs) is a world-leading source of independent analysis, informed debate and influential ideas on how to build a prosperous and secure world for all. The institute is an independent body which promotes the rigorous study of international questions and does not express opinions of its own. The opinions in this submission are the responsibility of the author.

Summary

1. This submission assesses the extent to which the UK’s soft power will enable it to exert influence within a changing international context, and examines some ways in which UK soft power could be enhanced. I argue that soft power is a core aspect of Britain’s international influence, but that it does not exist distinct from more traditional sources of power. Rather, it is built upon them.

2. This submission will deal principally with the relationship between the UK’s traditional sources of international influence and its soft power. The submission explores the economic, multilateral and non-state aspects of Britain’s soft power.

3. Britain has the potential to retain its capacity to enhance its international influence through soft power, even though it faces a number of near-term challenges. In order to live up to its potential, Britain’s leaders must concentrate on three priorities.

4. The first is to ensure that the UK sets its economy on a path to sustainable and productive growth. Without a strong economic base, Britain’s many attributes for international influence as well as its power of attraction will begin to erode.

5. Second, the UK will need to leverage its national and diplomatic strengths more proactively and challenge the status quo more frequently if it is to be influential in promoting its values and interests. Britain’s proactive role within the key institutions and relationships that helped promote its interests over the past sixty is a central pillar of its soft power, but that position is now more precarious than ever. In this context, leaving the EU would represent the greatest risk to the UK’s soft power.

6. Third, the UK government must continue to invest in or create the necessary supportive environment for those organisations and institutions which enhance Britain’s soft power – its universities, the BBC and other UK-based media organisations, the British Council, and the rich mixture of British non-governmental organisations.

Defining soft power

7. A country’s power and influence in international affairs reflect a combination of factors. They include a country’s material and human capabilities, along with the ability to apply political will-power towards international objectives.

8. Soft power is the ability to influence others through attraction rather than coercion. It rests upon the attractiveness of a state’s culture, the appeal of its values and the authority or legitimacy of its actions. But these qualities are also rooted in core aspects of power, and the two cannot be separated fully. For example, a country’s attractiveness is increased by steady economic growth and a successful socio-economic model.

9. To understand the extent of the UK’s soft power, therefore, a broader assessment of its capacity for influence is necessary. I will assess in turn three different aspects of the UK’s soft power: first the economic foundations; second, the international institutional elements; and third, the non-state aspects.

Economic growth and soft power

10. National prosperity is a source of both hard and soft power. By many of the core measures of economic power, the UK is in relative decline, and has been so for the last few decades. Following the global financial crisis of 2008, its economic position has subsided further relative to that of most of the rest of the world. In the first quarter of 2013, the UK’s GDP was estimated to be 3.9% below its 2008 pre-crisis peak. The UK’s share of global GDP declined from 3.2% in 2008 to a projected 2.7% in 2013. In addition, the UK’s share of world exports fell from 6% in 1980 to 2% in 2011.

11. Strengthening the British economy will enhance Britain’s soft power in numerous ways. First, at a general level, economic success will increase the UK’s power of attraction to others: increasing the degree to which other states seek out the UK’s support, associate themselves with its initiatives, and look to follow its example. If the UK can re-set itself on a path of sustainable economic growth, this will provide an essential platform for it to maintain or increase its soft power.

12. Second, economic strength will also bring material benefits. For example, UK military spending could rise, offering the government greater options to contribute to international peace and stability. These options would include increasing military and

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67 See, for example, the UK’s ranking in terms of household disposable income per head. According to the OECD, the UK ranked 11th in the world, falling down a list of other advanced economies including the United States, Australia, Canada and a number of Britain’s European counterparts. Claire Jones, ‘Britons slip down world ready-cash table’, Financial Times, 14 May 2013, http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/02703f38-bcac-11e2-b344-00144feab7de.html#axzz2XtaMGNiq.
70 In addition, ‘while the UK was the 5th largest exporter in cash terms between 1980 and 2000, in 2011 it was ranked 12th’. See Grahame Allen, ‘UK Trade Statistics’, House of Commons, 8 October 2012, http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN06211.
police training missions in key countries, while contributing to the maintenance of international stability through counter piracy operations, post-conflict reconstruction, and peacekeeping. These actions can have powerful effects, deepening personal ties between Britain and those countries that benefit from these initiatives - networks through which the UK can later engage in dialogue, press its case or make its own appeals for support. All can be offered without demanding specific returns from the recipients of these British investments.

13. Similarly, a healthy budget increases the UK’s capacity to play a leading role in disaster relief. The UK’s response to the Great Eastern Earthquake and ensuing nuclear disaster in Japan in March 2011 has reinforced the bilateral relationship. These actions build the UK’s status as a responsible and proactive member of the international community, one with a stake in the success of collective responses to global problems and that is willing to take on the risks and burdens that come from such a role. Playing this role strengthens the UK’s voice in bilateral and multilateral debates and decisions.

14. Third, the government could increase its still modest investment in its diplomatic network. Expanding the UK’s diplomatic missions in priority countries have been valuable steps, with 50 new positions created in Beijing and 30 in New Delhi. By 2015, 11 new British Embassies will open, with 300 more staff in emerging economies, including in South Korea, Malaysia, Nigeria, Angola, Argentina, Peru, Pakistan, Vietnam, and the Philippines. But the UK’s diplomatic capabilities remain under-funded, from compensation levels to technology infrastructure to overall staff numbers.

15. Fourth, the UK could invest not only in meeting the top-line goal of spending 0.7% of GNI on development assistance, but also in ensuring that it has the national administrative capacity to manage this increased flow of funds, and thus ensure that the support is put to good use. While the UK’s role as a leading provider of development assistance strengthens the attraction of its initiatives and approaches within multilateral forums and among other donors, a stretched staff may rely excessively on sub-contracting its initiatives without sufficient resources for effective guidance or supervision.

**Soft power and international institutions**

16. If there is one distinguishing feature of 21st century international relations, it is the inability of countries to address international challenges on their own. The UK will generally need to act in partnership to pursue its interests and uphold its values. It is important, therefore, to consider the effectiveness of the international institutions through which the UK conducts its diplomacy, as these are all arenas where soft power is a key currency of successful transactions.

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17. What might attract other countries and actors to Britain and its international agenda when it is just one among a growing number of influential players? A key advantage for the UK is that it remains one of the most networked countries in the world, with an important institutional position in the EU, G20, G8, NATO, UN Security Council, IMF, World Bank and the Commonwealth.

18. However, many of the traditional institutional avenues for British influence are in retreat. The UK has enjoyed a privileged position in a Western-led world order that may soon be eclipsed. The UK risks being less influential in the UN Security Council in a world of rising powers; less relevant to the United States as US leaders focus more on Asia; less significant in a leaderless G20 world than one led by the G8; and a more detached member of the European Union.

19. In the future, the UK will need to adapt its approach to its engagement in these institutions. Britain may be relatively less powerful in material terms than was the case thirty years ago, but it can still be confident in its position as a dynamic mid-sized economic, diplomatic and military power.

20. For example, the UK should seek to remain an influential power within the EU. Defenders of the EU have often pointed to its soft power strengths as a rebuttal to its hard power weakness. Europe’s attractiveness is rooted in a post-modern form of intergovernmental cooperation and supranational governance, the product of a remarkable 60-year project of reconciliation. The EU’s soft power has been enhanced by the attractive power of the single market and leading role as a purveyor of international aid. However, hopes that the EU might serve as a vehicle for its members to play a more influential role – from climate change negotiations to assisting in the political and economic transitions in the Arab world – have been undercut by the EU’s loss of credibility during this period of economic crisis and the persistent weaknesses in the structures of EU foreign policy.

21. Despite these weaknesses, the UK government should embrace the soft power benefits that membership of a rules-based, supra-national single market of some 500 million people confers upon Britain. The UK may be destined to sit on the institutional as well as the physical periphery of the EU. But if the UK government can navigate its way through its EU referendum maze, then its position as a major European economy with strong global ties could enable it to serve as one of the most powerful voices within the EU for deepening the EU’s international engagement. This could involve driving the EU’s current and future trade liberalisation agreements, such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement, or arguing the case for more forceful EU involvement in managing the security risks of its neighbourhood.

22. In the case of the G8, the UK could commit to raising the voice of this Western caucus inside the broader and still quite unfocused G20. It could build on a successful G8 Presidency in 2012-13, for example, in order to promote within the broader G20 the practical value of increased standards of transparency in governance and taxation. In the case of the Commonwealth, the UK should actively promote rule of law reform as a central tenet for economic development.
23. In the coming years, international influence will be measured more by the UK’s ability to set specific policy agendas in an increasingly competitive global environment and less by its capacity to serve as a highly-regarded mediator between sometimes divergent Western views. In all these different forums, the UK government should continue to enhance its soft power by seeking to lead international debates. The UK has a good record on which to build. In the recent past, it has provided conceptual and diplomatic leadership on combating climate change, promoting sustainable development, good governance and global health, and creating agreement on the value of transparency in an interdependent world.

**Beyond the state: The third dimension of the UK’s soft power**

24. The British government should not forget that the sources of its soft power also lie beyond state-centric institutions and dimensions. The UK benefits from some structural advantages in this respect which the government should continue to capitalise on and reinforce.

25. The British Council promotes the study of English as well as a better understanding of British culture across the world. The role of English as an international language enhances Britain’s influence in the fields of international negotiation, the arts and scientific research.

26. Ahead of being funded directly by the BBC Licence Fee, the BBC World Service’s budget was reduced by 16% in real terms for the three years following the 2010 Comprehensive Funding Review.\(^{72}\) And yet, the BBC’s reputation for objective analysis has made it one of the most trusted broadcasters in the world. As the government considers the future role of the BBC as a publicly-financed broadcaster, it should remember that the BBC World Service is not only a valuable international public service, it also helps promote the sort of transparency that empowers populations at the expense of entrenched and inefficient authority. It is also popular with the public. In the 2012 Chatham House–YouGov survey of attitudes to international issues, the public ranked the BBC second highest (after the armed forces) in a list of institutions which serve British national interests around the world.\(^{73}\)

27. The UK services sector possesses a number of structural advantages in addition to the status of English as the world’s *de facto* international language. With the added benefit of the country’s time zone between Asia and the Americas, the strength of the UK services sector has helped make London one of the world’s first global capitals and one of the most competitive centres of economic activity in the world. UK-based financial, legal and accounting services are not only major contributors to UK prosperity; they are elements of the UK’s soft power. They place UK firms at the heart of global corporate deal-making and negotiation, helping define the norms and rules through which international commerce is undertaken.

28. British universities attract students from across the world and deliver world-class research, and in so doing, help build personal networks that can reinforce bilateral relationships. British policy institutes offer international analysis and neutral forums.

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for debating policy while drawing on the insights of extensive local diasporas, especially from the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa.

29. And British-based environmental, humanitarian and human rights NGOs are fearless in challenging environmental degradation, natural disasters, poverty, injustice and autocratic regimes. A proactive UK approach to agenda-setting at the international level will need to continue to play to this strength.

Conclusions

30. In the last five years, the UK has under-performed economically, which has undercut its international standing and, to a certain degree, its capacity for international influence, in terms of hard and soft power. However, given Britain’s underlying economic strengths and unique political-economic attributes, it is possible that the country may be heading into a period of relatively better economic health.

31. It should not be forgotten that Britain still ranks among the world’s leading mid-sized countries from a combined demographic and economic perspective. According to the UN, the UK’s population will reach at least 73 million in 2050, which may make it the most populous country in the EU, overtaking Germany at some point in the 2040s.74

32. Rebuilding its economic strength will be a sine qua non to enhance the UK’s soft power, allowing it to increase investment in defence, diplomacy and development. It would also enable the government to invest in the institutions and organisations which support the attractiveness of the UK economy and the country’s social and political model, as well as to capitalise on Britain’s structural advantages of language and time zone.

33. The UK’s influence will also depend upon how the country’s leaders leverage the UK’s position within key international institutions in what is now a highly interdependent world. Enhancing the UK’s soft power will make it a more effective player in the networks and coalitions that will be essential to success.

34. The biggest risk to Britain’s soft power in the near-term is if it detaches itself completely from its closest and deepest institutional network: the EU. This would risk the UK becoming become a consumer of global public goods, standards and norms, rather than a shaper of the international environment.

22 October 2013

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Richard Norton-Taylor (The Guardian) – Written evidence


1. Responding to a comment reportedly made by a spokesman for Valdimir Putin on the sidelines of the G20 summit in St Petersburg in September 2013 that Britain was a “small island no one listens to”, David Cameron told journalists: “Let me be clear – Britain may be a small island, but I would challenge anyone to find a country with a prouder history, a bigger heart or greater resilience. Britain is an island that has helped to clear the European continent of fascism and resolute in doing that throughout the second world war. Britain is an island that helped to abolish slavery, that has invented most of the things worth inventing – including every sport currently played around the world – that still today is responsible for art, literature and music that delights the entire world.”

2. The prime minister continued: “We are proud of everything we do as a small island – a small island that has the sixth-largest economy, the fourth best-funded military, some of the most effective diplomats, the proudest history, one of the best records for art and literature and contribution to philosophy and world civilisation.”

3. The G20 meeting took place at a critical moment in the world affairs the significance of which goes far beyond Syria, the crisis which overshadowed it. In Britain, the House of Commons voted against military strikes in Syria; in the US, President Barack Obama decided to seek the approval of the Congress before embarking on military action. The US and Russia have agreed on a UN security council resolution on the destruction of Syria’s chemicals. Iran’s new president and foreign minister have made astonishingly conciliatory noises and agreed with the US to resume negotiations on Iran’s nuclear programme in an atmosphere appeared unthinkable not long ago.

4. We are at a seminal moment, certainly as far as the Middle East is concerned, a time when the US, the world’s most powerful military power, cannot win its battles and solve the most serious crises and conflicts in the world by the application of force. There is no better time to consider the importance – potential and actual – of soft power.

5. For years, government ministers and military commanders throughout the world, notably in the UK, insisted there was no military solution to the civil war in Syria, just as they had been insisting, for even longer, that there was no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan.

6. In response to growing world-weariness in the UK and US, British and American officials also insisted that whatever military action they threatened, there be no “no boots on the ground”.

7. These assurances referred to troops being engaged in combat operations. The danger, given then prevailing sceptical, even cynical, public mood, is that such empathetic assurances would encourage opposition to British – or American –
troops being deployed even for humanitarian or peacekeeping operations.

8. Ministers, government officials, and military commanders, have been slow to learn the lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan, how hard power without applying any of the instruments of soft power not only failed but proved counter-productive. Examples are legion of how British troops were poorly prepared and badly resourced – how in Basra, for example, some were distributing water while their colleagues nearby were shooting insurgents or bandits. “Lessons learned” should be the easiest of the topics facing the Chilcot inquiry whose report is expected to be published at the end of this year. The Ministry of Defence shies away from discussing these issues in public – a paper it commissioner on “lessons learned” from Iraq by retired Brigadier Ben Barry, now an IISS fellow, has at the time of writing still not been published. It has been left to frustrated former soldiers to publish independently. Two good examples are Behavioural Conflict, subtitled: Why understanding people and their motivations will prove decisive in future conflict, (Military Studies Press 2011) by Andrew Mackay, a royal Navy commander with experience of Sierra Leone, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and War From Ground Up (Hurst 2012) by Emile Simpson, a former Gurkha officer deployed three times in Afghanistan.

9. The government still had not taken on board lessons it should have learned from Iraq – in essence, the importance of soft power – when it deployed thousands of troops to Helmand province in Afghanistan in 2006. (To take just one example, they had little idea how to implement their responsibility for a counter-narcotics programme agreed by Tony Blair at the December 2001 Bonn conference on Afghanistan.)

10. General Sir Peter Wall, the head of the army, fully recognised the need for a fresh approach to military intervention in a speech to the Royal United Services Institute conference on Land Warfare in June 2013. He said: “We’ve experience the difficulty in conducting ‘hearts and minds’ campaigns in cultures inimical to our own... We should empower local forces to deal with local situations, preferably taking account of regional considerations. This approach calls for bilateral relationships whether ahead of, during, or after periods of conflict because, like it or not, we seem to be in a period of enduring confrontation with extremism.” It was essential, he said, that military commanders – and, by implication, their political masters – in future understood the consequences of intervening in a conflict. “For in extremis, if we do need to intervene in support of partners, we’ve got to understand the context, locally and regionally, we’ve got to know the key people, political and military, and we’ve got to be familiar with the culture and language.”

11. The key questions are: who are the enemies of the future, what are the causes of likely future conflict, and what are the most appropriate weapons to prevent, or succeed in winning, those conflicts.

12. There is increasing consensus among Whitehall departments, senior military figures, respected thinktanks, academics, and independent analysts, that armed conflict between states is, if not a phenomenon relegated to past history, at least extremely unlikely. Far more likely will be violent conflicts provoked by religious and ideological extremism, notably continuing political extreme political Islamism, by inter-tribal disputes, by climate change, problems exacerbated by drought and disputes over such basic resources as water, all compounded by rising populations increasing pressure
on cities in developing countries. These can only be successfully combated by soft power.

13. A report by the MoD’s own thinktank, the Development, Concepts, and Doctrine Centre, published in 2007, painted a picture of the “future strategic context” likely to face Britain’s armed forces looked 30 years ahead. In what it called an “analysis of the key risks and shocks”, and assessments which were “probability-based, rather than predictive”, it pointed to an increase in the population of countries in the Middle East of 132%, while Europe’s dropped as fertility fell. Some 87% of people under the age of 25 lived in the developing world, it noted. By 2010 more than 50% of the world’s population would be living in urban rather than rural environments, leading to social deprivation and “new instability risks”, and the growth of shanty towns. By 2035, that figure would rise to 60%. Migration would increase. Globalisations may lead to levels of international integration that effectively bring inter-state warfare to an end. Instead, “inter-communal conflict” would increase, the DCDC study warned. Rear Admiral, Paul Bennett, the Director of the DCDC, told the 2013 RUSI Land Warfare conference that as crop yields declined, 3bn people will be affected by drought. Globalisation, he added, will erode the power of the state.

14. David Kilcullen, former counter insurgency adviser to General David Petraeus in Iraq and adviser later to Nato forces in Afghanistan, warns in his books, Out of the Mountains, subtitled The Coming of Age of the Urban Guerilla (Hurst 2013), about the coming threat of urban violence and urbicide. In what he calls a “major shift in the character conflict”, he warns that “nonstate armed groups, because of heavier urbanisation and greater connectedness, “will be increasingly able to draw on the technical skills of the urban populations” – He describes how Syrian rebels built a home-made armoured vehicle sing a videogame controller to manipulate a remotely-mounted machine gun, and linked cameras to a flat screen TV to help the driver see without gaps in the armour. It is an example, says Kilcullen, of how urban populations can “turn consumer entertainment gadgets into military systems”.

15. A combination of poverty, corruption, and weak national governments (as well as counter-productive counter insurgency strategies), has meant that the Taliban remains a powerful force in Afghanistan, and paved the way for al-Shabaab in Somalia. British and other western officials and intelligence agencies are turning their attention to West Africa, where oil-rich Nigeria, the world’s seventh most populous country, is facing terrorist attacks in the north by the extreme Islamist group, Boko Haram, where armed groups, some loosely affiliated to al-Qaeda, some not, many fed by South American drug money, pose a growing threat that will not be defeated by western military intervention. These are serious threats that can be defeated in the end only by soft power.

16. The recent French-led military intervention in Mali provided an immediate response to an emergency. But such operations can only provide short-term answers. The causes of conflicts which today threaten western interests and western security are many but they cannot be solved by the application of military power. Their solution lies in the application of “soft power” – economic and trade policy, education, appropriate democratic institutions, training programmes.
17. International organisations, the EU as well as the UN, have an important role to play. But Britain, as the prime minister indicated in his St Petersburg riposte, has a unique contribution to offer – culturally; financially through the City; residual military prowess (which despite setbacks in Iraq and Afghanistan is respected throughout the world) that can, and should, be a “force for good”; diplomatically; universities; distinct contributions from Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland; the Commonwealth; and Britain’s security, intelligence, and policy, services.

18. Soft power, it is said, has to be backed up by hard power. But weapons have to be relevant and the threat to use them credible. Britain does not face the kind of threat, now or in the future, that requires a deterrent in the shape of a Trident ballistic nuclear missile system. Most relevant and useful to back up soft power in today and tomorrow’s world are unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) which have multiple military and civilian applications, special forces, submarines equipped with cruise missiles, and defences to counter cyber attacks.

19. The two large aircraft carriers being built for the Royal Navy could have a special role to play to promote soft power as well as hard power, though they would be vulnerable to the new generations of powerful and long range missiles being built by a growing number of countries. The first sea lord, Admiral Sir George Zambellas, said in a speech in September 2013 to the Defence and Security Equipment International exhibition in Britain with the “full range of diplomatic, political, and military, options”. They would become “national icons”, he said. Britain might be a small island, referring to the remark reportedly made by a Russian spokesman in St Petersburg (see paragraph 1), but the carriers would give Britain a “big footprint across the world”. However, serious questions remain over the Lockheed Martin F-35B Joint Strike Fighters that would fly from the carriers, as the Commons public accounts committee recently warned.

20. Influence in the modern world, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, former British ambassador to the UN, observed during a panel debate at the IISS earlier this year, was composed of many things and “nuclear weapons was one of the least relevant”. The economy was the most important factor, said the former cabinet secretary, Lord O’Donnell. A healthy economy, and more investment in such areas as computer science will be increasingly more crucial if Britain is to withstand such “soft power” weapons as energy supplies and cyber attacks in future conflicts. The UK could be the one permanent member of the UN security council to make a virtue of aggressive use of soft power – something that would also help to combat the criticism that in any conflict, Britain acts merely as a “poodle” of the US.

21. The use of soft power effectively, and to promote the UK’s influence in the world, has serious implications for the way Whitehall works. Past experience is not good. Individual departments jealously guard their existing areas of responsibility. The Ministry of Defence, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and Department for International Development, have been very reluctant even to pool their resources for the proposed conflict prevention fund.

22. The National Security Council has not yet seriously got down to discussing a proper strategy to shape and promote the UK’s role in the world, something which many
senior military figures, notably General Sir David Richards, the former chief of
defence staff, have called for as a matter of increasing urgency.

23. There is a danger that any public debate about a new profile for the UK, how it could
successfully use and deploy soft power in the national interest will be undermined by
scepticism, even cynicism, borne out of recent experiences of the deployment of
hard power. I sincerely hope this will not be the case and that your Select
Committee will success in promoting a debate on a neglected but very important
issue.

September 2013
Professor Joseph S. Nye, University Distinguished Service Professor and former dean of Harvard’s John F Kennedy School of Government, Harvard Kennedy University

Q176 The Chairman: Thank you very much for joining us. We are looking forward to this session very much indeed. I have one little formality that arises from the way our Committee works, which is that I have to say that the declared interests of Members of this Committee are on the website. Whether that interests you or not, that is something I just have to say. Can I just ask, Joe, how long you have for us?

Professor Nye: I am good through a little after 12 pm. I have a lunch that starts at 12.15 pm our time, so about 14 minutes past the hour.

The Chairman: Sorry, how long does that mean? An hour?

Professor Nye: An hour and 15 minutes.

The Chairman: That is excellent. We should begin by explaining that the remit of this House of Lords Select Committee is to look at the deployment of soft power and Britain’s overseas influence. As you would expect, being in a British Parliament, a British Committee, we are obviously focused on our own affairs. Over 20 years or more, you have written immensely interesting books codifying, clarifying, the concept of the deployment of soft power.

Let me start with a question, which sounds a bit parochial but it is to do with us. Here we are in Britain. We have to make our way in a totally transformed international scene, in an era of the digitalised world, changing/shifting power centres, new markets and new challenges. How do we do that, and how do your thoughts about the deployment of soft power come into play for us?

Professor Nye: Britain has a lot of assets in the area of soft power. The world is changing in the direction of—the cliché is—the global information age, but it does mean that many more aspects of networked power that rely on information are going to be important. Therefore,
the ability to use those assets that you have of previous networks is something that Britain stands well prepared for.

Let me just tick off a few things that might be worth noticing—there are many more. If soft power is the ability to get what you want through attraction and persuasion, the fact is that Britain has institutions that have been widely admired and often emulated in other parts of the world; Britain has the English language, which gives you access to many more networks; Britain’s historical role still has a residue in the Commonwealth, which means that you have contacts not just among Governments but among many social groups, as you know so well, through the Commonwealth; there are Britain’s universities and the role that Britain plays in educating people in British universities; there is broadcasting, and you could argue that the BBC is still the most credible of the international broadcasters; and there is the monarchy, which is quite fascinating. I had a piece in the *Financial Times* last summer saying that it is quite amazing how many people around the world are stirred by the birth of a young royal. I could go on and on. Britain has an extraordinary number of assets, without getting into many aspects of British culture: arts, literature or painting.

One could go on, but as somebody in California at the RAND Corporation said, the point is that it is not just whose army wins, it is also whose story wins in an information age. Britain has extraordinary assets to have the story to attract others and to prevail. I would argue that if I had to pick countries that are well endowed with soft power resources, I would put Britain pretty close to the top of the list.

**The Chairman:** Professor Nye, what does that mean in terms of what we should do that we are not doing now? What does it mean in terms of what the Government’s change of priorities should be, or are you saying you are doing all the right things already and there is not much else to do?

**Professor Nye:** Obviously anything can be improved, including my own writings. I would say that I am not sure you are cherishing some of the assets that you have quite as well as you might, particularly the BBC, which I know gets into issues about the way it is financed, taxes on home televisions and so on, but the BBC World Service has an extraordinary position in terms of credibility. My impression is that the new financial arrangements may mean that the BBC, and particularly the World Service, is going to be a little less well endowed and protected than it was in the past. I may be misinformed on this. I may have listened to too many British friends who have one view on it rather than an alternative view, but one thing I would point to is the question of the changes in the financing of the BBC.

**The Chairman:** Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts would like to come in. He is sitting over there—now you can see him.

**Q177 Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts:** You gave us a flattering list of our soft power assets. Then at the end you said that we would come close to the top of a list of countries when you listed soft power capability. What other countries do you think have a strong presence and from whom we could or should be learning?

**Professor Nye:** If you look at the polls that have been taken, including a BBC poll, polls by the Pew trust or the efforts by *Monocle* magazine to rank these, generally speaking the Americans come out near the top, although I think *Monocle* put Britain ahead of America this past year. One can quibble about some of the measurements and so on, but the United States is also extremely well endowed with soft power resources, not only in its cultural industries, of which Hollywood is obviously a global industry, but also I think in American policies of openness on immigration help.
We are going through a domestic debate about immigration, and we complain about it, as you are in your country. The fact that so many Americans are parts of diasporas and have contacts back home and that Americans in many parts of the world “look like” people in those other parts of the world, is I think another aspect of American soft power. There are a number of assets the Americans have. I will not go through them all and tick them all off for you, but I would say that Britain and America are probably as well positioned as any two countries in this domain.

Lest we think it is just an Anglosphere question, I should note that sometimes smaller countries are able to exercise soft power. It is not that they have as much as a large country, but they are able to punch above their weight. I think of a country like Norway, which is not a member of the European Union and has only five million or six million people. Not many people speak Norwegian, yet Norway often ranks very high in polls of attractiveness, partly because it is seen as a well ordered society that has done a good job in reconciling individual freedoms and liberties with having a welfare state. In addition to that, Norway has international policies with an emphasis on development assistance and its efforts at various times are to wield a role as a peacemaker. These have enhanced Norway’s attractiveness and reputation. In my answer to your question, I did not mean to make it sound as though an Anglosphere was the answer, and I have just given you an example of a country that is not English speaking which I think does punch above its weight in soft power.

Q178 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Professor Nye, you have been very flattering about our institutions. That poses a dilemma for us because we have been set up to look at ways in which we can improve what we are doing, at new ideas and new areas that we can work in. A few months ago one of our witnesses described the danger of the arrogance of our excellence, and I think that is one of the difficulties. I wonder if you could identify the areas that we are weak in. We get the impression that some of the other countries are getting past us, in particular, with smart power and we are being left a bit behind. Could you identify the weaknesses that we have?

Professor Nye: As Lord Howell said, we have to declare our interests. I should declare the interest that I am a victim of British soft power, since I was a Rhodes scholar at Oxford and therefore I have been brainwashed by British institutions. Leaving that aside, if I were to find fault, let me pick up the point about immigration that I just mentioned. Britain has many immigrants, but it is also true that immigration is now a fraught issue in British politics, as it is in Europe generally and to some extent in the United States. The extent that other countries see the door closed, or believe that there is a repudiation of immigration, can hurt. I suppose it comes particularly in the area of political asylum, although that is an area that is sometimes abused. If one looked at other parts of the world and people said, “Is Britain friendly?”, perhaps the immigration issue might be an area that would be difficult. Knowing the difficulties of the political issue at home, I do not see how you can do much to change that, but as an analyst the answer to your question is that I would think immigration is a weak spot.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Are there any other areas in the cultural and sporting field as opposed to the mainstream area that you have been talking about up until now?

Professor Nye: The British Council does a good job on British culture, and the various efforts that the British Council makes in teaching English also transmit a degree of British culture. By and large, on the culture, I do not think there is much to be changed there. There are things that one can complain about in British culture. Many times foreigners will be struck a bit by some of the rough edges of the class system; there are dimensions of inequality that can be unattractive to others. It is not as though Britain is a perfect nation.
Nor is the United States, of course. I do not see your ability to change those. I do not think you can do much about those as a means of increasing soft power. That is the way things are.

The Chairman: Would it be cynical to say that the most effective soft power is projected by countries with the strongest economies and the biggest resources? You mentioned Norway. Norway has masses of resources to hand around the world, so is it not the need for a strong economy in order to have one’s impact overseas?

Professor Nye: I think that is right. A strong and growing economy is a great asset. It is attractive to others, so it generates soft power in attractiveness. It also provides the economic wherewithal in budgetary terms for overseas development assistance to support the British Council or the BBC and so on. A strong economy is a good attractor, in and of itself. It is also a great source of support for other instruments.

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: Professor Nye, we are discussing soft power, the concept of government and parliaments, big businesses and vast economies. Do you feel that the growth of networking and the internet have fragmented soft power: that in a sense they have given power into the hands of people of the globe, in which case it is a completely different instrument? It seems to have been embraced by Government as another tool for Government. Do you think it is possible in fact it is the way that people may be able to exercise their will a great deal more effectively than they have done in the past?

Professor Nye: I think that is correct. I have often argued that a great deal of soft power of a country is produced by its civil society, not by its Government. If soft power is the ability to get what you want through attraction, aspects of civil society can produce attraction even when policies of Government may be running in the wrong direction.

I am always struck by an example from the American experience in the Vietnam War. The Vietnam War was an extremely unpopular policy around most of the world and you had people marching in the streets opposing American government policy, but the thing that always intrigued me was that when they were marching they were singing not the Communist “Internationale” but Martin Luther King’s “We Shall Overcome”. Here was a cultural artefact from an aspect of an American protest movement—the civil rights movement—which became the international mantra of those opposing the American Government’s policies. In that case, the American Government was destroying American soft power at the same time as American civil society, in its openness, diversity and robustness of protest, was creating an admiration for America simultaneously.

When one translates that into the current network world, as you described it, we have to realise that for every speech given by a Minister, or every official broadcast that goes out, there are millions more tweets and Facebook postings. An awful lot of what is happening in public diplomacy today is not done from a Government to people but people to people, and that has a very powerful effect. Being open in that sense, which of course Britain is, and having a society and economy that is open to the use of the networks and social media, is an asset in and of itself.

Q179 Lord Janvrin: Professor Nye, thank you. I am interested in pursuing this shift away from that area of soft power where government has some kind of policy-making function and handle on it into the civil society and, as you say, the soft power that derives from civil society. An area that a Government has some kind of control over is the whole aid programme. You did not mention that in your list of British assets, and I wondered whether that was because you see that as a separate area of policy.
Professor Nye: No, I should have listed it if I had done a complete list. I am afraid I would have bored you if I had gone on and on, but aid is certainly an important instrument for generating soft power. That said, let me admit that I sometimes have second thoughts about aid, and I will address this in terms of the American context. Very often when you have large aid projects that are more or less bureaucratically implemented, it is not clear that they are generating much soft power. There is a debate among economists as to whether they are generating economic development—and there you can hear both sides of that—but the question is: are they generating soft power?

I was looking at a study that was done on American aid in Afghanistan. It concluded that many of the large-scale projects did not generate soft power but could often consume it. For example, if you build an aid project, a bridge or a school or some big road in one area and the next area does not benefit, you may attract some people in the tribal area that you built it in, but in fact it may create jealousies in the area next door, or there may be a corrupt local road builder who is getting most of the benefits, and that is deeply resented.

This study showed that large aid projects were not necessarily sure fire generators of soft power. The projects that tended to produce soft power tended to be smaller projects that became possessions of the local people: in other words, converting the local people to saying, “This is our project. We are going to defend this school against the Taliban because it is ours. We are the ones who wanted it built here”. That was the secret to successful aid.

Sometimes I have a feeling—and this is a bit unfair to my colleagues and compatriots—that the aid bureaucracy is a little like the old Soviet bureaucracy, where you measure success by how much money you shovel out the door not by whether it changes minds on the ground. I am not trying to sound anti-aid. I think aid is an important essential source of soft power, but I am against the idea that we measure the amount of money spent on aid and treat that as though it is producing soft power. It may or may not.

Q180 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: Professor Nye, I think I saw somewhere that you were quoted as saying that soft power was about getting other countries to want the things that you want. I wonder if you could say a little bit about how successful you think the United States has been in exercising its soft power. One of the things that alarms me, particularly in places like Pakistan and the Middle East, is the degree to which hostility has grown towards the United States, sometimes because people believe that the United States—and I think this has probably been accelerated by the neoconservative movement—do not respect the cultures and values of the countries themselves. Given that the United States is such a strong economic power, as well as obviously being the world’s strongest military power, I wonder to what extent soft power is failing. One sees a degree of hostility towards the United States growing around the globe, which I personally, as a great supporter of the United States, find very alarming. What can soft power do to resolve this?

Professor Nye: I do not disagree with the premise, but let me qualify it a bit by saying that if you look at the recent poll done by the Pew trust, you will see that American soft power has gone up in some areas and down in others. If you take Asia, which is now a high priority for the United States, given the President’s so-called rebalancing toward Asia, the recent polls—both by Pew and by the BBC—show the Americans doing better. Although the Chinese have been spending billions and billions of dollars to increase their soft power in Asia, the Americans still score significantly higher than China in most parts of Asia.

The areas where American soft power has gone down, as measured by public opinion polls, tend to be where there is a conflict over policy. In an area like Pakistan, Palestine or much of the Middle East, you will find a decrease in the attractiveness of the United States. I think
that gets to the following point: that the resources that produce attractiveness or soft power for a country are threefold, to simplify a bit. One is a culture where the culture is attractive to others; the second is values, when they are attractive to others; and the third are policies when they are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others. You will find American culture is still attractive but American policies are very unattractive. That is true in large aspects of the Muslim world, where the policies that grew out of the so-called war on terror have alienated a lot of people. The drone strikes in Pakistan is a case in point, but also in Palestinian public opinion or Egyptian public opinion with the Arab/Israeli dispute. The Americans are seen as strongly on the side of the Israelis and that has an effect.

I think the answer is that in some places policies are undercutting soft power, even where culture and values may still be enhancing soft power, but if the policies are unpopular enough that becomes the dominant hand in the issue.

**Lord Forsyth of Drumlean:** I accept all of that. I was also getting at the point that the idea that it is about getting other countries to want what you want runs against the idea of respecting other people's cultures and way of life. For example, they may not see the Western democratic model as the ideal model for those countries and that if you are seen to be an evangelist for that, that can create a negative effect. That is nothing to do with broader policy but is to do with a different set of values, a different identity and a different historical position.

**Professor Nye:** I think that is right and it depends a lot on how you are preaching your values. I remember going to Argentina in the 1970s when I was in the State Department in the Carter Administration, and we were preaching human rights—Jimmy Carter's policy was to preach human rights to the Argentines—and we were very unpopular as a result. I went back to Argentina in 1991 and all of a sudden I discovered the Americans were extremely popular, so I asked some people, “Why is that?” and they said, “Because the people who are in power now in 1991 are the ones who were having their fingernails pulled out in 1977”. So what is attractive depends on where you are sitting, which has something to do with where you stand on this. You are not going to attract all people all the time.

I think standing for certain values is important. The question is how much do you beat people over the head with them. I think the invasion of Iraq was a terrible strategic blunder, and not only militarily. It was a blunder in terms of soft power because it was trying to impose these values. On the other hand, telling the Chinese that we think that Liu Xiaobo should not be in jail, yes, that is a Chinese decision, and some Chinese react negatively on that, but it does strike me that we do need to make clear that those values are important. How we apply those values at home is equally important, though. If we look hypocritical, then I think that undercuts these stands on values.

**Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top:** It does seem to me that when the whole debate about soft power came in, there was a relationship between military or hard power and influence and soft power. I wonder how you see that relationship now. In the connected world that Baroness Nicholson was talking about, it is much more difficult to be absolutely clear about what the issues are, as both your nation and our nation have discovered this year. Using military power is becoming increasingly difficult, partly because of the nature of opposition to Western values and how that opposition expresses itself internationally. It seems to me that we do not quite understand—let me personalise this: I do not understand—the link at the moment between hard and soft power, because I think it is very difficult to express it. I am interested in how you have moved your arguments since you first began to talk about soft power.
Professor Joseph S. Nye, Harvard Kennedy University – Oral evidence (QQ 176-186)

Professor Nye: I think hard and soft power sometimes reinforce each other and sometimes they compete with each other. I go back to my example a minute ago of the invasion of Iraq: the use of hard power there greatly undercut American soft power. You can see this in the public opinion polls, not just in the Middle East but in Western Europe as well. That is a case where the use of hard power achieved an objective. It only took us a few weeks to overthrow Saddam Hussein but at an enormous cost in terms of our soft power.

There are other cases where you can use hard power in which you can reinforce your soft power. Britain’s intervention in Sierra Leone, where a modest amount of hard power prevented an atrocious group of thugs from lopping off people’s arms and limbs, I think made Britain more attractive in Sierra Leone and in other parts of Africa as well. To give you another example where you can use hard power resources—not in a hard power sense, but to generate soft power—is where the United States used its naval resources to provide tsunami relief after the 2004-05 tsunami in Indonesia. It is interesting to see what happened to the attractiveness of the United States in Indonesia. It had gone down dramatically after the invasion of Iraq in 2003 but, after this intervention in support of the tsunami relief, it went back up to about half of where it had been before. So you can use hard power resources, in this case a naval resource, in a way that produces soft power. You can also use hard power for a hard power result, as in getting rid of the terrible thugs who were terrorising Sierra Leone. That was a hard power purpose and a hard power accomplishment, but it produced soft power in terms of admiration for those.

I have used this term “smart power” to refer to the ability to combine hard and soft power in ways that reinforce each other in terms of a successful strategy. I suppose the obverse of that means “dumb power”, when you let your soft power and hard power undercut each other.

Q181 The Chairman: Do you think the recent Syrian situation, with all the to-ing and fro-ing on chemical weapons, has some interesting lessons for hard power and soft power in it?

Professor Nye: The game is not over yet, so we do not know how to judge the outcome fully, and I am not sure it was all handled as smoothly as it might have been. If we do successfully destroy Assad’s chemical weapons, I think the fact that there was a credible threat of force which led the Russians to intervene to press Assad to do this, if this leads to such an outcome, this might be a smart power strategy: the threat of force led the Russians, as Assad’s protectors, to press him to move on this, which then led to the UN resolution and the work that is being done there now. But we still do not know the outcome. We will not know for some time.

The Chairman: Did the British Parliament, and indeed the Congress of the United States, also play their soft power role in this?

Professor Nye: I think they weakened the hand. If my previous argument is correct, that a credible threat of hard power, in the sense of an air strike, was an important incentive, I am not sure that your or our legislators helped much.

The Chairman: Earlier on, you mentioned the people telling the national story, We Shall Overcome. What are the implications of that? They could be big, could they not? If the projection of a nation’s interests and story are outside the control of the diplomats and official Government, that surely raises a number of risks. You are moving into uncontrolled territory, are you not?
Professor Nye: You are, and it raises interesting puzzles for what we think of as public diplomacy. I have a little diagram in my book, *The Future of Power*. Traditionally, Cabinet diplomacy was one Government Foreign Minister speaking to another. Then, in the 20th century, we developed a form of public diplomacy in which Governments would broadcast to the people in another country to try to get them to put pressure on their Governments. Now what we are seeing is that people in different countries are communicating directly with each other. That means a series of messages are being passed that Governments do not control, neither Government to Government nor Government to other people. This is more or less people-to-people. That has raised questions for some people, who theorise about public diplomacy saying, “Should we not have the Governments and their public diplomacy be more involved in this?” For example, that has led some in the State Department to encourage the idea that lower-level diplomats, particularly, should be using Facebook and Twitter to get messages out. It is a good thing because in fact it does get some Government views into this stream of people-to-people thinking.

The danger is it is very hard to control from the centre. There was a case in Egypt last year, where an American diplomat issued a tweet about what he thought was going on in Cairo. It turned out later to be wrong, and then it was criticised in congressional hearings and so on. So there is a loss of control from the top that is a risk that goes with this. On the other hand, if we do not accept a certain degree of looseness from traditional perspectives in that sense, we are not going to be effective in this domain.

The Chairman: Are we entering into an era of more informed people and weaker government?

Professor Nye: Yes, although I think we need to be careful. What you see on the blogosphere, what you see on the internet, is not always more informed people. It is often a lot of people saying a lot of things, some of which is extremely ill-informed. One of the virtues of having your diplomats being able to respond quickly is not just to reach the informed, but to counter some of the uninformed. If an event occurs and somebody says, “This event in the capital of country X was created by British intelligence services who are trying to overthrow the Government”, there would be a role for somebody in the British Embassy who is constantly in contact with opinion-makers in that area, who is saying, “That is nonsense. This is not our policy and we have not been doing this”, and who has developed a bit of credibility because they have been in contact with these people before. It is not that the people are always well informed. Some of the people are extremely ill-informed or mal-informed. They may be trying to do damage with the information they are propagating on the internet, and if you wait for an official statement from London it may be too late. The rumour may get legs and be around the world on the internet before you can catch up with it.

Q182 Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: Professor Nye, a little earlier you commented that aid projects that produce soft power tend to be small projects that effectively feel owned by the people. The other side of that, I would suggest, is that aid is being used as a soft power tool by aid-giving Governments more and more, through very large NGOs generally speaking, or delivered directly to Governments that perhaps have a less-level playing field on corruption than might be the case in the donating Government. This has resulted in recipient Governments mistrusting large aid—Russia is a very obvious example of that—and therefore forbidding it entry more and more. As this degrades the growth of local civil society, how do we find a balance in the middle that enables the growth of civil society locally, which does need some funding generally from outside, and yet detach big Governments from using soft power aid as a big tool? What is the key there?
Professor Nye: First of all, let me say that there may be some virtues to some big aid projects. If I understand DfID’s emphasis on generating economic development, there may be reasons why a large project makes sense from DfID’s point of view. I was addressing simply the case of: does a big project generate soft power? The answer is: sometimes it may but sometimes it may not. What we do in aid of using non-governmental organisations and civil society contacts I think is a healthy thing. It does tend to get more people-to-people contact and a sense of direct contact and ownership and that is healthy, but it does create problems for authoritarian countries.

If you look at Russia under Putin. He has been emphasising nationalism and sovereignty, partly as a way for him to recruit support from elements of society where he needs to counter the disillusion among the young middle-class voters who seem to have fallen away from him. The expulsion of many of these civil society agencies, and the efforts that the Russians have made to make some of these groups register as foreign lobbyists, is a problem. I am not sure there is much we can do about it. I would not say that we should stop these efforts. I still think that using civil society organisations makes sense, but we have to realise that there are going to be some authoritarian countries who are going to see this as a threat and will prevent us from doing it. There are indeed dilemmas, some of which are not easily resolved in this business.

The Chairman: One difference between you and us is that we are here in the European Union and part of the European continent, of course, whereas you are a continental power. Do you think that means that we have to approach soft power projection in different ways? In your view, is our membership and involvement in Europe a weakening or a strengthening of our capacity to project our soft power?

Professor Nye: From Britain’s strategic position, I would think it gives you a second arrow in your quiver: you can do things directly as Britain and things through the European Union. In some countries sometimes it may turn out that the European arrow will look a little less threatening and other times it may be that the British arrow looks a little less threatening. In any instance of using an instrument for soft power, you have to realise that soft power depends on the eye of the beholder. In other words, it matters tremendously how it is seen. In a country, perhaps an ex-British colony, where there may be some residual resentments about our fears of neo-colonialism and so on, the European arrow may work. In other areas, say, another ex-British colony, where there are very strong pro-British views, the British arrow might be better. From your point of view, I would think being able to use both makes sense. One of the problems for the United States is that, as a large power, it is often suspected and we cannot switch back and forth as you could.

The Chairman: Going to the general question of whether the ownership of soft power, which is largely—as you have rightly said in your writings and just now—in the hands of people rather than officialdom, does the Government of the United States have a soft power strategy that you are aware of or have they read your books and responded in that way?

Professor Nye: I believe they have read the books, or some have. Certainly Secretary Clinton, when she was Secretary of State, used the term “smart power” as the guiding principle for her diplomacy. I would like to say we had a strategy but I do not quite discern it. As in many things, we have a series of competing programmes and it is hard to see them knit nicely into a strategy. In budgetary terms, it is not clear that there is anyone who is looking carefully at the overall pattern of how we invest in public diplomacy or in soft power. Ideally, you would see somebody in the Office of Management and Budget doing a consolidated budget in which they said, “Here is what we spend on aid. Here is what we
spend on broadcasting. Here is what we spend on cultural exchanges. Here is what we spend on people-to-people projects”. I do not think that happens very effectively. For example, sometimes you will find that a decision is made to stop broadcasting in some foreign language by the Voice of America and it will save $1 million, and yet you may have some aid project that has just wasted $100 million. The question is whether those things are ever thought through in terms of clear trade-offs. I would like to say yes but I have not been convinced that that is the case.

Q183 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: I have this difficult task of trying to imagine the ideal way forward. What is the silver bullet? What is the magic formula? I wonder if you have had any particular eureka moments recently when you have said, “Hey, that is great. That is the best example I have seen of soft power. That fulfils my ideal, my whole philosophy, my theory”. Do you have any great examples you can give to us?

Professor Nye: It is interesting that sometimes you will find parts of the military and the people in the Pentagon who are a little bit ahead of the game in this. SOUTHCOM is one of the American combatant commands, as they used to be called. When he was in SOUTHCOM, Admiral Stavridis—who later became Supreme Commander of NATO—said, “I have all these ships and planes in this capacity. How likely is it that I am going to use them to shell Buenos Aires or Caracas? Not very likely. But how likely is it that I will use them to deal with humanitarian catastrophes or the results of hurricanes or pandemics or whatever? I need to have a strategy in which I can use these resources for soft power generation without diminishing their capacity to wield hard power if I need it”. When he was head of SOUTHCOM he did a very good job of thinking that through and setting up a budget. I addressed that in my answer to the question asked a minute ago about where is the intelligence in doing a budget that says, “Here is the whole range of assets that we have. Here is the whole range of programmes. Are we spending as much on this as on that? Should we allocate resources from this area to that one?” That has been done in places. My example of SOUTHCOM, when Stavridis was its commander, is a good one. That was budgetary allocations and resources between hard and soft power within one military command.

Ideally, it would be nice to have somebody doing an inventory of assets and Government programmes, in an effort to say, “How do we allocate our investments between them and are we doing it in the most effective way for the Government as a whole?” I do not know whether you have something like that in Britain or not. I fear we do not in the US.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: That is a very interesting suggestion. I think we could follow that up. I wonder if there are any people you have met, when you have talked about soft power or smart power, who you think could give us a new insight into thinking on this, who would come in from left field with some divergent thinking. No disrespect to any of our staff or our Chairman who, as you know, is a distinguished person—

The Chairman: No disrespect to him.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: No disrespect whatever to him. But the people we have tended to have are the traditional people who say, “This is what we have always done and it is going well. Why do we not keep on doing it?” I wonder if you have any more imaginative, radical thinkers to suggest.

Professor Nye: There is a retired military officer who came in to see me in the last six months, who is trying to develop a way to get a usable index for soft power for programmes that are run out of the Pentagon. I can provide his whereabouts to Lord Howell after this. I do not have it at the tip of my mind now. I was quite struck by the fact that he was being
very imaginative about how to make a soft power budget operational within the parts of the Government that he had been involved in. Let me see if I can pass that along. We will do something by email after the hearing. There are some people who are trying to think of ways to make this more effective.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Thank you, you have been very helpful.

Lord Janvrin: Can I just pick up on that? Do you think that the whole way in which people are trying to measure the outcome of soft power is worthwhile, or still very much in its infancy or something that is extremely difficult to measure in an effective way?

Professor Nye: Measurement will always be difficult, but let me point out that it is not unique to soft power. One of the problems we have with power generally is power refers to behaviour, getting what I want. We sometimes treat it as though we measure it in terms of resources, I have this big stick. I may have a big stick but it may not get me what I want. Even if you talk about hard power, if I say that I have 10,000 main battle tanks and you have 1,000 main battle tanks, our tendency is to say, “Those hard power resources mean that I am 10 times stronger than you”. If we fight in the desert in Iraq that may be a good predictor of behaviour, I will win. If we fight in the swamps of Vietnam it may be a very poor predictor of behaviour, as the Americans found out in Vietnam.

Even when you are looking at hard power where we do orders of battle all the time, totalling up resources, we are not getting at whether those resources are going to produce the behaviour we want. When we look at soft power we can look at the resources that should generate attraction. We can then look at public opinion polls as a surrogate to say, “Have they generated attraction?” But whether they have produced the behaviour we want we do not know, unless we know what is in the mind of the perceiver. There is a problem with measurement of soft power, but I would submit there is a larger problem with measurement of any type of power. It is a little bit harder with soft power because many of the resources are somewhat less tangible. We kid ourselves if we think that when we measure orders of battle in hard power that we are predicting behavioural outcomes.

Q184 Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots: Professor Nye, as the godfather or midwife of the soft power concept, when you began to develop this concept what were your beliefs about its likely ends? Did they include economic advantage in the propagation of good soft power? Did they include increased world stability, a sort of pro bono publico role of making the world a safer place? Was it making a nation feel good about itself, a bit of national vanity from creating a soft power concept? How did you see that in your mind’s eye when you started it, and how has your thinking on that changed?

Professor Nye: It is interesting, I basically embedded this as an analytical concept. My friend the great British historian Paul Kennedy wrote a book in the 1980s called The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, in which he predicted the decline of the United States. I thought, “I think he is wrong”. So I wrote a book that I eventually published under the title Bound to Lead. I first totalled up the American economic capacity and compared it to other countries. Then I totalled up the American military capacity and compared it to other countries, and I said, “But there is still something missing here. When we try to understand the capacity of the Americans to get what they want, compared to the Soviet Union—which was then still in existence—there is something about American attractiveness that the Soviets do not have. They may have had it back in 1945 but they certainly do not have it now. How can you conceptualise this?” That is what led me to develop the concept of soft power.

It seems to me that all too often we are mesmerised by the apparent concreteness of the resources that produce hard power but fail to notice that when you are looking for
outcomes sometimes attraction can produce those outcomes. Indeed, I think you can make a case—as I have tried to in some of my publications—that the Cold War was won partly by the hard power of the deterrent capacity of our militaries and by the hard power of our economic productivity. But it was also won by soft power, by the ideas that basically ate away faith in communism then behind the Iron Curtain. As I have said, when the Berlin wall went down it went down under hammers and bulldozers wielded by people whose minds had been changed. The purpose I had in trying to generate a concept was to get people, as they thought about power, not to stop short. In other words, hard power is tremendously important but it is not sufficient. It is not everything. I generated the concept to get people to say, “Okay, as you do budgets or as you do assessments or orders of battle, do not stop just with the hard power. There is another aspect called ‘soft power’ that can make a big difference”. Sometimes hard and soft power can counter each other and cancel each other out. Sometimes they can reinforce each other, but a good analyst needs to look at all three sources of ways to essentially affect others to get the outcomes you want.

My purpose was analytical but, to my surprise, it got picked up by politicians. I think the biggest surprise I had was in 2007 when Hu Jintao gave a speech to the 17th Party Congress of the Chinese Communist Party saying that China should invest more heavily in its soft power. I would never have expected that when I was writing this back in 1989.

The Chairman: You called your earlier book *Bound to Lead*, but in the networked world is leadership the right concept? As I think you have said in your later books, is it not partnership rather than leadership? When some countries claim they are leaders, is that not the way they turn other people off?

Professor Nye: That is right, if we think of leadership in traditional terms. I think the modern theories of leadership are that it is distributed leadership. In other words, it is not just the ability to say something or give an order, it is getting others to pick up your agenda. Dwight Eisenhower had a wonderful phrase for this. He said leadership is not just giving commands, anybody can do that. Leadership is getting other people to want to do something for you because they want to. That is what leadership really is. Of course, this came from a general who had all the authority he needed to give commands.

The Chairman: Baroness Nicholson, one more. I am mindful of the time but we will fit in a few more.

Q185 Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: Professor Nye, you commented that people’s minds being changed was a measurement of the success of soft power. But statistical measurements are difficult in terms of measuring human emotions and human well-being. Have you devised any mechanisms whereby you can grasp that problem? Is there anything that you could offer us so that we can define our own soft power influence, from the UK, for example, in any sector of society? What measurements are there?

Professor Nye: Although it is imperfect, the easiest measurement is public opinion polling. In other words, if you are talking about attractiveness and you notice that when you have a policy that is followed by a great reduction in the polls or by a great increase in the polls, that may tell you something about whether that policy has generated or consumed soft power. If you have a programme you can do the same sort of thing. For example, when you look at these Pew polls they will ask questions about, “What do you find attractive about—in this case let us say—the United States? Is it the science and technology? Is it the economic growth? Is it the openness of society?” Then you can go through and find what things are more likely to produce attractiveness. Polling is a surrogate measure, but the real measure you want is whether people’s behaviour changes. That is hard to measure en masse. In other
words, sometimes you can see that behaviour will come out in the way you want but if you say, “What is a metric for measuring?” it is hard to tell. It may come out in subtle ways. If you look at the Falklands War, officially the United States did not come down on Britain’s side on the Falklands War. But if you look at the relations between the British Navy and the American Navy, all sorts of information and intelligence was being passed from the Americans to the British. The Americans were not violating anything in a formal policy but they wanted the British to win. They were attracted to the British.

If you go back to World War I, there have been studies done about when Woodrow Wilson was debating between Germany and Britain and how would he feel about this. There were studies done that showed that Britain had much better contacts throughout the American elites, which essentially meant that when Wilson was trying to make his choices the British were much better networked into American society and this had an impact on the American decision to come down on the British side. So you can do historical studies or case studies that will show how behaviour was influenced, sometimes with important results for hard power but an overall metric is hard.

You can also do the converse. You can find situations where a loss of soft power has affected decisions. For example, when George W Bush wanted to get the vote of President Vicente Fox of Mexico—Mexico was then on the Security Council—for a second UN resolution, even though Fox had made a major effort to be close to Bush and to align Mexican policy with American policy, he basically said to Bush, “Frankly, the American position on Iraq has been so unpopular in Mexico that, much as you are my friend, I cannot support you. There has been such a loss of American soft power that I cannot help you”.

You can find concrete instances where a good journalist or a good historian can trace the effects but it is hard to put a precise metric on them. I think the closest you will come to a metric is probably public opinion polling. Since that is not the ultimate outcome, which is changed behaviour, I would call it a surrogate rather than a perfect measure.

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: These are very crude measurements, are they not? They are quite rough and ready. The State Department, the World Bank and so on, demand something much more sophisticated nowadays for the release of funding to start to alter things. Has soft power any capacity to lean into those much more complex measurements, or should we still view it that public opinion is the only real measurement?

Professor Nye: As I said, public opinion is not a perfect measurement because it does not go to the actual changed behaviour. I suppose if you put enough funding into it you could do studies in particular instances to show how a policy does in fact change behaviour. It would be very expensive and very cumbersome. In principle, you could do it. I do not suspect we are going to see a lot of investment in that.

Q186 The Chairman: I am going to make this the final question, because I am worried about your lunch and our schedule, Professor Nye.

If we are going to urge on our Governments more of a soft power strategy, and we are going to talk about budgets and so on, how does one distinguish between that and the whole thing drifting into propaganda? When you mentioned earlier that China was spending a lot of billions, was the implication that if that turns into propaganda it is not much use?

Professor Nye: Yes. The danger that the Chinese have is that they think that if you invest a lot of money in turning Xinhua and China Central Television into worldwide broadcasting networks, and make China Daily a worldwide paper, that you are going to get attraction. But it is the extent to which the messages that come across on these media strike the listeners
or readers as rather brittle propaganda. They are not very credible. If you are not credible you are not going to be able to generate soft power. The scarcest resource in an information age is attention. We are all deluged with information and the problem is: what do we pay attention to? We pay attention to that which is credible. That which is credible is not propaganda.

If you look at one of the things that is intriguing about the BBC, it is its ability to maintain its credibility despite the fact that it is Government funded. You ask, “Why is that?” It is because of an institutional framework that allows a degree of distance from the Government, but even more important is the ability to be self-critical. The fact that the BBC can bite the hand that feeds it occasionally means the BBC is seen as credible rather than as propaganda. You do not see that with the Chinese media broadcasters. In that sense, I think investing a lot in Government broadcasting that is not self-critical, which does not show that it is able to see different points of view, is not a very good investment. There is a very interesting book by David Shambaugh on China’s efforts to rise as a great power, which has a long 60 or 70-page chapter on Chinese efforts to increase its soft power. He gives chapter and verse on how this has not worked as well as the Chinese would like. I think the best summary of it would be a statement that I quote in one of my books from a young Czech student, who was at one of the Salzburg seminars where you spend two or three weeks with students from other countries. After this whole session the student was interviewed and asked, “How do you like it?” He said, “I suppose you might say it was American propaganda but it did not feel that way. The best propaganda is not propaganda”. I think that may be the answer. If you try to generate a message that is too single-minded you lose what is the great asset that Britain, the United States and other Western societies have, which is the ability to be self-critical, to open up, to generate debate and diversity. That is one of our great assets, which I did not properly give enough attention to right at the start.

The Chairman: I think that is an excellent note on which to end. We must release you and thank you very much indeed. As you say, credibility is the key to all this, and a bit of self-criticism as well. Professor Nye, we are extremely grateful to you. Your input, both today and obviously through your massive works and influence, is marvellous. We are very grateful to you and look forward to meeting you perhaps in the flesh on other occasions. Thank you very much indeed.
Open Europe, Centre for European Reform and European Policy Reform – Oral evidence (QQ 165-175)

Transcript to be found under Centre for European Reform in Volume I (page 326)
PACT – Written evidence

Executive summary
Pact welcomes the opportunity to put forward a submission to the Lords Committee inquiry on Soft Power and the UK’s influence.

As the UK trade association for independent TV, film and digital media companies, Pact’s view is that the sector has made a crucial contribution to communicating Britain’s soft power around the world. In doing this, it is simultaneously promoting the UK as an attractive business destination, raising awareness of its culture and encouraging foreign investment and tourism to the UK.

The UK is the second largest exporter of TV content in the world (after the USA) and at £838m in 2012, international revenues now account for 30% of total sector revenues in independent TV production. It is important for policy makers to maintain the existing broadcasting model allowing for the continuing success of this sector as established through the Communications Act 2003 introducing codes of practice and terms of trade guiding revenue sharing arrangements between broadcasters and producers.

The impact of Britain’s soft power overseas is difficult to measure in the short term beyond export figures, programme earnings or DVD sales. However, the TV and film industry can demonstrate that it has had a unique impact on:

- Promoting the UK as a positive place in which to do business and promoting the UK as a quality and innovative brand; and in turn having a positive impact on the industry itself;
- The promotion of British culture, society and values and the English language overseas;
- Foreign direct investment and tourism.

Introduction

1) Pact is the trade association that represents the commercial interests of the independent television, film and digital media production sector in the UK. The sector produces and distributes approximately half of all new UK television programmes as well as content in digital media and feature film.

2) Pact works on behalf of its members to ensure the best legal, regulatory and economic environment for growth in the sector.

3) The UK independent television sector is one of the biggest in the world with revenues of nearly £2.8 billion in 2012.

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75 Ofcom, Communications Market Report 2010: independents produced more than 50% of qualifying network programming by hours and 46% by value
76 Pact Census Independent Production Sector Financial Census and Survey 2013, by Oliver & Ohlbaum Associates Limited, July 2013
4) The British independent TV production sector is extremely successful internationally. The UK is the second largest exporter of TV content in the world (after the USA)\textsuperscript{77} and at £838m in 2012, international revenues now account for 30% of total sector revenues in independent TV production.\textsuperscript{78}

5) Pact’s address is: 3\textsuperscript{rd} Floor, Fitzrovia House, 153-157 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 6QW.

\textbf{Soft Power and the TV & film sector}

1.1 Joseph Nye introduced the definition of soft power in 1990, a concept that he subsequently developed in a number of publications\textsuperscript{79}. He defines soft power as the ability for a country to persuade or get what it wants through attraction rather than the hard power or coercive methods of economic, financial or political power.

1.2 TV is a prime means of communicating and disseminating Britain’s soft power overseas. The British independent TV production sector in particular is extremely successful internationally. The UK is the second largest exporter of TV content in the world (after the USA) and at £838 in 2012, international revenues now account for 30% of total sector revenues in independent TV production.

1.3 From the point of view of independent TV producers, the market has evolved over the last ten years since the introduction of the Communications Act in 2003 establishing the requirement for codes of practice governing how the UK’s Public Service Broadcasters (BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and 5) commission programmes from independent producers. The implementation of these codes of practice led to the introduction of negotiated ‘terms of trade’ in the UK market setting out the rights and revenue sharing arrangements between broadcasters and producers. This gave producers more control over the rights to their work allowing them more opportunities to exploit them in secondary markets too.

1.4 The UK independent production sector today is the global leader in developing and commercializing intellectual property. Over the last ten years, UK independent producers have grown to become market leaders and the UK has emerged as a leading global production hub. Independents are driving innovation and diversity in programming and selling programmes and formats overseas (X-Factor, Pop Idol, Who wants to be a millionaire). The UK has also developed into a global production hub attracting overseas productions and foreign investment.

\textbf{Measuring the impact}

2.1 Measuring the impact of the growth in the independent sector on the UK’s soft power overseas is difficult to do. This can only really be measured over a longer period of time drawing on a range of indicators. However, in the short term it can be measured in part by export figures, programme or box office sales and DVDs (sales of the recent Sherlock series topped the DVD charts in 2012).

\textsuperscript{77} Mediametrie Television Year in the World 2013
\textsuperscript{78} Pact Census 2013
\textsuperscript{79} \textit{Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics} (2004)
2.2 From a soft power point of view, the UK is demonstrating that it is a world leader in TV but it also having a number of other effects on:

- The promotion of the UK as a positive place in which to do business and of the British brand as a quality and innovative brand; and in turn having a positive impact on the industry itself
- The promotion of British society, culture and values and the English language
- Impact on foreign direct investment and tourism

Impact on doing business and the UK brand

2.3 The strong growth in the TV and film sector is showing that the UK can be a front runner in this space. A knock on effect for international tradeshows and exhibitions is that everyone wants to be where the British are – will the Brits be there? - Is the question on everyone’s lips. Through constructive transactions and dealings, the sector is showing that Britain is a positive trading environment. This is confirmed to a certain extent by the fact that the UK features well on the Corruption Perceptions Index\(^8\) compared to some other countries in Europe that languish further down the list. In general, the TV and film sector help uphold the view of the UK as a democratic and diverse society upholding the rule of law and human rights.

2.4 The Brits have a reputation for creating quality content but also for their creativity too, Danny Boyle’s Opening Ceremony at the Olympics being a case in point showing the history of innovation. The UK is envied for this approach and the quality and innovation of production.

2.5 Another example to offer is of how the UK is disseminating culture overseas. It has penetrated the US market and actually transformed TV formats in the US. Hulu is a US Video on Demand (VoD) service and was responsible for introducing ‘The Thick of It’ to the American public. Young, smart, Silicon Valley types (the ‘decablers’, moving away from traditional cable channels) were looking for more edgy content than the mainstream US channels could provide. Hulu wanted to be more than just a catch up channel and the show became one of the top five shows on the service.

Positive impact on the industry itself

2.6 The knock on effect for the industry is that it is sustaining and promoting its own model. The industry is creating a positive cycle for developing itself by making quality content then taking this to the international arena. Businesses are then competing on the world stage, innovating and developing. They then aspire to making more international content of interest overseas, engaging and encouraging more countries to invest in the British brand. Arguably the success that the sector has generated has reaped huge benefits for the UK and has been driven by the BBC Worldwide, the independent sector and others.

Promoting British society, culture and values

\(8\) Transparency International 2012
2.7 The exporting success of the sector is demonstrating to the world that the UK is not protectionist and is also allowing the penetration of UK ideas in societies overseas. This has resulted to some extent in a cultural invasion of music, fashion, football and other areas allowing wider sectors to benefit by way of revenue sales as well.

2.8 Through a range of UK hits including Downton Abbey, Bond and many others besides, the UK is communicating lifestyle and culture to the rest of the world and marketing its values too. Hartwood Films, a Pact member and producer of the popular Sherlock series, have developed a British icon; taking the history and nostalgia from the original book and characters and developing it into a modern adaptation with modern technology. The production has given a positive view of the UK as innovative and forward thinking in the process whilst taking from history.

2.9 The success of the TV and film sector is simultaneously communicating the English language around the world. With 1.5 billion people learning English at any one time TV and film is an important medium by which to sell British culture and language (despite the fact that in some countries programmes are more likely to be dubbed). The TV and film sector sustains other industries such as book publishing, the English language education industry and even to some extent English law which is a model used in legal frameworks and contracts internationally.

3.0 Through this exposure to British culture, landscape and scenery, it is then equally as likely that visitors will come to the UK as tourists and spend money in the UK economy having seen the images of the UK on TV or film. Highclere Castle in Carnarvon where the filming of Downton Abbey took place has seen a huge rise in interest from tourists. There is also increased interest in the Warner Bros studios at Leavesden where the studio filming took place.

**Pact’s role in sustaining success**

4.1 Pact is currently supporting independent producers looking to export through its Growth Accelerator scheme in collaboration with UKTI (UK Trade & Investment). The scheme involves access to workshops and seminars, supported access to tradeshows in over 10 markets, tailored support and updates on new territories and global trader bulletins.

4.2 With the UK creating over half of all formats sold worldwide, Pact has also developed an App available to download at [www.UKIndies.co.uk](http://www.UKIndies.co.uk) which gives valuable information, advice and contacts to anyone looking to license formats for use in their own country. The app gives access to hundreds of UK production and distribution companies who are responsible for documentaries, programmes and entertainment that is ready to licence for broadcast.

4.3 Pact is also working with KPMG on an ‘Export Bible’ allowing producers to access market information via an App on 58 countries globally helping them negotiate the local terrain when they get overseas and diversify into more markets.

**Conclusions**

4.3 Pact’s message for policy makers would be that the broadcasting model has worked well over the last ten years since the introduction of the Communications Act in 2003. We need
to continue to ensure that terms of trade truly encourage producers to sustain this success and encourage access to businesses more widely to overseas markets and to innovate and grow.
Dr James Pamment, researcher, University of Texas at Austin, submitting in an individual capacity.

1. I am a researcher in the fields of international communication, diplomacy and international development. My PhD thesis, *The Limits of the New Public Diplomacy* (2011) is a comparative study of public diplomacy policy, practices and evaluation in 3 countries including in the UK, and has been published in a revised version by Routledge as *New Public Diplomacy in the 21st Century* (2013). I have published half a dozen journal articles and book chapters on public and cultural diplomacy, and have presented a similar number of conference papers on those subjects. I am currently conducting research for a book on the diplomatic and promotional efforts surrounding the Olympic Games in 2012, so this inquiry is of great interest to me. I am also conducting a research project for the British Council exploring the relationship between their Official Development Assistance (ODA) activities and cultural relations, and a separate project on aid effectiveness and evaluation for which I have consulted with DfID among other international actors. In this submission, I shall briefly comment upon soft power as a concept; British soft power strategy and the prosperity agenda; the role of language in British soft power strategy in comparison to Germany and France; the GREAT campaign; evaluation and measurement; the role of ODA in relation to soft power; and finally some concluding points about the past and future of British soft power. I will be happy to address specific questions at a later stage.

2. I find soft power a deeply problematic concept. However, it is probably the best term we have for encapsulating ideas for which there are few good terms. It usually refers, depending on the context of usage, to a set of assets/resources, to communicative practices, and/or to the process of attraction. This is particularly difficult when the term is juxtaposed with hard power, which refers equally imprecisely to economic and military assets/resources, the practice of coercion, and/or the process of submission to a superior force. This poor conceptualisation is particularly weak at handling the relationship between economic value and attraction; for example, expensive, rare, important and powerful things are usually highly desirable and attractive. Many of the traditionally attractive soft power assets, such as strong, stable institutions with the capacity to assert and project common values and norms, are a direct outcome of substantial investments of hard resources into those institutions. Therefore the idea that soft power is a cheap alternative to hard power is misleading; soft power is in many respects the indirect outcome of being wealthy and powerful, and therefore of developing an infrastructure and culture which exudes the benefits of affluence. A second issue is the idea that soft power is something a nation exerts and a government can control. The inquiry will be well aware of the reasons why the picture is more complex than that, suffice to say that the best a government can hope for is to cultivate, curate and facilitate soft power assets. While there is plenty of room for criticism, let me be clear in stating that Britain has an incredible wealth of soft power resources, and efforts to create a soft power strategy are undoubtedly working from a position of strength.

3. Despite occasional claims to the contrary over the past few years, the UK does not have and has not had a coherent soft power strategy. In practice, the prosperity agenda and GREAT are probably the defining components of what might be considered the current strategy. It seems likely that any formally codified strategy would have to develop out of
these components, but it would require a broader, more inclusive narrative. By narratives, I refer to a form of storytelling that sums up the overarching national strategy in ways that soft power institutions can draw upon and rearticulate in their own unique ways. The current prosperity agenda is aimed at business elites and its central narratives are strongly tied to trade, investment and tourism. This makes a lot of sense, but if the UK is to have a formal soft power strategy, that strategy needs to be broader and more inclusive. Culture, education and international development would need a place within this strategy without their being subjugated to the prosperity agenda and its promotional style. I am particularly critical of the way in which the British Council has been treated in recent years, which has reduced the value of long term cultural relations and turned language teaching into a revenue source in lieu of proper funding. As I mentioned in the above paragraph, soft power should probably be considered the overflow from well-funded institutions with good governance, and not a product that can be packaged and sold. The latter is simply marketing, which the prosperity agenda is exceptionally good at, but marketing is only part of a soft power strategy.

4. Germany and France provide instructive examples of soft power strategies that establish useful narratives while providing relative autonomy to cultural organisations. Germany’s strategy positions it as a regional economic power without equivalent political power. This enables it to approach the emerging economies as a humble partner, echoing their calls for reform to the international system in response to geopolitical change. Its foreign cultural, education and communication sector is remarkably well-funded and relatively autonomous, and receives just under 0.5% of GNI (cf the 0.7% target for ODA). It would be interesting if this inquiry could obtain a credible figure on the UK’s contribution, which at my best guess is around half this figure. France’s soft power strategy is heavily based around promoting a Francophone cultural sphere, though this may be characterised by an anti-hegemonic spirit, as an alternative to American dominated globalisation and with a strong emphasis on international development. Striking in both examples is the centrality of language as the basis for attracting foreigners into national cultures and spheres of influence, and therefore as a platform for asserting norms. The UK has enjoyed the immediate economic value of language teaching and its higher education sector on the basis that English is a global language which people want to learn and are prepared to pay for. However, a long-term British soft power strategy should acknowledge that the English language needs to be protected, provides an essential point of access into British business, education and culture, and is one of the main pillars of the UK’s continued international influence. Most importantly, it should recognise that we cannot take for granted the continued global dominance of English over the long term, since language is a key focal point of economic competition through the long term soft power strategies of our closest neighbours. The UK currently lacks a coherent soft power strategy which balances language and culture with political-economic objectives, capable of being expressed as a compelling narrative explaining Britain’s place and intentions in the international system.

5. The GREAT campaign is skilfully managed and will in time probably be considered the most successful campaign of its kind in the UK and perhaps elsewhere. In my opinion, there are at least three reasons for its success, beyond the fact that Britain had the Olympics. First is the calibre of individuals involved, from the high-level political support, to the talented individuals running it, to the private sector representatives co-opted into the campaign. Second is the intensive coordination, including weekly meetings, thereby (temporarily at least) resolving problems of coordination highlighted by just about every review of British soft power and public diplomacy conducted in the past 15 years. Third is the opportunities
afforded by its modest funding, that have been valuable for counteracting the natural scepticism of the organisations promoting it. Organisations under financial strain are finding opportunities to run programs and retain staff through GREAT funding. However, there are also problems. The FCO recently had its own central pots of public diplomacy funding removed with the argument that decentralisation is a good thing; yet GREAT represents a centralised fund under the Cabinet Office, with a far more limited economic remit. Likewise, the GREAT board appears to have usurped the Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy board. The inquiry may wish to question which structures best facilitate the UK’s soft power organisations to go about their business – and whether those that do more than simply market the UK are adequately represented under the current structure. Second, GREAT is a marketing campaign and hence can only be considered an economic component of a soft power strategy. If a coherent national soft power strategy existed, it would help clarify whether all the UK’s soft power organisations and activities – particularly those with cultural remits – benefit from association with GREAT. I suspect some do not. Third, some of the tourism and investment targets for the GREAT campaign that were made public at launch are duplications of other publicly funded programs, which gives the impression that some targets are being paid for twice by the tax payer. In the interests of disclosure, this inquiry may wish to look more closely at the actual objectives for GREAT, which are currently withheld from the public domain.

6. Over the past decade, the FCO and British Council have come a long way in developing methods for the evaluation of soft power. The principle developments may be summed up as tools which evaluate an organisation’s capacity to deliver upon its business objectives. This is useful for rationalising organisations, particularly for resource allocation and clarifying whether activities are aligned with an organisation’s priorities. They have been aimed at generating data for annual reports and Foreign Affairs Committee inquiries – contributing to an organisation’s good governance rather than to an understanding of the actual impact of the soft power activities. Evaluation has been used as a disciplining tool, perhaps necessarily, but we must be clear that this is not the only way to measure the effects of soft power. The more recent ROI measures used for GREAT and around the Olympics intensify the trend for simplistic data that demonstrate impact in very base terms. The risk is that, by producing evaluation data that gives returns based on how an organisation is managed rather than on the wider impact of communication activities on their own terms, activities become less creative and ambitious. In my opinion, any long term UK soft power strategy should complement these kinds of measures with other, more speculative approaches tailored to the variety of practices that soft power entail. They should take an interest in the activities in their own right including their unforeseen consequences, not just on those elements considered relevant for departmental reports, inquiries and press releases. The PD Pilots carried out by the FCO in 2008-2009 is an interesting example, though I’m not sure the FCO is the most appropriate organisation to conduct experimental work of this kind.

7. In a time of austerity, it seems remarkable that the 0.7% of GNI dedicated to ODA is not considered a resource for the UK’s soft power. This whole area is poorly conceptualised, but it seems to me that ODA and public diplomacy/soft power overlap in at least two very important ways. First, the UK needs to communicate its ODA activities as part of its everyday public diplomacy work, since ODA is among the best funded resources available for exerting soft power. More ODA-related funding needs to be dedicated to explaining how ODA is spent. Second, many projects funded by ODA money, for example in the areas of governance and civil society capacity building, could equally be considered public or cultural diplomacy. The key evidence here is that some 80% of Chevening Scholarships are
considered ODA, and around two-thirds of the British Council’s funding is ring-fenced for ODA. Work needs to be done together with the OECD and other stakeholders to clarify what parts of public diplomacy, cultural relations, language teaching and scholarships meet the definition of ODA. Certainly the 25% grant element is easily met in many cases. Funds that are in many cases diverted to inefficient multilateral organisations or packaged in large-scale projects could be used much more effectively if coordinated and integrated with the communication of the UK’s overall interests. A future UK soft power strategy may be able to drawn upon the considerable resources dedicated to ODA in creative ways that maximise the value of expenditure in line with soft power objectives. This may furthermore help shape parts of a narrative for British soft power, representing the UK as a force for good in the world.

8. British public diplomacy has evolved over the past 7 or 8 years into a policy tool used to deliver business objectives. Its funding and evaluation structures reinforce this, and the most recent campaigns intensify these trends. This has helped rationalise and professionalise these activities, and it is a positive development for much of the FCO’s work, and certainly for UKTI and VisitBritain. But it has also given a dominantly corporate flavour to British soft power. I’m less convinced of the benefits for the British Council, and also for parts of the FCO’s public diplomacy, on the basis that many communication activities do not produce—or indeed require—tangible results. Part of the value of public and cultural diplomacy is when the activities are the informed decisions of talented staff who spot an opportunity without expectation of a visible ROI or statistic in the departmental report. While anything can be measured, there is the risk of collecting data that is unable to inform the decisions of policymakers because it has been collected purely to tick a box. Worse, certain activities may be preferred over others because they are more suited to reporting. Some of the effects of communication will be intangible, and it is my view that an organisation like the British Council is well-placed to act as a laboratory for testing new ideas when it comes to interpreting and delivering soft power. The previous Swedish government tried something similar with the Swedish Institute, and did pretty well. Returning to my original conceptual discussion, a government cannot control soft power, but simply cultivate, curate and facilitate it. There have been some recent trends towards control, which makes sense for certain campaigns and organisations, but not for all of them. A future UK soft power strategy needs to reassert not just the independence, but the unique ways of working, of all the soft power actors. It needs a long term strategy that is not chopped and changed every two years, and that hinges upon the core principles of language, development assistance and prosperity, and allows those principles to be expressed in different ways by different voices.

September 2013
Penspen Group Ltd, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC), Shell and ARM – Oral evidence (QQ 218-235)

Penspen Group Ltd, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC), Shell and ARM – Oral evidence (QQ 218-235)

Transcript to be found under ARM in Volume 1 (page 95)
Baroness Prashar, Government (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and H.E. Mr Carlos dos Santos, High Commissioner for the Republic of Mozambique – Oral evidence (QQ 152-164)

Transcript to be found under Government (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) in Volume 1 (page 500)
Premier League, England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and Lord Moynihan, former Chairman, British Olympic Association – Oral evidence (QQ 274-291)

Transcript to be found under England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) in Volume 1 (page 361)
Transcript to be found under Professor Simon Anholt in Volume 1 (page 68)
Raleigh International – Written evidence

Submission by Stacey Adams, Chief Executive, Raleigh International

1. Thank you for your invitation to contribute to the evidence process on the issue of soft power and UK influence.

We appreciate your broad outreach process and welcome the effort to understand this issue incorporating the experience and knowledge of stakeholders. We particularly wish to identify the irreplaceable value of young people’s contributions.

2. Raleigh International has experience of working ‘with’ and ‘through’ youth volunteers for nearly 30 years. Founded as Operation Raleigh in 1984 by HRH the Prince of Wales, we have supported young people from over 96 countries to contribute in finding sustainable development solutions together with some of the world’s poorest communities. Our volunteers come from all walks of life and also benefit from personal and professional development during their participation on our programmes. They learn to work in cross-cultural groups with communities and other NGOs to deliver previously non-existent services, inspire interest and action from peers locally and overseas; motivate communities to improve their own living conditions and create a sense of global citizenship and shared responsibility.

3. Raleigh International has been supported on many occasions in its 30 year history by the Foreign Office, receiving country specific funding for project work on numerous occasions. We also have close relationships with High Commissioners and Ambassadors in all of the countries where we operate. We are currently working in a Consortium led by VSO delivering the International Citizen Service programme for the Department for International Development.

4. As a result of our operations we can cite a number of specific very tangible results of soft power and cultural influence:

4.1 Raleigh China – Serve to Achieve
Raleigh International ran one expedition in China in 1998 which involved 200 UK and international youth and 22 local Chinese youth. It ran for ten weeks and undertook a number of projects in rural communities. Ten years after that one and only expedition, I was contacted by Lu Feng one of those volunteers of that expedition, who said he wanted to start a Raleigh China. Over the past four years Lu Feng has built Raleigh China into a major domestic organisation working with and through youth to support poorer communities and build civic society. It is registered as a not-for-profit in Shanghai and we were told by the Consul General in Shanghai that it was the only British heritage not for profit registered there. All of the original 22 Chinese who are now hold professional jobs are involved in a steering group. Raleigh China works with thousands of young people across China and ultimately aims to influence the education policy of central government to recognise the value of social action volunteering for youth within the education curriculum.

4.2 Raleigh Ghana - Contributing to National Development through Volunteerism
This local not-for-profit tells a similar story of supporting the development of civil society

ten years after Raleigh International left the country. Raleigh Ghana is run by a small number

of alumni who have recruited a wide range of volunteers to engage in building their own

communities in a genuinely sustainable and altruistic way.

4.3 Raleigh Hong Kong

This Raleigh alumni society was started by three Chinese volunteers returning after 3

months on Operation Raleigh in 1984. They have remained involved for the last 30 years and

are still on its executive committee. Raleigh Hong Kong recruits local volunteers to do

conservation work on the island and in the new territories. They also run 2 island wide

challenge events the Wilson Challenge and the Mountain Marathon both of which attract

hundreds of runners both nationally and internationally.

5. Raleigh’s alumni societies are not financially supported by Raleigh International and

we only hold a light-touch Global Alliance for Youth framework agreement with all of

our societies. There is sufficient trust and alignment of values that we work together

in a collaborative way to build a global community.

6. From our experience, it is critical to support long-term relationships between

international and national volunteers. These are lifelong, strong bonds that make true

changes in lives of both communities, putting firm foundations to future peace and

truly sustainable development. The influence of the Raleigh volunteering programme,

building tolerance, leadership skills and global citizenship is a very tangible result of

the UK influence of soft power. If you would like to discuss any of the above further I

would be happy to meet.

25 October 2013
Any programme that begins with the objective of designing a ‘programme to enhance ... soft power' will encounter difficulties. Soft power is a natural by-product of one’s values, principles, and behaviour (at home and abroad). It cannot be strategised. Therefore any attempt to ‘develop and employ better’ soft power is problematic. (Boosting trade and investment are neither objectives nor methods of exercising soft power; they are by-products.)

Therefore it is necessary to unpack the term to understand that it is possible to develop and employ the instruments of exercising soft power, such as public and cultural diplomacy, international broadcasting, educational exchanges etc. These help the accumulation of soft power capital, but cannot and do not guarantee soft power effectiveness or success.

Evaluation is extremely important but equally extremely difficult for it requires a method of converting intangibles into tangibles. One needs to identify a positive correlation between the exercise of soft power and changes in the behaviour/attitudes/foreign policy decisions of the target countries. This is why it is important to unpack its component parts. Any attempt to evaluate ‘soft power’ as an umbrella concept will fail, though it is possible to evaluate the success of public and cultural diplomacy initiatives, student exchange programmes and international broadcasting.

Yet even in measuring these activities there is a tendency to focus on outputs rather than impacts: how big is the audience for our international broadcasting? How many overseas students have entered our higher education system? How many people have seen a particular cultural product or watched the opening ceremony of the Olympics? These are quantifiable measures of capacity, but tell us nothing about emotions, attitudes or behaviour; they tell us nothing about ‘power’ or influence.

To understand this one only needs to examine the soft power activity of the People’s Republic of China. Polls of public opinion from across the world indicate that China’s image and reputation remains negative despite the estimated US$9 billion per year it spends on developing and facilitating its soft power programmes.

Therefore the bottom line is that soft power is not and should not be a panacea for problems in the political or social domains. How a government behaves at home and abroad will always have more impact than its soft power. Actions always speak louder than words.

The distinction between hard and soft power is increasingly blurred, hence Professor Joseph Nye’s recent discussion of ‘smart power’ to identify the integration of hard and soft power. Moreover, it moves forward the debates about when hard power may be soft, and soft power become hard. For example, Hollywood movies may be considered instruments
of American hard power in those parts of the world which try to protect themselves from American values and see movies as agents of cultural imperialism or hegemony. In this way soft power may not necessarily contribute to national security (I discuss this in more detail at point 20). Similarly when the armed forces are engaged in relief operations after a natural disaster, they may contribute to the accumulation of soft power.

8. Particularly useful in this context is Mingjiang Li’s contribution to the debate. He considers it more appropriate to refer to the ‘soft use of power’. 81 Again, this suggests that how a state uses its power, especially on its own people, can have an impact on perception abroad.

9. Such definitions also point to how discussions of soft power must consider the audience. In the final analysis, the source has very little power; the power resides in the target who can choose whether and how to accept or internalise the message.

10. Hence the importance of credibility - of both the message and the source. If there is any suspicion about the motivations or method of exercising soft power, any potential benefits are lost. Therefore government or institutions associated with the state are not the best agencies of soft power activity. In fact, the more distance the better between the government and a nation’s soft power capacity. We should consider the question ‘Who do we trust?’ Polls suggest that trust politicians and state representatives less and less, and even the influence of authority figures and experts has declined. Rather, we now tend to trust most ‘people like me’. This leads to the importance of networks, especially in the social media, to facilitate public diplomacy.

11. Digital communications are important for public diplomacy, not soft power. However, digital communications, and especially the social media, are only effective if they provide the opportunity for genuine interaction, discussion and debate. The essence of modern public diplomacy is listening and engaging, not just talking. Research indicates that web users are frustrated by the absence of dialogue on official social media sites of institutions (complaints about BBC coverage are rarely addressed on their Facebook pages, for example. Similar criticisms are made about the sites administered by political parties in the UK). Public diplomacy, the most important instrument of soft power, depends on the building of relationships. Social media are extremely useful ways of building and maintaining relationships with one’s target provided the source genuinely engages with the users.

12. At the same time, it is important to recognise how digital media can undermine public diplomacy and the accumulation/exercise of soft power capital. Unfiltered and unmediated information can be uploaded and distributed around the world at speeds previously unimaginable. Many users lack the skills and literacy necessary to contextualise the information posted, which means that credibility and reputations can be damaged and destroyed in an instant. The digital age also means that it is no longer sufficient to grab the attention of your target audience; shouting the loudest no longer works. The challenge now is to retain your audience’s attention in an overcrowded information sphere.

13. The bottom line: Governments should govern according to ethical, democratic, transparent and accountable principles. This is soft power. Governments should let others - the British and overseas media, cultural products, educational institutions etc. - tell the story.

The government should facilitate such activity and provide the infrastructure (regulatory and otherwise) and the conditions for investment necessary for non-state actors to work, but should be hands-off as much as possible.

14. However, we should note that it is difficult to measure the measure soft power in terms of returns on investment. The accumulation and exercise of soft power capital is a long-term process and governments cannot expect immediate or short-term returns. One cannot use a business model to design soft power strategies.

15. In the UK, recent debates on immigration have been particularly damaging to how the country is perceived overseas, especially among students. It is now more difficult for overseas students to come to British educational institutions. For example, the requirements for them to pay bonds on top of high fees, stringent and prolonged visa processes, and the abolition of the PSW visa, have all negatively impacted on the UK’s soft power. The UK is no longer considered welcoming of overseas students despite the huge amount of money they inject into the economy.

16. When the British government makes policy choices that are against public opinion and may even challenge the democratic foundations on which the British political system is built, the UK’s soft power is damaged. Britain’s intervention in Iraq in 2003 and the state’s collaboration in the most odious aspects of the inappropriately named War on Terror undermined the UK’s soft power. Similarly recent revelations about the British government’s complicity in American interception of private email correspondence and the detention of David Miranda, partner of Guardian journalist Glenn Greenwald, expose the UK to allegations of hypocrisy in those parts of the world where our soft power in concerned with spreading values associated with democracy, transparency, accountability, the rule of law, free speech and human rights. In soft power and public diplomacy, actions always speak louder than words.

17. For this reason, the UK’s involvement in aid and humanitarian relief/assistance is effective. However, if there is any suspicion that the government or NGOs are engaging in such activity for other than altruistic reasons, the soft power benefit diminishes. In June 2012 the UK’s Department for International Development (DfID) unveiled plans to re-brand British overseas aid. “From today,” declared the department’s website, “the new UK aid logo will be applied to items like emergency grain packets, schools and water pumps.” From now on, all recipients of aid will see the Union Flag and a statement that the aid comes "From the British people." When the media focuses on the problems caused by the invasions of, and continued wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, not to mention having to deal with the legacy of Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib - public diplomacy disasters in their own right - the British and American governments have let slip through their fingers countless public diplomacy opportunities to remind audiences about their assistance to Muslim communities across the world (for example, NATO’s intervention in Bosnia; the response to the 2004 tsunami in the Indian ocean). This is needed to help counter the prevailing narratives that the UK and the US have co-operated in a war against Muslims and Islam. So it is possible that the new logo will go help to demonstrate to the international community that international assistance does not come from a faceless bureaucratic machinery or from governments, but from the people who have too many times been the victims of terrorist
atrocities. It may have come too late, but it is a small step in rebalancing public diplomacy efforts towards a people-to-people strategy.

18. Yet flaws remain, and the most serious problem is that the British government has not explained the rebranding as a way of boosting the UK’s public diplomacy. Rather, it seems designed to make the British people feel better about themselves. Unveiling the new logo, the International Development Secretary Andrew Mitchell said: “For too long, Britain has not received the credit it deserves for the amazing results we achieve in tackling global poverty.... It is right that people in villages, towns and cities around the world can see by whom aid is provided ... And I am determined that, from now on, Britain will not shy away from celebrating and taking credit for them.” In other words, it is all about the British receiving the gratitude of the people they are helping. So, the right action for the wrong reasons. Such explanations do fuel suspicion about British arrogance and ambition. Public diplomacy is not about taking credit; it is about building relationships. If the Secretary had noted that branding British aid helps to make connections between the source and the recipient, then the decision may have been received with more warmth.

19. Another problem specific to the UK is the government’s treatment of the BBC World Service, the foremost agent of British public and cultural diplomacy. Decisions to cut or abolish altogether language services has a negative impact in public diplomacy terms. The rationale for cuts is based on an assumption that digital media offer new ways for audiences to listen to the station’s output. While the new media do represent a new-style of activism, mobilisation and offer more efficient means of P2P communication, old broadcasting media are also required. At a time when governments around the world are expanding their international broadcasting - China in particular is engaged in an aggressive investment programme to expand its reach across the globe - the British are cutting back and closing language services. For example, the BBC’s Mandarin language service built over decades a reputation among its audience for accuracy and credibility, and there is a clear relationship based on trust between broadcaster and audience (see my earlier point about public diplomacy depending on relationships). To abandon such relationships in the mistaken belief that they are antiquated and no longer required in order to save money is a mistake. Both the British Foreign Office and the American USIA throughout their histories have believed that they could turn language services on and off like taps, only to find that when they are needed again, it is not easy to rebuild audiences, reputations and relationships.

20. There are specific problems with cultural diplomacy and depending on culture to provide soft power capital. One weakness is that culture is subjective: What appeals to one member of the audience may not necessarily appeal to others, particularly when cultural products are dispersed around the world for consumption by audiences who have little or no cultural appreciation of what they are seeing. This means the audience holds the power: As Joseph Nye has noted, success in soft power means recognising that ‘outcomes [are] more in control of the subject than is often the case with hard power.’ In other words, audiences for international communications decide whether and how they will accept, internalise and act upon the message, and this decision may depend on a range of other internal and external influences – education, family, religious, peer pressure etc. – that affect

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and determine response. Perhaps this reveals that current approaches to soft power focus too much on the source of the communication and not enough on the power of the receiver living within distinct political, social and cultural contexts.

21. Moreover, there is a danger that the audience may interpret the most benign cultural diplomacy as yet another example of ‘cultural imperialism’, and thus the effort is squandered and may even backfire: ‘A target may find a sender’s promotion of cultural and political values (such as democracy) to be an act of coercion, not persuasion. A sender’s cultural and political values themselves may be interpreted by a target state to be the potential source of threat to society’. Janice Bially Mattern called this the hard character of soft power. When Karen Hughes was appointed US Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs in 2005, she seemed to offer hope that America’s international communications would avoid the kind of rhetoric that generated hostility: ‘I am mindful,’ she said at her confirmation hearing, ‘that before we seek to be understood, we must first work to understand.’ However, she then continued by declaring: ‘In the long-run, the way to prevail in this battle is through the power of our ideals: for they speak to all of us, every people in every land on every continent. Given a fair hearing, I am sure they will soon prevail.’ However, claims of universalism may ultimately rebound as the ideas, principles and values that one nation-state communicates may be a challenge to, and be challenged by a range of alternatives. Confidence in the universal application and value of one set of principles can easily be translated as cultural and political arrogance.

22. Finally it is important to ensure that public diplomacy is integrated into the domestic and foreign policy-making machinery at the highest levels so government can understand the public diplomacy implications of particular policy choices. Further, all diplomats serving in overseas postings require professional training in public diplomacy. The days when diplomats could dismiss engagement with the media as trivial or the work of the press office has long gone; in the digital age that is characterised by the 24/7 flow of global information demanding instant responses, all members of an overseas post are public diplomats.

23. One recent example: In June 2013 the British government announced the creation of a taskforce ‘aimed at confronting Islamic extremism and controlling preachers of hate’. All the media reports on this story and the speeches by the senior members of the government responsible for its creation reflected a decidedly belligerent position; the very label ‘taskforce’ resonates with military symbolism, while the involvement of the security and intelligence forces demonstrates clearly the thinking behind its design. In all the talk of this taskforce and its aims, priorities and methods, one word was noticeable by its absence: engagement; and I do wonder which members of the taskforce have the required expertise to advise on communications strategies that go beyond knee-jerk reactions such as closing down websites, monitoring social media, and trying to curb 'hate speech'. An expert in strategic communication and public diplomacy should be a key member of this taskforce suggesting methods of engaging with Muslim communities and their young members before they can be radicalised. He/she should be making sure that the taskforce talks with (not to) young Muslims about the problems they face and the reasons why fundamentalism might be


attractive to them; and above all to ensure that taskforce is prepared to spend as much time listening as confronting. It necessary to understand that the militarism of the taskforce may itself be a symptom of the problem, not a cure.

24. So the conclusions:
   Soft power must be unpacked into its component parts before a strategy can be designed and their effects evaluated

   Soft power is not a short-term solution to problems in the political or strategic domain; it is a long-term process demanding long-term investment. It is a mistake to expect immediate or short-term returns on investment.

   Public diplomacy, international broadcasting, cultural diplomacy etc. all require engagement, listening, and building/maintaining relationships. These facilitate credibility - of the source and its message - and without credibility, any soft power capital accumulated is lost.

   Actions always speak louder than words and help the credibility of the source and message.
   Governments are judged at home and abroad by the decisions they take and how they behave.

   To maximise its soft power capacity the British government needs to act responsibly, and according to its principles and traditions of democracy, free speech, human rights, rule by law and transparency. Recent cases in which the government has been accused of violating privacy and press freedom undermine the UK’s soft power potential.

   Governments should maintain as much distance as possible from all activities associated with soft power. They should facilitate the infrastructures for the non-governmental sector to engage in soft power activities.

August 2013
Research Councils UK – Written evidence

Introduction

1. Research Councils UK (RCUK) is a strategic partnership of the UK’s seven Research Councils who annually invest around £3 billion in research. We support excellent research, as judged by peer review, which impacts on the growth, prosperity and wellbeing of the UK. To maintain the UK’s global research position, we offer a diverse range of funding opportunities, foster international collaborations and provide access to the best facilities and infrastructure around the world. We also support the training and career development of researchers and work with them to inspire young people and to engage the wider public with research. To maximise the impact of research on economic growth and societal wellbeing, we work in partnership with other research funders including the Technology Strategy Board, the UK Higher Education Funding Councils, businesses, the government, and charitable organisations. Further details are available at www.rcuk.ac.uk.

2. This evidence is submitted by RCUK and represents its independent views. It does not include, or necessarily reflect the views of the Knowledge and Innovation Group in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). The submission is made on behalf of the following Councils:
   - Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)
   - Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
   - Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)
   - Medical Research Council (MRC)
   - Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)

3. This response focuses only on those questions or parts of questions relevant to RCUK or the individual Councils who have contributed to the enquiry. The response was informed by Research Council funded research, debate and academic thought on soft power.

Science and research diplomacy

4. The Research Councils welcome the opportunity to respond to the House of Lords Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK’s Influence Call for Evidence. We welcome the opportunity to highlight the knowledge and expertise on diplomacy and soft power in the UK academic research base and would like to draw the Committee’s attention to the various programmes and projects mentioned in our response.

5. We agree with other evidence to this Inquiry that has stressed the importance of cultural institutions such as UK universities, the British Council and the BBC World Service. As Professor Mary Kaldor, Director of LSE Centre for the Study of Global Governance and ESRC Science and Security programme award holder argues, cultural industries are likely to become more strategically and economically important in a world of scarce material resources. Whilst being British institutions,
they have global reach representing core values of independence, openness and creativity. Hence the UK’s cultural industries are in a good position to contribute to on-going global discussions and debates through which rules and norms of the modern world are constructed.

6. It is argued that science and research in particular play a key role in mediating soft power. The UK science and research base has made a long-standing impact on the international positioning of the country by means of its reputation for quality, authority, and expertise. Opinion leading and authoritative sources such as the British Medical Journal, The Lancet and Nature have also contributed to the positioning of the UK’s science in the world. The historic legacy of the UK science and research is also to be mentioned as it influences the regard in which UK is held. In this context it is important to note the institutional (e.g. Royal Societies) and individual (e.g. Issac Newton, Charles Darwin, John Locke et al) impact.

7. Through our response we would also like to demonstrate the importance of research in strengthening soft power, arguing that research goes beyond facilitating science cooperation, but can contribute more widely to diplomatic relationships. We would like to draw the Committee’s attention to the Royal Society report on New frontiers in science diplomacy that argues that “Science diplomacy’ is still a fluid concept that can usefully be applied to the role of science [and research], technology and innovation in three dimensions of policy:

- informing foreign policy objectives with scientific advice (science in diplomacy);
- facilitating international science cooperation (diplomacy for science);
- using science cooperation to improve international relations between countries (science for diplomacy).”

8. Soft power is an important component of the development of international relationships in research. In general, in the formation of consortia to conduct joint research programmes or construct major facilities, there is little hard power present. This means that relationship building, understanding of mutual strengths and expectations, and some willingness to adapt are essential pre-requisites of a successful partnership. The use of English language is also important in providing the ability to coordinate scientific projects. These are all elements of the exercise of soft power. There are numerous examples of UK researchers working in collaboration with their colleagues in other countries to create joint proposals, for example to bid under the EU’s Framework Programme for Research (FP) or to build up a joint infrastructure project to become a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC). The Research Councils have frequently provided support to facilitate the development of international partnerships.

9. The Research Councils have specifically facilitated research collaborations with other countries through supporting networking opportunities and funding joint research initiatives. An example of this is the ESRC Rising Powers Research Programme which enables building and strengthening of research networks for collaborative research.

Responses to the inquiry questions
The meaning and importance of soft power

Question 3: How do deployments of soft power inter-relate with harder and more physical exercises of the nation’s power, ranging from trade sanctions up to the full use of force through military means?

10. Mary Kaldor’s analysis of national security versus human security may provide some useful insight here. National security is taken to be about the defence of the UK from external threats and risks. Although the National Security Strategy conveys a wide range of possible risks, the tools are still somewhat focussed on conventional military forces designed to meet the threat of an attack by a foreign state. Human security concerns the security of individuals and the communities in which they live and involves both physical security and material security. Human security is often said to involve soft power options as opposed to national security and hard power. And yet this is clearly a false dichotomy—conventional military forces nowadays are to a considerable extent used for ‘soft’ purposes such as reinforcing diplomacy and protecting communities. And an effective human security approach can require the use of force in robust ways for rights-based international law enforcement (e.g. intervention over Kosovo).

11. The content of the communication, regardless what tools are being used, is important, particularly if the aim is to enhance the legitimacy of soft power. There may well continue to be a role for the use of force along with other instruments, but conceived in terms of the overall message being conveyed.

12. A human security approach would require the full array of tools available to contribute to multilateral efforts (the UN, the EU, or the AU etc.) to enhance human security. These include development aid, policing, disaster assistance, healthcare support, support for justice as well as military force. But military force would be used in quite different ways for international law enforcement rather than an act of war. This means the focus is the protection of civilians, the arrest of war criminals and the minimising of all casualties rather than the defeat of enemies.

13. The UK has a comparative advantage in the type of approaches needed for human security. In particular, the current UK- led EU anti-piracy mission in Somalia and the intervention in Sierra Leone in 2001 are good examples of missions that had strong human security elements.

Question 4: In a digitally connected world, is soft power becoming more important? If so, why, and will this trend continue?

14. Soft power is becoming more important in a digitally connected world with the use of social media to harness local support and to highlight events happening across the world, for example the Arab Spring movements.
15. In a digitally connected world technology can be used as a tool for influencing/increasing soft power. On the one hand soft power could be considered as a ‘force for good’ but it can also be subverted (e.g. state and non-state actors monitoring and shaping online discourse). However, the ability to use the technology does not automatically imply the ability to influence (ability to speak versus ability to be heard).

**The extent and use of the UK’s soft power resources**

**Question 5: What are the most important soft power assets that the UK possesses? Can we put a value on the UK’s soft power resources?**

16. The UK’s world leading universities and broader HE sector is one of the most central soft power assets the UK possesses. UK universities being world leading, attract foreign students and thus expose them to UK norms and cultural values. As argued above, universities and cultural industries in general are likely to become more strategically and economically important in a world of scarce material resources, and it would be advisable to make more use of them in their soft power capacity. See also the response to Question 28.

17. Languages play an important role in cultural diplomacy. Research into other cultural traditions and the language expertise that makes this possible, are a key part of sustaining the UK’s openness to the global world; hence the UK’s reputation as a country that is open to other ideas and perspectives. There are clear advantages in diplomatic personnel having a good understanding of the history and culture of country(s) they are dealing with for example. As such the UK’s academic experience in languages and cultures has a significant role to play in informing UK diplomacy. Therefore, we would like to encourage the Committee to look into the importance of engagement between the FCO and academic research and knowledge.

18. The role of English language as a soft power asset is outlined in our response to Question 26.

**Question 7: How can non-state actors in the UK, including businesses, best be encouraged to generate soft power for the UK, and be discouraged from undermining it?**

19. Evidence from the research of the cross-council [Digital Economy programme](#) suggests that businesses can look to generate soft power for the UK in terms of their image, branding and marketing. For example [Digital Shoreditch](#), the collective that brings together creative, technical and entrepreneurial expertise within East London and Tech City.

**Question 10: Is there sufficient return for the Government’s investment in soft power? Is the Government’s investment adequate?**

20. See also the response to Question 26.
Question 11: Are there spheres of influence in which the Government should do more to promote the UK? Are there spheres in which the Government should do less?


22. Professor Linda Woodhead, director of AHRC/ESRC funded Religion and Society Programme has argued that religion is a key element in cultural and political influence, and the UK’s use of ‘soft power’ would be greatly enhanced by taking account of this. Some mechanism for serious engagement with religious institutions worldwide would greatly enhance the UK’s ability to exercise influence.

23. See also response to Question 5 above.

Question 12: Given the soft power resources at the UK’s disposal, how can the UK Government, companies, individuals and other non-state actors do better at getting soft power to deliver, in terms of the UK’s interests? Can you give examples of where attempts to employ soft power have been unsuccessful, for instance because they delivered counter-productive results?

24. An appreciation of how soft power might have succeeded or failed in the past, though an understanding of the historical dimension to international relations and politics, could be one way to advance current day deployment of soft power. For example, the AHRC has funded a series of Witness Seminars at King’s College London organised with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office on Britain’s High Commissions and Embassies (http://www.kcl.ac.uk/innovation/groups/ich/witness/diplomatic/index.aspx).

Soft power and diplomacy

Question 14: What roles do international networks such as the UN, the EU and the Commonwealth play in strengthening the UK’s soft power and influence abroad and facilitating its application? How could the UK use these networks more effectively to increase its influence?

25. The Research Councils facilitate the development of international research networks and infrastructure in a number of ways. Apart from targeted initiatives to support networking opportunities such as the ESRC-led Rising Powers Research Programme, the Research Councils have also adopted a mechanism for including international collaborators in responsive-mode research grants. Thus for example, the ESRC’s International Co-Investigator Policy (introduced in 2007) provides the opportunity for UK researchers to collaborate with appropriate researchers from anywhere in the world to enhance and strengthen international collaboration, and to add value to the research. A similar model has been now adopted by the AHRC.

88 http://www.religionandsociety.org.uk/
26. Through engagement with the UK research community, the Research Councils develop a comprehensive and well-argued view of the UK interests and requirements and are then in a position to make a strong input to international policy and planning activities. For example, we play a leading role in developing European initiatives such as the European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) and inputting to the development of EU Framework Programmes. An example of this is the support ESRC provided to the European Social Survey’s application to become the first social science research infrastructure consortium.

27. A measure of the UK success in this is that the UK is often trusted as an honest broker by both European and non-European nations, giving us the opportunity to act as chair in key meetings and to assist all parties towards successful outcomes.

**Question 15:** How best should the UK’s foreign policy and approach to diplomacy respond to the new global communications environment, where social media have rapidly become prominent, where alternative media organisations (such as Al Jazeera) have multiplied in power and reach, and where the grips of traditional elites on the flows of information in their countries have weakened?

28. ESRC-funded research suggests that the UK needs to be smarter and more effective in how it undertakes media monitoring. The volume of data available and the speed with which events occur and are reacted to leave much media monitoring looking flat footed. The UK has an advantage here – it is well positioned through investments in linguistics and computing to build rapid and effective machine-aided systems to help monitor, understand and respond to media events. This is in contrast to some countries that have significantly reduced human expertise in the study of language.

**Question 18:** How can the UK promote its values abroad without being accused of cultural imperialism, propagandising, or hypocrisy?

29. Research in the social sciences and arts and humanities encourages a deep understanding of identities, values and cultural diversity. This knowledge is vital to maintaining an open, informed and tolerant democratic society in the UK which is an important element in promoting those values abroad. Humanities research helps to preserve and interpret the UK’s national heritage and history in an open, honest and objective way. Research in creative and performing arts disciplines enrich the creative outputs in visual art, music, design, performance, exhibition and creative writing. The arts and humanities therefore contribute to UK culture, which attracts tourists and overseas businesses, both of which are important for generating influence abroad.

Aspects of soft power

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89 The ESS was established in 2001 and is directed by a Core Scientific team from the City University London. The UK component of the survey and the Core Scientific Team is funded by the ESRC [http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/](http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/)

90 See, for example ESRC [Corpus Approaches to Social Science (CASS) Centre](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/cass/), University of Lancaster
Question 25: What roles do sport and culture play in boosting the UK’s soft power?

30. Undoubtedly culture plays an important role in shaping the UK’s soft power. Arts and humanities research makes an important contribution by enriching UK culture, heritage and history (making the UK attractive to other countries); it increases understanding of the history and culture of other countries and regions (allowing for better engagement with those countries and regions); and it provides further insight into the value of culture in soft power and the history of diplomacy more generally.

31. The recent report *Attraction, Culture and the race for soft power in the 21st century* by the British Council and Demos argues that in the modern world, culture and international politics are interdependent. Culture (in its broadest definition including language, education, sport, food, religion, and identity) can build trust that, in turn, increases prosperity and security.

32. Soft power is not just about directly projecting UK culture and values, but also about the values we project indirectly through the public engaging (and being encouraged to engage) with other cultures. Arts and humanities research also underpins many major exhibitions in the UK (e.g. Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam at the British Museum resulting from AHRC-funded research - [http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/News-and-Events/News/Pages/Hajj-Journey-to-the-Heart-of-Islam.aspx](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/News-and-Events/News/Pages/Hajj-Journey-to-the-Heart-of-Islam.aspx)) and abroad which themselves play an important role in demonstrating openness to the world, to foreign governments and populations. An example of this the AHRC-supported touring exhibition with the FCO in China on ‘Picturing China 1870-1950’ that was curated by the historian Professor Robert Bickers from British collections. Launched from the Embassy in Beijing in April, it reached over a million followers on social media and was covered by 18 Chinese newspapers and broadcasters. The FCO estimate an audience reach of over 10 million. Also, arts and humanities research projects can provide a neutral platform for collaboration between UK cultural institutions and those in countries where there are political sensitivities, thereby fostering diplomatic and cultural exchange. An example of this is the Shah Abbas exhibition at the British Museum in 2009 which involved UK museum representatives engaging with senior government officials in Iran.

33. Arts and humanities and social science research, beyond contributing to culture, can also investigate the role of culture in soft power and diplomacy. For example, there has been an exploratory award on ‘Understanding the Role of Cultural Products in Cultural Diplomacy’ (David Clarke, Bath university - [http://www.bath.ac.uk/polis/networks/role-cultural-products-cultural-diplomacy/](http://www.bath.ac.uk/polis/networks/role-cultural-products-cultural-diplomacy/)) under the AHRC’s Translating Cultures theme. It is also being explored through the AHRC’s Cultural Value Project, under which an award to Professor Marie Gillespie, ‘Understanding the Changing Cultural Value of the BBC World Service and British Council’, is looking at the role of these key national-to-global institutions charged with representing British identities and interests. The ESRC’s Centre for Research on Social-Cultural Change (CRESC) has also organised a conference which looked at the role of the BBC World Service and British soft power in perspective - [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/politics/SoftPowerprogramme.pdf](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/politics/SoftPowerprogramme.pdf).

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Question 26: What is your assessment of the role played by the English language, and English-language publications, in advancing the UK’s influence abroad, bearing in mind that English is the working language of the Commonwealth, which embraces roughly a third of the world’s population? What more can be done to leverage this?

34. Professor Tony McEnery, Director of the ESRC Corpus Approaches to Social Science (CASS) Centre, University of Lancaster argues that the role of the English language in advancing the influence of the UK abroad is undoubtedly very high and has been for a long time. The export of the English language has long been known to have a cash value, assessed by looking at the value of English language teaching (ELT) operations and the output of the UK ELT publishing and testing industry. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills estimate the value of the ELT industry to be worth £2,300.2 million annually to the British economy. In terms of increasing the leverage of English language for the UK, two issues could be considered: first a targeted support for the ELT industry and second, a clearer realization that what needs to be leveraged is British English (see next paragraph).

35. Professor McEnery argues that there is a need to leverage the influence of British English as there are Englishes, not simply English. Again the ELT industry provides a telling example of why this is so – UK language testing concerns, notably Cambridge Assessment offering the IELTS test, are in competition with other language testing concerns, in particular the Educational Testing Service based in the US, offering the TOEFL exam. Students with a stronger orientation to US English are advised to take TOEFL, those more comfortable with British English take IELTS. As the influence of American English grows, pressure is created on the UK ELT industry while the main exams are slanted towards one variety of English, so is the teaching and materials used to teach students. That pressure is intensified both by the soft power of the US and research funded into language teaching and testing in the US. If the UK is to leverage the growth of English to its advantage, its ELT English should be defended by soft power, i.e. students should be influenced culturally to adopt British English. Failing that, a real need will be created to undertake some form of protective support of the British ELT industry.

Question 28: What is your assessment of the role played by UK universities and research institutions in contributing to the UK’s soft power? Does the global influence of UK universities and research institutions face any threats?

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92 See [http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/higher-education/docs/e/11-980-estimating-value-of-education-exports.pdf](http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/higher-education/docs/e/11-980-estimating-value-of-education-exports.pdf)
93 See [http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/](http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/)
94 International English Language Testing System
95 See [http://www.ets.org/](http://www.ets.org/)
96 Test of English as a Foreign Language
97 See for example [http://www.ets.org/research/policy_research_reports/](http://www.ets.org/research/policy_research_reports/)
36. As our response demonstrates, UK universities in particular make an important contribution to the UK’s soft power through their involvement in the global science and innovation system. The Research Councils, through the research activities they fund and promote, support UK universities in collaborative work with overseas partners and sustain UK research excellence, which attracts foreign students and researchers to the UK. RCUK has offices in China, the USA, and India working with research funding organisations in their respective countries to facilitate collaboration between researchers in the UK and abroad. The teams also work closely with the Science and Innovation Network and others such as UKTI and the British Council to align activities and present a joined up picture of UK research resources and expertise. RCUK also has strong links with research agencies in Europe as well as other countries such as Japan, Brazil, and South Africa.

37. Research into other cultural traditions, and the language expertise that makes this possible, are a key part of sustaining the UK’s openness to the global world, and therefore, the UK’s reputation as a country that is open to other ideas and perspectives. The Language Based Area Studies (LBAS) Centres,98 established with funding from the Research Councils, HEFCE and the British Academy from 2006-1, have developed considerable international profiles in the regions that they are concerned with. The AHRC and the British Academy are currently supporting the LBAS Developing Funding scheme to extend the impact of the work undertaken by the centres:
- The British Inter-University China Centre (BICC)
- The Centre for the Advances Study of the Arab World (CASAW)
- The Centre for East European Language-Based Area Studies (CEELBAS)
- The Centre for Russian, Central and East European Studies (CREES)
- The White Rose East Asia Centre (WREAC)

**Question 29: What soft power gains can the UK expect from its overseas aid and humanitarian commitments? Should aid be used to advance the UK’s influence abroad?**

38. Professor Paul Collier from the University of Oxford argues that the UK aid programme is a definite source of soft power for Britain99; “The UK aid programme is well-run and has brought us respect from our peers and affection from many recipients. Africa is the world’s fastest-growing region and the UK is well-placed to benefit from this growth. The fact that we are being generous at a time of austerity has been noticed, and does us a lot of good,” he says. “The US is now savaging its aid budget, even though - like UK aid spending - it is far too small for the cuts to affect their fiscal deficit.” Aid is partly a responsibility, and partly an opportunity that the UK should be quick to grasp.

39. ESRC, along with some other Research Councils, collaborates closely with the Department for International Development through a number of joint schemes that fund world-class research on a broad range of topics which contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. For example the ESRC-DFID

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98 [http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funded-Research/Funded-themes-and-programmes/Language-based%20area%20studies/Pages/Language-Based-Area-Studies.aspx](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funded-Research/Funded-themes-and-programmes/Language-based%20area%20studies/Pages/Language-Based-Area-Studies.aspx)

joint fund for poverty alleviation research, [http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/international-funding/esrc-dfid/](http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/international-funding/esrc-dfid/).

September 2013
Professor Colin Riordan, Cardiff University, Tourism Alliance and UKinbound and London First – Oral evidence (QQ 246-259)

Transcript to be found under London First
The Transnationalism of Soft Power

1. The meaning of soft power today can only be adequately understood in terms of the shift in the way international power relations are structured through strata that are transnational as opposed to just national. That is, the assumption that soft power operates through national influence—as in the call for evidence’s emphasis on the UK’s influence—stands to be supplemented by further considerations.

2. Transnational soft power operates across borders according to lateral dynamics that reflect shared concerns and allegiances. For example, three currently dominant strata of transnationalism may be identified as:

a) Global neoliberal elites;

b) Globally shared ideologies aligned with religion or ethno-religion such as Islamism or Zionism;

c) Globally connected popular culture and protest movements.

Regarding these, the transnational lateral ties are increasingly at least as important as national ones, if not more so. For example, young rappers in Egypt, the UK and America feel they have much more in common with each other in terms of values and outlooks than with the elite bankers of their own nationalities. Islamism and Zionism are internationally supported movements in ways that can override national interests.

Whereas capitalism has previously been identified with globalisation, new stratifications of the global aim to supplement or contest this earlier configuration.

3. The above strata have their particular forms of soft power. The soft power of neoliberal elites is economic, concerning trade, aid and alliances on this basis. The soft power of ethno-religious ideologies relies on the propagation of beliefs (including propaganda) and on welfare according to a familial logic of inclusion/exclusion. The soft power of popular culture and protest movements uses, exploits and invents cultural channels of communication from Facebook to citizen journalism to music with a political message, trying to reclaim the power of the universal from the other strata.

4. What is the soft power of national governments in relation to the kind of transnational strata set out above? The following suggestions for means of intervention are indicative and are based on advancing ‘the common ground’. As a point of clarification, what is meant here by ‘the common ground’ is not simply the liberal tolerance of differences. Rather, what is at stake is the advancement of strongly shared values based on the affirmation of a universal humanity. The soft power in question should aim to create trust and cohesion through:
a) Countering the exceptionalism of economic elites, such as tax evasion, and similar double standards.

b) Strengthening the role of international law against exceptionalism.

c) Challenging the exceptionalism of a monopoly on democratic values, that is, the ring-fencing of these as ‘our’ (Western) values. In the call for evidence, it is asked: ‘How can the UK promote its values abroad without being accused of cultural imperialism, propagandising, or hypocrisy?’ One answer would be to proceed on the basis that these values are likely to be already shared, at least in part, as opposed to unilaterally propagated. Finding and demonstrating how these values are shared may be more effective than just targeting the deficiencies of others. There is a need to create much more of a public discourse on such lines, especially in that there is currently widespread disbelief in Western powers as the ‘owners’ of democratic values. The current popularity of Russia Today TV could be partially accounted for in such terms.

d) Engaging more closely with regional expertise that comes from local experts, such as regional intellectuals, creative practitioners, activists, journalists and psychotherapists. In my own areas of work, concerning arts activism in Egypt and the contemporary Levant, this has been invaluable as a form of trust-building and of understanding the key concerns and sensitivities of other cultures, especially around questions of dignity. The transnational linking of research with social and cultural activism based on the values of mutuality is an effective form of soft power, as encouraged in the UK by impact led funding.

e) Contesting the politicisation of religion, and the exploitation of such, in that this politicisation fuels sectarian violence, especially in the Middle East. Related to this is the need to counter the social ignorance amongst religious groups of each other (and consequent recourse to demonising stereotypes) that is fostered by separatist life styles. Both sport and culture have proved to be key means of fostering programmes that bring divided communities together: there are a number of concrete examples of such initiatives which could be more widely disseminated and shared through media attention to such.

f) Confronting the traumatic effects of violence, especially in the Middle East, so as to support rehabilitation. Rehabilitation is an under-used form of soft power, and in particular more could be done to support and network mental health professionals transnationally.

g) Replacing ‘big society’ rhetoric with actual schemes that draw on grassroots creativity to solve social problems.

5. In conclusion, the intensification of cynicism towards mainstream politics leads to loss of trust and competing forms of transnationalism. The UK could do more to address this predicament through policies aimed at re-establishing or re-connecting with ‘the common ground’ of strongly shared values, as indicated above.

September 2013
Professor Laura J. Roselle, Elon University, USA – Written evidence

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Summary:

- Soft Power is an important component of international relations.
- Soft Power cannot be understood without understanding the importance of narratives in social and political relations.
- Hard power is increasingly tied to soft power.
- Strict control of soft power undermines power.
- A new communication ecology undergirds soft power possibilities.
- Multi-method analyses are needed to understand soft power.
- Specific Recommendations (p. 5)

Soft Power is an important component of international relations.

Joseph Nye’s conceptualization of soft power recognizes the importance of ideas and culture in international relations and foreign policy. Rather than focusing on hard power as the ability to coerce or induce another to do something, scholars and politicians often say that soft power is the ability to influence others through the attraction of culture, values, narratives, and policies – which are soft power resources.\(^{100}\) A different way to think about soft power is as the ability to create consensus around shared meaning. If people believe, for example, that the promotion and protection of human rights is important, desirable, and right or proper, it is more difficult to legitimize actions perceived to be in conflict with that consensus. Creating a shared consensus, however, can be much more difficult than using hard power to force another to do something, but there is reason to believe that the results can be more lasting. Soft power resources may set the stage for shared understandings and this enhances other types of interactions, including opportunities in enterprise, and coordination of shared human goals such as the alleviation of human suffering.

Soft Power cannot be understood without understanding the importance of narratives in social and political relations.

Narratives are central to the way human beings think. They are important to people as conceptual organizing tools that allow individuals to understand one another within a particular context. Sir Lawrence Freedman, who has encouraged thinking and research on strategic narratives, suggests that narratives are “compelling story lines which can explain events convincingly and from which inferences can be drawn.”\(^{101}\)

First, a compelling narrative can be a soft power resource, as people may be drawn to certain actors, events, and explanations that describe the history of a country, or the

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\(^{100}\) Nye sets out culture, values, and policies as important resources of soft power.  
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2006/02/22/think_again_soft_power  
Of course, these are not distinct - as all are mutually constructed. I add narratives to the list of soft power resources. Conceptually ‘narratives’ focus attention on communicative processes associated with soft power. 

specifics of a policy, for example. Second, narrative communication as a process is one way through which soft power resources can be understood to work more broadly. Soft power resources – such as culture, values, and policies - may be attractive to someone in an audience because they fit within a preexisting or developing personal narrative. Finally, when we see how different states try to use narratives strategically to sway target audiences, we begin to see how difficult it is to employ soft power resources, especially in a more complex media ecology.

Strategic narratives are defined as a means for political actors to construct a shared meaning of the past, present and future of politics in order to shape the behavior of other actors. Debates over the environment, energy provision, reform of global institutions, security, and power transition can all be understood through the lens of strategic narrative. Each proposal to confront problems of the international community is driven by underlying narratives that may be strategically deployed by actors. This is a complex endeavor as the world is marked by contestation over narratives, but a compelling narrative may become a soft power resource on its own.

**Hard power is increasingly tied to soft power.**

Hard power resources include military and economic resources. Soft power resources include culture, values, narratives, and policies. However, there is a different utilization of hard and soft power resources. Hard power resources are most often kept in reserve, and are used at specific moments, or within certain theatres and timeframes, with specific strategic and tactical objectives in mind. A state need not deploy hard power resources, but may threaten the use of these resources, and still exert power. Many soft power resources are not kept in reserve, but must be shared. It makes no sense, for example, to fund a cultural program that is not implemented, or to produce a BBC documentary that is not aired. That said, there may be times at which communication about soft power assets and narratives may be used strategically – more in the lines of hard power resources (as in representational force or in strategic narratives).

In addition, hard power resources are held, at least in most cases of military resources, as a state monopoly. Soft power resources are found both inside and outside of the public sector – and this fact, itself, contributes to the soft power of the UK. Any plan for utilization of soft power resources must recognize that among the UK’s most important soft power assets are the values associated with an open, complex, diverse, and complicated society.

Today there is an important trend associated with the use of soft power by traditional bastions of hard power. This can be seen in the case of Afghanistan for example. Military forces have taken on quite a large role in stabilization and development. This means that the military employs soft power resources as well as hard power resources. This goes well beyond Nye’s idea that “A well-run military can be a source of soft power” to suggest that it is vital that the military continue to study soft power resources, including culture, values, and narratives.

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102 See for example Fred Everett Maus, “Music as Narrative” https://scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/2022/3432/MausMusicAsNarrativeV12.pdf;jsessionid=00BAC0039657DE3C43EBEC5BC352793A?sequence=1


104 [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2006/02/22/think_again_soft_power](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2006/02/22/think Again Soft Power)
Strict control of soft power undermines soft power.

States and other political actors may attempt to use soft power resources, and especially narratives, for strategic purposes. Some countries have tried to form and project a single strategic narrative about their identity and their place in the world. States attempt this at their peril. One important case that highlights the problems with this strategy is the Soviet Union/Russia. Certainly in the Soviet Union there was strict control over education, culture, and narratives. In the early years of the Soviet state all means of mass communication were appropriated by the state. With the development of satellite technology, Soviet governmental officials were able to project a strictly controlled message across 11 time zones. And yet, government officials did not understand that strictly controlled messages and information campaigns are understood by the audience to be exactly that -- governmentally controlled information. This undermines the legitimacy of the message communicated, especially if one's own experience contradicts the official narrative. This is exacerbated in a new media ecology.

A new communication ecology undergirds soft power possibilities.

Elites have lost relative power over information, timing, and audience as political actors, including individuals, non-state actors, NGOs, terrorist cells, and international organizations have access to communication technologies that will reach a vast audience. Soft power may be a resource on which leaders can draw; however, skilled political leadership is still required as soft power is employed in foreign policy and international relations. As Richard Holbrooke once commented to Michael Ignatieff in an interview, “Diplomacy is not like chess. . . . It’s more like jazz—a constant improvisation on a theme.” The ability to devise and implement a coherent strategy rests on the vagaries of events and the views of others.

Multi-method analyses are needed to understand soft power.

There are many new ways of monitoring, measuring and evaluating the impact of strategic narratives in a new media environment. Examples of quantitative measures include: analyses of reach, time spent with online content, number of Twitter followers and re-tweets, positivity of sentiment, for example. However, these do not capture the quality of engagement, and what follows from it. Qualitative research is needed as well – including focus groups, interviews, and participant observation. A multifaceted approach is needed to fully understand the use and effectiveness of soft power.

Recommendations

- The UK Government should develop a multi-disciplinary and multi-method approach to the study of soft power. Quantitative measures will not be sufficient to a clear understanding of how soft power functions.
- The UK Government should study narratives, with attention to what narratives and values are attractive to other parts of the world.
- The UK Government should seek to project a loose collection of narratives to reflect the character of its regions.

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The UK Government should maintain significant support for cultural, educational, and scientific programs.

The UK Government should recognize that consensus developed in and through international organizations enhances soft power.

The UK Government should study and address potential complications associated with the growing expectation that the military be tasked with enhancing UK soft power.

22 September 2013
Dr Christina Rowley, University of Bristol – Written evidence

What is your understanding of soft power?

1. A number of inter-related definitions and conceptualisations of soft power have been put forward to and by members of the committee, such as soft power’s opposition to, or place on a spectrum alongside, hard power; its relationship to smart power; and the notion that soft power is about attracting rather than bribing or forcing. The committee Chairman suggested that soft power comprises “things that make a people love a country rather than fear it” (Evidence Session 4), while others have talked about trust and reciprocity between actors, and have pointed out that soft power is not something that can be possessed, stockpiled or deployed in an instrumental fashion. On this view, the paradox at the heart of how soft power functions is that the very attempt to pursue it strategically makes it less (or un)attainable.

2. Often, in both academic studies of power and in the practice of international relations and foreign policy, power is implicitly or explicitly understood as ‘power over’ others – X’s ability to coerce Y into doing what X wants. Soft power, as it has been discussed by some witnesses, doesn’t entirely get away from this notion, in that the goal is still to attract Y to do something that X [the UK] desires. However, if we conceive of power not as ‘power over’ but rather as ‘power to’, the relationship between X and Y looks fundamentally altered: it may be that X enables Y – gives Y the ‘power to’ do something – or that X and Y come together in such a way that the relationship gives them both, collectively, the ‘power to’ achieve something they might not otherwise have been able to accomplish alone. ‘Power over’ is a negative understanding of power and of the world as a zero-sum game full of competitors and threats, while ‘power to’ is a positive way of viewing power, and one’s own and others’ roles and relationships.

3. Professor Cox also talked about soft power as being structural in nature (Evidence Session 2). Pursuing this line of thought, we can understand soft power as the ability to set agendas, to frame issues, to determine discourse and narratives – what Antonio Gramsci called hegemony. Hegemony differs from dominance in that audiences consent to the validity of these meanings. The agendas, issues, discourses are taken for granted as ‘true’ and ‘natural’; that is, the structural power at work is largely invisible. Contrary to the perception that hard power is ‘real’ power, then, political, social and cultural hegemony – governing by consent, setting the rules of the game, or the international order – is power indeed; while having to resort to force (dominance) is a clear sign that that power is being contested, challenged and resisted (consider the events of Spring 1989 commonly referred to by the term ‘Tiananmen Square’).

4. Different actors have different institutional resources to establish hegemonic meanings; global political and economic elites are some of the most powerfully placed (Rowley and Weldes 2008). It appears obvious that we should refer to “the Vietnam War” (although,
to the Vietnamese, it is known as “the American War”). Language and images actually hold much greater power than we typically allow (Weldes 1999a). In recent weeks, for example, with regard to the Syrian civil war, only one type of action exists: military intervention. Other actions – refugee assistance, diplomatic negotiations, supporting local and regional security actors – are not ‘action’. Elected officials in the US and UK worked hard to persuade publics that they faced a choice between ‘action’ and ‘inaction’; between military intervention or ‘armchair isolationism’ (Kerry). The terms of the discourse are controlled in such a way as to render non-military ‘action’ nonsensical. When successful – when we are not aware that and how the terms of the debate are predefined – we do not see the ‘soft power’ at work.

5. Consider the two images of soft power that have consistently been deployed in this committee’s evidence sessions. The first deploys the metaphor of economic competitiveness – which itself draws on a host of sporting metaphors: soft power resources become “assets” that provide a return on investment, which we are keen to quantify and exploit. Soft power gives the UK “advantages” against “rivals”, “new entrants into the soft power market” and “competitors” in the “global race”. While the UK is “top of the soft power index” and others are “playing catch up”, we must not be complacent, for “there is a global competition to topple the UK from its number one position in the soft power league table” and we must aim to “punch above our weight” or we will “lose out”.

6. Contrast this image of soft power with that conjured by the language of exchange and dialogue, of intercultural respect and trust, of reciprocity and generosity of spirit and the risk of taking friendships for granted. It is not that one of these images is “true” or “biased”. It is not a matter of truth or falsehood, impartiality or bias. Maps are an apt analogy in this context, since they are neither true nor false; they are all simplifications and abstractions of a complex world, but serve different purposes and have different effects. It is crucial that we reflect carefully upon which ‘map’ of soft power we should rely. Does the UK wish to pursue soft power instrumentally and self-interestedly for its advantages over rivals (which, several witnesses have warned, will most likely fail), or for the mutually beneficial relationships and ‘growing together’ of interests and agendas that occurs when co-operation is valued as an end in itself?

What roles do sport and culture play in boosting the UK’s soft power?

Are there any soft power approaches used by other countries that are particularly relevant to the UK?

How best should the UK’s foreign policy and approach to diplomacy respond to the new global communications environment, where social media have rapidly become prominent, where alternative media organizations... have multiplied in power and reach, and where the grips of traditional elites on the flows of information in their countries have weakened?
In a digitally connected world, is soft power becoming more important? If so, why, and will this trend continue?

7. Power, in this understanding, is much more diffuse and does not only reside with political or economic elites. Crucially, cultural artefacts (such as advertisements, films, television programmes) and practices (sports, tourism, fashion, art, and so on) also matter far more than we typically give them credit, for it is in these apparently mundane texts and practices that publics’ understandings of the world, or other cultures and interstate/intercultural relations, are largely constructed (Rowley 2010b). If we wish to understand the US’s self-perception of its role in international affairs, we might not immediately look to Star Trek but the depiction of the Federation closely resonates with US rhetoric about its own identity (Weldes 1999b); in the latter years of the Cold War, Star Trek was the most syndicated show on the planet. While a causal argument would be impossible to demonstrate beyond doubt, it is highly likely that Star Trek presented the US in a favourable light to its fans, without most (including the makers themselves) being aware of this function.

8. It is in the realm of the popular, the mundane and the everyday in which the majority of the world’s populations (the UK included) that political attitudes, beliefs and opinions are formed and here that they have the potential to be reformed. To be clear, this is not an argument in favour of greater government involvement in cultural industries – far from it. To look to another US example, the ways in which the Pentagon has directly involved itself in how US military institutions are portrayed on screen is deeply problematic and the UK should avoid such involvement (not just the appearance of involvement). David Robb (2004) argues persuasively that military assistance in making films and television show in return for explicit control over scripting and editorial decisions is, in effect, a form of government censorship and, I would argue, akin to propaganda (although without the “hard sell” that most deem necessary for propaganda to function).

9. Success with social media strategies comes not through one-way dissemination of information but through genuine engagement and dialogue. Social media offers exciting opportunities for local, national and international relations because of its democratising potential: people have greater access to multiple sources of information on which to make decisions; they also have more direct access to sources of institutional power that have historically been guarded by elite gatekeepers.

10. However, technology is never neutral because it is not created or used in a vacuum. Technology is always developed and utilised in particular, concrete, social, cultural, political and economic contexts. It is vital, therefore, that the democratising potentialities of the internet and of social media are nurtured and promoted, rather than being taken for granted as an inherent feature of the digital world, and that the power dynamics – who owns, who uses, and who is able to access the online world, for example – are assessed and not permitted to be monopolised by either governments or corporations. It is vital to acknowledge that it is not the whistleblowing of Edward Snowden or Chelsea
Manning *per se* that has damaged the US’s soft power resources but the institutionally sanctioned behaviours they exposed.

11. Soft power is not becoming more important; rather, its importance is becoming more readily apparent to us. Does social media mean that soft power is generated differently? Insofar as more people now have access to multiple sources of information and perspectives on governments’ and non-state actors’ rhetoric, decisions and behavior – and the contradictions between their rhetoric and their actions – this may be the case. The best strategy is likely to be one in which perceptions of gaps between rhetoric and action are minimised, and in which the UK government is less concerned with presenting only its best side, and presents its many sides, ‘warts and all’.

**To what extent have other countries tried to form and project a single strategic narrative about their identity and their place in the world?**

**How can the UK promote its values abroad without being accused of cultural imperialism, propagandizing or hypocrisy?**

**Can soft power promotion contribute to national security?**

12. In some ways, the US might be seen as a country that attempts to form and project a single strategic narrative about its identity and world role. For example, despite the substantial differences between Democrats and Republicans on domestic policy issues over the last fifty years, not only are US elected officials keen to stress their concern for bipartisanship and the national interest in matters of foreign policy, we also see remarkably similar rhetoric emerging from the White House on foreign policy matters, regardless of party affiliation – to the extent that it is sometimes almost impossible to identify the party from an anonymised presidential speech. US presidents’ projections of the US’s role in the world post-Vietnam all deploy the same rhetoric of a benevolent and defensive country, in a world where all are begging for US leadership, and whose efficacy in establishing global peace is built on its military strength (Rowley 2010a, ch.3).

However, this narrative does not travel particularly effectively abroad – indeed, it seems to be primarily designed for domestic consumption. The evidence that other countries and publics accept the US’s self-image is mixed at best.

13. Attempting to project a single strategic narrative is doomed to failure. It is neither possible nor desirable to create a single unified or coherent image or narrative. Different audiences (e.g., cultural versus trade, Latin American versus South Asian) expect different messages, and aspects of British culture, British values and British identity have varying resonances with these divergent audiences. Just as a person might be female, a mother, Asian-British, Sikh, gay, an athlete, and so on, all at once, so too nations are multifaceted. Different aspects of one’s identity are more salient than others in different situations. We should also acknowledge that our own self-perceptions may not resonate with others’ perceptions of ourselves – and we need to take this seriously. The UK may believe that it leads the world in terms of democratic traditions and practices, but when
others point out that this is at best a partial understanding of the UK, we should listen. In any case, attempting to maintain a singular narrative takes incredible amounts of ideological labour – far better to celebrate the messy complexity of UK history and identity.

14. Understandably, the UK does not want to project an image of itself as a colonial power, but nor should it want to deny that aspect of its history, and how its present place in the world is fundamentally built upon that colonial past. “Owning up to’ and owning those aspects of the UK’s past and present that it is less proud of, as well as publicising the good – deploying honesty, modesty (perhaps even a touch of humility now and then), in its dealings with others, are likely to attract friends and establish enduring relationships with others in the world, as Lord Faulkes suggested in the first evidence session.

15. I am not as pessimistic as Michael Cox that “we have lost certain parts of the world and will never get them back”. After all, we have new opportunities with each generation that comes of age. However, acknowledging that we bear some of the responsibility for the breakdown of relations with these states is a good starting-place. Focusing on the ways in which the UK is superior, and can teach others is not as likely to succeed as engagement built upon empathy – acknowledging the ways in which we share problems, rather than presenting the UK as having solved problems that others still face. To take an example: rather than understanding democracy as a journey with an “end-state” at which we have nearly arrived – or, at least, are closer to having “achieved” it than are others – what might we gain from seeing ourselves as having as much to learn from the cities of developing world as we seem to believe they do from us?

16. If soft power is what makes people love a country rather than fear it, then soft power not only has the power to contribute to national security, it should be the first line of defence. However, in the same way that, above, the deployment of soft power in strategic and instrumentally self-interested ways was problematised, so too, the notion of ‘national’ security should give us reason to pause. States, groups and individuals are most secure when others too feel secure. Instead of dismissing other states’ and organisations’ rhetoric, it is necessary to take seriously others’ insecurities, and consider how we may be contributing, unwittingly perhaps, to those insecurities. This is particularly necessary for the most vulnerable in global society, the most marginalized and disenfranchised (Rowley and Weldes 2012).

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September 2013
The Royal Commonwealth Society – Written evidence

Executive summary

- The Commonwealth is an important venue in which member states can construct shared understandings on certain values and principles.
- As a network of countries that share significant traits, the Commonwealth helps uphold those values that member states agree to be important and relevant in the modern world.
- Given that soft power can be said to exist in a situation where other states ‘want what you want’, the Commonwealth provides a venue in which soft power can be both created and utilised.
- The Commonwealth is not simply a venue through which the United Kingdom can further its own interests. Each state’s voice has the same weight.
- It can be said, however, that the values that Commonwealth states have freely chosen to uphold are very much in line with UK foreign policy goals.
- This means that the Commonwealth is a ready-made network in which 53 nations have, of their own accord, bought into the main tenets of Britain’s overarching worldview.
- The modern Commonwealth therefore represents an unparalleled opportunity for Britain to further its soft power objectives.
- Britain must maintain and strengthen its engagement with the Commonwealth, both at an institutional level and at a grassroots level.
- The negative or non-existent public perception of the Commonwealth that our research has uncovered must be addressed by Britain actively and publically making the case for the modern Commonwealth.
- Accusations of irrelevance and anachronism need to be confronted head on, and a positive case for a renewed institution needs to be made.
- At the grassroots level, Britain must ensure that those civil society organisations that work to promote Commonwealth values remain strong and influential. It is at this level that change can be achieved on issues that require societal rather than just governmental change.
- Britain must also ensure that engagement between businesses in Commonwealth countries grows and strengthens. This is especially relevant considering that the Commonwealth contains some of the fastest growing economies in the world.

The Royal Commonwealth Society

1. The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) is a civil society organisation founded in 1868. The RCS seeks to identify contemporary issues and propose practical solutions that contribute to the wellbeing and prosperity of Commonwealth nations. Headquartered in London, the RCS has an international network in some 40 Commonwealth countries. It is the oldest and largest civil society organisation devoted to the modern Commonwealth. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the work of this committee.
Soft power as shared understanding

2. Our conception of ‘soft power’ goes along with that outlined by Professor Joseph Nye. This quote covers the definition quite comprehensively:

“The basic concept of power is the ability to influence others to get them to do what you want. There are three major ways to do that: one is to threaten them with sticks; the second is to pay them with carrots; the third is to attract them or co-opt them, so that they want what you want. If you can get others to be attracted, to want what you want, it costs you much less in carrots and sticks”107.

3. Creating a situation where states ‘want’ the same thing through building shared understanding is absolutely central to the modern Commonwealth, and to the RCS’s vision of how the Commonwealth can continue to develop over the coming years.

Commonwealth values

4. The Commonwealth represents a commitment amongst 54 states to a shared set of values. These states have agreed that in certain areas, they indeed want the same outcomes as one another. The Commonwealth Charter, which was signed by all 54 states and by The Queen in her role as Head of the Commonwealth in March of this year is the most recent and clearest formulation yet of these core values.

5. If we are to look closely at the values contained within this document, it is clear that they are mainly those same values that the UK considers a core part of its identity on the international stage. For instance, the UK has worked to establish itself as an advocate for principles such as Democracy, Human Rights, Freedom of Expression, Rule of Law, Sustainable Development, protecting the Environment, and Gender Equality. All of these principles are contained within the charter (Articles I, II, V, VII, IX, X and XII respectively)108.

6. A cursory reading of this might lead one to believe that the UK simply uses the Commonwealth as a neo-imperial conduit for furthering its own values amongst its former colonies. The reality, however, is far more complex. The Commonwealth is an institution that operates on a consensus basis. The Charter, for instance, was unanimously adopted by all Commonwealth states. The fact that the UK’s core values are contained within the Commonwealth Charter is not so much a reflection of the UK’s influence over the Commonwealth, but more a reflection of the complex interdependence that has historically existed between these 54 states. The UK’s values have indeed shaped the understandings at the core of the institution, but they have equally been shaped by them.

7. Rather than viewing the Commonwealth as an avenue through which British soft power can be accrued and utilised, it should be viewed as a venue in which large states and small states, developed states and developing states all with some shared

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historical experiences can present their value systems, and can also learn from the value systems of other members.

8. With this in mind, the agreement around the Commonwealth charter has handed Britain a considerable soft power opportunity. 53 other Commonwealth states have freely chosen to adopt a shared value system that closely resembles the UK’s overarching worldview. There is now immense potential within the Commonwealth for the UK to strengthen the shared understandings with these countries that underpin its soft power. It can then use this to achieve meaningful change at both national and societal levels.

The public perception of the Commonwealth

9. The Commonwealth suffers from several problems with regard to its image. The most dangerous of these is that many see it as an irrelevant and anachronistic institution. Considering its potential for furthering values that the UK supports, the British government must counter this by making a case for the continuing importance and relevance of the modern Commonwealth.

10. Research carried out by the RCS in 2010 found that amongst British citizens, the Commonwealth was seen to have the least value to the UK when compared to the UN, G8, NATO and EU. On top of this, nearly half of respondents could not name any activities undertaken by the Commonwealth.

11. This disengagement with the Commonwealth directly affects the UK’s interests. The more that the Commonwealth is viewed as a historical relic, the less effectively its intergovernmental and civil society functions will operate. The institution already suffers from a ‘historical baggage’ problem as a result of its imperial past. A strong case therefore needs to be consistently made for its relevance as a contemporary institution. If the UK government fails to clearly make this case, the institution will continue to lose importance, and will have less of an impact on the governments and societies of member states.

Commonwealth civil society

12. One of the unique features of the Commonwealth is that it does not only operate at an intergovernmental level. High level interactions take place on top of a deep network of ties between businesses, academic bodies, professional institutions and civil society organisations.

13. It is naturally hard to quantify the benefit that the non-governmental Commonwealth brings the UK. However, one only has to look at the work of bodies such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, or the Commonwealth Lawyers Association to see that this network is contributing to the longevity of institutions such as the rule of law and parliamentary democracy worldwide. Non-governmental Commonwealth bodies are maintaining and strengthening the UK’s soft power.

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14. In addition to their modern activities, it must also be kept in mind that many of these Commonwealth bodies have an inheritance that no other international institution could claim to have. The Royal Commonwealth Society itself was founded in 1868, and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in 1911. Institutions such as the EU or G8 are still very young in comparison, and they cannot compete with the historical capital existent in the Commonwealth. This should be seen as a unique source of strength, legitimacy and continuity.

15. Ensuring that these bodies remain strong and active is just as important as engaging with Commonwealth countries at the governmental level. This is especially relevant on issues where deep societal change, rather than just a change in government policy is needed. The UK needs to increase its dialogue and involvement with such organisations.

Commonwealth business

16. Whilst it has been noted that much of the value that the UK derives from the Commonwealth is hard to quantify, it is also true that the UK certainly derives a material, financial value from its membership of the institution.

17. Research undertaken by the RCS found that if one compares the trade volumes that are passing through two country pairs, the trading volume between two Commonwealth members is likely to be a third to a half more than trade between a Commonwealth member and a non-Commonwealth member. The familiarity between countries, similar legal systems, shared business networks, the use of the English language and other factors produce what the RCS terms the ‘Commonwealth advantage’.

18. Indeed, the English language in itself is a major asset. When referring to sources of soft power, Professor Nye stated that English ‘has become the lingua franca of the global economy’. The language of the Commonwealth is also the language of business, and this provides a tremendous advantage for member states.

19. What we see here is the ‘soft’ aspects of the Commonwealth delivering a ‘hard’, measurable benefit to its member states. It is our intention to further explore this quantifiable impact in our research series ‘Commonwealth Compared’.

20. Britain is using its Commonwealth advantage to some extent. Some of the biggest leaps in UK exports – of both goods and services in the last two years (2010-2012) have been to Commonwealth countries. 33.5% to India, 31.2% to South Africa, 30% to Australia, and 18.3% to Canada.

21. Despite this, there is more that can be done. The only body that works to promote trade is the Commonwealth Business Council (CBC). There is currently no formal mechanism through which the Commonwealth promotes trade or investment. This is clearly one area in which the UK can have an impact. It is also worth noting that

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promoting the informal Commonwealth institutions mentioned above will have a real effect on the material benefit that the UK derives from the network. These institutions preserve the Commonwealth effect, and making sure that they prosper is exactly how the UK should be working to maintain its soft power.

**Conclusion**

22. In 2011, the UK government made a commitment to putting the Commonwealth ‘at the very heart of British foreign policy’\(^\text{113}\). Whilst we have seen some progress, it does not seem that the UK has really grasped the fact that it is a member of a network of 54 countries that overwhelmingly buy into its worldview. There is a wealth of potential here that the UK can use to further its objectives, but in order to do so, it must meaningfully engage with all sides of the modern Commonwealth.

September 2013

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The Royal Society welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK’s Influence. The Royal Society is the national academy of science in the UK; it is a self-governing Fellowship of many of the world’s distinguished scientists. This response draws on the advice of ten Fellows, including three former Foreign Secretaries of the Royal Society and its current Foreign Secretary, Professor Martyn Poliakoff CBE FRS.

I Summary

This response draws on the Royal Society’s recent international work and concludes that:

- The UK is not exploiting fully the UK’s science strengths and the reputation of its science institutions as a source of soft power on the international stage. The scientific values of rationality, transparency and universality can enable science to be used to build constructive international relations and should be an important part of soft power.

- Science diplomacy, as an arm of soft power, has the potential to help defuse complex and tense geopolitical situations by providing opportunities to build apolitical partnerships in developing and emerging economies.

- The UK Government has a role to play in minimising barriers to science cooperation, e.g. visa regulations and security controls, and providing diplomatic assistance, e.g. contract negotiations and intellectual property agreements; as do initiatives that champion scientific freedom and access.

- The FCO should develop a strategy that explicitly sets out a vision for how science cooperation should feature in UK foreign policy and how this vision should be implemented across Government. The role of the FCO/BIS Science and Innovation Network and British Council are instrumental here.

- There need to be more effective mechanisms and spaces for dialogue between policymakers, academics and researchers working in the foreign policy and scientific communities to identify projects and processes that can further the interests of both communities.

- The global influence of the European Union, the degree to which it legislates for the UK, and the progressive development of the European Research Area provide imperatives and opportunities for the UK to continue to help shape European policy. Interactions between UK and European scientists and institutions are strong and provide a useful, but presently underexploited, source of soft power.

- Science cooperation requires funding. The UK should continue to participate in large international scientific initiatives, such as the EU’s Horizon 2020 programme and ICSU’s Future Earth initiative, both of which have the potential to become truly global.
National science academies and learned societies are an important source of independent scientific advice to national and international policymakers, and in deploying science for soft power.

With its Fellowship drawn from across the Commonwealth, the Royal Society can play a leading role in the UK’s Government’s renewed focus on these 54 nations.

Capacity building in science programmes can contribute to soft power.

2 Introduction

2.1 The term “soft power” is interpreted as a power that “builds on common interests and values to attract, persuade and influence.”\(^\text{114}\) Science has always played a role in the development of hard power capabilities, such as military technologies, but science cooperation is also a source of soft power because it is attractive both as a national asset and as a universal activity that transcends national interests. The scientific values of rationality, transparency and universality can enable science to be used to build constructive international relations and should be an important part of soft power.

2.2 Throughout its history, the Royal Society has demonstrated leadership in using science as a source of soft power, or science for diplomacy, promoting and facilitating international scientific collaboration during times of diplomatic or military tension. During the American War of Independence in the eighteenth century, Benjamin Franklin, a Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS), arranged that American warships should not interfere with Captain Cook on his last voyage. In the Napoleonic Wars soon after, the then-President of the Royal Society, Sir Joseph Banks, used his influence in England and France to ensure that explorers of the two nations were not obstructed by the conflicting armed forces, and that French scientists should continue to be elected Fellows of the Royal Society; and in the 20th century, the Royal Society played a leading role in ensuring that scientific links between the UK and the Soviet Union continued despite the tensions of the Cold War.\(^\text{115}\)

2.3 The Royal Society’s mission to support international scientific exchange goes back even further. Philip Zollman became Foreign Secretary of the Royal Society in 1723, nearly 60 years before the British Government appointed its first Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Zollman’s role was to maintain regular correspondence with scientists overseas to ensure that the Royal Society’s Fellows remained up-to-date with the latest ideas and research findings.

2.4 The 2010 publication of *New Frontiers in Science Diplomacy*\(^\text{116}\) articulated the importance of science diplomacy and international scientific cooperation to the Royal Society’s work. The theory and practice of soft power underpin much of its current international portfolio, whether through policy studies, capacity building, or bilateral and


multilateral engagement. Where opportunities arise, the Royal Society will promote scientific cooperation between countries where there have been tensions or recent conflict. It will also provide advice to, and work with, UK and international policymakers and institutions on the relationship between science and diplomacy, in order to further the international objectives of the Royal Society and, where practicable, the UK. The Royal Society is part of a global network of science academies, capable of mobilizing the world’s best science and scientists on issues of global concern, including those where political negotiations may be fraught.

3 International perspective

3.1 Recent years have seen a fresh surge of interest in science diplomacy, most noticeably in the US, the UK and Japan. The post of Science and Technology Adviser to the US Secretary of State was created in 2000, where science diplomacy was defined as the ‘use of science interactions among nations to address the common challenges facing humanity and to build constructive knowledge-based international partnerships’117 The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) continues to lead science diplomacy thinking. In 2008, AAAS established a Centre for Diplomacy and in 2012 launched a quarterly journal, Science and Diplomacy118, the first of its kind. It has also signed a formal agreement with the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World (TWAS) to work on joint projects that build regional cooperation and networks, as well as increasing the capacity of foreign ministries, research ministries and international policy organisations to build science partnerships.119

3.2 Japan has placed significant emphasis on science diplomacy since the publication of their Council for Science and Technology Policy report in 2008, ‘Towards the reinforcement of science and technology diplomacy’, which identified four key objectives: negotiating the participation of Japanese scientists in international research programmes; providing scientific advice to international policymaking; helping to build science capacity in developing countries; and using science to project power on the international stage, in ways that increase Japan’s prestige and attract inward investment. This last area is motivated, in part, by Japan’s own recognition that its scientific and technological strengths are a key source of strategic and economic value. In 2011, science and technology diplomacy was designated as an issue of national importance in the government’s 4th Science and Technology Basic Plan.120

3.3 In 2001, the UK government set up a Science and Innovation Network (SIN), with the aim of linking science more directly to its foreign policy priorities. SIN facilitates collaboration between UK and international research partners across a wide variety of policy and scientific agendas, including energy, climate change and innovation. Over 12 years, the SIN has expanded to include around 90 staff (a mix of UK expatriates and locally engaged experts) across 47 cities in 28 countries. SIN officers are typically located in UK embassies, high commissions or consulates, and work alongside other diplomats and representatives of bodies such as UK Trade and Investment. The place of science in UK

117 Nina Federoff 2009
118 http://www.sciencediplomacy.org/
The Royal Society – Written evidence

foreign policy was further strengthened in 2009 by the appointment of the first Chief Scientific Adviser to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). There are also UK science attachés in Beijing, Brussels, Washington and New Delhi. In London, there are science attachés posted to the embassies of Brazil, Canada, China, Russia and several European countries, who meet regularly as the London Diplomatic Science Club.

4 Three dimensions of science diplomacy

4.1 Although a fluid concept, science diplomacy can usefully be applied to the role of science, technology and innovation in three different ways:

a. using science cooperation to improve international relations between countries and regions (science for diplomacy)
b. facilitating international science cooperation (diplomacy for science);
c. informing foreign policy objectives with scientific advice (science in diplomacy);

4.2 Building, nurturing and sustaining partnerships are important to all of these, and are central to science diplomacy, but it is the first category – science for diplomacy – that perhaps best illustrates the role of science in soft power.

a. Science for diplomacy

4.3 Examples of science for diplomacy tools include:

- **Scientific cooperation agreements**, which have long been used to symbolise improving political relations, for example between the United States and the USSR and China in the 1970s and 1980s. A science agreement was the first bilateral treaty to be agreed between the United States and Libya in 2004, after Libya gave up its biological, chemical and nuclear weapons programmes.

- **New institutions** can be created to reflect the goals of science for diplomacy. Perhaps the best example is the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN), which was founded after World War II to help rebuild bridges between nations. CERN enabled some of the first post-war contacts between German and Israeli scientists, and kept open scientific relations with Russia and other Eastern bloc countries during the Cold War. SESAME, a similar initiative in the Middle East led by Sir Chris Llewellyn Smith FRS, involves the construction of a CERN-style particle accelerator, the region’s first major international research centre, outside of the Jordanian capital, Amman. Scientists from Iran, Israel, Turkey, Cyprus, Bahrain, Pakistan and Egypt are working together on the project despite the difficult relations between some of their countries.

- **Educational scholarships** are a well-established mechanism for network-building and encouraging partnerships. For example, the Royal Society runs the high profile but modest Newton International Fellowships scheme, in partnership with the British Academy, to select the best early stage post-doctoral researchers from around the world, and offer them long-term support to carry out research and sustain relations with institutions in the UK.\(^{(121)}\)

\[^{(121)}\] [http://www.newtonfellowships.org/]
Science festivals and exhibitions, particularly linked to the history of science, can be an effective platform from which to emphasise the universality of science, and common cultural interests. China, India, Iran and other Islamic countries are particularly proud of their contributions to the history of science. The Royal Society is beginning to explore opportunities to use its extensive archives for (UK-based and travelling) exhibitions; recent examples include Spain and Qatar, with China as a future prospect.

4.4 Examples of the Royal Society’s current science for diplomacy projects include:

• The Commonwealth
The Royal Society is particularly keen to develop its links with the Commonwealth. Its Fellowship is drawn from across the leading Commonwealth nations – with around 165 Fellows living in Commonwealth countries other than the UK. In November 2014, the Royal Society will host the first biennial Commonwealth Science Conference, the inaugural event in India, to engage the very best scientists, engineers and technologists from across its 54 countries. The conference will celebrate excellence in Commonwealth science, facilitate cooperation between scientists and inspire younger scientists in different Commonwealth countries. The Royal Society is presently raising funds for this Conference series.

With the UK Government’s renewed focus on these 54 nations, the Royal Society, as the UK’s national academy and academy of science of the Commonwealth, can play a leading role in this area.

• The Atlas of Islamic-World Science and Innovation
This project promotes science cooperation as an area where trust and cooperation between Europe and the Islamic world can be strengthened at a time when political relations are strained. The project takes the form of a unique partnership between the Royal Society, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the British Council, Nature, the International Development Research Centre and Qatar Foundation, and is chaired by the OIC Secretary General. This complex multi-partner project has attracted interest from government and scientific communities in the UK, Europe, US and OIC countries, and has to-date published reports on science and innovation in Malaysia, Egypt and Jordan.

• Mount Paektu geoscientific project in North Korea
The Royal Society is currently supporting an unprecedented collaboration that offers a unique opportunity to open up engagement with North Korean scientists. Mount Paektu spans the border between China and North Korea but little is known about its North Korean side. However, in the 10th century it was responsible for one of the world’s largest eruptions of the past few millennia; the eruption having profound consequences in East Asia with substantial ash fall reaching Japan. Following a recent earthquake swarm beneath the volcano, attention has turned to its current state.

There has never been any direct collaboration between North Korea and China, and data that may have previously been collected by North Korean scientists have not been shared internationally. In the summer of 2012, scientists from Imperial College London and Cambridge University went to North Korea to discuss a collaboration to monitor, image and better understand the hazards associated with Mount Paektu, in partnership with the Institute of Volcanology of the North Korean Earthquake Administration. Research is now underway with monitoring equipment deployed on the North Korean side of the volcano for data collection over the next year. Future collaboration could involve North Korean scientists being trained in the UK and possibly even reciprocal exchanges in the longer term. This collaboration was politically inconceivable: it would not have taken place without the Royal Society’s facilitation as a co-signatory of both an MOU and research agreement, and its undertaking of political, scientific and legal due diligence.

4.5 The Royal Society’s experience shows that science diplomacy, as an arm of soft power, has the potential to help defuse complex and tense geopolitical situations by providing opportunities to build apolitical partnerships in developing and emerging economies.

b. Diplomacy for science

4.6 Flagship international projects, such as the Large Hadron Collider at CERN, carry enormous costs and risks but are increasingly vital in areas of science that require large upfront investments in infrastructure beyond the budget of any one country. These projects are the visible examples of everyday, bottom-up collaboration that takes place between individual scientists and institutions. The scientific enterprise is now premised on the need to collaborate and connect. This was articulated in the Royal Society’s 2011 report Knowledge Networks and Nations\textsuperscript{124}, which explored trends and developments in global science as well as different models of, and barriers to, collaboration.

4.7 Collaborations are no longer based purely on historical, institutional or cultural links. This creates an opportunity for the foreign policy community. Science can be a bridge to communities where political ties are weaker, but to develop relationships in these areas, scientists may require diplomatic assistance, whether in contract negotiations, intellectual property agreements or dealing with visa regulations. The Royal Society is currently providing this kind of support to the collaboration between UK volcanologists and their North Korean counterparts mentioned above.

4.8 At a multilateral level, the Royal Society is a member of the International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies and has been an active supporter of scientific freedom and access\textsuperscript{125}. The Royal Society is also a member of the ICSU Committee on the Freedom and Responsibility in the Conduct of Science\textsuperscript{126}, which advocates the Universality of Science so that scientists are not discriminated by virtue of citizenship, religion, political opinion, ethnic origin, race, or gender. Through this Committee, the Royal Society supports the free communication between, and association

\textsuperscript{124} http://royalsociety.org/policy/projects/knowledge-networks-nations/report/

\textsuperscript{125} For example, in 2002, the Society supported a statement against a boycott on international cooperation with Israeli scientists during the Israel-Palestine conflict.

\textsuperscript{126} http://www.icsu.org/about-icsu/structure/committees/freedom-responsibility
with, other scientists and can help scientists overcome barriers to cooperation, sometimes in spite of political impasse.

4.9 Whilst independent, the Royal Society cooperates with the FCO, BIS and other government departments, the British Council, UK Research Councils and other learned societies on the UK’s international science effort. Whilst this cooperation is constructive, it is not always efficient. **The FCO could usefully develop a strategy that explicitly sets out a vision for how science cooperation should feature in UK foreign policy and how this vision should be implemented across Government. This should include how science could feature more prominently in the British Council’s cultural relations narrative** (alongside the arts and education): with offices in six continents and over 100 countries, it has huge potential to use science as a source of soft power. **The role of the FCO/BIS Science and Innovation Network is also instrumental here**: the Network provides a high quality level of service by providing in-country intelligence, identifying expertise, brokering partnerships, and delivering on-the-ground logistical support and advice. SIN officers develop an in-depth understanding of the policies, people and priorities of their host countries, and identify collaborative opportunities for UK scientists, universities and high-tech firms – a service that is critical to the UK’s prosperity agenda. **There also need to be more effective mechanisms and spaces for dialogue between policymakers, academics and researchers working in the foreign policy and scientific communities to identify projects and processes that can further the interests of both communities.**

4.10 All collaborative science requires funding. The EU framework programmes and now *Horizon 2020* are good examples of how significant pots of money have enabled significant collaboration between EU countries and now, increasingly, third countries. With an €80 billion budget, **Horizon 2020 has the potential to become the first truly global science initiative, and a significant source of soft power.** Global platforms for research cooperation – such as the International Council for Science’s (ICSU) new 10 year *Future Earth* programme – will similarly mobilise thousands of scientists, while strengthening partnerships with policy-makers and other stakeholders to provide sustainability options and solutions in the wake of Rio+20. **It is critical that the UK continues to participate in large-scale funding programmes and regional and global platforms for cooperation.**

c. Science in diplomacy

4.11 The effective use of scientific advice in foreign relations requires international policymakers to have a minimum level of scientific literacy, or at least access to others who have it. It also requires scientists to communicate their work in an accessible and intelligible way, which is sensitive to its wider policy context.

4.12 National science academies and learned societies are an important source of independent scientific advice to national and international policymakers, and in deploying science for soft power. The Royal Society, as one of the oldest and most prestigious academies, has world-leading scientific capital and significant political capital: it works unilaterally, regionally and globally with other science academies to strengthen scientific advice to governments, and nurture scientific collaboration with the UK.
4.13 The global influence of the European Union, the degree to which it legislates for the UK, and the progressive development of the European Research Area provide imperatives and opportunities for the UK to continue to help shape European policy. Interactions between UK and European scientists and institutions are strong and provide a useful, but presently underexploited, source of soft power. The Royal Society works with its sister academies in the EU through European Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC)\(^\text{127}\) on wide-ranging policy issues, such as carbon capture and storage, and crop genetic improvement technologies for sustainable agriculture. EASAC is an important institution for soft power at the European level.

4.14 Similarly, at the G8 level, the G8+5 science academies have met annually since the UK’s G8 Presidency in 2005 to produce joint statements on issues of importance to the G8. This year, the Royal Society hosted the first ever meeting of G8 Science ministers and national academies as part of the UK’s 2013 G8 Presidency\(^\text{128}\), a meeting where agreement was reached on a number of open science issues that had been difficult to negotiate bilaterally.

4.15 The Royal Society also advises international institutions on global scientific issues through its membership of the InterAcademy Council (IAC), the IAP global network of science academies, the International Council for Science (ICSU) and other bodies, and seeks to build its own links with intergovernmental organizations (including the OECD, Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and UN agencies).

4.16 International institutions are beginning to take science advisory systems seriously. The EU has established a Chief Scientific Adviser to the Commissioner\(^\text{129}\) and the UN Secretary General has set up an international scientific advisory board\(^\text{130}\) reporting directly to him. In 2001, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) agreed to set up a science diplomacy initiative to improve ‘the provision of science and technology advice to multilateral negotiations and the implementation of the results of such negotiations at the national level’.\(^\text{131}\) Its focus has been on building the capacity of scientists and diplomats from developing countries to participate in international negotiations.\(^\text{132}\)

4.17 The Royal Society has a long history of building science capacity in Africa, promoting science cooperation between UK and African researchers and building the capacity and profile of African science academies.\(^\text{133}\) In doing so, African researchers and academies can become vital contributors to research and evidence-based policymaking in their own countries, as well as enhance their national and continental voice in international debates. Capacity building in science programmes can contribute to soft power.

5 Concluding remarks: what the UK Government can do to support science as soft power

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\(^\text{127}\) [http://www.easac.eu/](http://www.easac.eu/)
\(^\text{131}\) UNCTAD 2003
\(^\text{132}\) [http://stdev.unctad.org/capacity/diplomacy.html](http://stdev.unctad.org/capacity/diplomacy.html)
A UK strategy for science diplomacy

5.1 The UK has a positive story to tell on science with considerable strength and prestige in the international scientific arena. *The Scientific Century* (2010) showed how, with just 1% of the world's population, the UK provides 3% of global funding for research, 7.9% of the world's papers, 11.8% of global citations, and 14.4% of the world's most highly cited papers. The UK is a heavyweight, but it is not yet using this strength to its full advantage. The UK Government should treat science as not just intellectual or economic capital. The UK can still go further in exploiting its scientific expertise to further its diplomatic aims. The FCO should develop a strategy that explicitly sets out a vision for how science cooperation should feature in UK foreign policy and how this vision should be implemented across Government.

Creating an infrastructure for science diplomacy

5.2 The FCO could usefully place greater emphasis on science within its strategies and draw more extensively on scientific advice in the formation and delivery of policy objectives. The FCO/BIS Science and Innovation Network and the post of FCO Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) are critical for integrating science across FCO priorities and developing stronger links with science-related policies in other government departments. It is encouraging to see that a new department now supports the FCO CSA role, and that a deputy CSA has also been employed.

5.3 Other mechanisms to help build stronger links could include:

- ensuring messages about the value of science are promulgated throughout foreign ministries and embassies, including to all Heads of Mission;
- incorporating science policy training into induction courses and training for foreign ministry staff, and specialist diplomatic training for dedicated science officers;
- involving more scientists in foreign ministries to advise at senior and strategic levels;
- encouraging the recruitment of science graduates as part of the general intake for the foreign service;
- encouraging secondments and pairing between diplomats and scientists;
- encouraging independent scientific bodies to provide science policy briefings for foreign ministry and embassy staff.

Practical barriers to scientific exchange

5.4 An important set of constraints to science diplomacy are regulatory barriers, such as visa restrictions and security controls. Immediately after September 11 2001, more stringent travel and visa regimes in countries like the US and the UK severely limited the opportunities for visiting scientists and scholars, particularly from Islamic countries. Although efforts have been made to unpick some of these strict controls, there are still significant problems with the free mobility of scientists from certain countries. Such policies shut out talented scientists, hinder opportunities to build scientific relations between countries, and often hold up progress in UK-based research. Security controls can also prevent collaboration on certain scientific subjects, such as nuclear physics and microbiology. These policies are based on concerns over the dual use potential of some scientific knowledge. However, it is important to take into consideration the diplomatic value of scientific partnerships in sensitive areas to help rebuild much needed trust between nations.

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Widening the circle of science diplomacy

5.5 Scientific organisations can play an important role in diplomacy or soft power, particularly when formal political relationships are weak or strained. The scientific community may be able to broker new or different types of partnerships. The range of actors involved in these efforts should expand to include non-governmental organisations, multilateral agencies and other informal networks. A nation’s scientific diaspora is also strategically important, as scientists based overseas are often keen to retain a close involvement with their country of birth.

5.6 There need to be more effective mechanisms and spaces for dialogue between policymakers, academics and researchers working in the foreign policy and scientific communities, to identify projects and processes that can further the interests of both communities. Foreign policy institutions and think tanks can offer leadership here by devoting intellectual resources to science as an important component of modern day diplomacy.

Dr Tracey Elliott, Head of International, Science Policy Centre
Acting on behalf of the Royal Society’s Foreign Secretary, Professor Martyn Poliakoff CBE FRS
18 September 2013
H.E. Mr Carlos dos Santos, High Commissioner for the Republic of Mozambique, Baroness Prashar and Government (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) – Oral evidence (QQ 152-164)

H.E. Mr Carlos dos Santos, High Commissioner for the Republic of Mozambique, Baroness Prashar and Government (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) – Oral evidence (QQ 152-164)

Transcript to be found under Government (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) in Volume 1 (page 500)
Professor Philip Seib, University of Southern California – Written evidence

Philip Seib is Professor of Journalism and Public Diplomacy and Professor of International Relations at the University of Southern California, and served as director of USC’s Center on Public Diplomacy 2009-13. He is author or editor of numerous books, including Headline Diplomacy: How News Coverage Affects Foreign Policy; New Media and the New Middle East; The Al Jazeera Effect; Toward A New Public Diplomacy; Global Terrorism and New Media; Al Jazeera English: Global News in a Changing World; and Real-Time Diplomacy: Politics and Power in the Social Media Era.

All countries wield power to some extent. Some do so primarily through conventional means, such as large military establishments and economic clout. Other nations, wary of hard power’s proximity to conflict, rely on soft power – exerting influence through persuasion and attraction rather than threat or coercion. Soft power is exercised through traditional means such as educational and cultural exchanges, and also through technological tools, such as Qatar’s expansion of influence through the Al Jazeera broadcasting channels.

The request from the House of Lords is broad – in fact, it would be a good outline for a book – so this memorandum will be limited to facets of soft power in a digitally connected world, particularly in terms of public diplomacy, for which a brief definition is government-to-people rather than government-to-government diplomacy. I hope the thoughts presented here will stimulate thinking and discussion, and I would be happy to provide supplemental information if it would be of use. For expanded treatment of items in this memorandum, readers are referred to my book Real-Time Diplomacy: Politics and Power in the Social Media Era (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), from which much of the following material is drawn.

In his 1939 classic, Diplomacy, Sir Harold Nicolson wrote, “In the days of the old diplomacy it would have been regarded as an act of unthinkable vulgarity to appeal to the common people upon any issue of international policy.” Nicolson lamented technological advances such as “the invention of the wireless,” which gave “a vast impetus to propaganda as a method of policy” and allowed manipulators such as Adolf Hitler to wield “a formidable weapon of popular excitation.”

Today, it would be an act of unthinkable stupidity to disregard “the common people” (more felicitously referred to as “the public”) in the conduct of foreign affairs. Propaganda can still be effective, but the public is not at such a disadvantage as it once was because of the vast array of information providers that can offset, as well as deliver, the messages of propagandists. Empowered by their unprecedented access to information, many people have a better sense of how they fit into the global community, and they are less inclined to entrust diplomacy solely to diplomats. They want to be part of the process.

With members of the public having rising expectations about participating in democratized diplomacy, their activism affects not only policymakers of their own country, but also those who implement the foreign policy of other states. This expectation makes the diplomat play

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more of a conventional political role than she or he may have done in the past, with a
constituency far larger than the traditional foreign policy establishment. Shrewd domestic
politicians, such as George H. W. Bush’s secretary of state, James A. Baker, and Hillary
Rodham Clinton, secretary of state during Barack Obama’s first term, possess skills that have
become essential supplements to the traditional art of diplomacy. They recognize that their
domestic public is affected by the 24-hour news cycle, as are publics in many of the countries
with which they deal, and so their diplomacy must reflect sensitivity to shifting political
currents, at home and abroad. Thanks to recent communication tools – from satellite
television to Twitter – the world intrudes into more lives than ever before.

A reordering of relationships is underway among those who make policy, those who carry it
out, and those who are affected by it. Henry Kissinger observed in a 2011 interview that
“new technologies make it much easier to acquire factual knowledge, though they make it
harder in a way to process it because one is flooded with information, but what one needs
for diplomacy is to develop a concept of what one is trying to achieve. The Internet drives
you to the immediate resolution of symptoms but may make it harder to get to the essence
of the problems. It’s easier to know what people are saying, but the question is whether
diplomats have time to connect that with its deeper historical context.”

Balancing recognition of historical context with the pressures generated by new information
and communication technologies requires a new approach to the construction of diplomacy
and to being a diplomat. The word often used by public diplomacy officialdom to describe
wielding influence is “engagement,” but that is a mushy term that lacks clear meaning. It can
refer to something as ephemeral as the digital version of “pen pals” – useful but in a minimal
way – or to a broad-based online discussion forum that has a substantive effect on opinion
formation. Engagement should not be seen as a strategy or a policy goal in itself; it is merely
one tool among many. Public diplomacy requires multifaceted efforts designed to meet the
particular political and cultural interests of the public for whom outreach is designed. This
means, in part, that despite the infatuation with social media, public diplomacy should include
direct personal contact whenever appropriate and feasible.

Considerable effort is required to grapple with security and financial constraints, but
projects based in tangible physical space, such as American libraries and their equivalents
organized by other nations, remain valuable in ways that cyber connections cannot match.
The audience reached individually by such ventures might not be as large as that which visits
Facebook walls and reads Twitter feeds, but the qualitative value of the contacts might be
more significant. The U.S. Embassy in Jakarta has received much attention for its digital
campaigns, and its amassing of more than 300,000 Facebook followers is a tribute to the
initiative of the embassy’s staff. But what is the real nature of this connection? Are people
truly learning about the United States and its policies? Are their opinions being changed? As
with any contact with the public, numbers in and of themselves mean little. This is
particularly true given the casual ease with which “following” or “friending” or making other
online connection can be done.

The U.S. State Department is among the government organizations that have added “digital
outreach” to their repertoires. By posting messages on Arabic, Urdu, Persian, and other
Internet forums, the State Department project tries to connect directly to individuals who
are part of target audiences, which is the essence of public diplomacy. The big question, to

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which there is not yet a definitive answer, is, does this technology-based approach work better, or at least as well, as more traditional contact techniques?

A report released in January 2011 by Stanford University found mixed results of the State Department’s digital outreach venture. The report focused on the department’s efforts related to President Obama’s 2009 Cairo speech, and its principal findings included these.\(^\text{137}\)

- The Department states that the mission of the Digital Outreach Team (DOT) is “to explain U.S. foreign policy and to counter misinformation.”
- The team members always identify themselves as working for the U.S. State Department.
- Because members of the team must share their items with colleagues before posting them, the average response time was 2.77 days, which “makes it hard for readers to keep up with the points that they are specifically responding to.”
- The DOT “does present an image of a government that is trying to engage with and listen to people directly (although this has been met with skepticism by some users who accuse them of being spies).”
- “When the DOT starts a thread about Obama’s Cairo speech, it aims at making people think about the speech, putting it on the thought map.”
- “If U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East does not produce more than rhetorical change, public diplomacy 2.0 will not be able to alter perception of the USA in the region.”

This final point sometimes is overlooked when the mechanics of message delivery receive inordinate attention and the substance of issues positions is treated only cursorily. Public diplomacy is a process, but it cannot be separated from policy. As Obama’s short-lived post-speech surge in popularity in many Muslim countries indicated, deep-rooted skepticism about U.S. intentions in the Arab world will limit even the most cleverly designed public diplomacy tactics.

In these matters, another concern should center on the question of intellectual influence afforded by use of new media, particularly social media, as public diplomacy tools. To what extent are publics’ opinions actually changing as a result of what they pick up from these media? Is there an intrinsic strength in this kind of messaging that makes the State Department Twitterer the equivalent of the Peace Corps volunteer? Do Tweets have the same impact in communities as a hands-on project, such as a new sanitation system?

High and low tech need not be – and should not be – mutually exclusive. The challenge for diplomats – the expeditionary diplomat in the field or the policymaker in the foreign ministry – is to create a public diplomacy that incorporates the modern without wholly abandoning the traditional. If soft power is to be effective, it must be built upon a solid foundation of policy that is complemented – not dominated – by new information and communication technologies.

September 2013

Shell, ARM, Penspen Group Ltd and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) – Oral evidence (QQ 218-235)

Transcript to be found under ARM in Volume 1 (page 95)
I. INTRODUCTION
1. I have been asked to submit written evidence on UK soft power in general and armed conflict in particular.

II. HARD AND SOFT POWER
2. The distinction between hard and soft power is not between military and non-military power, because the term military has two senses. First, it can mean the armed forces. Second, it can mean resort to war. The armed forces can be used outside of war: humanitarian work, training missions, and so on, ultimately through to threatening force without actually going to war. Is the use of armed forces outside of war soft (non-military) or hard (military) power? The military or non-military distinction is confused already and so inadequate.

3. More broadly, there are plenty of non-military resources that can be employed in a hard mode. Take for example the EU’s threat of retaliatory trade tariffs that ended US protectionist tariffs on steel in 2003. We need a more sophisticated distinction between hard and soft power.

4. Hard and soft power distinguishes between the persuasive resources at the state’s disposal. Hard and soft are not binary categories, but two ends of a spectrum: the hard end represents persuasion through coercion, and the soft end persuasion through attraction.

5. While exclusive use of hard or soft resources might work, persuasion is often achieved by an approach that uses both hard and soft resources as carrots and sticks. This is sometimes termed “smart power”.

6. The practical utility of the distinction is a conceptual aide to the resourcing and synchronisation of state action. So to speak of “hard”, “soft”, or “smart” power as strategies in themselves is potentially confusing: those prefixes identify only how the strategy is resourced in time and space, not what the state is trying to achieve. Thus for the distinction between hard and soft power to have practical utility, it needs to be understood in relation to the goals of state policy and the audiences against whom those goals are defined.

III. POLICY GOALS AND AUDIENCES
7. Understood as persuasive resources, hard and soft power can only have meaning in relation to people - audiences - in the individual or collective sense.

8. Thus the same resource can be both hard and soft at the same time to different audiences. An army battle-group may be reassuring (soft-attracting) a civilian population by its presence in a peace-enforcement mission, while simultaneously intimidating (hard-coercive) towards the insurgent group or oppressive government threatening that population.
9. Of course, that battle-group is not attracting or coercing audiences towards itself, that would not make sense, but towards a policy goal, which in this case might be the political stability of that area.

10. So the application of hard and soft power demands a context that identifies policy goals and audiences.

11. *That context is the narrative.* If hard and soft power is about messaging, the narrative is the message: an organising idea that gives meaning to actions to link them to the goals of policy. In this way the policy goals are achieved when the audiences against whom they are defined recognise the narrative as reality. So the narrative is a vehicle for translating a policy goal in the abstract to a realised reality.

12. What is a narrative? The narrative is a story that aspires to communicate state policy goals in a way that make sense – that is persuasive – to the various audiences against whom that policy goal is defined. Actions, hard and soft, tell that story. Crafting a narrative usually means making choices between different audiences, because one cannot please everyone. That in turn requires clarity as to which audiences state policy is defined against.

13. Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* distinguishes three forms of persuasive resources, which in the present context can be understood to mean: *logos* (rational argument – is the narrative grounded in reality?); *pathos* (emotive argument – does it resonate on a human level?); *ethos* (ethical argument – is this moral?). Note that *ethos* is really about persuasion through the moral standing of the speaker herself, and is similar to soft power in the sense of persuasion based on attraction. *Aristotle’s three persuasive resources are a very useful checklist of the content of any narrative.*

14. A historical example of effective use of narrative by the UK is the Borneo Confrontation 1962-66. Indonesia wanted to destabilise and incorporate parts of the newly created state of Malaysia. The UK could not get US support for military action against Indonesia because the US perceived it to be a colonial project. The UK and its commonwealth allies managed to re-frame the problem by persuading President Lyndon Johnson that it was not a colonial but an anti-communist fight, a counter-part to the US effort to Vietnam. This not only got the UK crucial US support, but kept British troops out of Vietnam.

15. An example of ineffective narrative is UK and more broadly, international policy in Afghanistan in the earlier phases of the campaign. The narrative oscillated wildly between idealistic and limited goals: democracy and rights versus a basic level of security. No wonder Afghans were confused. Take this quotation from a Helmandi farmer reacting to the anti-narcotic effort: “We are lost; I do not know what is legal and what is illegal in Afghanistan. If I grow poppy, that is illegal, but if I pay a bribe, that is legal.” That sums it up.

16. Because the policy was not clear about whether the mission had a narrow UK national security goal, a broad nation building remit, or a host of other objectives cited at various moments, or at least did not prioritise between them, it was not clear to an audience, be it insurgent, Afghan government, Afghan civilian, or international
audiences, what the basic message was. In that context, greater focus on hard or soft power would not make much difference.

17. Take by analogy a salesman who is unsure of what product they are trying to sell: regardless of the sales method, hard or soft, they will likely be unpersuasive. The product here is analogous to the narrative.

18. If the Committee’s aim is to improve UK understanding of, and capacity in, soft power, the focus of attention should be the process by which the UK crafts narrative. Effective use of hard or soft power, and more accurate understanding of what resources need to be acquired to deliver hard or soft power, will then follow.

IV STRATEGIC NARRATIVE

19. Ideally, strategic narrative provides an organising idea that gives meaning to actions to link them to the goals of policy, both for one’s own side and external audiences.

20. Why add the prefix “strategic” to narrative? Because state strategy is that which links state action to the goal of state policy, and adjusts both in so doing in what is ideally a dialogue between desire and possibility. So strategic narrative is strategy in narrative form, because it seeks to link actions to policy.

21. Furthermore, “strategic” in strategic narrative should be understood as an aspiration to give a narrative a strategic quality. There are two senses of narrative: first, the story that one tells; second, the story as received by the audience(s). Narrative will only perform a genuinely strategic function when the story told is the same as the story received, in the sense that it is persuasive and coherent, and so links actions to policy in the minds of the audience(s).

22. The key practical deduction here is that any reform of the process by which the state makes strategy should aim to mirror in institutional design and procedures the ideal strategic dialogue between desire and possibility: the story the state wants to tell (desire) and the story that is actually persuasive to the audiences against whom policy is defined (possibility) should reciprocally and at regular intervals be situated and updated in light of one another.

23. This ideal dialogue is incompatible with the traditional view of civil-military relations, in which policy makers and the military do not trespass on each other’s domain. This view is really informed by legitimate democratic considerations, but does not make strategic sense. The reason strategic narrative in Afghanistan was so lethargic to what was possible on the ground was due to a breakdown in strategic dialogue. Reform here is crucial, the challenge being how to establish in state processes effective strategic dialogue while preserving democratic imperatives.

24. Is this all abstract theory? No, because to have a coherent strategic narrative is to have a coherent strategy, and that matters immensely:

(1) Take the recent French intervention in Mali. The narrative was clear: the enemy in north Mali was Al-Qaida, not the surrounding Tuareg population, who initially had invited in Al-Qaida. In the event, the Tuaregs understood that
they were not being targeted, and did not fight French forces, and so did not spark a wider insurgency.

(2) Conversely in Helmand in 2006, a vague and confused narrative meant that British forces ended up fighting not just the Taliban, but a whole mix of tribal and narco-factions, sparking a large insurgency.

25. If all state policy is ultimately achieved through persuasion of people, the aim in any situation is that the state’s actions match the state’s words, so that the policy is credible, and thus persuasive. If actions cannot match words, then the words should be more limited, or one will eventually be found out and lose credibility. So for example a regional power is taken seriously when it is understood to have regional power and acts accordingly, when it makes wider claims, it loses credibility fast.

26. The UK today struggles to maintain a coherence between the narrative of global power and the reality of declining military and economic position relative to powers like the US and China. So it is no wonder that there is often a credibility problem with UK foreign policy. Until UK strategic narrative frames UK actions to give them a meaning that is actually persuasive to its audiences, this problem will continue.

27. The irony is that the UK still has real power, and especially, in an era of defence cuts, soft power. The UK legal, financial, educational, and creative industries are good examples. The political and legal stability of the UK is by far our most important strategic resource. The BBC World Service is trusted worldwide, and reflects those values. That counts for a great deal.

28. The UK will not realise the value of its persuasive power, hard or soft, if it is not framed by a strategic narrative that credibly matches actions and words.

29. My central recommendation is therefore to focus on reform of the process by which the state produces strategic narrative. As stated above, ideally strategy is produced through a dialogue between desire and possibility, and the configuration of state structures and procedures should reflect that.

30. In the context of strategic narrative in armed conflict, and policy lines that deal with security more broadly, the establishment of the UK National Security Council (NSC) in 2010 was a decisive step in the right direction, which should now be furthered as follows:

(1) The NSC should be the exclusive point of authentication of UK strategic narrative: the point at which what is desired by elected politicians and what is possible on the ground is discussed and adjusted in light of the other, at regular intervals.

(2) There must be a single lead minister, or perhaps civil servant or soldier, for a given situation, who sits in the NSC, to give clear direction on what the policy goals are, and thus anchor the UK strategic narrative relevant to that situation at a single source.
The NSC should sit above departments. Currently it effectively co-ordinates between them, which limits its impact.

The above should be supported by a large expansion of the NSC staff, drawn from the top ranks of the relevant departments.

A more general recommendation is that given the UK’s geo-political position, our power often rests on our ability to bring others with us. To act as a unifying force amongst other powers we need: to be in a position of strength (without being threatening); for our opinions to be respected (built on a track record); to understand the situation as well as or better than the others who are involved; and we need to be prepared to resource our ambitions. Posturing in the diplomatic sphere and then backing out when we are challenged to stump up the resources doesn’t work.

V SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

I have been asked to comment specifically on the following questions:

(1) **Is war still legitimate if a government decides to go to war without fully understanding the political context of the conflict that it is entering?**

Legitimate for whom? Since a government may offer different reasons to different audiences, perceptions of legitimacy will differ. In relation to a given audience, for a conflict to be legitimate the policy goals need to resonate rationally and ethically, be understood to be accomplishable, and then be understood to have been accomplished.

No army or government will fully understand the political context before entering, as war is complex and evolves. The key is to learn fast on the ground, and quickly recognise what is or is not achievable, if the conflict is not of an existential nature.

In Afghanistan it took far too long, especially between 2006 and 2009, to close the gap between desire for idealistic goals and the possibility represented by ground truth. The dialogue between desire and possibility in the strategic process was broken, so the strategic narrative was lethargic and unpersuasive. In the meantime, soldiers died. This was a coalition as much as a UK issue.

(2) **To what extent does the media’s tendency to simplify narratives around conflict have an influence on governments’ approaches to and understanding of war?**

The government itself simplifies narratives around conflicts. At least in Northern Ireland most UK politicians could probably name the basic political groups and terrorist factions, so as to communicate an understanding of the conflict that recognised it was not a clear two-way fight, or a war, and to condition public expectations accordingly.

I doubt the same could be said for Afghanistan. How many UK politicians could name the tribes and factions in Helmand, or give even a simple overview of its recent political history? I think not many.

The basic problem was reliance on a traditional paradigm of war where the result of battles is immediately apparent and expectations of decisive results are encouraged, such as when the UK government spoke about “defeating” the Taliban. That was
inaccurate. What British forces were doing was trying to enforce the domestic jurisdiction of the Afghan government more than defeat an external foe: most insurgents are locals.

That means that success was a relative level of stability, in which insurgents either joined the government security forces, stopped fighting, or became more of a criminal problem. The UK government rightly shifted its language towards the language of stability in around 2010.

I think the media were on the whole fair in reporting the government's narrative, which is the key variable. If a politician states that the problem is that the UK public “don’t understand” what a given campaign is about, that is usually a problem of communication based on strategic confusion, not of public understanding.

(3) How can governments and the media make war appear legitimate, if it is now to be an unending, diffuse process which policy must serve, not which is a servant of policy? If soft power is in the eye of the beholder, how do governments explain war to publics, at home or abroad?

When the enemy is endless, and even becomes more an idea to which people can subscribe, then military activity to defeat that enemy can often not be clearly conceptually distinguishable from political activity with the same aim. The result is a blurring of the boundaries between war and peace, and state policy can become trapped in a continuous effort to defeat an endless enemy: policy becomes an extension of ill-defined war.

The key is to reassert the primacy of policy over war and to do so means having clear strategic boundaries - geographical, chronological, legal and conceptual in terms of policy goals audiences, and especially to define the enemy audience (see paragraph 24).

Conversely, the view that the UK is engaged in a global, generational, fight against terrorism is the wrong approach. It mistakenly encourages seeing enemies to UK national security everywhere.

(4) If leaders could explain the changing nature of war, would it be easier to advocate the virtues of a particular war? Do we need to alter expectations about what war is and what war looks like? Do we need a whole new imagery of war?

The nature of war is essentially constant, but what changes is the social and political context. The context today is the information revolution, which means that while many conflicts start as polarised, global audiences quickly bolt onto the conflict, and many feel they have a stake in it. Syria started as a polarity, but rapidly moved to a politically fragmented battlespace, in which the notion that one could simply intervene on one side or the other in a clear cut military fight is plainly redundant.

This is likely to be the trajectory of contemporary armed conflict. Traditional war still exists, and the possibility of conventional inter-state war remains. Whether a war is supported by a given audience, especially the UK domestic public, is a function of whether the strategic narrative is persuasive.
In terms of the imagery of war used by the strategic narrative as an explanatory framework, the key is to present each conflict in its own terms, and in particular not to force a situation into the model of a two way fight if that is not what is going on. In short, the UK government does not need to redefine war in general, but to define the parameters of each war in which it is involved.

27 January 2014
Meaning and Importance

Soft power can be summed up as a set of characteristics and values that are associated by others with a particular nation and its people, and which appeal to others in such a way that it can affect their opinion and perhaps their behaviour towards that people and nation in a positive way. The effect could be negligible, but even negligible change can be the difference between acting or not acting. For Britain, such characteristics might include the reputation of its institutions of higher education and the media (BBC), the sense of humour of its people, its democratic traditions, and its rich historical heritage. Such characteristics could also include blends e.g. the tradition/modernity mix of current-day Britain, or stereotypes, e.g. the British and fair play. Whatever the characteristics, the outcome is a general sense that a) Britain stands for something in terms of values, and b) Britain is unique, or at least recognisably different from other nations, in a positive way.

Extent and Use

The key is not so much to identify what is best about Britain, but to find out what images and perceptions of Britain play most positively with audiences around the globe, and then to think how best to build on that foundation.

Setting ‘targets’ for such an exercise is probably not a worthwhile exercise, unless one wants to devise a set of measurables such as numbers of tourists to Britain per year, numbers of foreign students at British universities, and so on. Even then, what is being ‘measured’ is not necessarily soft power, but fluctuations in the value of the pound, or the increasing costs of higher education, and the impact these changes might have on peoples’ decision-making. Of course, the continuing wish of international student to attend British universities despite the fact that the costs are rising is in turn a sign of Britain’s soft power as a place for higher education. A few years ago a British Council study concluded that while international students go to America for career-based reasons and to Germany because it is affordable, they tend to go to Britain for quality. It is important that British universities maintain that quality in an increasingly competitive marketplace for international education. That would be a useful target for the upcoming five years.

One of the problems of the digital era is that the level of information saturation makes it difficult to differentiate between sources, and difficult to make one stand out beyond others. At the same time, there is a fear of being ‘left behind’ or ‘invisible’ in the digital era, sometimes causing an engagement with social media platforms for no other reason than ‘everyone else is’. It is not possible to ‘dominate’ the hugely dispersed media environment of the 21st century. What is possible is to a) maintain a constant awareness of how political behaviour and actions are conveyed to the (mainstream) media, and b) identify the key social media sites (as regards quality and number of followers) where forms of careful engagement could bring dividends. But any sense of social media engagement for purely public relations or selling policies will achieve little.
Learning from Others

Some attempts to apply soft power as positive imagery are meant well but jar too much with the actual reality. A few years ago the US State Department made a short introductory film of the American landscape and its people to be shown at airport passport control points. While the film expressed the welcoming and friendly nature of the American people and the diversity of American society, its positive message was not matched by the long queues for those waiting to go through immigration control, or the hard-edged attitude of the US immigration staff themselves. The exercise was well-meant, but the wider context devalued its message. This is a good example of getting the message right but the reality wrong.

Economic diplomacy is of increasing importance, with trade delegations now making up a major part of any diplomatic outreach, and soft power is often regarded as a means to enhance this. Other nations are very good at focusing on particular aspects of this. The Netherlands has for a number of years run a Dutch Design campaign that makes use of innovation as a key theme. Alongside the ubiquitous ‘tulips and windmills’ imagery, Dutch Design is used as a way to express youthful talent, self-confidence, problem-solving, social improvement, and networked engagement. It also expresses value - the added value of what the Netherlands brings to other nations and to the world. It mixes a combination of entrepreneurial spirit and economic potential with the fungible impact of ‘cool objects’. It also cleverly manages to elude the fact that the Netherlands no longer has any particular manufacturing base - the point is not to make the product, but to be at the leading edge in designing it. The overall message is therefore that the Netherlands may be small, but its well connected, and it provides a valuable service in the global knowledge economy. In terms of displaying innovation, Britain has long been successful. The remarkable British pavilion at the Shanghai World Expo probably did more to nurture the image of innovative Britain with the millions of Chinese visitors than any other campaign could. In contrast, Dutch Design is an ongoing campaign ‘selling’ the same message on a broader scale.

The Netherlands has also developed a series of 'rolling anniversaries' which mean in practice a year of cultural event and exchanges with a particular nation with which it has had long-running ties. Examples recently have been with the United States (1609-2009), Turkey, Vietnam, and, in 2013-2014, Russia. The risk with some countries is that, without careful management, the colonial heritage of the past will cloud any attempt to repackage the relationship as some kind of 'partnership of equals' (and even careful management can end up looking as if it denies the violence of the past. The positive side of this approach is the emphasis on mutual interests in the current-day and the future, particularly for trade and business. It is a way to put the spotlight on and build on existing ties, which can perhaps be developed further in the diplomatic arena via international organisations etc.

Soft Power and Diplomacy

A country's soft power is important because it denotes a certain legitimacy to that country’s actions in the eyes of others. The harder the power applied, the greater the legitimacy required, and so the greater the need for soft power. But soft power cannot simply be generated at will, its features can only be identified and promoted over time (i.e. through public diplomacy, or careful use of 'nation-branding'). Neither do all of its characteristics necessarily have a universally equal impact – cultural differences obviously play a role in terms of reception.
Institutions such as parliament definitely resonate positively in other parts of the world. The recent vote against a military strike against Syria was a good example of democracy in action. Whether more could be made of parliament is another matter, since any suggestion that Britain has all the answers democratically will inevitably risk alienating others with its arrogant undertone.

It is fair to say that Britain faces something of an identity crisis. The very notion of ‘Britain’ as a political unit is coming under increasing strain. The so-called ‘special relationship’ with the United States clearly has little meaning for the Obama administration, beyond fixed agreements on information sharing and nuclear security. Britain’s place within the European Union is probably to be reconsidered in the coming years, with the outcome highly uncertain. An economy buffeted by recession has led to the capacities of Britain’s armed forces and diplomatic service, and their capabilities for global engagement, being reduced.

But soft power is as much about indicating change - and peaceful change - as it is about displaying fixed values. Some of the most effective campaigns to re-brand a nation’s image have been all about democratic change - Spain and South Korea are good examples. Should Scotland become independent, it would obviously be a challenge to the conception of Britain, but there are also ways to turn it into an advantage by highlighting exactly the peaceful evolution of Britain into new forms. Britain has already evolved from imperial to post-imperial, from industrial to post-industrial, and we may be entering a new phase of ‘post-Britain’. This would not be easy to achieve, since any public diplomacy campaign should also involve a public affairs component, i.e. any campaign needs to resonate with the national populace as much as it successfully conveys a message to those abroad. Propaganda – conveying an overly positive message that has little connection with reality – can backfire with one’s own nationals as much as with anyone else. But it is worth thinking how this might be done, since in a world of incessant change, those who can manage and harness that change come out ahead.

Britain benefits a great deal from the inventiveness and professional qualities of its diplomatic staff and apparatus, particularly in international organisations such as the UN. This is respected worldwide. The key for the future is to generate solutions for mutual problems. It is impossible to satisfy everybody in this way, but it is possible to influence those for whom solutions are more important than ideological prejudices. For many around the globe, Britain still represents a colonial past and a country that assumes by right its place at the top table of global governance (such as in the UN Security Council).

As time goes on and other powers rise in importance both economically and politically, this position will become increasingly resented. On what grounds can Britain continue to claim its 'special status' as it gradually moves down the rankings of relative power? Only by providing a) connectivity and b) expertise towards problem-solving. Other countries also have these qualities in abundance, but they may not possess the ability to link up with others as successfully. Britain needs to position itself not as a nation that has all the answers, but as a nation that has the qualities that can bring the answers nearer for the mutual benefit of others as well. This is not a major departure from existing British diplomatic practices. What will be different is the realisation that it has to become central to the whole enterprise, simply because Britain cannot hold on to its position at the centre of global governance purely on privilege and the past. A mutual approach not based on ‘tutoring’ will also avoid potential accusations of hypocrisy and cultural imperialism.
It is impossible to reach out to all peoples worldwide, and there is always the risk of focusing on the leaders and the elites and missing the 'street'. Britain should aim to connect with the aspirations of the rising global middle class. This is the community with both ambition and vulnerability (to economic shocks). This means not only 'acting entrepreneurial', highlighting quality education and investment opportunities, but also acknowledging and promoting sustainability in everyday life. There is great scope for 'sustainable soft power', and the failure of traditional diplomacy should not prevent the success of other more informal approaches. It is at present not possible to secure a follow-up to the Kyoto agreement due to the wide differences between the nations of the North and South. But this does not close out building lower-level connections between sustainable enterprises and ventures that recognise these efforts not as marginal or exotic but as necessary and normal. Britain would benefit enormously from an approach that looked to utilise the vibrancy of its existing 'green', sustainable economic sectors and use this as a means to link up with what is happening in other nations in innovative and novel ways. If this is done without hubris (i.e. without any sense of 'tutoring'), and with a focus on connectivity, expertise, and sharing life experiences towards mutual sustainable solutions, it would certainly enhance Britain's soft power reach.

September 2013
MONDAY 16 DECEMBER 2013

Members present
Lord Howell of Guildford (The Chairman)
Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top
Lord Forsyth of Drumlean
Lord Foulkes of Cumnock
Baroness Goudie
Baroness Hussein-Ece
Lord Janvrin
Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne
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Examination of Witness

Tara D Sonenshine, former Under-Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs for the US Department of State (2012-13), and Director of Foreign Policy Planning for the National Security Council during the Clinton Administration (via videoconference)

Q358 The Chairman: Tara Sonenshine, good afternoon. I am David Howell, Chairman of our House of Lords Select Committee, here in London. We are very grateful to you for sparing time to join us this afternoon and share some thoughts with us on the subject preoccupying us, namely the pattern of international diplomacy; how it is changing with globalisation and the hyper-connectivity of the planet; how the new techniques of soft power or the marriage between hard and soft power or the smart power that is the result of that marriage can now be applied successfully in world affairs, both by the United States and, obviously, by the United Kingdom, with which we are concerned. That is the scene. I hope that sets it for you clearly. We would like to ask you a few questions. I am going to go straightaway with the first one and perhaps give you the opportunity to share some of your overview of the whole question.

We have lived through a decade or more of hard power activity in Iraq and in Afghanistan and, frankly, there is a general feeling that it has not produced the kind of results we would have liked to have seen. Indeed, we seem to have lost touch with some of the aims with which we were originally concerned. To what extent is the renewed interest in soft power on both sides of the Atlantic a bit of a rebound as a result of the disappointments in those two theatres?

Tara Sonenshine: Good afternoon to all of you. It is with great respect and humility that I come before you to provide some testimony to this Select Committee. I will address your question directly but, very briefly, I will say that my career has been at the intersection of international policy/smart power communications and media, and so I am delighted that you
are taking such a hard look at it. Terminology is important. As you may know, I subscribe to the term used by Secretary Clinton, “smart power”, and with great respect, of course, to Professor Nye who has spoken to you about soft power and hard power.

I think what I would like to focus on, in looking at the cases of Iraq and Afghanistan, is first that we need to have a toolbox approach to this whole question of traditional diplomacy hard power/soft power. We need to see this as a whole of government, whole of community effort around using key tools: education exchanges, social media, foreign assistance, government media, sport, traditional film. I would argue even travel and trade are part and parcel of the overall deployment of a number of techniques.

In response to the two conflict areas, I think you are right. First, the polling, to the degree to which you accept polls, suggests that Americans are particularly wary and leery of military involvement, especially when there are long-term engagements that cost lives and treasure. We see now a renewed interest in the alternatives to traditional military use of force, troops on the ground, and all of the military means; although I will tell you, and we will get into it, that the military can be very important in what I call a public diplomacy strategy. By that I mean engaging publics for the purposes of furthering your own national security objectives and for the purpose of communicating your values, interest, culture, short-term objectives, medium-term and long-term.

I see this whole public diplomacy field as a way in which Governments communicate with individuals overseas to further their national security objectives and, as you say, we must be clear what those objectives in an individual place are.

The Chairman: Thank you very much for that opening overview. I suppose the question that then follows from that—and I am going to ask Baroness Goudie, who is a member of our Committee, to come in on this—is: does the US have such a strategy or is this just the formulation of informal opinions?

Q359 Baroness Goudie: Good afternoon. On the question of soft power, since President Obama’s Administration I have seen that you have put, through the State Department and others, much more funding into soft power activities. I look on those as appointing Ambassador Melanne Verveer as Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women, appointing other people within the State Department and the Foreign Service to do work about empowerment across the divide, taking people from Afghanistan to Pakistan, Pakistan to Iran and other places like that. You are doing far more funding—I think more than the American people realise—into soft power activities, through the funding of NGOs and other organisations, and convening events together in a much softer way than you did before, and also not using the phrase, “We do it this way”.

Tara Sonenshine: We do believe that you need an overarching strategy and then you need the tactics and instruments to carry out that strategy. One strategy that you have identified well is the strategy of engagement and exchange and education: three “Es” that we feel are very much strategic pillars of this soft power/smart power public diplomacy.

On engagement, we can come back to social media and other forms of engagement, education, exchange and economic use of some of these tools. With regard to women, girls, marginalised populations, youth, all of this, we see that you must interact with people where they are and often where they are is on the web. While I was there the State Department committed to a very robust social media engagement strategy.

On the education side we see, whether it is Fulbright programmes or 140 other forms of educational exchange, that that is a very powerful vehicle for explaining your foreign policy,
your values, your culture, your interests, but within the matrix of what people’s lives revolve around and that is their educational attainment.

The engagement strategy or all of these programmes that you see involving women entrepreneurs going back and forth or India/Pakistan bridging of dialogues is all premised on the belief that contact is important between and among individuals of different countries. Whether that contact happens virtually or physically around a dinner table or in a classroom or on a programme, what you are seeking is this interactivity around which you may see short-term benefit, mid-term benefit and long-term benefit, and you need to measure those outcomes in a very systematic way. What are we gaining from these interactions and exchanges? Be they for women and girls, be they for vocational training, entrepreneurship or through foreign assistance, all of these are a means by which you are engaging other cultures.

The Chairman: May we take some practical examples? There have been plenty. Only a few months ago, on both sides of the Atlantic, Governments were considering a very hard power action towards Mr Assad over his alleged chemical weapons use. The British and the French, with American support, used some hard power involvement in Libya. The whole situation in Iran is now changing in a very interesting way, where hard power has been threatened and is still on the table as a last resort. How do your thoughts and ideas fit in with all that? Give us some comments on that.

Tara Sonenshine: On Syria, I think we have all seen the polling data. The American Congress and the American people did not subscribe to the notion that military strikes would be the most effective way. I think this goes back to this opening point about the wariness and being leery of how much time we will have to spend in a given region and to what end. I think the public are looking for alternatives to that military use of hard power. They do not distinguish so much between whether that alternative is traditional, government to government diplomacy, international activity through the United Nations or through other bodies, or whether that means soft power as we would define it in a traditional way, but they know they want some alternatives tried, with the use of militaries being the last resort.

In the case of Iran, I think we can say that there has been a combination of efforts around trying to move the Iranians short of use of force. I would say the sanctions are obviously a form of more government pressure, international pressure, but in the case of Iran I would also call your attention to the fact that Secretary Clinton, and now it has continued under Secretary Kerry, created a virtual embassy for the United States in Iran. Absent a physical embassy, we have used the power of social media to deliver messages to the Iranian people. I would not discount the interest on the part of Iranian citizens to be engaged with the United States or the UK and the degree to which that will factor in to decisions that Iranian officials may make. There is contact, albeit in that case virtual, and we do have Iranian students in the United States. I think in each of these scenarios we are still dealing with some element of public engagement beyond simply Government to Government or international responses.

Q360 Baroness Hussein-Ece: You mentioned Pakistan earlier and you talked about engaging and diplomacy. I want to ask you about the United States policy on drone attacks because you will be aware of the negative impact that does have on diplomacy, for example. I wanted to know whether you think there is a danger of that undermining all the investment in the work that is going into soft power and diplomacy. For example, we have a large diaspora here in the United Kingdom of Pakistan origin who are extremely negative and angry about what the United States is doing in terms of drone attacks. I believe that when she spoke at the United Nations recently, Malala, the young woman who was shot by the
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Taliban made a plea that this policy was recruiting and radicalising more young men than it was resolving. I would just be interested in your views on this.

Tara Sonenshine: For one to be very honest and genuine about the field of public diplomacy one has to concede that there will be times when what you are seeking to achieve through your cultural diplomacy, your educational outreach, discussions of your values, will most definitely clash with what may be happening on the policy side of the ledger. I think it is fair to say that there are times when those things come into conflict, but you stay the course on the engagement front, in my view, because you are looking beyond the short-term stresses and strains in the bilateral relationship over particular issues. Drones in Pakistan are a good example.

I did a public diplomacy mission to Pakistan during my stay as Under-Secretary and I knew, in speaking at a college in Lahore, that I would face very difficult questions. Students did come to the microphone and say, “But how can we be engaged with you educationally when you are having drone strikes that take casualties?” They were critical of the United States coming in to get Bin Laden. They were critical of a shooting that had happened in Lahore. What I explained to them—and I think those young people understood—was that there will be ups and downs where our countries will disagree over issues relating to countering violent extremism or particular policies vis-à-vis Afghanistan, but there are some common areas of concern: education; health; finding employment; living in a secure and safe environment; having individuals like Malala able to speak out without retribution.

Once we got to those issues I must say that something happens with publics. Then when I tell them that one of the largest Fulbright programmes that the United States has in the world is in Pakistan and that we do a State Department scholarship programme to teach English for impoverished world marginalised communities, you will be amazed particularly with young people who can accept that we may disagree on foreign policy and defence issues but still find respect for American science, technology, education, even our films, although some would prefer we not export too much of our values by those means. I do think you can get through that maze and minefield, literally, of policy dispute if you see a broader engagement strategy that you think will deliver some benefit to both societies.

The Chairman: I have not quite got hold of the connecting links between the soft power engagement you are talking about, Tara, and the actual policy being pursued by the United States Government. All over the world you hear both tunes, if I may say so. You hear about American culture, its contribution and major programmes of scholarship. We all know that certain aspects of American culture dominate the world, like Hollywood, and yet you hear about American insensitivity, demanding that certain values be swallowed regardless, heavy-handedness and so on. How do these two things match up? Are you winning? Is your line of thinking winning over the idea of tougher gentlemen and ladies who would say, “Just send in the rockets; send in the gunboats”?

Tara Sonenshine: Let me give you some concrete examples where we have measured the impact of this. One is in the area of extremism. Can you use engagement and contact with others to lower the temperature in terms of countering violent extremism? A couple of years ago our President asked if we would look at the possibility of utilising some of this social media interaction to take a look at a very hard power issue of countering violent extremism. What became formalised in presidential executive order 13584 in 2011 was the establishment of an interagency Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications. This was a new concept to try to see if we could orientate and inform others in this space on social media where we know a lot of communications happens around terrorism and violent extremism, particularly in the case of al-Qaeda.
This was moved into the Office of Public Diplomacy to co-ordinate. What goes on there is that we are essentially taking a very upfront, transparent US Government media, social media, video communications and going into previously uncontested space. What I mean by that is we are joining the online conversations in which there is a great deal of misinformation about US intentions and what our strategy is vis-à-vis countering extremism.

What we have seen over time is that you cannot one-for-one say, “I am preventing this individual from going down a given path”. However, you can see that the conversation begins to change around issues such as: what is the alternative if you are seeking a violent path to get your objectives? What else might be an alternative open to you, a programme, an education, a job, training. We have ways of noting that we are more in that conversation by pulling up our chair at the table.

Congress would say, “I need something more concrete”. We would say, “All right, what is the economic impact of engaging foreign students?” Congress has asked me at times, “How many foreigners are on our American campuses, international students?” The answer is: close to 800,000 per year. People will say, “What do we get from that beyond exposing Tunisian students or Egyptian or Libyans to our values and culture? Tell me something you get from this?” My research determined that the presence of those international students on American campuses, beyond the moral, cultural soft power/smart power, public diplomacy value, delivers roughly $22 billion to our US economy across 50 states. It was stunning to know that the presence of those international students delivers real economic value.

Then we looked years hence from the time students arrived; five years, 10 years and 15 years. Many of those who came on Fulbright scholarships, Gilmans, went back and became productive citizens in their Parliaments, their Governments, and their non-governmental organisations. Many became Nobel Prize winners. I must say there is an untold story of impact and influence and real change that happens if you are willing to see this in the long sweep. It is not just, “What is the reaction to drones on Monday?” but, “What are we doing to produce productive citizens who share a positive, productive, global peace and prosperity agenda in the out years?” I would say, finally, what is the alternative to doing it? It is such a small amount of our budget that it is almost paltry when you compare it with other things we may do to try to influence or shape publics overseas. I hope that is the beginnings of an answer for you.

The Chairman: Thank you very much indeed. That is very clear.

Q361 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: First, can I just say how much I admire what you are doing in respect of education and engagement in countries like Pakistan, and if you will permit me a small anecdote? In the summer before 9/11, I went to climb a mountain on the far borders of Pakistan and China. We had 40 porters. They came from a village where the life expectancy was less than 40. There was no school apart from a school that had been provided by an expedition. I spent three weeks with them. Every one of them hated America with a passion. They said that Americans took more than their fair share of world resources. They said that the Americans have no respect for other people’s culture and their only way is their own way. One of the reasons I was opposed to the war in Iraq was because I just imagined—and these people would not have televisions so they would not have seen it—the impact on a whole load of people around the globe of seeing on the television screens the so-called shock and awe.

My question to you is, yes, I can see how Fulbright scholarships are going to bring opinion-formers and so on, but what do you think is the source of these people who have no education? They are lovely people, some of the most balanced people that I have met. How
can they have such a distorted view? Where is this coming from? Social media and so on is fine if you have a mobile phone, but there are millions of people like this around the world who have this view of the United States and indeed, more broadly, of the west. One of them said to me, “We would never bear guns when the British were here”, and I said, “It did not feel like that at the time”. So there is a duopoly of views. To my mind, what you are trying to do is terrific but the problem is much broader. Would you agree?

**Tara Sonenshine:** Indeed. The answer to your question of what is the source of the disdain and the resentment, I truly believe is estrangement. I do think, when you are cut off and you have no information about the other, you are left with rumour, innuendo, a glimpse here and there, or what you imagine another society might be.

**Lord Forsyth of Drumlean:** I do not want to interrupt you but do you think that the clue might lie in, “The Americans only think their way is the best way”? Does it not have to be a two-way communication?

**Tara Sonenshine:** I think it is multiway at this point. For those who are not wired and connected, you have to get out into those rural villages. You have to do what the British Council does. What American spaces do. For example, we have 850 small spaces around the world, many of them outside the embassy and some of them now mobile, where essentially they are places of contact with ordinary citizens. I think about it in a way like the old circus tents that would come around.

You do have to come down to personal relationship-building, particularly when you cannot do this virtually. It is expensive and you will not reach every single remote village. You send your public diplomats out from every embassy. All of our embassies now have expertise in public diplomacy, local contact with local media, with citizens. Unfortunately, security is one of the greatest challenges now for public diplomacy. If you cannot get out from behind that high embassy fortress wall you may not be able to reach people.

In my travels in Ethiopia beyond Addis I went to very small places where those students did not have computers, but I must tell you the proliferation of cell phone mobile technology, even to the most remote areas, begins to connect. Even a rural farmer who has no access to the marketplace can now pick up information through mobile technology. In a sense, we have to keep pace with where that is going. If we simply abandon the notion of reaching individuals, just at a time when a globalised economy and information infrastructure allows so much more penetration, I am afraid we would be ceding the ground to all notions that it is simply too high a wall to scale and I think we have to keep coming at this and cutting at it from different points.

I would also mention to you the role of the military in an effort such as Tomodachi after the triple disasters in Japan. Many of the missions that US military do in the wake of a disaster are in areas where they will tell you there was great suspicion about America, but then came the earthquake or the tsunami or a nuclear disaster and then the US military sends its Mercy ships to provide medical care; then these helicopters come dropping food; then come these large US aid boxes that have the American flag on them and opinions shifted greatly in Tacloban in the Philippines or in areas of Japan where people were very dubious of our military presence for a very long time.

I think you simply have to stay the course with these efforts and not abandon ship, because you have your eye on something very long term and something that requires developing a field of expertise around this public diplomacy. It must be trained and taught in a systematic curriculum that says, “How are you going to extend your values, your national security and your ideals, extending it around the world?”
Q362 Lord Janvrin: Can I pick up on something you mentioned earlier about the overarching strategy of engagement, exchange, education and economic impact and how that relates to the overarching hard power strategy? If you took as an example the pivot to Asia and the American policy towards Asia, which involves a significant deployment of hard power resources, naval resources, is there integrated with that a soft power strategy of the same sort of dimension and what is the shape of it? What I am trying to find out is how you integrate the Pentagon with your thinking about public diplomacy.

Tara Sonenshine: I do think you need a civilian military strategy. First, as we know, the Pentagon defence budgets are such that they can do a great deal in the communication space, although there is always suspicion around strategic communications deployed by US military. None the less, I think there are more and more conversations across the so-called civil divide around how we can work together. If we are going to have an increased naval presence in the Asia region, for example, what else do we need to be doing on the education exchange front;—sport diplomacy with Burma, for example?

Certainly we all know the Chinese strategy has been to match whatever they do with a soft power/smart power strategy. Their Confucius Institutes have sprung up in the United States and overseas where they have deployed teachers, instructors of Chinese language and participants in political science discussions, and it is no secret that they believe that there is some impact. Whether they are having that impact we can debate separately but, in terms of the Asia-Pacific region, I think we do try to say: as well as having more military power in the region, what are we doing to match the fact that 25% of our international students here are coming from China?

What are our Peace Corps volunteers or the equivalent in other countries doing to have a presence in parts of the world where we can do good? What is our strategy around empowering women and girls in Burma or media development or whether it is BBC or Voice of America? How are we taking multiple tools from this public diplomacy toolbox so that we leverage what the military might be doing and what the diplomats might be doing? Can we set the table for a Middle East peace agreement? Can we encourage some sort of civil society discussion that might fortify what the diplomats are doing or might make it less likely that we need militaries to resolve conflicts, to prevent them or to deal with post-conflict societies?

Governments are large, so they fall victim to the bureaucratic resource debates and the lack of coherence around this kind of joint holistic strategy. Unless you see this in a very holistic way it is very difficult to achieve, but very important to set out to weave the tapestry.

The Chairman: But, Tara, one of the oracles of soft power is Joe Nye, who I am sure you know and we know; he has given evidence to our Committee. Does he not say that the secret of the whole different approach must be to engage with and work with rather than work against, to gather around the intentions and aims of others in order to establish a common direction? What you have just said partly answers that because you say there are thousands of Chinese students and so on, but you have also said that the battle fleets are floating round the Pacific. How do these two things match up together? It is very hard for us to understand.

Tara Sonenshine: If you take Afghanistan, to go back full circle, in addition to Afghan communities relating to the presence of US military, we found early on that we needed female US military to be on the ground in Afghanistan if we were going to use the military to create some kind of community that would be less hostile to the presence. If you simply said, “We have guys in helmets, well armed in villages in Afghanistan doing hard power”, it was
important to explain. The Pentagon was quite good about saying, “Then what you are saying is we need to deploy female engagement teams as well, because you are saying there is something that even the presence of military can do to better relate to the community if we want a lessening of tensions”.

I do not see the military as a zero-sum game, with regard to integrated thinking about individual lives, who you are trying to either protect against something or enjoin to something. If you do not have the ordinary citizen in your mind at that checkpoint and you are going to search every female Afghan woman coming in by a male soldier, you may breed the very hostility that your colleague found in a remote mountain area of Swat or Pakistan, simply because you did not consider the individual and the people diplomacy, soft power, smart power, hard power integrated strategy and so you have defeated your objectives rather than enhanced them. I hope that perhaps gives you a sense of taking into account this individual some place and their needs for security, education, engagement, contact and business.

The perceptions of one another cannot also be lost here. None of us like polling data, but we all look at it very closely: what is the US view of other countries and how is the United States perceived by other countries? Those snapshots are simply snapshots in time, but what we can see over time: is there some movement on some fronts that we might see as trend lines going forward?

The Chairman: Baroness Goudie, are there some themes there that you would like to pursue?

Baroness Goudie: I find it very difficult to accept, in terms of military on the ground in Afghanistan, that you would only consider putting women there because of the situation in Afghanistan. I find that quite difficult to reconcile as part of soft and hard power because women are part of the military, I would take it.

Tara Sonenshine: Yes. They are increasingly but not targeted. In that case they were not utilised in a needs assessment way.

Q363 The Chairman: Still on this theme, early on you talked about public diplomacy experts in every US embassy. The question in our mind is: who briefs them? How do they know what message to put over? What is the source in the Administration or in Washington generally that generates the messages that these public diplomacy experts have to convey?

Tara Sonenshine: Let me give you some of the facts on this because, in part, it is a combination of public diplomacy and public affairs. My title at the State Department was Under-Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, because oftentimes in the field your public affairs officer is very much tied to what your public diplomacy intentions are. For example, the State Department budget oversees 3,540 public diplomacy and public affairs positions. Some of those are Foreign Service officer positions in embassies. Some are civil service positions in Washington or the US and, often and very importantly, are locally engaged staff from those countries who speak the language and know the culture. There is still centralised guidance, talking points, messages that emanate from Washington to the field, and more and more some listening by Washington to the messages from the field. Just as you might have your British Councils or other presence—Goethe Institutes are what the Germans might be using—we have both American spaces and public diplomacy officials within embassies that are doing that constant contact on the ground in local regions. I hope that answers the question.
Many are trained at the Foreign Service Institute, taking courses in public diplomacy, social media, online, business contact, trade and travel. More and more we see tourism, for example, as a very important tool in the toolbox. If you increase contact, utilising tourism, you also begin to see not only the value upside of contact but the economics and jobs upside if you can create that back and forth. That is part of what we are talking about here in terms of engaging civil society.

The Chairman: Let us go on to question 4.

Q364 Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top: Good afternoon. The work that is going on with Iran and the beginnings of an agreement with Iran, do you see that as having come from a hard power perspective of tough sanctions? In relation to everything else that you have been saying, it is interesting to think where it is going to go because it is also bringing a lot of anxiety to some of America’s traditional allies: Israel, Saudi Arabia and so on. How do you deal with that level of complexity?

Tara Sonenshine: I think we all know this is a multilayered chess game, the situation in Iran being particularly multidimensional in the layers of complexity. Clearly, in terms of sticks and carrots, the economic sanctions have begun to wear down on the Iranian public, in a sense setting the scene for renewed interest in contact for their purely economic reasons. At the same time that we like to focus on those sanctions, I am deeply aware that there have been other ways of seeding the ground for this kind of development. One is we have had a Persian news network operating in Iran and I think the BBC has been in and out. We have had some reporting, some contact.

As I say, we have had this virtual embassy. Even when the Iranian Government has virtually pulled our embassy down, we put it back up and the cat-and-mouse game continues. I think that you have to say: in the end is this going to be something that publics, even when their respective Governments do not like it, think should succeed? Should it progress? Will it have popular support in countries irrespective of their foreign policy positions early on? Clearly we do not know that yet, but I guess what we are all saying is that you cannot discount the role of individuals in these dramas because the very same individual, who might be a cleric or a government official, also deals with a flock of sermon listeners or students in a class or a public square where a protest may emerge.

How could we even think that we might wall ourselves off behind traditional diplomacy with simply hard power and then be surprised when the public is galvanised because they have chosen to see something different? My argument is that we constantly integrate this public diplomacy piece. Overwhelming as it is to imagine how you might engage an individual Iranian cleric, what we have seen in other regions is that engaging mullahs or religious leaders sometimes will make the critical difference as to whether you have an eruption of violence in a given area or not, if you have any human contact with these individual leaders in a local or civil society context.

The Chairman: Of course, one area where the negotiations in Iran have not been at all popular is Israel, among the Israeli leadership. Israel has been highly critical. Where does your line of thinking meet up with that situation? Are you looking to those Israelis who are feeling in a more positive state of mind? Are you working on the Israeli Government? How does soft power meet this very hard and difficult situation that you have encountered with the strong Israeli criticism of negotiations with Iran on anything?

Tara Sonenshine: Certainly Israeli public opinion is very multifaceted, multilayered. I think we hear mostly the hard line position communicated but I think when one probes a bit you can find those—even in the Israeli military, and certainly in different parties in their
Parliament and their Government—parts of coalitions that might not project the same hard line. I would agree that their public diplomacy is very much focused on the animosity towards this agreement.

At the same time, when you look at the issues around Middle East peace for example, what you see are these shades of difference in the public opinion. In a small country I will tell you that those different blocks and coalitions and strange bedfellows and public views can strongly influence where a Government in a place like Israel may or may not go. We certainly hear the loud voices of the opposition to this, but I think a more sophisticated reading would say it is not the only voice emanating from there.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: I wanted to go on to looking the other way round.

The Chairman: We are about to do that, yes. I am now going to turn the tables and see if you have some advice for us, because we have run up against some blockages and lack some progress. I am particularly thinking of the relations with Argentina over the Falklands and that sort of thing, so perhaps there are some soft power ways through here. Let us have a question from Lord Forsyth as to how you see our affairs.

Q365 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: The Scottish poet Robert Burns pleaded for some power, “the giftie gie us to see oursels as ithers see us”. Can I encourage you to be quite frank with us and perhaps give us your view on where you think the US views the United Kingdom today? Are we seen as the US’s best and most compliant friend or as a lesser member of the EU, with Germany as the continent’s real player, or somewhere in between? We will not be offended.

Tara Sonenshine: I think, first, with all the caveats around polling data, what I have looked at is two sets of research. I will give you my own personal view at the end, but I think what is more important is the public’s view. Gallup, as you may know, recently had Americans listing Canada and Great Britain as their two favourite countries, with 88% favourability for the United Kingdom. Of course, when you dig deeper into that you find some obvious reasons: common language, a sense of fascination with British royalty, a love of everything from “Lord of the Rings” to “The Hobbit” to “Shakespeare” to television.

I think there is at least in that a US/UK special relationship. When you ask citizens of your country they generally give the US high ratings, but not as high as we give you. That is interesting. I do think that on the education front the UK hosted the largest number of US students last year, close to 35,000; so it is a common destination for us and, of course, sport diplomacy, Olympics, travel and trade, all of that.

Where I think there are questions and some concerns is around diaspora communities. You mentioned that earlier. I do think this complex added factor that both societies have over immigration and how to deal with essentially “the other” is probably where you would get the most candid expert opinions saying, “We are not quite sure how we are handling the issue of dealing with those who emanate from other countries, even though we see ourselves as a melting pot, and we are not quite sure how you are managing on that issue”. Those very much influence those places of origin from whence and where those diaspora communities arise.

I think there is a major public diplomacy challenge for both countries in how to relate to diaspora countries. We used to think of it not as a foreign policy issue but as a local national question, when it is very much a global issue with the mobility, the transportation, the remittances that go back and forth, and the ideas over the web that go back and forth. I would say that is probably the weak suit when one is looking at public diplomacy.
**Lord Forsyth of Drumlean:** About the special relationship question, I asked you specifically whether we were seen as your most compliant and reliable friend or as a lesser member of the EU?

**Tara Sonenshine:** On that one I would say that when you ask people how they define the relationship they often use the word “partner”. I do not think the ordinary citizen knows the special transatlantic relationship. I do think that the UK still emerges in the EU pact for most Americans as their relatives in a familial sense.

There is a growing understanding that the European Union, which has been doing its own public diplomacy by the way, is creating a sense of almost a flag that is very much Europe in the United States. It is going to be interesting to see how that plays out against French public diplomacy, British public diplomacy, German public diplomacy and now this kind of European day approach. I think that is something interesting to look at: will there be coherence around the tip and other things that represents?

I do think you only need look at the Royal Family coverage here or the television shows to know that there is something unique grounded in commonality over history in English. I think we see it as a very special, very unique, very family-like relationship. You might be probing, but I do not sense anything that is negative.

**The Chairman:** Would it be fair to say that America would be even better received in Britain than it is—and it is pretty good—if there was less talk about leadership by America of the free world and American values and so on, and more talk about partnership, the very word you have just mentioned? Is that a change of emphasis that you would like to see in America? I think probably we would like to see it here.

**Tara Sonenshine:** I think there is much more of a multilateral conversation that I sense going on under President Obama for years now, which has been about shared interest, mutuality, commonality and trade agreements. I do not sense as much this arrogance over unilateral positioning but, again, I am not on the receiving end of it. I do think we have moved to talk about partnerships and global climate, dealing with poverty and food insecurity and multilateral institutions.

I presume every country, in seeking to draw attention to its unique role in the world, risks that kind of backlash against an egocentric view of some unique leadership position. I think this has been rather a coalition-type approach to issues, but you may be hearing it through a different set of ears and eyes.

**Q366 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock:** I want to follow up what Lord Forsyth asked you. You have been far too nice to us. The one very helpful point you made is about the diaspora communities. I think that is something we have to pick up because we haven’t had that fully explored yet how we deal with the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent people here. I think that is a very helpful point you have made. But there must be other things that annoy you about Britain. You must say, “They are doing too much of that”, or “They do not do enough of that”, or “They go about this the wrong way”. You are being far too nice. Can you think of anything else?

**The Chairman:** There is a challenge for you.

**Tara Sonenshine:** I would not put your culinary diplomacy as your top—

**Lord Foulkes of Cumnock:** That is a start.
**Tara Sonenshine**: The Italians have it over you on food diplomacy. I think there is always a perception of, “Is it stuffy?” I say that most public diplomacy begins at the airport. That is your first contact and so I have never had any problems—

**Lord Foulkes of Cumnock**: Do you have a lot of people saying to you they have problems when they arrive at British airports, huge queues and problems like that?

**Tara Sonenshine**: Yes, Customs. Your first view of another country is, when you step off the plane on to their territory, will the person be warm and welcoming? Will I feel that I do not just get my stamp, but I am now viewed as an asset to your culture and society? The formality. I keep saying even to our folks, TSA and others, “This security issue”, and it is in a very serious way, “can be a turnoff to people travelling to another country”.

The five things that people look at when they come to another country are, “Will I find my way around? Are their maps good? Are the guides good? Are the hotel prices reasonable? Can I get into the museums?” That is clearly at an elitist level of contact, “Can I make my way through your system of applying for visas and documents?” Truly, I think we are all looking at how easy it is to have contact with British society.

**Lord Foulkes of Cumnock**: You were a TV producer. Supposing you were sending one of your reporters to Britain to winkle out some of the things that you find we are weak at and we could do better on, what other things could you point to? Where would you send them?

**Tara Sonenshine**: I would start in the airports, of course. I would send them out to some of the immigrant communities and see if they felt welcome at a mosque. If they were travelling with a scarf on their head, would they feel comfortable? We have the same issues. Would I feel profiled? Would I feel in any way diminished by how I visually or visibly look? We have looked at this in regard to other European countries, how women feel travelling. We have looked at it in the context of India and other places. Do I feel physically safe? Is there crime? Is there terrorism? Are the prices reasonable?

This is where I think the economic piece of engagement is becoming so critical, “Can I afford to even visit some of these places?” Again, it is back to putting ourselves in the mind of individuals, not just Governments, and imagining that we are part of the public and how we receive those images and perceptions beyond what we think of drones. I think there is a more human part of this soft power/smart power, even hard power, traditional diplomacy that is about public understanding. At the end of the day we are public servants and, therefore, we take our cues from the board of directors, which is ultimately the consumer, the citizen and the person who is on the receiving end of our policies.

**Lord Foulkes of Cumnock**: Thank you very much. That is very helpful.

**The Chairman**: Of course, the consumer is empowered as never before with information and connectivity. This has been very useful. Baroness Hussein-Ece, you are going to have the last question.

**Q367 Baroness Hussein-Ece**: Thank you very much. I was going to come back and pick up your point on the diaspora, which I asked you about in the drone question, but my colleague here, Lord Foulkes, expanded it somewhat.

I want to ask you your views because you mentioned that, in terms of the United Kingdom, perhaps there are some issues in our diaspora community about how they may be treated or how their views might be reflected, certainly with the host countries from which they originated from. You brought this up and you did not expand on it.
Tara D. Sonenshine – Oral evidence (QQ 358-367)

Looking at the United States now, you have a black President. You have many more women and ethnic minority-origin people in key positions in the United States Administration. Sadly, we are very far behind on that score, even though we have had diaspora communities settled here in this country for over half a century. Earlier there have been questions asked about: are we seen as perhaps being a small group of people from an elite background still in positions of power without some of the diaspora communities perhaps getting a fair share of influence?

What is your perception in terms of when you look at the United Kingdom, leaving aside the monarchy, “Downton Abbey” and these sorts of things? In reality what is your personal perception?

*Tara Sonenshine:* I think outreach to the Muslim world and to Muslim communities remains a very important separate conversation and session to be had because it deals with very sensitive issues of faith diplomacy, of understanding differences and of our tendency in all societies to reach prejudice or discrimination conclusions based on events that have occurred and linger, but we do not have an open, honest conversation about stereotypes, about interfaith dialogue and about people’s comfort level with others who occupy the country.

These are conversations that have to happen, beginning in younger primary schools where we formulate images, where we hear what our parents or grandparents think or what they have experienced, and I do think there is a whole host of outreach around women and girls in this space.

I think the Malala episode has brought to the fore, frankly, a very positive image of a young Pakistani girl that becomes a symbol. When you now think, “Young girl, Pakistan youth”, right away from a media perspective you have a slightly different image. Seeing her give her book to the Queen, these are powerful metaphoric moments and they have to be followed with real change, with curriculum, with the way public messaging happens.

I could spend a great deal of time simply on that. At the same time with our Asian communities I think there is a perception abroad that China has moved in, even in places like the UK and others, and just simply invested and put their money into things. What is the country itself getting back? They may be getting a new airport or jobs or a hotel sector, but we do not spend time in dissecting what these images may lead to. At the end of the day this whole field is about influencing how people think, feel and behave.

I think we were content to just see this as a hearts and minds issue, but it comes down to how people act upon the information they receive, the impressions they form, and meeting these people where they are as opposed to simply projecting where we want them to be. That respect for one another’s faith, culture, identity, place and position, that is where the hard work happens in that communication of values and impressions.

**The Chairman:** Thank you very much, Tara Sonenshine. We must leave it there because we have taken up a lot of your time. You have vast experience, which you have shared with us. You have acted as a little mirror. We can look at ourselves a bit, which is one of the tasks we have to do to report both to our Government and to our wider public, and I think it is the wider public that is the big actor in this story. Thank you very much again for your time. We appreciate everything you have said very much indeed. Thank you so much.

*Tara Sonenshine:* Thank you. I look forward to reading more on the website. Thank you so much.

**The Chairman:** Thank you.
The UK has a strong and well established international reputation for the rule of law, good governance and political stability. This reputation provides a solid foundation from which the UK can exert considerable ‘soft power’, promoting and developing the principles of good governance, democracy and human rights across the world.

We recognise and respect the importance of the role of international development, and DfID in particular, in addressing world poverty and providing humanitarian relief together with financial and practical support in the fields of health, education, economic regeneration etc. We recognise also the contributions made by FCO, WFD and others in promoting parliamentary democracy and free elections in those countries undergoing radical change in governance.

However, whether political and governmental change results from military action or from popular movements and revolutions, we believe that we are not giving sufficient priority to establishing the rule of law in a country before concentrating on what popular opinion always believes to be the first step towards democracy, i.e., democratic and free elections.

There has been unprecedented international political upheaval since 9/11. In that time the west has, through military action, brought to an end the rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan and repressive dictatorships in Iraq and Libya. We have to varying degrees supported the Arab Spring and other grassroots revolutions in such countries as Egypt, the Ukraine and Tunisia. In now facing the crisis in Syria and following our experience in Iraq and Afghanistan we are reluctant to become militarily involved in a conflict where civil war exists and where the opposition is unlikely to provide stable and free government subsequent to any regime change.

In many of these countries, the immediate demand (outside of economic and industrial development and reconstruction) has been for a new constitution and free elections and the West has responded by helping to deliver on these demands without a full appreciation of the fact that such political concepts are unlikely to survive or succeed without the state very quickly establishing the rule of law. Public participation, and acceptance and access to the law are of course essential for the rule of law to be effective, but constitutions, parliaments and elections are tools to be used to deliver and endorse these ends; they are not ends in themselves.

As we know from history, the rule of law depends on many other factors, not least an independent judiciary, a professional but accountable police force, an army subject to the decisions of the state and so on. Egypt provides a good illustration. Popular protest secured the resignation of Mubarak. Free elections swiftly followed to great applause. Within months of Morsi’s presidency, he was accused of disregarding the law. Importantly the Muslim Brotherhood adopted a ‘winner takes all’ approach to democracy and sought to change the constitution in a way that favoured their religious view of the world. The resulting street protests led to the military taking over again. Democracy is never built in days or months, and the lesson to be learnt from Egypt and elsewhere is that the rule of law is key. Namely,
it can provide a stabilising influence while the more sophisticated aspects of democracy are established.

¶7 In recognition of the above arguments, I established the Good Governance Foundation CIC (a not for profit company) in 2011. My aim was to work with other governments and institutions to prioritise the rule of law. Our first project was the establishment of a post graduate law course at Zayed University in the Emirates with outreach to Palestine. This project had two key objectives: to promote the rule of law and to assist with the creation of the institution of a state in Palestine. This initiative was successful and the first students are now in place. I took advice from a number of Law Lords in the House when setting up this programme.

¶8 I also gave a lecture in Abu Dhabi at the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research last year on “Rule of Law and the Stable Society”. At the time I proposed this lecture might serve as the first of an annual prestigious event designed to give high profile regional coverage to the rule of law. I am currently uncertain whether the authorities in the Emirates will take this forward. We also agreed with Zayed University to publish in Arabic Lord Bingham’s seminal book ‘The Rule of Law’. Some progress has been made, but no final decision has been reached. We believe there is a real need to promote books and other resources which support the rule of law and governance that are easily available in English but not available in the languages of countries emerging from authoritarian rule.

¶9 The Good Governance Foundation (GGF) is now working with Libya and Burma/Myanmar (short courses on the rule of law for officials in the Ministry of Justice, and a proposal for an in-country Academy founded on the rule of law). In both these countries however, there is difficulty in establishing and maintaining the necessary in-country contacts and relationships required to deliver workable training programmes. They are often overwhelmed by offers from around the world and too much time is spent by a relatively small number of decision makers talking to representatives of other governments, NGO’s and business groups. We are attaching letters which demonstrate support and interest given in good faith but where follow up has either not materialised or been less effective than it could have been.

¶10 In a move to counter these problems, we are in discussion with the Director of Clinical Programmes, Department of Law at York University, and the Training Gateway (also at York University), about setting up a partnership arrangement to establish an Academy for Governance and the Rule of Law here in the UK. The Training Gateway links UK universities with those in other countries in order to facilitate the development of joint undergraduate and post graduate programmes as well as supporting staff training and development to ensure the delivery of relevant, effective high quality educational provision in-country. In these respects, I believe the Training Gateway provides an appropriate structural model for the Academy that the Good Governance Foundation is proposing.

¶11 The proposed Academy for Governance and the Rule of Law would be based within a UK University but at an ‘arm’s length’, working with UK universities and governments to put in place training programmes, jointly administered in-country and the UK to ensure delivery of the agreed programmes. The Training Gateway would work with the GGF to
identify potential partners and suppliers of high quality training courses to support the work of the Academy through its well established network of accredited universities, colleges and private training providers in the UK. (We have worked with and learnt a great deal from the Training Gateway with its well-established infrastructure and connections abroad, and I would in fact suggest that their work is less recognised and appreciated than it should be.)

12 Existing links between UK universities (including the Open University) and the Training Gateway are extremely valuable but what is lacking is an organisation dedicated and committed to the promotion of the rule of law and good governance, the basic ingredients for a stable and free society. We recognise that many other factors are necessary but the rule of law is an essential starting point and, most importantly, many states in transition recognise and welcome assistance in this field even where they may be hesitant about democracy and elections.

13 The Academy courses and activities we are proposing will feature ‘hands on’ experience as well as the academic provision so that people selected for our programmes meet with their counterparts in the UK and benefit from the actual experience of people doing the job in the UK. The GGF has access to people and organisations working in the field or with recent relevant experience.

14 A dedicated Academy for Governance and the Rule of Law would reach out to countries and put in place the administrative structures necessary to deliver required outcomes. Such an Academy lies at the heart of this submission to the Select Committee on Soft Power.

15 So what would an Academy for Governance and the Rule of Law do that is not already being done? The primary objectives and methodology would be:

1. To provide a one-stop-shop for courses, information and assistance on governance and the rule of law. It would aim to be a prestigious Academy that draws on Britain’s reputation in this field and on the high respect held for UK universities the world over. All areas of governance should be included: financial competence and integrity are as important as is accountability of politicians.

2. To work in partnership with UK universities, colleges, institutions of government, NGO’s and others to draw on the widest possible experience that can be shared with other states and political parties. More specifically, the Academy would work closely with such organisations as the British Council, the Open University, the Bingham Foundation for the Rule of Law, the Training Gateway, DFID, the Bar Council and a variety of organisations including those in a position to help in the establishment and training of a free media. This is not an exclusive list but is suggestive of how we see the Academy having a wide ranging role that draws together the overlap of know-how that exists in so many organisations at present. We also anticipate that there is an opportunity to liaise with the Commonwealth organisations in selected cases.
3. Wherever possible existing courses and resources would be utilised to draw on the expertise available in the UK. I believe we make insufficient use of such expertise. In the House of Lords we have people with recent and very relevant experience as heads of the civil service, police, armed forces etc. Viscount Slim, for example, has military experience in India and his father Field Marshall Slim is remembered by the ruling generals in Myanmar. Not to make use of him in the delicate transfer of power is an opportunity that we are in danger of missing. Viscount Slim has a good understanding of the attitudes of the Generals ruling the country and has met them but at present we have no structured way of utilising his special knowledge and experience. The same applies to other Members of the Lords and as I indicated earlier I drew on the experience and knowledge of the Law Lords for my work with Zayed University and the Palestinian Authority.

4. To identify, work with and support key ‘in country’ individuals in accordance with agreed priority areas of work and strategies for effecting progress towards the rule of law and good governance. Burma/Myanmar is a case in point – they are clear about wanting the type of courses we are offering but lack the institutional structures within the country to act.

Example Outputs

i. Work with DFID/FCO and others to identify which countries would be prioritised as key for this service.

ii. Work with in-country authorities to identify those groups or individuals who require training, and support and develop e.g. 6-12 month training programmes to deliver the agreed priority objectives set out in point 4 above.

iii. Work with universities and other relevant organisations to organise and deliver short courses, individual lectures, work experience or personal mentoring as appropriate to fulfil training programme needs.

iv. Promote high profile lectures/seminars/papers/consultancies with leading experts, and establish in-country ‘shadow’ academies at in-country universities linked to the UK Academy. (The intention would be for in-country academies to become self-supporting within three to five years, so providing a long term and sustainable resource.

v. Facilitate the translation, publication and distribution of related academic works (e.g. Bingham’s “The Rule of Law”)

vi. Establish a competent website resource which promotes the Academy and provides an educational resource, with a view to establishing online/distance learning facilities which may, where appropriate, be accredited by UK institutions.

vii. Respond to specific requests by providing bespoke programmes of activity. The Tunisian Ambassador asked if we could help establish an organisation similar to
the BBC. This would be possible but currently we do not have an organisation equipped to handle such a request.

¶17 Conclusion

The work that the Good Governance Foundation has done to date strongly suggests that the UK could play a key role in assisting states trying to achieve political stability and build up the rule of law and supporting governmental structures. Our contacts both within the UK and with external organisations like the Commonwealth, the EU and the UN provide a powerful base from which to influence countries in the process of political development. It is envisaged that the proposed programmes will by and large be self-funding, as many of the countries we have had discussions with are in a position to pay, and seem to prefer the independence and control that an aid programme cannot give them. Where they cannot pay funding would have to be provided by an aid programme.

¶18 Recommendations

That the Government supports the establishment of an Academy for the Rule of Law and Governance as an ‘arm’s length’ organisation located within a British University but independent of it. As the Good Governance Foundation is already in talks with York University and one other university showing interest, we do not need any Government assistance at this stage. In due course some seed corn funding would be needed, and at that point we would recommend that the Government look at such a request sympathetically.

Lord Soley of Hammersmith
Director and Chairman, Good Governance Foundation

18 September 2013
I) I have been working on British-Iranian relations for some time. My recent focus has been the relationship between the BBC Persian Services and the FCO. The latter institution seems finally to have recognised that the more hands-off and non-interventionist it is, the greater the efficacy and impact of the World Service (my book on the subject, *Persian Service: The BBC and British Interest in Iran*, is currently in press with IBTauris). Clearly the integration of the World Service within the wider BBC and its operations under the license fee will alter both, perhaps dulling the edge of world service activity in the wider world but potentially bringing greater richness and complexity to domestic news coverage.

2) The Islamic Republic has reacted forcefully to the range of “soft power” channels directed at it from the West, including the BBC Persian Services, and has developed a notion of “soft war”. I have written on the subject (http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/2004) while further argument is presented in the above-mentioned volume. The Iranian response is a clever piece of rhetorical subterfuge but it carries a warning against any crude adoptions of “soft power” as simple weapons of public diplomacy.

3) To me, “soft power” is a woolly concept of limited analytic purchase; it is overused and its scope is unclear. I do not think it has much resonance amongst Politics and IR scholars, while cultural writers now invoke Buddha as instances of Indian soft power; one imagines him squirming in his grave. If we have to use the term, I would argue strongly that it is most effective as a process of channeling and representing British culture in all its glorious raucousness and complexity to the world. This is far more efficacious than getting ambassadors to tweet to foreign audiences or any other limited activity that smacks of old-fashioned propaganda. Only on rare occasions might a government have a clear ‘message’ that it would like to broadcast to a foreign audience but such instrumentised approaches are weak tools. A more eclectic, generous and creative sharing of ‘our’ culture is a far better approach.

4) But this also implies the necessity for joined-up thinking. British higher education is an enormous asset, highly prized around the world. I teach at SOAS and see the transformation that an open, engaged and questioning academic environment can have on international students, many of whom are arriving from countries where they have never been asked for their opinion or where to offer such has had dangerous consequences. Yet, we price many good students out of the higher education market and we make it hugely difficult, through the current UKBA policies and processes, for many more to arrive. Higher education is neither the location for waging the ‘war on terror’ nor a quick fix for immigration policy and the negative stories about harassment do huge damage. More affordable higher education and more reasonable visa-processing would expand international student numbers, restoring Britain as a preferred international student destination in relationship to US, Canadian and Australian universities.
5) Joined-up thinking is also needed in relation to the arts. Britain’s theatre and performing arts, music, plastic arts and design are admired worldwide and the best “soft power” approach would be to support these and market them to the world, through a panoply of exchanges, exhibitions, etc. Instead, the arts are currently under-funded, theatres have closed and the financial provisions for travel in both directions – artists coming in to Britain and British artists travelling abroad – is much reduced. Here again, policy coherence is required – the arts have to be supported in order to be used for ‘soft power’ ends! And there are border issues here also: the UKBA has also prevented various Iranian artists from entering Britain at a waste of time, effort and goodwill of all those involved in trying to build ‘soft-power’ exchanges. Recent discussions at CARA about trying to support and develop British-Iranian activities in academic research and the arts floundered on these issues, compounded by the draconian sanctions regime in place against Iran which add further layers of difficulty.

6) Let me return to the BBC World Services which I think are one of the best resources we have for international engagement. These now employ many highly-educated people from the countries to which it broadcasts; such native intellectuals embellish the understanding of foreign countries that has been built up by cadres of British journalists such as John Simpson and Jeremy Bowen to make British newsgathering and reporting the best in the world. This is the most effective model for ‘soft power’ elaboration (for more academic research on the BBC World Services that addresses issues of digital diasporas and soft power, see the recent AHRC-supported project, Tuning In at http://www.cresc.ac.uk/our-research/reframing-the-nation/tuning-in-diasporic-contact-zones-at-bbc-world-service). The development of bilingual journalist and their utilization throughout the BBC is an excellent step toward enriching the news coverage of international affairs and should be expanded to improve domestic news reporting also. British audiences should benefit from such enormous and diverse resource. The domestic audience includes members of many different diasporas who have chosen to live in Britain. The more they feel ‘included in’ to British culture and feel that our media channels, our public debates and our policies support their everyday lives, the greater the likelihood that shared values of tolerance, empathy and understanding will flower and be ‘exported’ by these transnational communities. Islamophobia and little-Englander attitudes work against British soft power influence in the world.

Yours,

Annabelle Sreberny
September 2013
Rt Hon Jack Straw MP – Written evidence

1. Thank you for your communication of 5th September in which you kindly asked me to submit evidence to your Committee. I am very happy to do so, as I would be if your Committee wished me to give oral evidence. My apologies for the delay in replying to you, as I know my office has explained to you, I have been rather preoccupied by the arrival, within two days of each other, of our first two grandchildren.

2. This letter is intended to give your Committee a brief overview of my views.

3. Let me turn to the substantive issue your Committee is addressing. I remember Joseph Nye’s seminal work on soft power when it was first published, in article form138, in Foreign Policy in the autumn of 1990, and I often reflected on his thesis whilst I was Foreign Secretary, as I have done again more recently.

4. There always was a paradox about Nye’s timing. He published his essay as the world entered an unusual era, with a single super-power, whose military might, and therefore its political influence, completely overshadowed all other nations, including its adversary the Soviet Union (on the verge of collapse as he wrote), and the former great powers of western Europe, as well as Japan, and China.

5. It will be recalled that Nye argued that the cost (political, financial, social) of military involvements had increased vastly compared with the nineteenth century when the European colonial powers had, “carved out and ruled colonial empires with a handful of troops”139. He drew particular attention to Vietnam, and Afghanistan, from which the US and the USSR respectively had had to withdraw after prolonged, and ultimately unsuccessful, engagements. He then went on to assert the emerging importance of “soft power”, in short, “when one country gets other countries to want what it wants”.140

6. Although Nye was quite correct to draw the distinction between the relatively low level of troops needed by the nineteenth century colonial powers (not least, I might add, because of their vastly superior organisation and materiel, such as, towards the end of that century, the Maxim machine gun or the Lee-Enfield rifle), the more successful European powers – France and the UK – did not eschew the use of soft power, even if they did not use this term per se. A comparison between the Belgian colonial experience on the one hand, and that of France and the UK on the other, is instructive. Belgium’s approach was unapologetically rapacious141, and made no pretence to have any higher purpose than power and exploitation. Although these were also the overriding factors for France and the UK, both nations to varying degrees sought to modify, and indeed to soften, these purposes by institution-building, and an inculcation and spread of the values which had, in their own eyes, made these two nations amongst the most civilised on earth.

7. Just a few months after Nye had published his essay in Foreign Policy, with its assertion that the US and the Soviet Union had found the costs of maintaining troops in

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139 Foreign Policy, Autumn 1990, p 162
140 Ibid, p.166
141 See Joseph Conrad, the Heart of Darkness (1899) and Adam Hochschild, King Leopold’s Ghost (1998).
Vietnam and Afghanistan “unsupportable”\textsuperscript{142}, the United States was in the vanguard of prosecuting large scale military action against Iraq, in the first Gulf War. This was followed in the 1990’s by US-led action in the Balkans in 1998/9, and, on a much smaller scale, by the United Kingdom in Sierra Leone (in 2000). In the last decade, post 9/11, there was the invasion and military occupation of Afghanistan beginning in late 2001, and the invasion and military occupation of Iraq, from the spring of 2003, both led by the USA. This decade has witnessed western-led military action against the Gadaffi regime in Libya.

8. Iraq has unquestionably cast a long shadow over the use of force, and the readiness of parliaments and publics to see, and to allow their military capabilities to be deployed in third countries, especially if there is no international consensus reflected, reflected in a UN Security Council Resolution. However, against the background of the last two decades, we can see that whilst war has indeed become more costly, it has not been abandoned as the ultimate means by which nations with power are able to assert their power.

9. This leads me to one key conclusion – on which I would be happy to expand – that there is no intrinsic dichotomy between “soft power” and “hard power”; rather, the reverse, with the one supporting the other.

10. The United States is the best exemplar of my point. It remains by far and away the strongest military nation on earth, with its defence expenditure equalling that of the next ten nations put together.\textsuperscript{143} At the same time, the United States’ hegemonic influence not only far exceeds that of any other nation, but in many respects has been built and then reinforced by its defence expenditure.

11. Towards the end of the Second World War, the United States sought to capitalise on the huge advantage it had gained by its intervention in the war, by ensuring that the vanquished nations, especially Germany and Japan, were restructured to western democratic norms. It also ensured that the design of international institutions, from the United Nations, through to International Financial Institutions (IFIs) like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund was such that they benignly served the United States’ interests as well as those of the wider international community.

12. The internet is unquestionably the best example of a nation’s soft power. It is wholly dominated by the United States. Its development, especially in its early stages, was funded and directed from the US’s military budget, through the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)\textsuperscript{144}.

Soft Power and the United Kingdom:

13. If my argument is accepted that in significant part soft power derives from and is dependent upon hard power, it follows that it would be naïve in the extreme for a

\textsuperscript{142} Foreign Policy, ibid, p 162
\textsuperscript{143} SIPRI Yearbook 2013
\textsuperscript{144} Founded in 1958 by President Dwight D Eisenhower, DARPA’s original mission, established in 1958, was to prevent technological surprises like the launch of the Soviet satellite “Sputnik”, which had signalled that the Soviets had beaten the U.S. into space. The mission statement has evolved over time. “Today, DARPA’s mission is still to prevent technological surprise to the US, but also to create technological surprise for our enemies” DARPA 2005
belief to grow up that we could make up for any serious deficiencies in our military strength by seeking to “develop” our soft power. Instead, we should strive for a proper balance between the two.

14. The central purpose of both our military power, and softer influences should be to provide security for our nation in its widest sense, to further our economy and our trading opportunities, and to proselytise some of the key values which we hold dear - of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, the protection of minorities, and our wider culture - in the belief that the more these become norms across the world, the more peaceful the world is likely to be.

15. In the UK in the last decade and a half, it had been assumed, even if it has not been explicit, that there is some direct trade-off between cuts in defence spending, a squeeze on the Foreign Office’s budgets (including for the British Council, and the BBC World Service) \(^{145}\), and rising expenditure on overseas aid within DfID’s budgets.

16. I am proud that as a nation we have been able (unlike many comparable countries) to give such priority to overseas aid, but I have always been uncomfortable that DfID’s budgets have been ring-fenced by the “0.7% of GDP” target while Defence and the FCO’s has not, thus making rational debate about where best to invest our limited resources on soft power, and hard power, more complicated. I regret the closures of some British posts overseas which took place during my time as Foreign Secretary (and through to 2010), along with certain decisions by my successors. (None of these decisions were made willingly, but were a consequence of budgetary constraints).

17. I am in no doubt that a strong diplomatic presence produces high dividends for the United Kingdom, and, as such, I am happy to applaud the efforts of the current Foreign Secretary William Hague to re-open some Posts, and to open some new ones (whilst sensibly reducing some of our FCO activity in EU member states, given the density of our contact with those nations in other ways, not least through EU institutions).

18. The BBC World Service, and the British Council both do valuable work in terms of “cultural diplomacy”. As Foreign Secretary I sought to encourage such diplomacy in all its forms. For example, I gave strong and active support to Neil Macgregor and his colleagues in the British Museum in their successful endeavours to secure cultural exchanges with Iran during the very difficult period of the Ahmadinejad Presidency.

19. I think we can see from other countries’ experience what happens when the balance between hard and soft power, traditional diplomacy and military spending versus aid, is not struck in the right way.

20. Take Germany. This is the world’s most successful exporter; its generally high living standards are built on this. But its approach is essentially mercantile. It does have armed forces (and they played a part in peacekeeping operations in northern Afghanistan) but their unwillingness generally to use their armed forces in active offensive operations means that they have surprisingly little wider “soft power” influence across the world and their diplomatic clout is also diminished as a result.

21. Or, in contrast, take China. China, as yet, has confined itself largely to a tactical rather than strategic role in foreign affairs. Its decisions are mostly ad hoc and are predicated strongly on short-term economic cost/benefit analysis. That being said,

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\(^{145}\) From 1st April 2014 funding for the BBC World Service will transfer from the Foreign Office to the BBC, financed by the licence fee.
due in no small part to its strong, indeed growing, armed forces, China is treated with considerable diplomatic regard. Coupled to its diplomatic clout, where it chooses to exert it, is China’s growing soft power reach, most evident in Africa. China’s presence on the African continent now manifests itself in substantial aid spending and significant infrastructure projects. Recent research found evidence of some 1,000 projects that are either live or complete, at a total of $48.6bn.

Conclusion:

22. Henry Kissinger, writing in 2005, aptly summarised that in foreign policy, “The best strategy is one in which there is combination of soft power with other power in reserve.” As I have set out in this brief overview it is my strong opinion that ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ power must go hand in hand for either limb to exert the full influence it can bring to bear. An over-emphasis on military power, as Vietnam showed us, can have deleterious effects on a state’s soft power influence, while too great a reliance on soft power, without the requisite military capability to underpin it, can leave a country, as Germany finds today, unable to bring its full weight to bear internationally. Put more succinctly, as Theodore Roosevelt wrote in 1900, a state should seek to, “Speak softly and carry a big stick.”

30 September 2013

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146 Henry Kissinger; Searching for a new trilateral partnership (2005)
147 Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Henry L Sprague, 26 January 1900.
H.E. Mr Kim Traavik, Ambassador of Norway, Dr Rudolf Adam, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, H.E. Mr Keiichi Hayashi, Ambassador of Japan and H.E. Mr Roberto Jaguaribe, Ambassador of Brazil – Oral evidence (QQ 187-199)

**H.E. Mr Kim Traavik, Ambassador of Norway, Dr Rudolf Adam, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, H.E. Mr Keiichi Hayashi, Ambassador of Japan and H.E. Mr Roberto Jaguaribe, Ambassador of Brazil – Oral evidence (QQ 187-199)**

*Transcript to be found under Dr Rudolf Adam, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Volume 1 (page 23)*
Tourism Alliance and UKinbound, London First and Professor Colin Riordan, Cardiff University, – Oral evidence (QQ 246-259)

Transcript to be found under London First
UK China Visa Alliance (UKCVA) – Written evidence

Introduction

1. The UKCVA has been invited to submit evidence to the Select Committee on the impact that the UK visa regime has on the ability of Britain to exploit the full potential of the benefits from its soft power.

2. UKCVA is a private sector body established by major retail, hospitality and travel businesses who wish to work with Government to improve the visa system so that the UK can perform as well as our major European neighbours in the number of Chinese visitors we attract. Our founding members are New West End Company (the Business Improvement District representing 600 retailers in London’s West End), Walpole Luxury (representing 180 British luxury brands), Global Blue (the tax free shopping company), MacArthur Glen (designer retail outlets) and London First (the pan-London business organisation). The Alliance’s full membership can be seen on our website[148]. Our chairman is the Retail Director of the John Lewis Partnership.

3. Our evidence to the Select Committee reflects the scope of the Alliance’s remit. We focus only on visitor visas for Chinese travellers. We cannot comment with authority on issues outside this remit. However, many of the issues we raise are relevant to other countries and, in some cases, to other forms of visas. Indeed, the analysis and solutions we propose for applying for visitor visas in China could be a model to use in other important markets.

4. This evidence comprises our formal evidence plus a more detailed appendix.

The importance of Chinese visitors to the UK

5. China is a huge and growing market for tourism. In 2012 Chinese people became the world’s top spenders in international tourism, moving ahead of Germany and the United States[149] with expenditure of $102 billion. Chinese visitors in the West end spend three times more than the average overseas tourist[150]. The UK benefits from Chinese tourists both from the money they spend and by raising the profile and attractiveness of the UK as a place to invest and do business.

Britain’s underperformance compared with European neighbours.

6. Britain significantly underperforms in terms of the number of Chinese visitors it attracts compared with major European neighbours.

7. Visit Britain estimates, based on passenger surveys, that France attracts up to 7.5 times more Chinese visitors than the Britain does[151]. Home Office figures show that the maximum number of Chinese visitors to the UK, based on visas issued in 2011-12, was 210,400. In the same period, the Schengen area issued 1,185,000 visas to

[148] www.ukcva.com
[150] New West End Company internal consumer research
Chinese visitors, six times more\(^{152}\). Visitors with a Schengen visa can visit any of the 26 member states in Europe.

8. The UKCVA estimates that the UK loses up to £1.2 billion in revenue annually because of this underperformance, which would create up to 24,000 new jobs.

**Why does the UK under perform in terms of the number of Chinese visitors we attract?**

9. The need to get a separate visa to add the UK to a European tour is a significant factor in the UK’s underperformance in attracting Chinese visitors. The Government’s Tourism Regulation Task Force reported in 2012 that although “the government has made clear that Britain needs to punch its weight more strongly in international tourism………the current visa regime conspires against this goal”. “Visa restrictions directly impact visitor numbers. Key inbound tourism markets where visas are required include Russia, India and China”\(^{153}\).

10. The key issue is that Chinese people visiting Europe usually wish to visit more than one country. Research by the European Travel Operators’ Association showed that the average Chinese visitor visited 4 European countries\(^{154}\). To visit the UK and other major European countries a visitor requires two visas. A Schengen visa will allow access to 26 European countries. Because Britain is not a member of the Schengen Agreement an additional UK visa is needed to visit the as part of a multi-country tour. This puts Britain at a competitive disadvantage.

**UKCVA’s analysis of the visa problem.**

11. The Home Office and the visa service in China have recognised the problem and have introduced a range of measures to streamline the visa service. These are welcome improvements and they have clearly helped to increase the number of visas issued, although these increases reflect a general increase in visas obtained by Chinese visitors. The Home Office states that the number of UK visas issued to Chinese visitors in 2012 (286,000) was 75% more than the number issued in 2009\(^{155}\). However, during the same period the number of Schengen visas issued in China rose from 597,000 to 1,186,000, an increase of 98%\(^{156}\).

12. The problem is not so much that there is an under-performance in terms of processing and issuing visas, it is that not enough Chinese travellers are applying for a UK visa. Applying for any visa, UK or Schengen, takes time, effort and money. It involves a trip to a Visa Application Centre which in China can often be many hours away. Rather than having to go through the time consuming application process twice

\(^{152}\) Home Office “UK Visa and Immigration – The UK Visa Service in China, September 2013”

\(^{153}\) Tourism Regulation Task Force “Smart Regulation and Economic Growth”

\(^{154}\) European Tour Operators Association “Europe: Open for Business?”

\(^{155}\) Government news release “New Service launch in China to support growth in Chinese visas”

\(^{156}\) European Union “Complete statistics on short stay visas issued by the Schengen States 2012”
it is easier for potential visitors simply to leave the UK off their itinerary and instead visit other countries already covered by their Schengen visa.

13. This is shown by Government figures. Only around 6% of Chinese visitors to Europe bother to obtain two visas\textsuperscript{157}. 85% obtain just a Schengen visa and 9% obtain just a UK visa. So other European countries can welcome 91% of the 1.3 million Chinese visitors to Europe. The UK can welcome only the 15% who have obtained a UK visa.

14. In effect, 1.1 million Chinese people travel half way around the world to visit Europe each year but, because they do not have a UK visa, they do not then make the short trip across the Channel to visit Britain. This is a lost opportunity to the UK and its economy.

15. The challenge is to find a way to share data collection so that the Chinese traveler experiences as much as possible just one procedure for submitting their applications for both visas \textit{but without joining the Schengen Agreement}. This would encourage more to apply for a UK visa at the same time as a Schengen visa but the UK would still maintain border security by processing every application.

\textbf{How do we allow potential visitors to apply for two visas at the same time?}

16. The Government has announced that it proposes to work with tour operators in China to improve the system because they manage the majority of trips to Europe and the UK. The Alliance agrees with the focus of the Government’s activities and looks forward to working together on this initiative although we are still awaiting details. But the scheme has to allow tour operators to apply for both visas at the same time and same place if it is to make a significant difference.

17. In addition, there is evidence that more Chinese people are travelling independently rather than in organised tours\textsuperscript{158}. This is particularly the case with high net worth individuals who are an important market for the UK. Any improvements need also to address the requirements of these individuals.

18. The UKCVA believes that an additional way forward by reaching bilateral agreements with the three major European countries that issue most visas in China and whose application process is similar to ours, to share the collection of data. France and Germany and Italy between them issue over 775,000 of the 1,186,000 Schengen visas in China\textsuperscript{159}. In 2012 France and Germany opened a common visa centre in Beijing indicating that bilateral co-operation is possible\textsuperscript{160}. The UK already shares Visa Application Centres in China with Italy. We strongly recommend that this avenue is actively explored.

\textbf{Conclusions}

\textsuperscript{157} UKCVA analysis of visa numbers issued by the UK and Schengen members in 2011-12 and Visit Britain estimate of the number of Chinese visitors to the UK obtaining a Schengen visas in China Market and Trade Profile (40%).
\textsuperscript{158} “Chinese International Travel Monitor 2013” Page 7
\textsuperscript{160} “Chinese International Travel Monitor 2013” Page 32
19. UKCVA is committed to working with the government to find practical ways to increase significantly the number of Chinese visitors to the UK for the good of our economy. Marginal improvements are welcome but more radical ideas are needed to present some form of one-stop-shop process for applicants to submit their applications for both visas as the only way to make significant improvements in Chinese visitor numbers.

20. The UKCVA recommends that -

The Government accepts the principal that, in order to achieve significant increases in visitor numbers, ways need to be found to enable potential visitors, those travelling both on tours and independently, to apply at the same time and same place for both visas required to include the UK on a multi-country European tour, and actively seeks ways to deliver this.

Appendix

A more detailed assessment of the issues and proposed solutions to the UK’s under performance in attracting Chinese visitors

The importance of Chinese visitors to the UK

1. China is a hugely important market for the UK tourist industry. While visitor numbers are relatively small they are growing fast. The former UK Border Agency issued 205,000 visitor visas to Chinese nationals in 2011. Its successor, UK Visas and Immigration, issued 289,000 in 2012-13, a 30% increase161.

2. In November 2011 Visit Britain published its Market and Trade Profile China (excluding Hong Kong)162. This shows the importance of the Chinese market and the extent to which the UK benefits -
   - China has a population of 1.3 billion which is growing at 0.5% annually.
   - Its economy is growing by around 8%
   - Chinese people spend $54.9 billion annually on international tourism (2010).
   - In the ranking of global spending on tourism it is placed third for 2010.
   - The country has over 535,000 high net worth individuals (with more than $1 million in assets)

3. Visit Britain’s research also shows that -
   - In the 12 months to June 2011 the number of visitors from China to the UK was 133,000, an increase of 69% on the same period up to June 2010
   - Of these visitors 38,000 were on holiday (28%), 40,000 on business (30%) and 32,000 (24%) were visiting friends and relatives
   - In 2010 Chinese visitors spent £184 million in the UK

4. In 2012 the Chinese became the world’s top spenders in international tourism, moving ahead of Germany and the United States163 with expenditure of $102 billion

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163 United Nations World Tourism Association “Tourism Highlights 2013” Page 13
(up from the $54.9 billion in the Visit Britain report). Research by New West End Company, the Business Improvement District for London’s West End, shows that Chinese visitors spend over three times the average visitor spend on shopping (£1,688 compared with an average of £567).164

5. Importantly, the UK benefits not just from the spending made by Chinese visitors, on holiday, studying or visiting families, but also by raising the profile and attractiveness of the UK as a place to invest and do business. Put simply, visitors to the UK are more likely to see the UK as a place to do business.

**Britain’s underperformance compared with European neighbours.**

6. Britain underperforms significantly in terms of the number of Chinese visitors it attracts compared with our major European neighbours, such as France.

7. Visit Britain uses International Passenger Survey (IPS) figures and the French Government’s equivalent to conclude that the UK attracted 4% of the market in our competitor set (i.e. countries seen as competing for the same Chinese visitor market, five of which are European) whereas France attracted 30% (i.e. 7.5 times more).165

8. The Home Office questions the accuracy of the visitor surveys used and prefers to look at the number of visas issued. The Home Office’s figures for 2012 show the UK issued 210,400 visas to Chinese nationals compared with “fewer than 1.2 million” [1,185,000] issued by the Schengen countries.166 So using the Home Office’s figures, because France and the other 25 members of the Schengen Area can welcome all visitors with a Schengen visa whereas the UK cannot, the market for France was around 1.2 million people, compared with just 210,000 for the UK, nearly six times as great.

9. The UKCVA estimates, based upon Visit Britain’s figures for spending by Chinese visitors (£184 million in 2010) and the UK’s relative underperformance, that the UK economy is losing up to £1.2 billion annually. The tourism industry estimates that one job is created for every £50,000 spent, so this underperformance could be costing the UK up to 24,000 jobs.

10. The impact of this underperformance will increase as Chinese visitor numbers grow. The Government announced in April 2012 that the number of visitor visas issued to Chinese travelers in 2012 (286,000) was 75% more than the number issued in 2009.167 However, during the same period the number of Schengen visas issued in China rose from 597,000 to 1,186,000, an increase of 98%.168 And whereas a 75% increase for the UK represents an additional 123,000 Chinese visitors, for the
The case has been put to the Alliance that the smaller numbers of Chinese visitors to the UK stay longer and spend more than the larger numbers visiting other European countries. This may or may not be the case. But what is clear is that 1.1 million Chinese people travel half way around the world to visit Europe each year but, because they do not have a UK visa, they do not then make the short trip across the Channel to visit Britain. This is a lost opportunity to the UK and its economy. British companies would like to be able to compete for a portion of the spending money of these 1.1 million Chinese people in addition to that of our 200,000 Chinese visitors.

**Why does the UK under perform in terms of the number of Chinese visitors we attract?**

12. There is a range of factors that affect the performance of Britain in attracting Chinese visitors. These include demand side issues such as attractiveness of the destination, general perceptions of the UK as a destination, marketing and historical links and relative costs. There are also supply side issues such as ease of access, facilities for visitors (e.g. flights and accommodation) and available tour packages.

13. On the demand side, there are indications that the UK is attractive to Chinese visitors. According to Visit Britain’s review of the Chinese market, the UK scores at number 3 out of 50 countries in terms of its attractiveness as a national brand to Chinese people. The Government has a major worldwide marketing campaign, “Great”, which is aimed at stimulating further demand. In 2012 the Government announced an additional £8 million for the Great campaign in China. Research by Trip Advisor based on millions of visitors to its Chinese travel website show that Paris, Rome and London are the only three European cities that appear in the top 20 searched-for destinations. It does not seem that relative lack of demand can account for the fact that our major European neighbour attract between six and eight times as many Chinese visitors.

14. It is on the supply side that the difficulty seems to lie. The need to obtain a UK visa to enter Britain as a Chinese visitor is seen as the major factor in the UK’s underperformance. The Government’s Tourism Regulation Task Force reported in 2012 that although “the government has made clear that Britain needs to punch its weight more strongly in international tourism……the current visa regime conspires against this goal”. “Visa restrictions directly impact visitor numbers. Key inbound tourism markets where visas are required include Russia, India and China.”

15. An indication of the impact of visas on visitor numbers was shown when, in 2009 Taiwan was removed from those countries that require a visa to visit the UK and

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South Africa was added to them. In that year visits from Taiwan grew by 40% and visits from South Africa fell by 11%\textsuperscript{173}.

16. The key issue is that Chinese people visiting Europe usually wish to visit more than one country. Research by the European Travel Operators’ Association showed that the average Chinese visitor visited 4 European countries\textsuperscript{174}. Visit Britain’s research shows that 40% of Chinese visitors to the UK are on multi-country tours\textsuperscript{175}. To visit the UK and other major European countries a visitor requires two visas. A Schengen visa will allow access to 26 European countries. Because Britain is not a member of the Schengen Agreement an additional UK visa is needed to visit the UK (and Ireland) as part of a multi-country tour. This puts Britain at a competitive disadvantage.

**UKCVA’s analysis of the visa problem.**

17. Many individuals, businesses and organisations are frustrated by the barrier that the visa system presents to potential visitors, students and business people to the UK. To its credit, the Government recognises this and, in China, has made a range of improvements to the system.

18. We have heard many stories of difficulties in applying for UK visitor (and other) visas from individuals and organisations. UKV&I, which recently replaced the UK Border Agency, responds that 96% of applicants successfully obtain a visitor visa; average processing time for a visitor visa is less than seven days; the number of supporting documents required has been reduced; and the passport passback service allows applicants to apply to the two visas simultaneously\textsuperscript{176}.

19. In December 2012 the Home Secretary announced a series of initiatives aimed at improving further the visas system in China\textsuperscript{177}. These are welcome although, given their recent introduction, the full results have yet to be seen. Operational improvements to the visa service in China, such as additional staff during busy times, has also helped to improve performance. And the new VIP mobile visa service should make it easier for high net worth travellers to apply for a visitor visa.

20. In UKCVA’s report on UK visas for Chinese visitors \textsuperscript{178} we look at the various elements of the visa system where improvements could be made, including reviewing the application form (e.g. reducing its length, allowing applicants to complete it in Chinese), refining the amount of supporting material required, reducing the fee, streamlining the biometric element and addressing the time taken to process applications. But we conclude that while there are always areas of improvement to the system, these marginal improvements in themselves will not lead to the significant increases in Chinese visitor numbers required to match the performance of, say, France.

\textsuperscript{173} Visit Britain Website, Visas \textsuperscript{174} European Tour Operators Association “Europe: Open for Business?” \textsuperscript{175} Visit Britain “Market and Trade Profile – China (excluding Hong Kong)” \textsuperscript{176} “UK Visa and Immigration – The UK Visa Service in China, September 2013” \textsuperscript{177} UKBA Latest News and Updates \textsuperscript{178} UKCVA “Promoting Growth in Britain’s Economy”
In a letter to the Home Secretary in May 2012 the British Ambassador in Beijing pointed out that the British performance in terms of the number of visas issued compares favourably to that of other European countries. The Alliance agrees with this and understands the Ambassador’s frustration that, while his staff are generally processing as many visas as other European embassies, there is still criticism of their performance. But unless something changes, this will always be the case because the main issue is not the under-performance in terms of processing and issuing visas, it is that not enough Chinese travellers are applying for a UK visa.

Applying for any visa, UK or Schengen, takes time, effort and money. It involves a trip to a Visa Application Centre which in China can often be many hours away. Rather than having to go through the time consuming application process twice it is easier for potential visitors simply to leave the UK off their itinerary and instead visit other countries already covered by their Schengen visa.

And since most Chinese visitors to Europe come on organised tours, the tour operators have to organise all their clients’ visas. It is simpler for them to leave the UK off their European itineraries than to make visa arrangements twice for large numbers of travellers. So no matter how much the UK is promoted in China, and no matter how much the application process is improved, the UK will continue to be missed off most European tours.

This is shown by Government figures. Only around 6% of Chinese visitors to Europe bother to obtain two visas. 85% obtain just a Schengen visa and 9% obtain just a UK visa. So other European countries can welcome 91% of the 1.3 million Chinese visitors to Europe. The UK can welcome only the 15% who have obtained a UK visa.

The challenge is to find a way to share data collection so that the Chinese traveler experiences as much as possible just one procedure for submitting their applications for both visas but without joining the Schengen Agreement. This would encourage more to apply for a UK visa at the same time as a Schengen visa but the UK would still maintain border security by processing every application.

How do we allow potential visitors to apply for two visas at the same time?

The Government has announced, at a UKCVA event in May 2013, that it proposes to work with tour operators in China to improve the system because they manage the majority of trips to Europe and the UK. The Alliance agrees with the focus of the Government’s activities and looks forward to working together on this initiative although we are still awaiting details. However this must be more than just an easing of the UK application process along the lines mentioned in paragraph 20 above.
they do not in some way allow for both visas to be applied for at the same time and place it will not make the difference required.

27. In addition, there is evidence that more Chinese people are travelling independently rather than in organised tours\textsuperscript{182}. This is particularly the case with high net worth individuals who are an important market to the UK. Any improvements need also to address the requirements of these individuals.

28. The UKCVA believes that an additional way forward by reaching bilateral agreements with the three major European countries that issue most visas in China and whose application process is similar to ours, to share the collection of data. France and Germany and Italy between them issue over 775,000 of the 1,186,000 Schengen visas in China\textsuperscript{183}. In 2012 France and Germany opened a common visa centre in Beijing indicating that bilateral co-operation is possible\textsuperscript{184}. The UK already shares Visa Application Centres in China with Italy. We strongly recommend that this avenue is actively explored.

29. The imminent introduction of biometrics by Schengen members (which will require a trip to a Visa Application Centre to give finger prints) may provide an opportunity for closer working given the larger number of Visa Application Centres that the UK already has in China and restrictions on new VACs imposed by the Chinese government. By physically sharing premises to collect data it would be possible to collect it twice but at the same time.

The biometric issue

30. The issue is likely to become worse when Schengen introduce biometrics, possibly in early 2014. Although this will create a level playing field (the UK has had biometric visas since 2007), having to give biometric details for a Schengen visa will make the application process even more onerous. This will make it even less likely that a visitor will go through the application process twice. So some way of collecting the biometric data just once for both visas will need to be found if the UK isn’t to lose out even more.

Conclusions

31. UKCVA is committed to working with the government to find practical ways to increase significantly the number of Chinese visitors to the UK for the good of our economy. Marginal improvements are welcome but more radical ideas are needed to present some form of one-stop-shop process for applicants for both visas as the only way to make significant improvements in Chinese visitor numbers.

\textsuperscript{182} “Chinese International Travel Monitor 2013” Page 7
\textsuperscript{183} European Union “Complete statistics on short stay visas issued by the Schengen States 2012”
\textsuperscript{184} “Chinese International Travel Monitor 2013” Page 32
32. The UK China Visa Alliance believes that, if the political will is there, practical ways can be found to present some form of one-stop-shop procedure for applying for both visas, without joining the Schengen Agreement, which will have lead to significant increases in Chinese visitor numbers while not harming Britain’s border security. And if it works for China, it can work for other important markets where a UK visa is required. Britain could then realise more of the potential from its strong position of soft power.

September 2013
UK China Visa Alliance (UKCVA) – Supplementary written evidence  

UKCVA submitted evidence to the Select Committee about the effect that the UK visa system has on the number of Chinese visitors to the UK. Subsequently the Government has announced further improvements to the system. This supplementary evidence comments on these improvements.

The UKCVA’s central argument is that it is the need to make two separate applications for the two visas required to include the UK on a multi-country European tour that is the main reason why Britain underperforms in the numbers of Chinese visitors we attract compared with France.

Most Chinese tourists to Europe want to undertake a multi-country tour and it is easier to leave the UK off their itinerary than apply a separate UK visa. The answer, then, is to find ways of streamlining the two application processes so that the customer experiences, as much as possible, just one procedure for applying for both visas. The applications would still be processed separately so ensuring the security of Britain’s borders.

The announcement made by the Chancellor in Beijing in October is clearly aimed at streamlining the two application processes. A pilot with selected ADS tour operators in China allows them to use a Schengen application form to apply for a UK visa so doing away with the need to fill in two forms. This is a significant move forward.

Speaking in a Lords debate on China on November 7th 2013 the Foreign Office Minister, Lord Green of Hurstpierpoint, said –

- “Last month, in Beijing, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced measures to streamline and simplify the visa process for Chinese nationals who want to visit the UK for business, study or pleasure. This includes plans to open a 24-hour visa service and streamlining the UK and Schengen visa application process”.

- “The Schengen process itself is moving—or so they claim—to biometrics, which will level the playing-field. I hope that we will increasingly be able to provide, in effect, a one-stop-shop service for Schengen and UK visas”.

- “Progress is being made in discussions with Schengen about how to converge the two processes as much as possible”.

The UKCVA welcomes both the pilot and the Minister’s words as clear signs that the government has accepted the principle of streamlining the two processes. We now look forward to continuing to work with the Government to deliver practical ways to achieve this.

November 2013

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185 UK Visas and Immigration announcement 14 October 2013 http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2013/october/22-simplified-visas-china
186 Lords Hansard 7 November 2013 Columns 371-372
UK Sport – Written evidence

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 UK Sport is the nation’s high-performance sports agency. Its mission is to work in partnership to lead sport in the UK to world class success. Primarily this means working with our partner sporting organisations to deliver medals at the Olympic and Paralympic Games. UK Sport’s strategic direction, investment and performance support helped British sports and athletes deliver 65 Olympic and 120 Paralympic medals at London 2012.

UK Sport’s second priority is to lead the UK’s work in the bidding and staging of major international sporting events, and through its ‘Gold Event Series’ UK Sport is supporting a programme of around 70 world-class legacy events to be staged the UK over the next 6 years.

Finally, UK Sport has a lead role developing the UK’s international sporting relations and influence, working in partnership with National Governing Bodies of Sport, the BOA and BPA. A further dimension of our International sporting activity focuses on increasing participation as well as the positive impact of sport for development internationally. UK Sport is funded by a mix of Government Exchequer and National Lottery income.

1.2 UK Sport’s core high performance and major event programmes are conducted almost entirely within the international sporting environment. The framework that governs international sport is largely regulated by each sport’s International Federation (IFs) in conjunction with various international umbrella organisations including (but not limited to) the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

1.3 The UK’s ongoing international sporting success fundamentally depends on the legitimacy and stability of the bodies that govern world sport, as they act as the framework between nations to regulate sporting activity. As a successful nation within international sport, the UK has a responsibility to contribute to these international structures and play a strong role in ensuring the health of the international sporting system.

1.4 Perhaps more importantly, the UK also has a strategic interest in being in a position to shape decisions taken by international sport organisations. These organisations regularly take decisions that directly impact on the UK’s ability to be successful in international sport, including:
  • Where and when major international sporting events are held (and the positive impact of home advantage on the performance of our athletes)
  • The rules and regulations that govern international sport competition
  • The qualification, selection and ranking systems that govern the entry of our athletes and teams into international competitions
  • The sports and events/disciplines that are included within multi-sport events (e.g. the Olympic/Paralympic/Commonwealth Games sport programmes.

1.5 UK Sport’s aim is to ensure that international decisions on the regulatory frameworks and structures that govern sporting competition are sympathetic to the UK’s
vision and plans for high performance and major events. As one of over 200 nations that make up the international sporting community, the only way that the UK can shape these decisions is to be actively represented within these international governing bodies and to enter in dialogue with other nations. Coordinating and enhancing the UK’s international sporting relationships is therefore an important front-line activity for UK Sport to achieve its main objectives.

1.6 Our focus is not exclusively on developing elite athletes and hosting major events. As a nation that cares passionately about international sport at all levels, UK Sport has, over the years, generated worldwide impact and success through its high quality international development programmes, working in partnership with local, national and international sport bodies and non-governmental organisations. UK Sport provides the executive team for the ‘IN’ Charity delivering ‘International Inspiration’, London 2012’s Olympic and Paralympic legacy programme, reaching 16 million young people across 20 countries. UK Sport has also been involved in the leadership of global activity advocating the use of sport for development and peace.

2. THE UK’S USE OF SOFT POWER IN INTERNATIONAL SPORT

2.1 Historically, the UK was at the forefront in the establishment, development and management of international sport. British institutions and their administrators have had a direct influence on the structures that govern international sport today. In particular, the UK has had a strong influence in the origins of both the modern Olympic and Paralympic Movements. English has also historically been the international language of sport, alongside French.

2.2 The UK has also been one of the lead countries in the international sport development assistance movement since 1990, when the British Sports Council begun to work in southern Africa. Activities in southern Africa have continued since, and UK Sport has also worked in a range of other countries across East and West Africa, the Middle East, south Asia, East Asia, the Caribbean and Brazil, often in partnership with the British Council, to assist the development of sport and, importantly, to liaise with relevant Ministries to embed systems and initiatives into political structures, for example into education systems or national youth policies. These initiatives have provided the basis for friendly collaboration and have generated good will towards the UK and its institutions.

2.3 Prior to being awarded the London 2012 Games, the UK’s influence within international sport had, arguably, begun to decline. While trying not to over-generalise, British influence within international sport had frequently become confined to maintaining the rulebook and setting standards in officiating, rather than setting the agenda and shaping the important decisions. In some cases, the UK has been perceived as arrogant and overly-paternalistic by some within the international sport community. This has sometimes been in part due to the occasional lack of cultural sensitivity adopted by British administrators, and perhaps resentment in some corners of the world to the UK’s colonial past.

2.4 However, the UK’s profile, reputation, representation and general influence within the international sporting community has increased significantly over the last decade, due in no small part to the successful bidding for and hosting of the London 2012 Games and to the fact that we kept ‘the Singapore Promise’ and delivered a unique and unprecedented international sport and social legacy initiative in ‘International Inspiration’. The Games have
generated gains across all the domains of international sport including elite performance, major events, international development and international representation.

2.5 Today, the UK has an attractive stock of sporting venues to offer the international sporting community, a skilled and experienced workforce and a spectator audience that is passionate about sport. The experience gained through London 2012, as well as preparations for Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2014, has given the UK the credibility to position itself as a more outward facing nation in sporting terms which is actively looking to support and deliver sport around the world.

2.6 The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games provided a unique opportunity to work directly with a large number of organisations within and beyond the international sporting community. Having overseen the successful delivery of these Games, there is undoubtedly a positive ‘glow’ around many British sport institutions, with the UK now seen as a trusted partner to many in the international sporting community. As that community’s focus now moves to other parts of the globe, there is a challenge to maintain the UK’s global reputation and influence within the administration of international sport and safeguard its position in an ever-changing international landscape. Furthermore, there is a broader opportunity to use the ‘glow’ and the tangible achievements of International Inspiration and UK Sport’s other international development work to generate trust and good will with other governments beyond the domain of sport itself.

3. THE IMPACT OF SPORT ON THE UK’S WIDER SOFT POWER

3.1 Sport today plays a significant role in global soft power. The modern Olympic Movement and the Games were originally founded so that ‘the promotion of athletic competition would increase greater understanding across cultures and lessen the chances of war’. While history may suggest otherwise, the Games has arguably taken adversary between nations from the theatre of war to the medals table, with nations investing heavily into their elite athletes. Furthermore, cities spend significant sums in order to just even be considered to host these prestigious sporting events and cement their place as important, vibrant, exciting and cosmopolitan cities. The Games themselves (and indeed many other major sporting competitions) are one of the most visible and most acceptable demonstrations of national identity and symbolism in the modern world.

3.2 Sport is one of the few commodities that can explicitly and without subjective interpretation showcase the UK as a successful nation to the rest of the world. As one of the most successful nations at the London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games (3rd in the medal table for both), sport has a unique ability to profile many things that the UK is good at e.g. innovative and ground breaking designs in both stadia and athletic equipment, seamless operations and robust budget management principles, compassionate and helpful volunteers, a nation that belongs alongside the other major countries on the world stage, enthusiastic and knowledgeable audiences to name but a few. Many of these qualities are not confined to a home Games and are also be demonstrated when the UK is successful in international competition.

3.3 A recent study, as reported in this article by the BBC (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22624104) provides an indication of how sport and the hosting of mega sporting events like the Olympics (if run successfully) can have on international perceptions of the UK and of other nations. This study explored international
perception of 16 countries and whether their influence on the world was viewed as mainly positive or negative, before and after 2012. UK saw a bigger increase in positive ratings than any other country and climbed to third place in the table, in the wake of hosting London 2012.

3.4 The internationalisation of sport is another key development in recent decades. For some time, the administration of sport had been delivered to a greater degree ‘parochially’ with importance focused primarily on delivery at a national level. However, in the same way that football has attracted prominent international owners into the Premier League, the Olympic Movement has seen a similar trend, whereby powerful individuals are seeking to play a direct role in the way sport is run. Many of these individuals have significant business and political interests outside of sport.

3.5 We are now observing a growing ‘battlefield’ for sport, where nations from (amongst others) Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe are having greater influence and challenging what has been the traditional West European dominance. Where the administration of international sport was once dominated by a group of Western European nations, we have observed a gradual but marked shift in the balance of power to emerging nations. This is in part evidenced by the recent award of major events to these countries: the FIFA World Cup has been awarded to Brazil, Russia and Qatar for 2014, 2018 and 2022 respectively and the award of the next four editions of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (summer and winter) have gone to cities from Russia, Brazil, Korea and Japan in 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2020 respectively. The recent election of a German as the next President of the IOC, defeating candidates from other parts of the world, and the location of the vast majority of sporting institutions in Switzerland, suggests that Europe has not completely lost its hold on the Olympic Movement and still retains a significant voice in international sport.

3.6 Following the record breaking performances of Team GB at the London 2012 Games, and the progress that has been made since the Atlanta Games in 1996 (where only one gold medal was won, contrasting with the 29 gold medals secured in 2012), there has been significant international interest in the UK’s high performance system. This suggests two things: firstly that other nations place a large amount of importance on being successful in international (nation-building, promoting national identity, raising national morale etc) and secondly, the UK is recognised as possessing world-leading expertise in this sector: UK Sport regularly receives requests to meet with foreign delegations and present at international sport conferences. We operate in a competitive international environment, so we therefore have to be cautious of what information can be presented and to whom in order that our competitive advantage is not eroded but we willingly share the principles that underpin our work.

3.7 And beyond Team GB’s achievements on the field, and the high standard of event hosting set by London, the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games gave the UK the opportunity to do something quite unique; something that was not just about promoting the UK, but about positioning ourselves as a nation that cares and that was prepared to share our moment in the limelight of world sport to benefit other nations and specifically the world’s two billion youth. There is a great opportunity for the FCO and UKTI to build on the goodwill created by our delivery of International Inspiration and on the relationships already established with Ministries of youth, sport, education and gender as well as with global fora, such as the Commonwealth Secretariat, through the programme.
4. DEVELOPING THE UK’s ROLE WITHIN INTERNATIONAL SPORT

4.1 UK Sport adopts a multi-faceted approach to increasing the UK’s role within the structures that govern international sport. UK Sport primarily does this in partnership with National Governing Bodies (NGBs) for Sport through supporting and funding the development and implementation of NGB international relations (IR) strategies. UK Sport also works with other key national partners including the British Olympic Association, the British Paralympic Association, central and local government to help co-ordinate the UK’s interests across the international sporting landscape.

4.2 UK Sport also supports the identification and development of future international sports leaders by providing training and development opportunities to aspiring British sport administrators. Through its International Leadership Programme, UK Sport helps to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies of British representatives holding positions in international sport. Training themes include increasing understanding of the international sporting landscape, building strategic relationships, managing cross-cultural differences, negotiation and influencing skills, language training and campaign management skills.

4.3 UK Sport is a world leader in the field of international sport development, with over 23 years’ experience of working in 30 different countries. At the heart of UK Sport’s development mission is the belief that the UK should play a role in increasing opportunities for young people in developing countries to participate in sport and to improve their lives as a result. UK Sport also seeks to influence ethics and standards in sport through a partnership with UNICEF and other international organisations, to embed standards for the safeguarding and protection of children in community and governing body sport across the globe. UK Sport has also been active in the wider ‘development through sport’ movement, resulting in the broader appreciation of the potential of sport to contribute to the human rights agenda and a powerful platform for DFID to achieve its Millennium Development Goals and their successors. Examples of UK Sport’s contribution in this area include the production of a guide for governments using sport as a tool for human and social development; delivery of programmes to improve the lives of girls and women through better education and a greater choice on family planning; preventing violence against and empowering girls and young women through sport; and developing local leaders to deliver community play inclusive activities for children of all abilities in a safe environment. This work has contributed to an increase in the UK’s ability to influence, created a high demand for our ‘intellectual capital’ on global platforms, and drawn a great deal of international goodwill towards the UK.

26 September 2013
The Chairman: Thank you very much indeed for being with us for this short session on a hot afternoon. We much appreciate your coming this afternoon. This Committee has been quite teed up, I have to confess to you, by the previous session. There were a number of observations made about your work and that of your organisation—

Nick Baird: I hope positive.

The Chairman: —some of it critical, some of it full of praise, including one that will please you particularly—it may not, actually—which was that there should be double the number of people working in your organisation—

Nick Baird: I hope positive.

The Chairman: Having said all that, let us go straight into the meat of our interest, which is obviously competing in what is called the global race or in the struggle for competitiveness in a super-competitive world and the work you do. How do you feel that your work relates to the deployment of soft power in the form in which it is now being talked about? Can we start there?

Nick Baird: I think British soft power does help British business in quite concrete ways. I would look at four particular areas, which I will just touch on briefly to begin with.

The first is around systematic campaigns to present British excellence. We did this, of course, during the Olympics with our 18 sector summits—the Olympics opening ceremony of itself was an extremely powerful presentation of British excellence—and the related GREAT campaign. On the Olympics, we were able to announce on Friday, as you probably saw, that we measure the economic benefit one year on from the Olympics at £9.9 billion, and I can go into that in more detail if you like, Mr Chairman. The GREAT campaign is, of
course, simply the wrapping around more focused and directly commercial events in this country and overseas. Increasingly, we are measuring business outcomes from that campaign in quite a concrete way, and I can talk about that.

The second area is around education, culture, the English language. It is difficult to quantify the benefits to British business from those areas but they are undeniably there. For example, a Chinese student who studied in a UK university who returns to his home in China and takes on a significant business role there might well prioritise his activity through knowledge and affection for the UK.

On the culture side of things, it is absolutely the case that British culture is a major draw into this country of people, including business people. These days on major prime ministerial trade missions we will tend to take our big British cultural icons as well: the British Museum, the British Library, Tate Modern and so on. The English language as well, I think, is a clear comparative advantage for us, both in attracting inward investment and very directly in the way we can sell English language training overseas. Increasingly, people everywhere around the world see English language not just as a language but as an economic tool, and the thirst for it and the desire for it is undoubtedly there.

Thirdly, I would say that British values are also influential and applicable to business outcomes in a number of ways, although they are difficult to quantify. For example, there are clear economic possibilities where historically British legal systems or other forms of systems are embedded in the countries in question. That is particularly the case, of course, in the Commonwealth. Secondly, although the picture is mixed, I think that the net benefit of the Bribery Act—I cannot do this in firm, evidence-based, analytical terms but I can do it in anecdotal terms—is there. Although it causes British companies problems in certain countries, it also means that where we engage with Governments and companies—large contractors on major projects, for example, absolutely want to be sure that their partners are not going to engage in any corrupt activity—they will look more favourably towards us on the back of that.

I think it is also true that we benefit in certain parts of the world from being perceived to be a highly tolerant and multicultural society. For example, when I was ambassador in Turkey we ran a number of programmes involving British Muslims and Turkish Muslims in some of the more socially conservative cities in Turkey, which are now the engine room of that country’s economic development. Those sorts of links undoubtedly help develop those links in quite interesting but specific ways. For example, women can wear headscarves at universities here. They could not in Turkey, and when their fathers wanted to ensure that they got decent education they looked to us rather than a number of other countries because it was seen as an open, fair, tolerant society for their daughters and they would be comfortable with their daughters going overseas. That will certainly feed into economic advantage as well.

Then, more broadly, I think we benefit in the UK in inward investment—we will announce last year’s inward investment figures on Wednesday—from being a very open society and being perceived as very open and very tolerant. All those ways, which are difficult to quantify, are I think highly relevant to business outcomes.

**The Chairman:** That is a very comprehensive answer. Thank you very much. Would anyone on the Committee like to follow that? Otherwise I shall ask Lord Forsyth to ask the next question. Baroness Nicholson would like to follow up.

**Q117 Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne:** Thank you very much. A number of the witnesses who have kindly given their thoughts to the Committee so far have raised the
question of language, English, as being one of the highest reasons for countries turning to us to invest. How does UKTI perceive that? Obviously, you will see it as a benefit. What about greater linkages or more support for something like the British Council, or are there other ways in which you foresee you could do something?

The second question is perhaps a follow-up of that. It has been suggested to us that we do not have sufficient follow-up as a country on the ground from the excellent delegations that UKTI leads so regularly. Is that a priority for you too, and, if so, how will you be going to address it?

**Nick Baird**: On the English language issue, I definitely do think that it is a major comparative advantage. We of course work very closely with our inward investors when we land particular investment projects, and when we are not successful in projects, in talking to them about what was decisive in their decisions about where they come to invest. The English language is a very significant and regular element of that, so I think it is a big element in the pull of inward investment.

Going out in the opposite direction, we work extremely closely with the British Council in a whole range of ways. The direct opportunities that are presented to both the council and private sector English language providers are huge across the world and growing exponentially. It is not just about the direct provision of English language; it is also about training trainers to provide English language right across the education systems of large countries. It is also about working with them, sometimes in university partnerships, sometimes in e-education, to ensure that wherever possible university courses are in English. All these things have significant knock-on effects for business, although difficult to quantify.

I think follow-up is a really important point and one that I would say we have not always been consistently strong at in the past. I would attribute our Olympics performance to very strong systematic follow-up. Every single businessperson who came through the 18 summits in Lancaster House last summer had an account holder who followed up with them and continued working with them until, in the cases where it happened, an investment was landed, and will continue to do so as we look to grow that investment. Everyone in UKTI under our leadership has now been told to regard themselves as account managers, not simply to have individual interactions with companies and then to forget about it but to build the relationship with that company. It is obviously easier to get further service deliveries, as we describe them, and further contract outcomes from your existing customers than it is to get new customers, although they are important to us as well. It is absolutely clear to us when we look at our quality metrics and our customer satisfaction metrics that we are strongest where we have intensive services that involve regular contact with a customer as opposed to one-off contact. It is absolutely critical.

**Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne**: A quick follow-up question on the British Council. During your time in Turkey the British Council blossomed, yet there is not that consistency across the globe. Is it a lack of funding? Is it Britain not understanding how important the work of the British Council is, which you developed yourself under your deputy, I saw, in Turkey? Where is the gap and can you address it, or should we be saying something about that?

**Nick Baird**: I think you could. My perception of this is that because the actual systems are not strong enough, it depends on the individuals in the countries concerned. Where you have individuals on both sides, the Foreign Office side and the British Council side, who are interested in co-operating together and are of that mindset, you can have fantastic
outscomes. Where it is not the case you do not, because there is no really powerful system in place of integrated co-operative activity.

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: What should we suggest?

**Nick Baird**: I think there should be an area of activity that is jointly governed, jointly targeted and properly overseen in monitoring performance against those targets. We should have joint UKTI targets—not just UKTI targets but broader FCO and British Council targets—in quite concrete terms in particular countries, and people should be held accountable to them. If they are joint, that will incentivise closer working. I see huge opportunities from doing that.

**The Chairman**: What you are saying is extremely interesting, because it raises the whole question of the positioning of UKTI in the matrix. Perhaps we could pursue that, but, Lord Forsyth, I think you wanted to come in.

**Lord Forsyth of Drumlean**: Yes. Before asking the question, I just wonder what a target might be. Can you give me an example?

**Nick Baird**: It could be, for example, the contract value of e-education that was achieved in the country in question. It could be the number of university partnerships that are developed. It could be the scale of English language training contracts that were achieved. It could be any of those. It could go into broader cultural activity as well. For example, in Hong Kong some of what we describe in UKTI as high-value opportunity programmes, which are essentially major global projects where we believe there is significant accessible value for British companies, are about major cultural developments.

**Q118 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean**: That brings me on to my question, which is about the two extremes. I am very much encouraged by the idea that you are treating companies as a client relationship that you develop and try to understand and so on. At the two extremes, if I am a very small to medium-sized business that is innovative—I am not declaring an interest here—how do I get to be one of your account people who you support? At the other end, how does that work for large businesses that do not need somebody to introduce them to India because they already have established relationships with India but clearly need help to develop their business there? How do you work with larger companies that are not looking to establish a new bilateral relationship but perhaps want to develop their business?

**Nick Baird**: The sort of support that we would give to the largest businesses and the innovative SMEs are qualitatively absolutely different. Generally speaking, we find that larger businesses want us to lobby Governments on regulatory and market access issues, and indeed, where an overseas Government is the procurer of a major project, they want Government-to-Government lobbying. It is often about helping them with the political context in the country and providing advice in that area.

**Lord Forsyth of Drumlean**: Sorry to interrupt you. What happens if more than one British company is involved in that kind of activity?

**Nick Baird**: Competing for the same project?

**Lord Forsyth of Drumlean**: Yes.

**Nick Baird**: Then we will support them absolutely equally. What we are seeking to do as well, which bridges the gap between large and small, is to work with large companies to help SMEs access overseas markets. Our high-value opportunities programme is very much built
around large companies, going for large global projects and bringing British supply chain with them, such as when we were in Kazakhstan with the Prime Minister at the beginning of July looking particularly at the oil and gas sector. BG and Shell are the big companies there, and we have a lot of Aberdeen-based supply chain companies, too. We also look to work with big inward investors in this country to help some of the small businesses that supply to them here to get into third markets.

For the innovative SMEs, how we manage the volume issue and the value of the contact issue is a real issue for us. We essentially help 30,000 companies a year, and we are seeking to drive up that volume without losing our quality. The core of this to me is driving a different business model, which we are part-way through. It is not about trying to do everything ourselves as UKTI; it is about increasingly outsourcing our SME advisory services to partner organisations that have private-sector disciplines and can drive productivity better and have real experience of excellent account management. We have already done that in the UK. We deliver our services to SMEs in the UK through partners, and we will increasingly look to do that overseas and create a single end-to-end process for SMEs for advisory services.

In my view, the Government do not have particular expertise in providing advisory services to SMEs. We have got into that space because what is currently in the private sector is, generally speaking, not affordable for SMEs. The Government certainly need to continue to subsidise it but not to provide it directly. That business model is helping us to multiply the number of companies that we can help and support.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: Sorry to interrupt you. How many account executives are there for the 30,000 businesses that you are supporting?

Nick Baird: If you look at crudely the number of staff that UKTI employs and apply that to the number of companies there are—that is crude because they are in different countries and all the rest of it—we have 2,300 staff and 30,000 companies. You could apply only a proportion of that 2,300 to the companies.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: You have this model that is like a client relationship. An account executive is responsible for this company, Widgets and Co or whatever, and follows it and keeps in touch with it. I am trying to find how many companies are looked after by how many people. What is the number?

Nick Baird: It is very difficult to give you a precise answer because companies—

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: If people are allocated particular companies, why is it difficult to give an answer?

Nick Baird: Because companies access us at different points in the journey, as it were.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: I am sorry to interrupt you again, but you described what I thought was a very interesting model and said that you are moving towards a position where people take responsibility for particular companies. They do not deal with them on a one-off basis; they work with them, see their development and take it forward. I want to know how you do that.

Nick Baird: That is correct. We have in this country 400 what we call international trade advisers, which we employ through chambers of commerce or companies set up by chambers of commerce, generally speaking, in nine regions of the UK. Those international trade advisers are essentially the key account managers of the 30,000 or so companies that we help. For the vast majority, that is the model. However, some companies never go through one of our regional teams. Some companies engage directly with a team overseas and never go through the UK part of the journey.
Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: On my arithmetic, there would be 75 companies per person.

Nick Baird: That is correct, so you cannot manage this in house, which is exactly the volume versus value issue. It is even more challenging for us to do so if, as people here said earlier, we double the number of companies that we support.

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: Just a thought: are you in a position to bring in due diligence on the SME list? I know how difficult it is when you are supporting so many SMEs, but I just believe it might be a helpful thing.

Nick Baird: The kind of due diligence that we can do is essentially related to their capacity to export successfully. The classic customer journey for our SMEs is that they will get what we call a passport-to-export service, which is essentially a new-to-export company’s introduction to exporting and how you do it. As part of that process, we will certainly assess whether that company is ready to export. We can certainly do that form of due diligence. Broader due diligence is extremely difficult, given the numbers that we deal with.

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: Yes, it might sift out your list a little bit.

Nick Baird: Yes.

Q119 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Just following up what Michael said, why do you think our witness from the Asian Business Association said that the UKTI is not fit for purpose and does not do anything to help SMEs not based in London?

Nick Baird: We would obviously need a much more detailed account of what he saw the problems as being. We have teams right across the English regions, and we have partner organisations in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. Generally speaking, the services that are provided by those teams get extremely strong customer satisfaction scores. However, for a number of the reasons that we have discussed already, the scale of the demand for our services as against our capacity to provide those services is obviously an issue.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: It is your lack of resources rather than your people not being any good at the job.

Nick Baird: We are certainly not perfect across the board, and we certainly have unevenness of performance, particularly in our overseas network, less so in the UK. As I say, our customer satisfaction scores for the services that we provide through our international trade advisers here—all of whom, by the way, are people with international business experience; they are not civil servants, and that is the basis on which we employ them—are very strong. Overseas, we are much more uneven. We have extremely good teams overseas, and we have less good teams overseas.

Q120 Lord Janvrin: You have covered quite a lot of the question I was going to ask about, but it leads me to ask another question closely related to what we have been discussing. One or two of our previous panel were saying that the Germans were doing it so much better. We have better links into their SMEs and so on. The Americans were also held up as being extremely good at using soft power resources and at the kind of things that you were talking about. There is a conundrum here, because everyone says we have fantastic soft power resources, language, the Commonwealth, the BBC, you name it. Are we making enough use of it? Can we learn from other countries? Can we learn from other countries? Can we learn from the trends that the Chinese are beginning to exploit in looking forward to how we gear the activities of the UKTI in the future?

Nick Baird: We look very closely at the comparison with how other countries do this. I would say the Germans are an extremely good and interesting model to look at, particularly
for supporting SMEs, because theirs is a much more integrated one-stop-shop service. If you are an SME in Germany and you wish to export, you know exactly what you do. You go to your local chamber, and it provides a complete one-stop-shop service to an SME, whether it be the trade finance, insurance, how you get your IP, or how you find an appropriate distributor. It is all done in one place and is very much linked into a global network. If you are an SME and you want to export in the UK, you think, “Where do I go?” Some of them may know UKTI, but we do not provide a complete one-stop-shop service. We do not do documentation for exporting, for example, which is done in the chambers. More probably, you press your button on Google and you find a whole range of different suppliers that will provide it.

I think that is a significant comparative disadvantage for UK SMEs, and that is precisely why we are seeking to outsource our SME advisory services across the globe to the chamber movement. This is difficult, because the chambers in this country are at this moment uneven in their quality, so this has to be a medium-term programme whereby we strengthen the quality of our platform first and pass it over when the platform has been strengthened. As I have described, at the UK end we are quite well advanced with this. Overseas we are less well advanced, although in some countries we are. It is not always a chamber as such, but in China the China-British Business Council delivers for us a huge range of our SME advisory services. The chamber in Singapore will do so soon, because it is already a strong chamber, and we will do that more broadly. I think the comparison with Germany is very strong.

The Americans run a very different model. Their export support organisation is much smaller. It concentrates on the biggest and most major opportunities and companies and brings a lot of the political support in behind that. I think that is a perfectly powerful model, and indeed, as we move towards outsourcing our SME advisory activity, we will be able to concentrate our own in-house resource more on that activity. I would hazard a guess that an American SME would not say that it gets huge amounts of support in exporting to different countries.

Q121 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: You described it as outsourcing. Is it not just passing the buck?

Nick Baird: It is not passing the buck, because we will continue to do two things. We will continue to subsidise, because if we do not, the services will not be affordable, in our judgment, and we will continue to quality assure. It is not passing the buck. It is essentially multiplying our effect. There is also a pragmatic reason why I do this. I can get extra money out of the Treasury for delivering my activity through outsourced partners. I cannot get extra money for increasing the number of staff I have. That is not the main driver, but it is a contributory driver to why we are doing that in this way.

I also think it is better to outsource to chambers, because what SMEs need in third countries is not boffin analysis but quite concrete, non-rocket science-type stuff. It is, “I need to get a work permit for somebody. Who is the best person in the Ministry of Labour to deal with?” It is another SME who is likely to be able to tell you that, and that is what chambers are overseas. They are, generally speaking, a group of small businesses that have been active in that country, British small businesses, who know the ropes. If you strengthen that—

The Chairman: This is the voice of impatience, but why do you think all this has been so slow coming when some people, including me, were writing about this 30 years ago? There are books and volumes telling us we have to emulate the German Mittelstand and use its vigour at their provincial level—we have Lord Heseltine saying that now—and yet somehow it seems to be still talking. Why is it so slow?
Nick Baird: I am not sure I have sufficient historical perspective to comment on that authoritatively, but what I would say is I think there is a burning platform now, which there may not have been in the past. Our overwhelming impression in dealing with SMEs—and I am out and about the country all the time talking to audiences of SMEs about exporting—is that because they are struggling to get the growth they need out of their domestic markets they are more enthusiastic or more willing to think about exporting than they have been in the past. Last year we helped 25% more companies than we did the year before, and that is not just because we have been good at generating new leads ourselves. They are coming to us because they need to think about exports. I think because there is a burning platform we are having to react to the greater demand for our services by looking at more sensible business models to deliver what we need to do with the budget we have.

Q122 Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: Just a quick point of information. When you were discussing the US model, were you referring to the rather small section of the State Department, which is the commercial side, or were you, in fact, referring to the very dominant and very significant US chambers of commerce?

Nick Baird: I was referring to the first. That is exactly right. What you have in the US is much closer to what the Germans have. I would argue that it is not as strong as the German. Nonetheless, there is a strong chamber movement in the United States and a very small government effort. That is precisely the model that we are seeking to move towards ourselves: to retain a significant in-house activity, principally in support of major campaigns. That does not necessarily mean just large companies. It means, as I described before, high-value campaigns where you have large contractors, their supply chains, inward investment, bringing investment here, and outsourcing our SME advisory activity.

The Chairman: I want to bring in Lord Ramsbotham, because we are getting towards the end, but you mentioned earlier the IOCs: Shell and BP for instance. That, of course, must mean that in trying to bring companies and supply chains together you are having to deal with a lot of non-British companies as well. This is a triangular or quadrilateral operation half the time. How does that work out, and do you feel you are equipped to do that?

Nick Baird: Yes, I do, although, of course, we could obviously be resourced to do even more of it. For example, on big construction projects there are, alas, not many big British contractors that build stuff overseas any more. If it was a big construction project, you are almost by definition looking at a foreign prime and introducing supply chain to those primes. The big French construction company VINCI is now obviously active in the UK, having taken over Taylor Woodrow, and we run systematic programmes to enable British supply chain companies to pitch into VINCI in France. That is one example of how it works in third-country terms, but it also can work with a contractor in the country concerned.

Another very interesting and related area that I should just touch on is working increasingly with Chinese contractors in Africa. I was recently at quite an interesting conference in Macau, which was essentially a Chinese conference with their developing country clients. The UK was the only developed country invited to that conference, and we kind of wondered why. There was a video clip right at the beginning of the conference that had the Chancellor of the Exchequer, a British Airways plane and Canary Wharf on it. It became very clear what our role was there, which was essentially to validate Chinese construction to their developing country clients so that they would accept that the quality of the construction would be good. They partner the UK, they partner UK project managers, design engineers, architects, and because of that partnership the quality is there. We have a huge potential to leverage that part.
The Chairman: That pleases me a lot. I have often thought we could be consultants to the Chinese on how to operate better in Africa than they do, and that is a good example of it. Excellent.

Lord Ramsbotham: I have to declare an interest, and it is because my eldest son is the chief executive of the North East Chamber of Commerce.

Nick Baird: I had not drawn the link, but we work extremely closely together.

Q123 Lord Ramsbotham: I am interested in this business of encouraging the chambers of commerce to function as well. As you know, they have developed a very interesting connection with north-east China, which came from a mutual involvement in coalmining, steel and shipbuilding. There have been six visits each way now, and that contrasted starkly with the attempt by the North East Chamber of Commerce to get involved in Iraq after the invasion in 2003, developing the sort of skills for opening up Basra and so on, which was not aided. A previous witness here mentioned the importance of having what in the army we would call lessons learnt and post-strike analysis: that after you have had some influence you get together and follow it up. You mentioned follow-up, but in the same way in which the chambers are hugely important in getting together and working, something seems to be missing somewhere in this whole movement. There is vibrancy there. Are they being given enough encouragement and space to develop the contacts that they have, and are they being helped to do that?

Nick Baird: I think that the challenge for chambers of commerce in this country has been that they have not been properly resourced. Of course, the comparison with Germany is that every company is obliged to be a paying member of a chamber of commerce, so it automatically becomes extremely well resourced. We thought about whether we could do that in the UK and concluded that companies would not accept it and would regard it as a tax on exports. We need to find other ways of resourcing up the chamber movement so that they have the capacity to deliver the services that we want and to be massively powerful in the way that German and US chambers are.

Part of the answer to this is some of the work that Lord Heseltine has been doing and the devolving of some of the spending from central government to local government, using local enterprise partnerships as the strategy partner and chambers, in some cases at least, as the delivery party. That is absolutely how we view it for UKTI activity. Part of the extra money that I received from the Chancellor in the Autumn Statement is going to strengthen British chambers overseas so they become a strong enough platform to deliver some of our services overseas and to make sure that we have a proper link between British chambers and the international networks, so that if a company comes to a chamber in the UK for export support it has proper links into where the support is provided all around the world. I agree with you that this is good in parts. The North East Chamber of Commerce, for example, is clearly one of the UK’s best chambers, and some of the things it has done have been really effective. Other parts of the UK are not as well served at this moment. It is not going to happen quickly, but I am convinced—and Lord Green, who has been very passionately committed to this programme, is convinced—that although it will take time it is absolutely crucial for the UK, particularly for exporting small businesses.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: I do not want to sound negative—perhaps Lord Foulkes is more up to date than I am—but when I was Secretary of State for Scotland we set up local enterprise companies on precisely this model, and they were given very substantial resources. I think that has since been wound up and was regarded as not working. The problem was that in engaging with the small businesses, much as we have heard earlier,
because people are frustrated that they cannot get what they want they say the organisation is useless and full of expensive bureaucrats who all just hold conferences and produce expensive glossy brochures; they do not actually do anything. I read Michael Heseltine’s report from cover to cover—it took me all of a weekend to do it—and I had this feeling of déjà vu, a bit like the Chairman. We have been around this track before. In Scotland we had the SDA. Then we broke up the SDA and set up these local enterprise companies. The idea was that you would have local businesses and so on. We went round the track of having a levy on business, which was resisted for the reasons you have accounted for.

Are you not a bit concerned that the lessons of the past are that the remedy may not lie in setting up new structures and just parking money in places? It absolutely depends on leadership and commitment, and that is locally on the part of the business community. I think that is the hardest thing to achieve, because many of the characteristics that make small and medium-sized entrepreneurs so successful are not the characteristics that enable this kind of thing to work. I come back to the question of whether it is because the Germans are more used to having a structure. Do you think you can solve these problems?

Nick Baird: Those are really good points. I think it is partly cultural. I think the Germans do operate on a more collaborative basis than we do, although my perception—again, this is only anecdotal—is that there is a generational issue here as well. Younger businesses in the UK are much more collaborative and much more inclined to work collectively overseas. In some of the Tech City co-working spaces, for example, some of the small businesses that are being set up there by young people are instinctively collaborative. I think that may help us.

Q124 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: That brings me on to the next point that I was going to make. Back in the 1980s, when we were trying to create these structures by having meetings and committees and so on, we did not have the internet or the instant communication that youngsters who are setting up businesses now have. Is there a way in which you could almost use the new technology to create virtual organisations, which I think are much more likely to succeed?

Nick Baird: Yes, I strongly agree, although I think the two things need to go together. One very important part of the work we will need to do with the chambers is to help them modernise. When we have trialled our model with younger businesses around the country, to put it fairly bluntly, most younger businesses think that the chamber is where their grandad would go to, not where they would go themselves. They have to get very strong in the digital space as well—some are, some are less so—as do we. I absolutely agree that a key element of the future model needs to be very strong virtual linkages and very strong digital offers by chambers.

The potential of e-exporting is absolutely vast for companies that have the kind of products that can be exported online. We are not bad in the UK, but the additional potential is huge. One of the things that we are doing this autumn in UKTI is working with the Chinese eBay, Alibaba, and we will take it around the country and get it to present to groups of SMEs all around the country about how it can use this platform in China as its shop window. We will back that up with a whole one-stop-shop service provided with a number of partners to help companies that wish to do that with all the other things that they would need to do to realise an export. It is a huge set of opportunities.

The Chairman: Baroness Nicholson will have the last question, because then we are out of time.
Q125 Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: Thank you very much. I have two questions. The first one is on UKTI. All of us want to see UKTI being more successful than any other trade and industry department on the globe. There does, however, seem to be a slight hesitancy in confidence in UKTI, particularly among a lot of businesses. I wondered whether you would address the problem of transparency that you have inherited from predecessors. It may not be quite as clear as it could be. I am thinking particularly of the rather shadowy tables which the department has attracted. Nobody seems to know who they are, and I have had a lot of comments from businesses, such as, “Who are these people? Are they merely failed businessmen who have time to attend conferences in UKTI?”. Transparency as to who these people are who are advising Ministers would, I think, be a very good idea.

A second point, very quickly, is that I am surprised to see that the companies that are exporting from the UK seem to be the classic pioneering companies. Whether we call them big or large really is irrelevant. Where is the hunger among those who are not doing what they should be doing in the business community? Why are they so well fed without making the effort to go abroad?

The Chairman: Two easy questions to end with.

Nick Baird: Yes. Driving up UKTI performance and reputation with the business community is obviously a huge focus for us. We believe that we are making progress, and we believe that our satisfaction scores show that, but we are a long way from being perfect. Our performance with big companies is definitely very significantly improving. Our performance with smaller companies is still difficult. It is difficult to push up the scores, but they are going up. We have talked about some of the challenges, and I think that a lot of them are about the capacity to support intensively. We want to bring in more effective account management. We have the sorts of challenges that emerged from Lord Forsyth’s question.

I do think transparency is very important as well. I absolutely agree with that. A key part of the activity of the trade envoys that we have brought on board to support us is to be out in front of businesses in this country, as well as making engagements and visits to other countries. We are encouraging them to be very outward-facing. Sorry, I have forgotten the second question.

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: What about those advisory tables in the ministry, which are not transparent?

Nick Baird: We are bringing our sector advisory groups together. We are reforming them around the new industrial strategy, so in each of the sectors of the new industrial strategy we are bringing together advisory groups that exist in those sectors between BIS and us into single groups. It is absolutely critical that they are and are seen as the voices of the companies in their particular sectors.

The Chairman: Mr Baird, we have kept you longer than we said we would, so that is very patient of you. You have raised a number of issues that I think we will want to think about very hard, particularly about the positioning of you and your strategy in the overall government firmament. Thank you very warmly indeed for coming here and for, as I say, giving us a lot of food for thought. Thank you very much indeed.
UK Trade Facilitation – Written evidence

Introduction
UK Trade Facilitation is the new champion for UK traders who seek to enter new markets or who find difficulties with existing ones. Its role is to inform traders about markets around the world, to assist them when they have difficulties or require information and to influence barriers to trade in other markets, helping to reduce them. It is funded by traders and is responsive to their needs and requirements. It fills the gap left by the closure of SITPRO in 2010.

This submission is focused mainly on issues of direct relevance in this context.

The meaning of Soft Power

1. Soft Power is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as
   a. “a persuasive approach to international relations, typically involving the use of economic or cultural influence”
   It is not a recent concept, but has existed for as long as the need to convert or convince individuals and people where the use of force would be unsuccessful or achieve only subjugation. It aims to inform debate and thus build consensus with the objective of influencing and, where appropriate, directing policy makers and opinion formers when they are developing and deciding future policies or strategies. Soft power promotes common consent for the common good.

2. In effect, Soft Power is the means of influencing others to get them to agree with and support one’s point of view using persuasion, argument, example, history and culture. In international relations it also depends on the legitimacy or moral authority deemed to be embodied in the culture, political values, institutions and policies of a country. The successful use of soft power relies heavily on the pedigree of the argument and the quality of the presenter. The argument must be cogent, coherent, convincing and above all consistent; it must demonstrate that everybody would achieve benefits from a commonly agreed outcome. Used effectively, soft power should encourage compromise without conceding honest conviction; promote the art of co-operation and the objective of achieving the possible.

3. Soft power should not be confused with lobbying or focus groups. The difference is motivation. Lobbyists and members of focus groups tend to be single issue advocates. Their aim is to pressure decision makers into accepting a specific point of view to the exclusion of all other opinions. The ultimate objective is the implementation of a pre-determined policy or solution. The concept of negotiation and concession is alien to the lobby or focus group because of the perceived virtue of their opinion.

4. Although sometimes successful, lobbying often results in opposition (sometimes violent) to a particular policy, creating discord in society and risking any consequential law being honoured as much in the breach as in the observance. In turn this could create an oppressive environment of enforcement of unpopular legislation or rules, setting the government and its agencies against the community and the citizen.
5. The age of the internet has seen the exponential rise of soft power. An individual with access to the ‘blogosphere’ can express an opinion and see it 'go viral' in a matter of hours. From such a small beginning, public support can be garnered for a person or a policy: witness the presidential campaign of Senator Barack Obama in 2008. No doubt this trend will continue but, of its very nature, it will focus on single issues generated by individual concern. However, the real exercise of soft power will remain with the contributors to and the participants in meetings and gatherings where views and opinions are exchanged and decisions agreed. Humankind is by nature a communal creature and social interaction involving all the faculties is essential for individuals to form sensible opinions, apply reasoned judgement and make informed decisions.

The extent and use of the UK’s Soft Power resources

6. In order to have effect soft power must be focused and directed to the most influential actors - other governments, the European Institutions, international governmental networks and NGOs and other trading blocks. The UK has a justified and justifiable reputation for the effective use of soft power. Established through military success, the spread of empire, especially in India, was nevertheless achieved by employing soft power to build alliances, develop treaties and negotiate mutually beneficial agreements. Of course, the use of hard (physical) power was always in the background but was often only used as a last resort when diplomacy failed. The loss of the American colonies is perhaps the classic example where the UK employed brute force instead of exploring and exhausting the options offered by soft power.

7. The reputation of the UK as the seat of democracy, one of the largest financial centres in the world and a broker of agreements is high. Many of the NGOs and trade and professional bodies within the UK punch far above their weight in European and international fora because of this. Often the extent of the UK’s soft power through these organisations is recognised more abroad than at home. Recent cutbacks in the civil service have lessened the ability of the UK government to recognise its potential in soft power while requiring greater reliance on its use.

8. Much of the success of soft power in empire building was the result of the work done by non-state organisations and individuals, particularly religious bodies and the commerce sector. The former inspired with missionary passion, the latter motivated by free trade spread the concepts of freedom of assembly and speech, a free press, the rule of law and respect for the rights and beliefs of individuals. The expansion of ‘British’ values, accompanied by language and culture gave, and continues to give, the UK a unique place in world affairs.

9. Non-state actors are in an invidious position in exercising soft power. On the one hand they represent companies and consumers whose views may not always correspond with government policy. The exercise of such soft power, while advantageous to the UK, can be seen as undermining government policy which, of necessity, is transitory as the party in power changes. In turn, non-state actors benefit from the prestige and status of the UK with other countries. This is particularly true in international trade where the UK has been able to influence the trend of policies in promoting and regulating international trade and leading the way
in advocating international trade facilitation, one of the few areas in the WTO which has universal acceptance.

**Soft Power and diplomacy**

10. International networks can only help to strengthen the UK’s soft power if the UK plays an active part within them. This is now often not the case due to lack of resource. In such cases the UK is dependent on the non-state players who are active within these networks to promote its point-of-view.

11. Many critics express the view that the UK no longer makes effective use of soft power and is drifting toward a more hard power approach to foreign policy and diplomacy. The march to war in Iraq and the continuing entanglement in Afghanistan lends some credence to this view. So the timing of this House of Lords Select Committee inquiry on Soft Power is apposite.

12. Within the European Institutions the current official attitude of the UK towards the EU causes concern. While the role of the UK is not diminished by it, the effectiveness of the UK voice is reduced because of uncertainty regarding the long-term commitment to Europe. Here there is more reliance on non-state players which promote the views of UK business and traders. In Europe and elsewhere, UK institutions such as the Monarchy and Parliament are held in high esteem and continue to contribute hugely to the Soft Power of the UK.

**Soft Power and Hard Power**

13. Soft and Hard Power are closely inter-related. One may lead to the other or follow it. The UK has a track record of getting the balance right.

14. 24/7 news coverage, the internet, the digital age and social networking have probably swayed the balance in favour of Soft Power in many instances. Governments and policy makers must take note of views expressed via these media which are, or can be, transnational. Governments themselves rely heavily on the Soft Power generated through social media to get across their message and seek approval for these policies.

**Non-state soft power**

15. The difficulty with the use of Soft Power by non-state actors is that it can be misconstrued and tarred with the same brush as lobby and focus groups. This is especially pertinent in the case of international trade. An idea for improving trading practice or a request to reduce or remove procedural burdens can appear as industry (or service) sector special pleading. A solution to this problem can be the establishment of an independent body at arm’s length from the private sector and supported (but not necessarily funded) by government. The body would act as a facilitator, gathering together the appropriate representatives of the business sector and moderating discussion to achieve consensus of the issues confronting the trading community. For this approach to be completely successful government should commit to active involvement in the dialogue and be willing to share its views on current issues and future policy.
16. For many years the UK used such bodies to exercise soft power successfully in the technical committees responsible for developing the standards, norms and good practices for international trade. Within the European Union, the UK encouraged the adoption of the aligned layout for trade documents, the Common Veterinary Entry Document being a perfect example. The trade facilitation measures developed and introduced by the UK Customs administration have often acted as the model for more efficient and effective control methods while facilitating legitimate traders and economic operators.

17. Within UN/CEFACT (the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business), the UK has effectively used soft power to develop recommendations, standards and other instruments for better international trade and supply chain performance and management. The committee operates under the aegis of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe that has responsibility for the promotion of trade facilitation throughout the UN family of economic and social commissions.

18. In the recent past the UK chaired the International Trade Procedures Group which produced the suite of UN Recommendations on the design, development and operation of a national Single Window for the exchange of trade related information between government and the business community. The suite of products is now being extended to include a Recommendation on Interoperability of Single Windows. This issue will become increasingly important as the world economic powers look to establish inter-regional trade agreements (the Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership for example) in the absence of rules-based global trade facilitation arrangements under the Doha Round of Trade Negotiations.

19. For the future, the International Trade Procedures Group is developing a recommendation on the various and varied methodologies for the consultation process between government and the trading community. Here the UK has significant experience and is using Soft Power to encourage the adoption of a genuine partnership approach to consultation for the mutual of public and private sectors.

20. The Group is also researching mobile business - the ability to conduct trade using a mobile device such as a smartphone or hand-held tablet computer. The information and communication technology sector is very important to the British economy. Therefore UK influence in developing the guiding principles, measures and good practice for the implementation and operation of Mobile Business is essential and paramount. This influencing of the debate and informing its decisions is best pursued using soft power.

21. International trade is the life blood that pumps through the arteries of the British economy. The imposition of any new regulation or administrative procedure, or changes to the existing process in international trade impacts on the ability of British companies to do business in the global marketplace. Developing measures to facilitate international trade through simplification standardisation and harmonisation can only have a beneficial effect on British trading performance. Participation in the discussions of such trade facilitation measures can bring even greater advantages to the architects of the design and early adopters of development. Here the UK should use
soft power to be seated at the table where the decisions are agreed that will enhance or damage the ability to grow our economy, create jobs and increase wealth.

Learning from others

22. There are always opportunities to learn from others. The European Institutions are a prime example where diplomacy wins over hard power. The concept of majority voting has many beneficial outcomes in this respect. As more issues are determined within trading areas or by groupings of governments, the UK is able to influence others and to learn from the successes of other governments. This should help to advance the causes of justice and peace.

23. In international trade facilitation, while the UK is still one of the most respected countries in the world, new rules and procedures need to be influenced by the views of other nations with which we are trading and their national authorities. One example is EUROPRO, the European federation of national trade facilitation bodies which has the authority to negotiate on their behalf through the Trade Contact Group of DG TAXUD on all matters relating to European customs, including the Uniform Customs Code.

24. Within the UNECE and WCO the role of the UK is enhanced by inter-governmental discussion and also by the work undertaken in specialist areas by representatives from many countries who seek to establish international policies. Here, the UK is a leading player but has to use its Soft Power to influence the direction of decision-making.

Aspects of Soft Power

25. The work undertaken by UK Trade and Investment is fundamental to the overseas expansion of UK companies. Like other government agencies, however, its resources have been slashed and its effectiveness blunted.

26. In respect of international trade facilitation, the UK has led the field for over 40 years. It is unfortunate, therefore, that with reduced resources, the new emphasis on the EU/US Trade Agreement and the closure of SITPRO in 2012 there is no longer a strong UK voice to continue this valuable work. UK Trade Facilitation is trying to pick up where SITPRO left off but in a different context – funded by traders for traders. There remains a vast amount of work to be done if unnecessary trade barriers are to be demolished and UK traders assisted not just to identify new markets but to be helped to identify and negotiate the national barriers which exist.

Norman Rose (Executive Chairman) and Gordon Cragge (Trade Advisor)

September 2013
1. Following the Edinburgh Culture Summit in 2012, the Scottish Government’s Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop, announced that the Scottish Government would explore with the University and the British Council the feasibility of the creation of a Centre for Cultural Diplomacy to be based at the University of Edinburgh. She said:

“We will be working with the University of Edinburgh and the British Council to further explore this proposal. A centre of excellence for cultural diplomacy based in Scotland would undoubtedly enhance Scotland’s international reputation.”

2. Following the completion of a feasibility study which carried out extensive research to establish whether such a Centre would meet a real need, the University agreed with the Scottish Government and the British Council to establish a research-led centre of expertise. The Centre for Cultural Relations will be formally launched by the University later this autumn.

3. This submission reflects the work undertaken by the University with its partners over the last year, specifically the understandings gained from extensive market research and a large scale consultation exercise which gathered evidence from over 100 consultees in academia, governments in the UK and overseas, international organisations, public bodies, economic development bodies and cultural practitioners.

Soft power or cultural relations?

4. Terminology matters. As our research progressed, it became clear that the question of terminology was central to any consideration of soft power. The original proposal for the Centre had used the term “cultural diplomacy”. The study concluded that a better term would be “cultural relations”. Why was this important?

5. Our conclusion was that research was needed on the full range of exchanges between societies. After considerable discussion, it was agreed that the terms “cultural diplomacy”; “public diplomacy” and “soft power” should not be used as they would narrow the scope to state-directed transactions. This did not reflect the nature of the field, where the role of non-state actors, informal groups and individuals is increasingly important. We therefore settled on cultural relations as the term which best reflected the wide-ranging and fast changing nature of the field.

6. This submission accordingly mostly refers to cultural relations throughout, rather than soft power. It was also relevant that the British Council used the term to communicate the Council’s role. “The British Council creates international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and builds trust between them worldwide. We call this work cultural relations.”

Are cultural relations important?

7. We reviewed existing evidence which indicated that cultural relations were seen as increasingly important in a range of fields:

- There was a perceived need for both a new theory and strategies for international engagement;
The role of cultural factors such as beliefs, values and contexts for developing and sustaining international relations and international exchange was seen as increasingly important. Political researchers as well as think-tank practitioners suggested that due to processes of ongoing globalisation and decentralisation of governance this was more important than ever;

Cultural relations was a major focus of attention and effort in an era of global, digital communications. This was true for those involved in states, other public bodies, NGOs and businesses;

There was a well documented trend for emerging economies to invest heavily in cultural relations;

Cultural factors play an increasing part in international business, for example where companies work beyond the firm in international multicultural project teams, or where they are engaged in innovative international collaborations;

Cultural relations and dialogue are increasingly recognised as important in security and conflict resolution. They are also key to international development efforts and to tackling global challenges. These are all areas where engagement beyond the state can be vital to success;

Finally, in relation again to terminology, a cultural relations perspective was seen as being able to succeed in grasping the multiplicity of actions and practitioners consciously and unconsciously engaged in the dynamic field of contemporary international relations.

Understanding cultural relations

8. The assumption at the heart of the original proposal to establish a Centre at the University of Edinburgh was that there was a need for academically rigorous interdisciplinary research in cultural relations. We accordingly reviewed the existing research base.

9. Our main finding was that there was a considerable amount of applied research and there were a number of private research initiatives, but university research projects (mainly US-American) on cultural relations were minor in number and scale compared to private research initiatives. For this reason, contemporary cultural relations issues such as e-diplomacy remained under-theorised.

10. This had practical consequences. For example, while practitioners were often passionately committed to the idea of cultural relations, they could struggle to persuade others that they mattered. This was due to the lack of a shared understanding of what constituted the field and the tendency for soft power or cultural relations to be seen in opposition to the traditional focus on hard power in international relations.

11. Our research confirmed the need for research which was both scholarly and focused on practice. This research needed to be interdisciplinary to reflect the changing nature of the field. This view was shared unanimously by academic and practitioner consultees. The general view was that the field was under-researched, the quality of current research was poor, and there was a need for a Centre with the necessary interdisciplinary strength, reputation and ability to collaborate at the highest level.

12. Academic consultees stressed that scholarly research was essential. They argued that traditional disciplinary boundaries needed to be rethought in order to research a fast
changing and fluid field of study. They were also strongly aware of the need for scholarly research to contribute to practice through knowledge transfer.

13. Practitioner consultees from all sectors (governments; public bodies; business; cultural organisations) felt strongly that current research was not meeting their needs and that a major cause of this was the lack of a coherent academic approach. There was a universal appetite from practitioners for research which would provide an evidence base both for existing activity and for “what worked”.

14. There was a feeling among practitioners that culture was probably more important then ever in affecting international developments, but that it was harder than ever to make a case for culture in competition with other “harder” areas of activity whose impact was more actually or apparently measurable.

15. These insights persuaded the University that there was a major opportunity to establish a new Centre dedicated to research in cultural relations. Supporting this was the lack of any other comparable centre in the UK or indeed, internationally. Existing provision reflected traditional academic boundaries. Universities and other institutes focused on eg International Relations; Cultural Studies; the practice of diplomacy; intercultural communication for business; communications or new technology. Cultural Relations were researched, but in the great majority of cases within the terms of the parent discipline.

**Soft power, foreign policy development, diplomacy and the role of the state**

16. Soft power as defined by Nye was an instrument of foreign policy. On this view. the role of the state was central and soft power (whatever non-state resources were deployed) was used because the state had a responsibility to use all means at its disposal, including those of soft power, to achieve its international policy goals.

17. Nye also acknowledged that some goals were impossible to achieve with soft power, as some were impossible to achieve with hard power alone. He relied on the distinction drawn by Arnold Wolfers between “possession goals” (tangible, specific objectives) and “milieu goals” (structural and intangible).

18. Nye’s view suggested that soft power (or “smart power” – the use of both hard and soft) was an essential part of foreign policy formation and therefore should be a responsibility of the state. This approach appeared to be endorsed by the Foreign Secretary in his foreword to the British Council publication “Influence and Attraction – Culture and the race for soft power in the 21st century”. “Britain remains a modern day cultural superpower. Staying competitive in ‘soft power’ for decades to come means nurturing these assets and valuing them as much as our military, economic and diplomatic advantages.”

19. Whether or not Nye’s doctrine of soft or smart power was accepted, there was no doubt that there was an urgent need to understand what soft power meant for the conduct of international relations. What part did cultural understanding play in foreign policy development, as the basis for peace and conflict, making and implementing policy and living and working in a globalised world?

20. This requires a novel interdisciplinary approach to international relations. It is important for states and diplomats, if they are to work successfully in the 21st century, to have access to understandings of the role of culture in international interactions across the whole spectrum of activity from that of states and diplomats
through to individuals able to exercise influence and mobilise resources across borders through the use of social media.

**Soft power in the UK**

21. If the UK is to rise to the Foreign Secretary’s challenge, we need to understand what our soft power assets are and know how to value them. At present, in our view, that overview of how soft power is used by the UK at all levels – including the activities of the state, sub-national structures (devolved administrations, cities, local initiatives), commercial, cultural and non-state actors – does not exist.

22. We also need tools and techniques to understand what the impact of those activities are. We need to ensure that we have evidence as to what works, where, when and in which contexts. That requires a rigorous focus on assessment of practice.

23. We also need to understand how our soft power relates in terms of our international reputation to the practice of hard power – it makes little sense to consider one without the other.

24. We need to understand the instruments, tools and techniques of UK soft power and how domestic policies relating to soft power (eg on culture and education) relate to our international reputation.

25. Finally, we need to situate the UK as a soft power practitioner alongside others. There are various benchmarks and indices of comparison. Knowing how relatively effective we are, in relation to our investments, means learning from others’ innovation.

26. The question of definition arises here. Our emerging view is that we need to work both with Nye’s definition (culture, political ideals and policies) and with the definition of cultural relations (arts, education, English language) used by the British Council.

**Suggestions for Government action**

27. We suggest that the Government:

- Builds on the Foreign Secretary’s comments to ensure that our cultural relations assets are valued and contribute to foreign policy development;
- Prioritises support for research to support that approach, in the areas identified above;
- Takes steps to establish the UK as the world’s leading centre for cultural relations expertise and reputation;
- Builds on this inquiry to ensure that cultural relations are a feature of future Parliamentary debate and scrutiny.

University of Edinburgh

12 September 2013
Introduction

1. Universities UK and the Higher Education International Unit (‘the International Unit’) support the committee’s inquiry into the UK’s soft power and influence. As is suggested by some of the questions to which the committee invited responses, the concept of ‘soft power’ is not easy to clearly define. For the purpose of this submission, we understand soft power to be the influence enjoyed by a nation or state from sources other than its economic, military, or formal diplomatic strengths. This includes influence gained through the strength and reputation of that country’s educational and cultural sectors.

2. Universities are significant beneficiaries of the UK’s soft power. Their teaching and research capabilities are significantly enhanced by the UK’s reputation for excellence in these areas, by strong cultural links between the UK and other countries, and by the lingua franca status of the English language.

3. UK higher education is also a major contributor to this soft power, both directly and indirectly. The strength and international reputation of the UK’s higher education sector is a major direct contributor to the reputation of the UK’s education and culture, and so a significant contributor to – or perhaps more accurately a constituent part of – the UK’s soft power.

4. Our higher education institutions’ research and teaching excellence also contributes indirectly to the UK’s soft power, and underpins all of the other examples in this submission of the soft power benefits granted by higher education. This excellence and can only be maintained through sufficient and ongoing investment in the sector.

5. However, the UK spends significantly less as a proportion of its GDP on tertiary education (including research) than the average for the OECD. While the UK punches above its weight in terms of research quality (as measured by citation rate) relative to expenditure, the soft power benefits of our world-leading higher education sector cannot be guaranteed for the future without continued investment and policymaking that supports the international activities of UK universities.

International students at UK institutions

6. The UK is second only to the USA in terms of its market share of internationally-mobile higher education students. This is partially the result of the UK’s soft power (in particular the reputation of the UK’s education sector, and the value to students of being taught in the English language), but is also an important source of soft power. In September 2013 the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) published a report on the wider benefits of international higher education in the UK. A

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187 *Education at a Glance*, OECD, 2013
188 *International Comparative Performance of the UK Research Base*, BIS, 2011
189 *Education at a Glance*, OECD, 2013
190 *The Wider Benefits of International Higher Education in the UK*, BIS, 2013
number of the benefits set out in this report could be considered as contributing to the UK’s soft power.

7. We will not repeat in detail the numerous examples of indirect benefits to the UK set out in the BIS report, but recommend the committee considers the report in full. However, it is worth broadly summarising the key ways in which international students are beneficial to the UK’s soft power.

8. Most international students who leave the UK after study retain professional and/or personal links and networks here. Out of those interviewed as part of the BIS study, 84% retained either personal or professional links. Aside from the obvious indirect economic benefits of fostering professional networks between overseas graduates of UK universities and home graduates (and others), there are wider benefits to fostering both professional and personal networks that could be classified as contributing to soft power. Out of those interviewed for the study, 90% agreed that their perception of the UK had changed – all in a positive direction – as a result of studying here. Those who have studied in the UK have an increased appreciation for, and trust of, the UK, its culture and its population. This is an important contributor to soft power.

9. As well as international graduates of UK institutions obtaining networks in the UK, UK graduates also develop international networks and a more international outlook as a result of studying and living alongside peers from around the globe.

10. The benefits outlined above are all the more important given that many internationally mobile students studying at UK institutions are likely to go on to take up influential positions in their home countries and elsewhere. As an example, a report by the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee published in March 2011 listed 27 international heads of state at that time who had studied in the UK, many in UK universities, and the Times Higher Education published an article in September 2013 highlighting 12 world leaders that had been educated at UK universities.

11. One of the many striking examples detailed in the BIS report referred to above is that of a PhD graduate from the University of Cambridge who now holds a director-level post in the central bank of the People’s Republic of China. After describing himself as a ‘friend’ of the UK, he explains that when he is involved in negotiations with the Bank of England, he goes into these negotiations ‘emotionally bonded’ to the UK.

12. Other prominent alumni are world leaders in other areas which exemplify the UK’s philosophies of global citizenship, democracy and aid. For example, Cambridge graduate Mohan Munasinghe is Vice Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize; Aung San SuuKyi, Oxford graduate and chairperson of the National League for Democracy in Burma received the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 1990 and the Nobel Peace Prize in

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191 Ibid
194 The Wider Benefits of International Higher Education in the UK, BIS, 2013
1991. These accolades show the influence of UK values, shared through higher education experience, on politics worldwide.

**Immigration policy and international students**

13. In order that the potential benefits of international students attending UK institutions are realised, we must build on the current strength of the sector in attracting international students. However, we are concerned that the government’s immigration policy, and some of the ways in which this has been communicated, is having a negative impact on the ability of the sector to attract international students. The latest figures published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) show that the number of first year non-EU students at higher education institutions decreased by 0.4% in 2011–12. While this decrease appears small, it follows years of strong growth. This decline is largely the result of a decrease among taught postgraduates. Non-EU entrants to taught postgraduate (eg Masters) degrees fell by 2.6% between 2010–11 and 2011–12.

14. This trend is significantly below that which would be required for the 15–20% increase in numbers over the next five years that the government’s industrial strategy for international education considers ‘realistic’. Even this level of growth is likely to represent a decrease in market share, given the rate of growth internationally of students studying outside of their home nations has been estimated at 7% per annum by the European Commission, and rose from 2.1 million in 2000 to 4.3 million in 2011.

15. Changes to visa policy to date have produced an overall reduction in net migration. However, further considerable reductions will be necessary to meet the government’s target of reducing net migration to the ‘tens of thousands’. In order to meet the target the government will need to continue to bear down on immigration. Students are the largest category of migrant (despite the fact that the majority leave on completion of their studies). The Migration Advisory Committee has calculated that a reduction in non-EU student numbers of 87,600 over the three years 2012 to 2015 would be required to meet the government’s net migration target.

16. International university students should not be caught up in efforts to reduce immigration. Visa procedures should be implemented in a way that is consistent with the government’s aim for a 15–20% increase over the next five years. The government should stand by its commitment to ‘a period of stability in the student visa route’ by not introducing further restrictions to student visas, and should continue to explore the potential value of extending the more generous post-study visa regime currently afforded to PhD graduates to a wider range of international graduates.

17. Universities UK and many others in the sector have worked to rectify some of the damaging, and often misleading, international headlines about the UK student visa system. In particular, we note that with growing use of the internet and in particular social media, it is increasingly difficult for the government (or any other agency) to ‘segment’ its messages on a particular issue for different audiences. A message that

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196 *European Higher Education in the World*, European Commission, 2013
197 *Education at a Glance*, OECD, 2013
may have been intended for a domestic audience can now more easily be seen and shared worldwide, with perhaps unintended consequences for international perceptions of the UK.

18. We welcome the public statements made by the prime minister while in India in February 2013, encouraging Indian students to study at UK universities. The government should ensure that the UK’s student visa rules are understood internationally, and continue to work to promote UK higher education.

Outward student mobility

19. We know that the UK is a destination of choice for international students, but cultural exchanges benefit from being outward looking as well as inward. In 2012, the higher education sector reported to the International Unit’s Joint Steering Group on Outward Mobility that outward student mobility raises the profile and reputation of UK education overseas, as well as the profile of individual institutions. Likely soft power benefits of outward student mobility, aside from the further improving the reputation of UK education, include the promotion of an international outlook among UK graduates and the opportunity for such students to engage in ‘citizen diplomacy’.

20. In 2010, around 23,000 UK students were studying for a degree abroad. 198 This is an outward mobility rate of just 0.9% 199, though this does not include those studying overseas for periods of less than one academic year, such as the 12,833 UK students taking part in an Erasmus study or work placement 200. The government’s recent industrial strategy on international education recognised the need to encourage such interactions through the development of an Outward Mobility Strategy 201 to promote study and work abroad to UK students as part of their study programmes. In order to maximise the soft power created through these interactions, full commitment to the aims of the strategy is needed from across government and the sector.

Transnational education

21. Transnational education (TNE) is the delivery of education in a country other than the one in which the awarding body is based. The UK is a leading TNE exporter: in 2011–12 some 570,000 higher education students were engaged in UK TNE 202. The British Council has recently estimated that there are 1,395 different TNE programmes provided by UK higher education institutions around the world, as well as a growing number of overseas campuses. 203 It is generally recognised that the popularity of UK TNE among students is derived from the perceived quality of UK higher education overseas.

22. UK institutions report the impact of joint and dual degrees, one of the modes of TNE, as including: greater collaboration between faculties; increased international visibility; greater collaboration between administrative staff; developing strategic

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201 The Outward Mobility Strategy is due to be published by the International Unit in autumn 2013.
202 Aggregate offshore record, HESA 2013
203 The shape of things to come: The evolution of transnational education: data, definitions, opportunities and impacts analysis, British Council, 2013
partnerships; and further programmes and cooperation. The relationship between soft power and TNE goes both ways: it can flow from established TNE as well as create TNE opportunities. TNE bears out the British Council’s argument that cultural and educational interactions translate into significant soft power.

23. The recently published British Council report *The shape of things to come* identified that there remain substantial market opportunities for UK TNE expansion. Host countries are particularly interested in TNE partnerships with the UK to fill skills gaps and meet education needs. It is anticipated that TNE growth will outstrip international student growth in the coming years; the UK is well positioned to lead on this.

**International research collaboration**

24. The UK is a world leader in international research collaboration. Forty-six per cent of UK-authored academic papers are co-authored with at least one non-UK researcher. This figure is higher than any of our major international competitors, bar France.

25. Such international collaboration in research has a positive impact on the citation rate for that research. Internationally co-authored papers have a two-fold increase in citations compared to papers co-authored within an institution, significantly higher than the 1.4-fold increase seen for papers co-authored between researchers within one country.

26. This suggests that international links and networks between researchers are likely to have positive results for the impact of their research. Such collaboration therefore forms part of a virtuous circle that benefits the reputation and influence of UK research: improvements in our research reputation encourage collaboration from researchers overseas; and such collaboration improves our research reputation.

**Mobility of academic staff**

27. UK universities benefit from the international reputation of the sector through being able to attract academic staff from overseas. As well as increasing the potential pool of talented researchers and teachers from which appointees can be drawn, it is likely that such overseas appointments facilitate international research collaboration, the benefits of which are outlined above.

28. Higher education is becoming increasingly internationalised, with institutions competing with others around the world for research and teaching talent. Such appointees, if from outside the EU, count towards the government’s cap on skilled worker migrants, though we note that this cap has not yet been reached in any year since its introduction.

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204 Joint and Double Degree Programmes in the Global Context, Obst, Kuder and Banks, 2011
205 Trust pays, British Council, 2012
206 The shape of things to come: The evolution of transnational education: data, definitions, opportunities and impacts analysis, British Council, 2013
207 International Comparative Performance of the UK Research Base, BIS, 2011
208 Ibid
29. It is important that UK institutions are not put at a competitive disadvantage through a visa system that makes it more difficult to hire academic staff from overseas, or through the perception that the UK's visa system is overly restrictive. Such appointees are (by definition) internationally mobile and highly sought after, and are less likely to choose to work in the UK if they feel that they would be unwelcome.

**Information exchanges**

30. The International Unit works closely with government departments and university leaders to facilitate international delegations. The appeal of the UK's higher education sector is apparent in the high demand from international leaders to participate in mutual exchange and information sharing visits. Ministerial engagement with the International Unit’s work in spearheading outgoing missions is a clear indicator of the priority that government accords the higher education sector.

31. Student exchanges are not a new concept, but the popularity of the UK within recent innovative programmes shows its influence and appeal to other nations. A key example of this is Science without Borders, through which up to 10,000 Brazilian students will study in the UK over four years, funded by the Brazilian government. 1,700 Brazilian students were placed in UK institutions in September 2013, treble the previous two cohorts, and demand for places at UK institutions has exceeded expectations for the January 2014 intake. On a practical level, the UK's higher education sector has a significant draw for international students; on a political level, Science without Borders is raising and cementing the UK’s profile across the BRICS nations.

**Conclusion**

32. The strength of the UK higher education sector, through the excellence of its research and teaching and its international reputation, is itself a significant constituent part of the UK’s soft power. It also makes a significant indirect contribution, in particular through attracting international students, staff and research collaborators. Both direct and indirect contributions rely on continued investment in our universities.

**About Universities UK and the UK Higher Education International Unit**

33. Universities UK is the representative organisation for the UK’s universities. Founded in 1918, its mission is to be the definitive voice for all universities in the UK, providing high quality leadership and support to its members to promote a successful and diverse higher education sector. With 133 members and offices in London, Cardiff and Edinburgh, it promotes the strength and success of UK universities nationally and internationally.

34. The UK Higher Education International Unit (IU) represents all UK higher education institutions internationally and delivers a number of programmes and initiatives to support the development and sustainability of the UK HE sector’s influence and competitiveness in a global environment. It supports the sector’s engagement in European Union and Bologna Process policy debates. The IU is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, Scottish Funding Council, Department for Employment and Learning (Northern
Ireland), GuildHE, Universities UK, the Higher Education Academy and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. It is located at Universities UK.

September 2013
Only Two Cheers for Soft Power

Soft power is the postmodern version of propaganda and strategic communication. It has always existed in international politics, but has become more important over the last few decades.

Three reasons present themselves.

First, the post-Cold War faith in an “end of history” has lured us into believing that the world has become normatively harmonious – no more big ideological clashes, but growing convergence on what’s good and proper. In such a world (if it exists, of course), hard power is frowned upon, and differences of opinion and interests require “soft” strategies forging compromise. The logic is straightforward: if differences between major actors in global politics are minor (and manageable), coercion and the use of hard power are not just uncalled-for, but could even be counter-productive, and spoil the dream of the inevitable global normative convergence.

Second, since soft power deals with “attraction rather than coercion and payments”, societal players without military and financial means can play a role, if they are active and smart. Taken together with contemporary technological revolutions (Internet, satellite TV, social media) and the growing “complex interdependence” of economic, political and societal issues (see Nye’s earlier work, from the 1980s), soft power has become the favorite approach of all actors keen on influencing policy-agendas, public opinions, and (ultimately) policy decisions. In today’s media-drenched environment, the scarce resource is not information, but attention. Soft power is a cheap and smart way to get attention, often using inexpensive, new electronic media. This explains the rise of phenomena like celebrity diplomacy, place branding, public diplomacy, as well as Twitter/Facebook revolutions.

Third, the attention to soft power reflects the complacency and decadence of (mainly) Western analysts and policy-makers. Acquiring hard (military) power is not just costly, but has become hard to sell to a Western public that has grown detached from the military and no longer grasps geostrategic problems. Instead, the Western public has been raised to prefer altruistic foreign policy goals, often using a left-liberal agenda focused on humanitarian, global poverty and climate change issues. Rather than investing in costly defense projects and army units, funds are allocated to “international cultural cooperation”, and “inter-faith dialogue” at worst, and “public diplomacy” at best. By doing so, many Western states hope that Kishore Mahbubani will be right, and that we stand at the dawn of a new global governance system uniting regions, civilizations and great powers. The budding “great convergence”, this Singaporian diplomat claims, will be unlocked by the transformative
power of economic modernization and the emergence of a global middle class. For the West, believing in Mahbubani’s prophecies is a tremendous leap of fate, and a misguided triumph of imagination over intelligence. By privileging soft over hard power, the West takes the easy (and cheap) way out.

The background sketched above may give the impression that I underestimate the value of soft power as a mode of influence. This is not the case. Thinking strategically about soft power is essential for all responsible states. The US (with its US$ 800 bn. defense budget) developed a Quadrennial Diplomacy and Defense Review (QDDR, in 2010) to “elevate its civilian power”. The UK launched an equally sophisticated approach to public diplomacy in 2008. China as well as Russia now work on public diplomacy as well, acknowledging that image-building and networking are integral aspects of the foreign policies of all states, regardless of their size and capabilities.

The fundamental problem with the debate about soft power is therefore NOT that it might be frivolous in nature, or ambiguous in outcome (although these issues are also tricky – see below). Thinking strategically about soft power is a prerequisite of responsible statecraft. The key problems are of a different nature, and are reflected in the conceptual ambiguity of what power is, and how it can be used in contemporary international politics. To be frank, this vagueness can also be found in the House of Lords Select Committee’s Call For Evidence on this matter.

Let me clarify my concerns by pointing out three conceptual and practical problems inherent in most of the thinking about soft power, and its “execution” by (Western) policy-makers.

First, in the Background Brief to this Call for Evidence, reference is made to “the UK’s soft power resources”, the question of the “possession and deployment of soft power”, as well as the “use of soft power”. These questions follow from Nye’s assumption that soft power is agent-centered, assuming that it is based in resources, which can be used and wielded. This is a serious mistake. Clearly, the UK is the envy of the world in terms of the benefits it can draw from its rich and glorious history, its vibrant and attractive culture (from the English language, to music and the Premier League). Only the US does a bit better. So how can the UK Government use this “soft power”, how can it wield it, if the need arises? Here the answers are few and far between, and never convincing. The fallacy of soft power is that it prompts a similar vocabulary and mind-set as hard power (based on “resources”, which we can “use”, or even “deploy”). This is dangerously wrong, leading not only to confusion (which is forgivable), but to major foreign policy mistakes (always inexcusable). Soft power is based on the perceptions of others, and – perhaps counter-intuitively – not a resource we can use, but a relationship we can activate. It gives our Governments voice (attention), and it gives their actions (if we’re lucky) credibility, legitimacy and support.

Second, soft power is frequently juxtaposed to hard power. Robert Kagan’s famous “Venus vs. Mars” (i.e., Europe vs. US) metaphor comes to mind. This ostensible antagonism suggests
that using hard power would imply losing (or undermining) soft power. The UK, due to its robust strategic culture and remaining military capabilities, has not fully succumbed to this fallacy, in contrast to most of continental Europe. It is important to recognize that the use of hard power often contributes to (rather than detracts from) the credibility and overall impact of one’s policies. In most parts of the world (Balkans, Russia, Middle East), words are considered cheap, and the only real measure of one’s sincerity and determination is the use (or threat) of hard power. This is why the EU’s reputation in, for example, the Middle East is miserable (despite all its ostensible efforts to “wield” soft power), and why the US is respected (despite its track record of military intervention). This is also why the notion of smart power (suggested first by the CSIS, in 2012) is important, since it underscores the complex dynamic between hard and soft power.

Third, soft power reflects the societal model we have grown accustomed to in Europe, based on compromise and caring. The EU has been built upon the understanding that using (and even just having) hard power is wrong and dangerous since this could quickly awaken the ghosts of nationalism that have led to war. In a way, soft power is the EU’s main, if not only currency and unique selling point. The EU prides itself for its normative power, based on leading by example (e.g., on combating climate change). This choice is hardly surprising, since most international actors consider their own societal model superior to others, and hence tend to upload this model to the international system (often by hegemony). By privileging and even (in the case of some countries) rescinding hard power, Europe has intentionally made itself vulnerable to bullying and intimidation of hard-nosed competitors who still value the uses of hard power (China, Russia, etc.). The result is that most of Europe now only accepts as much external threat as it can deal with, and that security is redefined to fit the privileged soft power paradigm and its tool box of dialogue and diplomacy.

This leaves the usual, and ultimately crucial question of What to do? And particularly: How should the UK develop a strategic approach to soft power? Again, let me give three pointers.

First, the UK has a unique blend of soft and hard power, combined with an equally unique fusion of a European identity and cosmopolitan worldview. There is no other European country with these qualities and capabilities. It is up to the UK to develop a strategy of smart power, and imbuing the EU with a much-needed dose of Realpolitik and pragmatism. The UK has to buck the trend of leading by example and reifying multilateralism. Instead, the UK should shape a policy based on clearly defined values and interests. And it should ram home that it is willing to defend these values and interests, if need be by using hard power. By making this clear, the UK would not only educate its own populace that its freedom and prosperity requires vigilance and grit, but also send the message to outsiders that it considers these values (and interests) worth defending. The optimal mix of hard and soft power – brought together in a smart power strategy – will add to the UK’s global influence, and will be the most valuable contribution the UK can make to building a credible EU security culture.
Second, the UK should realize that whatever soft power strategy it adopts and implements, it will always make both friends and enemies. Understanding that soft power cannot be “wielded”, implies that it is created by relationships that are always idiosyncratic. The UK should appreciate that whatever policies it adopts, the reactions of outsiders will be colored by their experiences and prejudices. What is appreciated and loved in one part of the world, will raise suspicion and loathing in other parts. The effective “use” of soft power requires historical and sociological knowledge. It also assumes that policy-makers set priorities in a sophisticated way: which countries/actors/audiences do we want to get on our side, and what is the acceptable amount of blowback? In all soft power strategies, it will be important to assure that the essential “audience” to keep on one’s side should never be forgotten: the UK’s own citizens. This is all the more important since soft power strategies tend to be devised and implemented by professional “internationalists” (diplomats, NGOs), whose tendency to “go native” (and lose touch with national needs and attitudes) undermines a solid domestic base.

Third (and last), soft power needs to be operationalized. All too often, government agencies who claim responsibility (and hence a budget) for managing the country’s soft power (usually under the lofty heading of “international cooperation”), are free to do as they please. Since soft power cannot be measured, evaluation is equally hard. The focus should therefore be on two aspects: public diplomacy and place (or nation) branding. These are two established practices with a growing body of academic knowledge. The rest of the UK’s soft power base should be developed by the country’s vibrant society. The money saved should be spent on developing the hard power resources that are now the victim of austerity measures.

27 September 2013
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The UK possesses a unique cultural history that greatly enhances our performance and presence on the global stage; however we can do more to take advantage of our national characteristics to improve our soft power and influence capacity by paying closer attention to the cultures of other nations. Our ability to work cross-culturally is limited at best and damaging at worst. Failure to move with current trends capitalizing on our wealth of past experiences means that we are in danger of being left behind and of being considered ignorant of the importance of cultures beyond our own horizons. Advances in both the UK education system and the defence and security industries could yield enormous benefits in the projection of UK soft power, not only in terms of additional trade and commerce for the UK, but also for the perceptions of our nation as a figure in the International Community.

INTRODUCTION

2. Victus was formed in 2012 to offer language and cultural intelligence capability to both public and private sector companies, and also to individuals involved in international trade and business. Our services are built around the work of our highly trained language and cultural intelligence specialists who are able to deploy in all manner of working environments around the world, in order to assist our clients with their liaison and cultural discourse requirements and to help them establish links with international counterparts that will lead to further opportunities. By providing an enhanced level of cultural intelligence across international boundaries, we are able to support the working cultural dynamic in a manner that is of mutual benefit to both our clients and their partners overseas. Victus is currently involved in projects with government agencies, private and commercial clients, charities and NGOs.

3. We believe that our business aims and ethos correlate closely with the agenda of the House of Lords Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK’s influence, and we welcome the opportunity to provide evidence to the House.

4. This submission is offered for consideration by the Managing Director of Victus, Benjamin Clayson and the Director of Research, Andrew Gregory. Our evidence demonstrates our position and opinions on soft power and influence in their broadest terms and specifically considers the impact of Cultural Intelligence on both UK defence and security, and education.

THE VALUE OF SOFT POWER AND INFLUENCE

5. Despite the high level of value attributed to soft power and influence as a facet of international discourse, many UK institutions have a considerable shortage of corporate cultural intelligence and a chronic lack of understanding of the practical
systems and methods that can be incorporated into their operations in order to increase their soft power and influence quotient.

6. One way in which the government can help to consolidate and develop the soft power and cultural appeal that the UK already possesses, is by facilitating and promoting an enhanced interest in other, diverse cultures from around the world. It is not enough for foreign nationals to know that we are worth cooperating with simply because of our values and assets, we must be equally interested in and aware of the cultures of the other peoples with whom we wish to engage. In the first of the Committee’s oral hearings Hugh Elliot stated that Nye’s definition of soft power and influence is essentially the work of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office writ large. Whilst we encourage this wholeheartedly as a mantra for the FCO, we also believe that if the UK is to capitalise fully on its soft power assets it must not unfairly place the majority of the required workload on the shoulders of one government department. As Rory Stewart MP explained to the Conservative Middle East Council, with a budget of only £2 billion spread across the resources of every British embassy around the globe, the FCO faces a monumental task in providing all the services currently required of it, and clearly any further demands must attract the appropriate levels of additional funding in order to be successful.

7. The defining characteristics of soft power and influence, that are both difficult to quantify and informed by the very situation they are designed to affect, mean that it is often easier to overlook these troublesome attributes rather than taking the time to examine them more thoroughly. As a consequence, we believe that this leads to situations wherein the value of soft power is overlooked and as a consequence opportunities for enhanced understanding and cooperation are missed. Perhaps the greatest value of paying closer attention to the hopes and desires and cultural legacies of other nations lies in the development of a reputation as a nation that listens before it acts. In terms of enhancing UK credibility in all areas of global trade and commerce, few things could have such a significant effect in return for such a seemingly small investment.

IMPROVING PROJECTIONS OF UK SOFT POWER

8. The UK already invests significantly in the development of these capabilities, and both individuals and corporate bodies are keen to investigate any readily accessible thesis that may assist them in achieving their goals in relation to intercultural communications.

9. Individuals tasked with working on issues of soft-power and influence including Linguists, Cultural Advisors and media representatives to name but a few, need to be afforded the appropriate levels of professional trust and acumen that will allow them to have maximum effect within their area of work. There is a tendency to regard soft power and influence as intrinsically vague and difficult to quantify, and as a consequence of the problems in pigeon-holing influence due to the effects being perceived rather than directly observed, the value of work in these areas is often regarded by others as questionable.

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209 Evidence Session No.1, 10 June 2013.
210 CMEC Policy Forum, 14 March 2012.
10. The efforts of subject matter experts (SMEs) in soft power, influence and language and cultural intelligence, need to be relied upon and embraced in order to be effective. This can be affected by the personal skillset of the individual involved as much as the nature of their task, however we believe that a lack of appreciation and understanding of the value of the work of experts in this field is one of the defining and limiting characteristics of current UK international policy and business.

11. In order to improve UK projections of soft power we must encourage the development of careers that incorporate the use of soft power and influence, both within the diplomatic service and also externally. Greater intrinsic value must be attributed to the field in the psyches of our nation’s people, with an increased awareness of the world beyond our borders and a more outwardly-looking national attitude.

DEFENCE AND SECURITY AND SOFT POWER

12. When looking at the work of HM Armed Forces in contemporary operational environments, it is increasingly the case that hard power alone in the form of physical force and intervention does not lead to the resolution of conflict. Though it is an oversimplification to state that more soft power would have translated into greater success in the recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, one can’t help believing that a soft or ‘smart’ power approach would have at least deflected some of the criticisms levelled at the UK and our coalition partners of being culturally ignorant. The UK government in common with many others around the world has recognised that gaining ‘hearts and minds’ is of fundamental importance on the modern battlefield. However the phrase has become hackneyed and over used to such an extent that it is often rendered meaningless and is regarded by many as being a weaker, more emotional facet of operations. Lip service is paid to a concept that should form a core element of all levels of planning and operations.

13. When preparation for the deployment of troops into a counterinsurgency environment is heavily biased towards identifying and destroying an enemy who dress, speak and live differently to ourselves, it is hardly surprising that a soldier will regard all local nationals as the same potential threat. In a counterinsurgency theatre, influence takes primacy over direct action. Yet current UK defence spending directs a negligible proportion towards generating language and cultural intelligence capability, and supporting media and psychological operations.

14. Looking specifically at the UK military approach to using language assets to improve soft power capabilities in Iraq and Afghanistan; following the end of operation TELIC in Iraq in May 2009, HM Forces cut almost all investment in the maintenance and generation of Arabic language capability. As a consequence, many service personnel who had invested years of their careers in developing what they believed was a highly regarded specialist skill that would greatly increase their operational effectiveness, were returned to their units to work in roles that neither capitalised on their experiences and training nor gave them the opportunity to maintain their skills in preparation for any future operations in Arabic speaking countries. As an example, one bi-lingual, native Arabic speaker who had been involved in intelligence operations in Iraq in 2008 was returned to his service to take up a junior position as a store man.
15. A 2013 study conducted by DOLSU (Defence Operational Language Support Unit) concluded that emergency measures must be implemented in order to meet the current defence requirement for Arabic linguists. This is hardly surprising given the short-sightedness of previous policy and the treatment of key language assets. Whilst no military can be expected to invest in a speculative, permanent, full-time language capability generation programme in preparation for a hypothetical situation in multiple operational environments, it may be reasonable to suggest that a language as important to UK foreign policy as Arabic historically has been, should be considered an enduring priority.

16. In 2010 the Army established the DCSU (Defence Cultural Specialist Unit) in an attempt to create a conduit for senior commanders in Afghanistan to receive and incorporate language and cultural intelligence into their operational planning. Whilst this is clearly a move in the right direction, the decision to restrict the opportunities to serve with DCSU to personnel holding rank as Senior Non-Commissioned Officers and above creates a situation wherein the valuable insights offered by DCSU personnel will be heard and noticed only at a command level. What this fails to provide is an approach that incorporates bottom-up development of institutional cultural intelligence that relies on and encourages all levels of seniority, from the most junior soldier upwards, to engage with local nationals.

17. The net effect of increased cultural awareness and appreciation of the value of soft power and influence in the military context is of enormous benefit as an addition to traditional military hard power. In combination, and with sensitivity to the specific requirements of the operation or campaign, a balance can be struck that has proved throughout history to be the most effective means to progress beyond the immediate situation when guided by a well-informed grand strategy. The UK military continues to operate in extremely difficult circumstances around the world and must be applauded for what it achieves. It is because of their willingness to learn, adaptability and not least the levels of exposure that HM Forces receive in front of international partners, that make this one of the most critical areas in which to invest in the development of cultural intelligence for the benefit of UK soft power and influence.

ENCOURAGING SOFT POWER AND INFLUENCE THROUGH EDUCATION

18. Through the active promotion and incorporation of support and influence work and taking practical steps to encourage the development of individual and corporate cultural intelligence throughout the UK, we can take quantifiable, practical steps towards improving our soft power capability.

19. Education is critical to this process. It is essential that efforts are made to alter the perceptions of intercultural discourse and integration as well-meaning and naïve, towards an appreciation of the power of soft power. The UK should take a progressive approach that openly demonstrates an eagerness to understand and embrace other cultural ideologies and practices, that no longer relies on romanticised stereotypes that rely too heavily on the appeal of the days of the empire, and that acknowledges without shame or fear, that the position of our country on the world stage has changed.

20. Soft Power germinates in the many small interactions that take place between individuals hundreds of times over in a single day rather than the large symbolic
interactions between national institutions. The interactions of tourists and locals often do more to effect perceptions of a culture than meetings between diplomats. We believe that not only does increased knowledge and understanding of other cultures assist the UK as a nation, but also the individual through increased job prospects and better appreciation of their standing in the global community.

21. The teaching of Religious Education and Citizenship Education in schools are excellent vehicles to foster an understanding of the importance of countries and cultures. Too often these subjects are given minimum classroom time, and as a consequence many young people leave education with little or no interest in cultures other than their own. In common with the military example, these are seen as soft rather than hard subjects and as a consequence are often overlooked or side-lined.

22. The decision not to include RE within the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects has proven disastrous for the subject in many schools and is something that could very easily be rectified by classifying it as a humanities subject alongside Geography and History. We do however commend the policy ensuring the continuation of Citizenship Education as part of the National Curriculum.

23. The study of languages has been in steady decline since the decision was taken to change the statutory requirement for a language to be studied until the age of 16. The requirement for teenagers to take a language at GCSE was ended by the last Labour government in 2004 which led to a significant decrease in the numbers of students studying languages. An uptake in those opting to study languages at age 14 has been seen through the introduction of the EBacc measure; however this is still not enough to ensure that the UK has a ready supply of individuals with the necessary language skills to promote our national interests successfully abroad in international markets.

24. It is essential that as well as promoting the value of learning about other cultures and developing language skills at secondary level, we encourage a general rise in the level of cultural intelligence across those leaving our education system. Cultural intelligence is not culture specific but is rather a way of thinking that encourages interest in others, and a manner of regarding the world that promotes cooperation and integration without losing one’s own culture. Improving cultural intelligence at an individual level has benefits for both the individual and ultimately for the UK.

CONCLUSIONS

25. In conclusion, the UK is in a very fortunate position due to our history and our domestic cultural and ethnic diversity. We must capitalise on this if we are to make the most of our future in the International Community and the global marketplace. In light of the points discussed in this submission and the continuing requirement for development of UK influence capability, we respectfully offer the following recommendations to the House:

- Incentives should be given for public servants to specialise within cultural or linguistic fields in order that they may make careers through gaining and developing advanced knowledge of other cultures. This proposal may be unpalatable during a period of
austerity and continued spending cuts, however an investment in the enduring international trade capability of the UK may warrant a degree of protection from this.

- Government should improve the recruitment and retention of language and cultural specialists in the Armed Forces by implementing practical measures such as career and financial benefits. These cannot be false promises and must reward service personnel for their commitments to this field.

- Religious Education should form part of any English Baccalaureate measures in UK Secondary schools. This will raise the status of the subject, encourage more students to study it at GCSE level and thereby raise the quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 which would impact upon all students.

- Government should invest in the teaching of Cultural Intelligence in educational institutions as a means of ensuring future generations are better prepared for a world of greater international connectedness and to improve their individual standing as ambassadors for the UK.

September 2013
VisitBritain – Written evidence

About VisitBritain

VisitBritain is the strategic body for inbound tourism. A non-departmental public body, funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, it is responsible for promoting Britain worldwide and developing its visitor economy.

VisitBritain has been directed by Government to run a £100 million marketing programme across a four year period (2010/11-2014/15). VisitBritain also plays a unique role in the cross-Government global GREAT campaign by promoting Britain direct to consumers. Together these campaigns aim to attract 4.6 million additional visitors, spending £2.6 billion, sustaining jobs and supporting economic growth across the UK.

Tourism is a massive invisible export, earning £18bn in foreign exchange for the UK. Independent analysis shows that, with the right marketing and policy, Britain could attract 40 million visitors a year by 2020 (a 9 million increase on today). This would deliver £8.7 billion in additional spend by overseas visitors annually (at today’s prices) and support an additional 200,000 additional jobs across the UK. VisitBritain has developed a clear strategy to deliver this ambition.

In this response tourism refers to all inbound travel to Britain encompassing people visiting Britain for a holiday, for business, short term study or to visit friends and family.

Summary of VisitBritain’s Response

1. Tourism is one of the UK’s strongest assets for creating soft power and turning it into hard economic benefit.

2. As digital advances and globalisation have made soft power more important, so too has tourism’s ability to contribute to soft power.

3. As the national tourism agency and strategic body for inbound tourism, VisitBritain is one of the UK’s most important soft power instruments. VisitBritain also works closely with other soft power instruments including cultural institutions such as the Royal Shakespeare Company and British Museum, the English Premier League and BBC.

4. Government has an important role in supporting soft power through creating and funding instruments of soft power and creating the environment and conditions within which soft power can be operated.

5. In spite of its size, the UK remains a world leader in soft power, thanks largely to its competitive tourism industry, successes like the Olympics, strong education sector and institutions with global renown such as the BBC, British Museum and English Premier League. As other nations turn their focus to soft power we need to continue to raise our game to ensure that we remain a leader in the sphere.
The meaning and importance of soft power

What is your understanding of ‘soft power’?

1.0 If power is the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes you want, soft power is the ability to get what you want through attraction, rather than through coercion or payment (‘hard’ power). Simply put, it is the ability to achieve your objectives through winning hearts and minds, rather than through fear or money.

1.1 ‘Soft’ can imply ‘less effective’ and ‘less important’ but well deployed, soft power is a potent force in international relations and can prevent other, more costly, forms of intervention. It is most effective in building trust and relationships, and can be valuable in creating or maintaining ties between countries in periods when diplomatic relations are strained. At a time when Sino-UK relations at government level for example have been cool, VisitBritain has increased its promotional effort and visits from China to the UK have grown significantly, preserving and building the relationship.

1.2 Our soft power assets are significant in developed countries such as Germany and the USA, but soft power is also valuable in countries in which our historic, cultural and diplomatic ties are less developed and knowledge of Britain is weaker. Broadly speaking these are emerging powers, countries like South Korea, Mexico and Indonesia whose economies are growing fast.

1.3 In addition, it is clear that sustainable economic growth in the UK will be export led, and soft power helps create the conditions for and facilitates international trade. Soft power is therefore an important asset in the context of the current economic recession.

1.4 Soft power tends to be exercised through connections outside of government; indeed Government-sponsored influencing can be treated with suspicion or dismissed as propaganda such as individuals talking through social media. The rapid increase in the use of social media across the globe – Facebook has over 1.15 billion active monthly users – has meant that the reach and potency of soft power has grown.

What does it mean for the work that you do?

2.0 VisitBritain is the strategic body for inbound tourism. A non-departmental public body, funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, it is responsible for promoting Britain worldwide and developing its visitor economy.

2.1 Tourism is one of Britain’s strongest sectors for creating soft power, as by definition it showcases the most attractive side of the UK and its people. Britain’s tourism offer and marketing is an integral part of its image building and brand, which in turn influences not just whether people come for a holiday, but whether they choose to trade with and invest in British companies or relocate their businesses here.

2.2 Personal experience of a country has a profound and lasting influence on people’s views about that country, and typically increases their interest, understanding and empathy for that country’s people and values. Visitors to Britain return home with far more than a passport stamp and some holiday snaps. They return with an enhanced knowledge and appreciation of Britain and this carries through to other spheres of life – including politics and business.
Research shows that people who have visited Britain are more positive than those who have not.

2.3 Visitors also connect with friends and family while they are here through sites like Flickr which allows them to share photos and Facebook where visitors can ‘check in’ to attractions, hotels and restaurants – providing instant and direct feedback and recommendations. It is important for us to operate in this sphere and we have a strong presence across all the major social media sites. We also recently launched an inspirational image-based website ‘Love Wall’ which allows users to build and share their own travel itinerary.

2.4 While this long term tourism impact is difficult to quantify, comparing the views of those who have visited Britain collated through the Nations Brand Index with those who have not gives some indication of this soft power effect. As Figure 1 demonstrates, not only are those who have visited the UK more likely to be willing to live and work in the UK, think of it as a good place to study and do business but they are more positive about other key export, governance and cultural attributes. They are more likely to think of the UK as a country that cares about equality in society, that makes a major contribution to innovation in science and technology and that behaves responsibly in the areas of international peace and security.

Source: Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index, 2012 Report

2.5 There is also a wider ‘halo’ effect, as visitors to Britain also act as ambassadors for the UK, telling their family, friends and colleagues about their visit and influencing their perceptions. This first takes place while they are in Britain through social media and the internet and is reinforced when they return home.

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211 The Nations Brand Index (NBI) is an annual independent online survey, run by GfK in partnership with Simon Anholt, looking at the views of people in 20 countries around the world about 50 nations. The survey is carried out annually, enabling long term changes to be tracked, and provides a stable measure of the power and appeal of each country’s ‘brand image’ by examining six dimensions of national competence: Exports, Governance, Culture, People, Tourism and Immigration and Investment. Each year, approximately 20,000 adults ages 18 and up are interviewed.
VisitBritain – Written evidence

Figure 2: Tourism’s contribution to the UK’s soft power

- **Exposure**: Exposed to most attractive side of the UK
- **Awareness**: Britain top of mind
- **Perceptions**: Perceptions of Britain refreshed and positive perceptions reinforced

- **Increased familiarity**: Refreshed perceptions of Britain and increased knowledge
- **Increased appreciation**: More likely to see issues from Britain’s perspective. Increased understanding and interest in UK values and society
- **Business impact**: Increased knowledge and understanding business opportunities in the UK, leading to increased propensity to trade and do business with the UK.

Halo Effect: Perception of Britain influenced by the experience of others who have visited

2.6 Tourism directly translates soft power into hard economic benefit:

- Tourism is a significant export. Overseas visitors spent a record £18.7 billion in the UK in 2012, contributing £3.2 billion to the nation’s coffers directly in taxation.
- Tourism is a key economic sector which is delivering growth and employment. It contributes £115 billion to UK GDP and employs 2.6 million people; 9% of the UK economy on both measures. 44% of those employed in tourism are under the age of thirty.
- Independent analysis by Oxford Economics shows that by 2020, with the right marketing actions and tourism policy, Britain could reasonably expect to attract 40 million overseas visitors a year. Critically, this could deliver £8.7 billion additional foreign exchange earnings at today’s prices and support more than 200,000 additional jobs.

In this digitally connected world, is soft power becoming more important? If so, why, and will this trend continue?

3.0 Digital advances, particularly the exponential rise in mobile technology and social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, have extended the reach of soft power as they provide a means of direct and instant peer to peer communication across different nation states. There is every reason to suppose that mobile technology and digital innovation will continue, and that an ever greater proportion of the global population will become digitally connected.

3.1 This is reflected in our use of digital media to reach potential visitors, which is at the centre of our international marketing. We are a leading tourist board in social and digital media and have merged with No 10’s suite of pages ‘This is GREAT Britain’. We now have 2.2 million highly-engaged Facebook followers in China: over 245,000

VisitBritain TV: 20 million views a year **VisitBritain.com**: 800,000 views per month
and Weibo fans and have been acclaimed as one of the most influential tourist board on Twitter. We also use e-CRM to communicate with nearly 2 million potential visitors and our international reach has been strengthened by our global partnership with Yahoo!, one of the world’s most visited homepages.

3.2 Digital advances however must be seen against a backdrop of broader advances in transportation, telecommunications and infrastructure which have accelerated the process of international integration and interdependence between nations. In eroding the power of governments, this globalisation has increased the importance of soft power.

3.3 Contact between nations has historically been elite-to-elite (through ambassadors and royal courts), became open to many through cinema and broadcasting in the 20th century and has now entered a phase of people to people, through the internet and travel.

3.4 Traditionally the preserve of elites, open skies agreements, low cost air travel, visa waivers and economic growth have been major drivers of tourism growth. Concurrently, the growth of the middle classes globally has increased aspiration to travel. Initially travel is inter-regional but as markets mature visitors become more adventurous, travelling further and more frequently. Last year the absolute number of global international tourists passed the 1 billion mark. In 1964 when the International Passenger Survey began to measure the number of visitors coming to Britain, the UK welcomed 3.3 million overseas visits: in 2012 it welcomed 31 million.

3.5 Though Joseph Nye first coined the phrase ‘soft power’ in 1990, soft power has long formed a part of nation states’ diplomatic arsenal. Digital advances and globalisation have however made soft power more important, just as tourism’s ability to contribute to soft power grown.

The extent and use of the UK’s soft power resources

What are the most important soft power assets that the UK possesses? Can we put a value on the UK’s soft power resources?

4.0 Tourism is one of the UK’s strongest soft power assets. As the national tourism agency and strategic body for inbound tourism, VisitBritain is one of the UK’s most important soft power instruments. We conduct robust evaluation to gauge the economic contribution of our work to UK plc. In the Financial Year 2011/12:

- The financial value of our work overseas was £503.2 million, against a target of £375 million.
- Our work with commercial partners resulted in bookings worth an additional £89 million.
- Our support of the British trade resulted in £9.9 million export earnings.
- Our PR activities generated more than 28,000 individual pieces of TV, radio, print and online coverage, with the advertising value equivalent of £3.7 billion.

4.1 Figures for the 2012/13 financial year will be available in October 2013.
4.2 Non-tourism brands and partners can play an active role in broadening and deepening interest in and recognition of Britain as a destination. Perceptions of a nation’s image and brand are not just influenced by marketing campaigns, but by the products, places and activities associated with that country. Partnership is therefore central to our approach and we work closely with a number of other soft power actors:

GREAT Campaign

4.3 We are a key player in the cross-Government GREAT campaign which aims to highlight why Britain is a GREAT place to visit, and in which to study, do business and invest. In bringing together all the government bodies that operate overseas under a common brand, including the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, UK Trade & Investment and the British Council, GREAT provides a strong platform to leverage Britain’s soft power assets.

4.4 We understand what motivates people to travel to Britain and what activities they enjoy while here, and have used this to develop tourism pillars which we use across our markets. Our strengths include our rich heritage and culture, while scenic beauty and welcome are relative weakness.

4.5 Our GREAT tourism campaign promotes Britain directly to consumers through seven broad themes, namely culture, heritage, countryside, music, sport, shopping and food. It directly showcases some of Britain’s soft power assets such as the British Museum.

English Premier League

4.6 The Premier League is much more than the UK’s most popular sporting competition - it’s a powerful economic agent which makes an important contribution to Britain’s soft power. Matches are shown in 212 territories and the league has a global audience of 4.8 billion. Interest in football and in the Premier League is growing fastest in markets where our economic interests are growing fastest. A third of residents in China say they have a strong interest in the Premier League and this is even higher in emerging markets like Malaysia (42%) and Indonesia (51%). People around the world do not just watch Premiership football - 900,000 fans come to Britain annually to experience a game first-hand in the home of football, contributing £706 million to UK plc. On average each fan spends nearly £800 per visit, £200 more than the average overseas visitor.

4.7 We have long recognised football’s potential to boost inbound tourism and have worked with the Premier League to convert the global interest into a desire to travel to Britain since 2008. Last season alone we generated £4.5 million worth of football themed coverage, reaching over 70 million people across the world, and secured interviews with five top overseas players in which they shared their experiences of living and playing football in Britain. These included an interview with Manchester United’s Shinji Kagawa which has already been viewed 1.5 million times. In light of this success, we have renewed our
p partnership with the Premier League for another three seasons and will soon launch a new Football is GREAT campaign.

**BBC**

4.8 The BBC is a beacon of soft power. BBC Worldwide has an audience of 100 million, is a trusted source of news and information and communicates British culture and values across the world. We partnered with the BBC international i-player in 2011 and they showed our Britain You’re Invited advert around the world. More recently, we worked with the BBC Motion Gallery to produce 40 short films covering top attractions and key Olympic sites such as Much Wenlock and Lee Valley that broadcasters could use free of charge (Australian Channel Foxtel aired every single short film).

**Monarchy**

4.9 Britain’s monarchy is an important part of its history and identity. The world’s media was won-over when Prince William married Catherine Middleton in 2011 and media interest in the royal couple, particularly in the US, has remained strong since. Our marketing seeks to leverage this coverage, showcasing Britain’s royal heritage, sites with royal connections across Britain and, since the birth of Prince George, Britain’s family friendly offer.

**Olympic Legacy**

4.10 Monocle magazine’s annual soft power survey placed Britain in the top spot for the first time in 2012, thanks to the Olympics and its opening ceremony.

4.11 Hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games provided an unprecedented opportunity to Britain centre stage, refresh out-dated perceptions and showcase the whole country as an attractive place to visit, country that welcomes international visitors. We did a first class job leveraging the Games which boosted perceptions of Britain. We developed and are now implementing a clear strategy to convert international interest into long term economic benefit for tourism businesses across the UK and the exchequer. Our ambition is to attract 40 million visits by 2020. This year (January-July 2013) the volume of visits has increased by 4% and value of visits by 13%.

**Are the Government doing enough to help the UK maximize the extent of, and benefit gained from, its soft power? What more – or less – should the Government do to encourage the generation and use of soft power?**

5.0 There is broad consensus that soft power is most potent when exercised independently of government. It is argued that direct government control often invites suspicion and hostility and soft power activity is quickly undermined if it comes across as lacking in authenticity or as government propaganda. While it is imperative that government maintain the lightest possible footprint, it does have an important role in supporting soft power:
Creating and funding instruments of soft power

5.1 Government has an important role in creating and funding instruments of soft power, although the accepted wisdom is that these are most effective if arm’s length. Government can also help bring together key players, agree key audiences and messages.

5.2 The GREAT campaign is a good example of how this can work in practice. It is funded and is co-ordinated by central government to capitalise on Britain’s showcasing during 2012 and deliver the Olympic legacy but delivered by individual government departments and arm’s length bodies. Evaluation shows that it has been effective in highlighting why Britain is a GREAT place to visit, and in which to study, do business and invest.

5.3 We estimate that 90 million people had an opportunity to see the first wave of our high impact advertising. Evaluation by Ipsos MORI suggests that strong intention to visit Britain has increased both within three years and within a year. Those who recall the tourism image campaign are more than twice as likely to strongly intend to visit in the next three years or year than those who do not recall it, and four times as likely to say they have already booked a future trip to Britain.

5.4 Our GREAT tourism activity has generated visits worth £200.25 million, but our core activities also deliver a strong return for Government investment. Between April 2011 and March 2013 we directly contributed £900 million to the UK economy (in spending by overseas visitors) through our four year £100 million marketing programme. This is a return on investment of 18 to 1. In addition, we successfully attracted £24 million in match funding from the private sector – doubling the Government’s investment in international marketing.

5.5 While GREAT funding enabled us to harness the Olympic Games full tourism potential by running our largest ever marketing campaign, tourism is fiercely competitive and we have to work hard to keep up with better resourced competitors.

5.6 To change perceptions of a country requires sustained effort, as successful branding campaigns like Incredible India and 100% Pure New Zealand demonstrate. The scale of the global coverage of the Olympics created a step-change in the way people overseas view Britain. Perhaps unsurprisingly given Team GB’s performance, the Nations Brand Index showed that perceptions of British sport improved. So too however did perceptions of Britain’s culture, natural scenic beauty and ‘overall brand’, indicating that Games coverage influenced perceptions of Britain more widely. Perhaps most importantly, perceptions of the welcome improved – for the first time Britain was in the top 10 destinations for welcome. Welcome is a key indicator for tourism – visitors who feel welcome in a destination are much more likely to recommend it.

5.7 To really entrench and build on this positioning requires a sustained campaign and sustained investment rather than the uncertainty of an annual funding cycle.

5.8 Competitors like Tourism Australia and Brand USA are extremely well resourced. Tourism Australia for example currently spends AU$13 million (£8.5 million) per year in China alone, which supports an image campaign with TV and print advertising, as well as promotional films on the metro and in office buildings. Australia has also recently signed a three-year marketing deal with China Eastern Airlines worth almost AU$9 million (£6
VisitBritain – Written evidence

...million), as well as a memorandum of understanding with China Union Pay. In comparison, VisitBritain's budget for China in 2013/14 is £2.5 million.

Creating the environment and conditions within which soft power can be operated

5.9 While ensuring that soft power instruments have sufficient resource is important, so too is securing a conducive policy environment.

5.10 Tourism Economics has modelled future inbound demand for British tourism under a number of different scenarios. The first assumes that the policy environment becomes more favourable. The second assumes that no policy changes are made. Figure 3 illustrates the extent of the influence that policy decisions exert on visitor spend.

5.11 Total visitor spend is forecast to rise to nearly £43 billion by 2030 should policy remain the same (2012 price). If policy improvements are implemented, this could rise to over £55 billion. This is over £12 billion additional spending, with a resultant potential for more than 315,000 additional jobs, right across the UK.

5.12 The two most important policy areas for inbound tourism are visas and aviation:

- The majority of overseas visitors to the UK do not need a visa but with around 1.7 million visit visas issued each year it is important to have a high quality visa service enabling legitimate travellers to come to the UK. Almost £1 in every £6 spent in Britain by overseas residents is from those who require a visa to visit.
- Aviation is an essential enabler for inbound tourism to Britain: 73% of visitors to the UK come by air. Capacity at the UK's airports, particularly in the South East, is constrained and new airport capacity is needed to accommodate tourism growth and ensure that Britain remains a competitive destination for airlines and their passengers.
Learning from Others

Are other countries, or non-state actors, performing better than the UK in maximising the extent of, and their benefits from, their soft power resources?

6.0 In spite of its size, the UK remains a world leader in soft power, thanks largely to its competitive tourism industry, successes like the Olympics, strong education sector and institutions with global renown such as the BBC, British Museum and English Premier League. Our position is not guaranteed, and we will lose our standing in the world unless we can compete with the established and emerging soft power superpowers.

6.1 China is investing heavily in soft power instruments and has enjoyed some success, albeit this is undermined by overt government involvement. China has created some 200 Confucius Institutes around the world to teach its language and culture and the number of foreign tourists visiting mainland China has also increased dramatically to 57.6 million in 2012, making it the world’s third most visited country.

6.2 Soft power has been employed more successfully in South Korea. Since the late 90s a new wave of South Korean hallyu culture, exported through TV dramas such as Jumong and K-pop hits, has transformed the country’s standing in Asia to such an extent that the foreign

William Hague, Foreign Secretary

Britain remains a modern day cultural superpower. Staying competitive in ‘soft power’ for decades to come means nurturing these assets and valuing them as much as military, economic and diplomatic advantages.
ministry talks of *hallyu* diplomacy. The Korean Tourism Organisation supports *hallyu* diplomacy through its Buzz Korea campaign. Pop star Psy is working with the organisation through short videos about South Korean culture. According to the New Yorker: “*Hallyu has erased South Korea’s regional reputation as a brutish emerging industrial nation where everything smelled of garlic and kimchi, and replaced it with images of prosperous cosmopolitan life*”.

6.3 Another way to exert soft power is to give something positive to the world. Norway for instance, a small (but wealth country) awards Nobel prizes every year, and this altruism and recognition of excellence in human endeavour is widely acknowledged and appreciated. Norway is seen and sought after as a nation of conflict resolution and trusted as a broker of conflicts, punching above its weight, due to its exercise of soft power.

6.4 Foreign ministeries in developed and developing nations alike increasingly understand the value of cultural exports and diplomatic litheness as military might and financial clout are no longer considered sufficient to maintain influence. It is cliché but nonetheless true that Britain is not simply competing against the traditional industrial economies of Europe and

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>The Soft Power Competitive Landscape</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Large countries with established soft power instruments</strong> – Countries like the UK, France, Japan and Spain have a long history of using soft power and have established institutions and structures. As a general rule, their budgets for soft power instruments are under pressure, if not falling.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Large countries with fast emerging soft power profiles</strong> – This group consists of the BRIC countries and fast growing economies like South Korea and Taiwan. These are nations that are expanding their cultural relations activities, opening new institutions around the world and increasing budgets. The proliferation of Confucius institutes (China) and Korean Tourist Organisation’s use of rapper Psy (of Gangnam Style fame) in their advertising serve as good examples. The countries in this category see soft power as an important aspect of making their presence felt on the world stage and helping people understand who they are.</td>
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<td><strong>Smaller countries with established soft power presence</strong> – This group is composed of smaller nations such as Norway with clear well-established soft power instruments and clear identity.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Smaller countries with emerging soft power resources</strong> – By far the majority, these countries struggle to make their mark on global consciousness.</td>
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North America or the BRIC powerhouses for soft power, but countries such as Indonesia, Vietnam, Turkey, Mexico and South Korea.

6.5 For no soft power vector is this truer than for tourism. The marketplace for global tourism is getting tougher. Absolute numbers of international visits passed the 1 billion mark in 2012, but Britain’s global position has been in decline. The growth in global travel over the last two decades means that Britain is competing against more destinations, for a larger number of potential visitors.
6.6 We face more and better resourced competitors who are aligning their marketing and policy. We have developed in-depth competitor profiles for each of the most successful tourist boards to identify best practice and closely monitor their activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country / Tourist Board</th>
<th>Overall budget 2011/12</th>
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<tr>
<td>UK / VisitBritain</td>
<td>£51.5m (Including £14m private funding)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia / Tourism Australia</td>
<td>£92.6m</td>
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<tr>
<td>France / Atout France Switzerland / Schweiz Tourismus</td>
<td>£65.6m (Including £30m raised from subscriptions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canada / Canadian Tourism Commission</td>
<td>£63.2m</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA / Brand USA</td>
<td>£173.6m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany / Deutsche Zentrale fur Tourismus</td>
<td>£31.1m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand / New Zealand Tourism</td>
<td>£60.8m</td>
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Further Information:

Thank you for taking our comments into consideration. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss any points raised in our response further with the Select Committee.

September 2013
**Walpole British Luxury – Written evidence**

How important is a country’s soft power? What evidence is there that soft power makes a difference?

Walpole believes that soft power is very important. Our view is it is just as real as the hard variety. Long term, it can be more effective – and is almost completely benign and positive in its impact (not something that can be said about hard power). Of course the problem is that this is hard to prove, the term is used loosely and its definition often elusive.

The reason for this unequivocal stance is that Walpole looks at Soft Power through the lens of the European Luxury Industry and our business model. And in this context we are quite certain that it benefits our sector.

The Luxury market has delivered double-digit growth year on year since 2008 and, despite some uncertainties expects to see continued healthy growth in both sales and margins. The global industry is dominated by European brands and this looks set to continue in the medium term. Despite much talk, very few luxury brands have emerged from fast-growing markets such as China or even the more mature markets such as North America. Europe remains the heartland for luxury. Remarkable given how much the world has changed and how most advantages have been moving eastwards.

The main reason for this is that most affluent consumers still prefer European luxury brands rather than the home-grown variety. Or to put it another way they are only prepared to pay luxury prices for products, which are backed up by brands, which deliver reassurance on certain key criteria.

These include what can be loosely called cultural aspects, which European brands luckily have in abundance. By cultural we mean the hard-to-define but critical components of a brand’s reputation that is fed by a national reputation for certain craft skills often related to a country, region or city (for example, leather-working in Florence) or quality (English vegetable-tanned bridle leather). This is often reinforced by the heritage or length of time that that skill has been practised in that region. However while these values are critical in establishing the ‘Respect’ that is necessary to sustain success, luxury brands also require sufficient ‘Love’ from consumers, by which we mean our products have to continue to excite and be seen as fresh, relevant and, above all, stylish. This requires high levels of ongoing creativity.

In the context of luxury, creativity consists of two critical components: a) design skills and b) marketing. The former to keep the products exciting and relevant. The latter to keep telling the brand story in a way that engages consumers of different nationalities and generations on an ongoing basis. In most cases this brand story, includes to a greater or lesser extent certain national characteristics. Thus this sort of creativity, which could be described, as applied or commercial creativity is also a very important soft power asset. Luckily it is also something the UK has in abundance (see more on this below). Indeed many of our most successful British luxury brands are new (Jimmy Choo, Anya Hindmarch, Mulberry) which rely not on heritage but on design and marketing creativity as well as clever use of a somewhat quirky British identity.

Taken together these cultural and creative aspects of national and brand reputation are significant soft power assets. They have long been important to the success of the luxury industry, even if it is only recently that they might be described as Soft Power.
Accordingly Walpole has long held the view that **national soft power is a critical and often overlooked asset for the success of the European luxury sector**, especially in Italy, France, Germany, Spain and the UK. It has therefore worked with other European luxury organisations to get governments and decision-makers to appreciate this more in order than policy-making can take this into account. We were therefore very pleased when the European Commission formally recognised the industry as a Key Driver of the European economy.

We also believe that luxury brands are not just recipients of the benefits of positive national soft power but contribute to their country’s positive reputation in a **beneficial cycle**. We also think that they act as ‘**ambassadors**’, who often communicate contemporary national values more effectively and in a more relevant way (to consumers in key overseas markets) than governments. These thoughts are developed more fully in a paper produced by Walpole’s Guy Salter in June 2011 (Diplomacy by Other Means).

In addition to our belief that a soft power approach is key to the luxury industry’s continued success, we also believe that aspects of our model are relevant to European nations, as they struggle to find their competitive edge in an ever-flatter world (more of this in the last section).

**In a digitally connected world is soft power of increasing importance? If so, why?**

Very much so. In many ways the commercial success of British and European Luxury is all about the ability to convey soft power messages through new mediums. For example, for over a hundred years, luxury brands have understood the importance of telling compelling stories and illustrating these with iconic imagery. Both of these are things that (luckily) work very well in a digital world and especially so for success across social media. Our view is that governments could learn much from this.

**What are the important soft power assets that the UK has? How can we make the most of these? What is the role for non-state actors?**

**Our National Assets**

Walpole members have found that the UK’s reputation for **innovation, creativity, tradition and quality** resonate with global markets and audiences.

Less obvious assets such as the rule of law, our heritage, our still mostly-beautiful countryside plus hard-to-value Soft Power aspects of our national life such as our cultural vitality, irrepressibly cosmopolitan London or even the NHS or Royal Family also play an important role.

The combination of these assets and how they interact to create a national identity that is unique to Britain has helped Walpole members in the following ways:

- The **contribution of national DNA to our member brands** (as described in the first section above).
Walpole members and associates have found that when they are in contact with different countries ‘Being British’ opens doors and makes doing business easier.

London & the UK attract significant numbers of affluent visitors, for whom shopping is a key activity. Wealthy investors also often like to make their home in London or have a base there.

Making the most of them.

Our problem is we don’t. Walpole’s view (captured in more detail in the leader in this year’s Walpole Yearbook) is that the following needs to done to maximize the UK’s competitiveness in this area:

The first step is to appreciate what soft power assets we have, which matter most and concentrate on improving them until we are world class. This requires more of a debate and getting wider buy-in of the value of soft power. In addition, we need a better understanding of which are the core skills which support our soft power assets and so where we should be investing (for example in education to foster imagination and innovation in both Arts and Sciences). Walpole does this in a small way through its CRAFTED and BRANDS of TOMORROW programmed.

Secondly, we need to concentrate on the soft power assets that give us the most competitive advantage and differentiate us from competitor nations. A thread that runs through much of what we do well nowadays could be described as creative. Not just the creative industries but the flair and imaginative edge we, at our best, bring to engineering, technology, finance, retail, life sciences and other traditional business sectors. In other words, we believe that the UK should concentrate on marketing itself as being ‘Creative’ in the way that Germany is known for Engineering, the French for Food, the Italians for Style. This would provide much needed focus, especially for B2B marketing and best use of government funds.

The next step is to make sure our customers know what we are good at. The world is far too competitive a place to worry about modesty, especially when much of the time it is false. Deep down we know we are good at lots of things. We just have to get used to celebrating, encouraging and honoring. Or to put it another way, to marketing and selling.

Walpole also believes that the luxury sector can help in terms of the tangible value of authenticity and exclusivity. Elitism is a dirty word but why not aim to be the best? We try to be an open and fair society, which in itself contributes in no small part to our soft power appeal but that doesn’t come cheap. Striving for the highest standards pays in global business but can also engender aspiration and a sense of prosperity at home.

Non-State Actors.

In Walpole we believe the private sector has an important role in maximizing the soft power opportunity, especially post the Olympics. It cannot all be left to the Government. This is partly showing leadership but also about being prepared to work together where it makes sense to do so and not being half-hearted about national pride. Likewise, we need to partner with government, part of which is persuading policy-
makers to work on the bits that we can’t, such as cherishing and utilizing our soft power assets intelligently or doing away with business-unfriendly policies such as unnecessarily complicated visa systems. This is why we were early enthusiasts for the GREAT Campaign and continue to be a key partner, especially in the GREAT Festivals of Creativity.

We also believe that the luxury and fashion industry are natural standard bearers for a soft power led approach to improving the UK’s competitiveness and prosperity. Creativity is hard-wired into our businesses; we have to be focused on quality; our customers are world-wide and knowledgeable; and we understand how to weave heritage and newness into being relevant and desirable.

Looking more widely than luxury, Walpole believes that many inspirational British brands are beneficiaries of the country’s soft power credentials, just as they contribute to them in a beneficial cycle that few of us, in either business or government, understand or value as much as we should.

September 2013
The Committee’s call for evidence asks:

‘To what extent should the UK Government involve the devolved administrations in its work on soft power? Does the UK have a single narrative or should it project a loose collection of narratives to reflect the character of its regions?’

We interpret soft power as the way in which the UK engages with the rest of the world with a view to promoting our heritage and values.

Broadly speaking, all parts of the United Kingdom share core values and principles as they are perceived by others. However there can be significant variations of emphasis and interpretation in different parts of the UK. We recognise that for many people outside (and sometimes within) the UK, England and the UK are seen as one and the same, and care must be taken to ensure that where differences exist they are recognised positively.

The image the UK presents to the world should reflect its devolved constitution and its diverse political cultures. The way the UK accommodates political and cultural difference within a unitary state through devolution is a strong message for the rest of the world.

The UK Government and bodies with a UK remit need to ensure, through consultation and practice, that their exercise of soft power reflects all parts of the United Kingdom. Some examples of such organisations with a UK remit include the British Council; UKTI; and Visit Britain.

It is also important to recognise that the Devolved Administrations are able to develop and pursue relationships with countries and regions which can contribute to the UK’s overall soft power and influence. Some examples of this include:

Relationships within the European Union: Since devolution, the Welsh Government has worked hard to establish relationships with its regional counterparts in the EU, both bilaterally and through its membership of regional groupings such as the Conference for Peripheral and Maritime Regions and the Regions with Legislative Power. In certain member states, regional governments play a full and active role in drawing up and agreeing their national positions on EU issues. They are also fully involved in negotiations in the various formations of the EU’s Council of Ministers. Our relationships with other regional governments means that we can sometimes achieve understandings, or project and amplify agreed UK messages, at the regional level which may then be reflected in national positions. In other Member States, there is also often a degree of movement between the different tiers of government with Ministers moving from the state to national level and vice versa. Often, devolved administration Ministers will have cultivated relationships with regional Ministers who subsequently move up to the national level. Again, these existing relationships can be used to promote and project UK interests.

Similar groupings exist at a global level, such as nrg4SD (network of regional Governments for Sustainable Development) of which Wales is a founding member. Through this network
we can influence the sustainable development and climate change agenda - important to Nation states but heavily reliant on regions for its delivery.

There are many examples of bilateral relationships at the devolved level which contribute to the soft power and influence of the UK. Examples include:

Wales’s long standing cultural relationship with the Chubut Province of Argentina based on the Welsh community established in 1865;

Our relationship with the Mbale region of Uganda where we have worked hard to explain and promote a positive approach to LGBT rights;

Wales’s 20+ year relationship with the Lesotho through which we have assisted the UK Government by promoting the understanding of why the UK has withdrawn bilateral aid and a consular presence.

The call for evidence is very wide ranging: while we have not attempted to address every aspect from a specific Welsh / Devolved Administration perspective, we have tried to illustrate some of the ways in which the UK’s soft power and influence agenda can draw upon co-operation and strengths at both a UK and devolved level.

September 2013
As a result of the failure to agree policy on Syria by both the UK Govt and its counterpart in America, hard power has failed as a foreign policy objective.

We have some brilliant global soft power players - the British Council, BBC World Service, our great national museums and galleries and four or five world class universities.

There is one area where there is a need for UKplc to step up to the plate. We need the UK Govt to take the lead in creating a single global body for the Internet which puts the citizen at its heart. We do not want a Russia or a China or even an America to occupy this space first. We are a trusted source in this area with a proud legacy which includes Alan Turing, Tim Berners-Lee and Sir Jony Ive and I would urge the committee to make this one of its recommendations.

31 October 2013
Introduction
1. The Committee has raised among other questions the issue how the UK can learn from other countries’ experience with soft power (p. 4 of the Call for Evidence). As my expertise lies in East Asian international relations, with a special focus on Japan’s foreign relations and cultural diplomacy, I would like to use Japan’s long-term and current soft-power strategy to answer some questions regarding the use and limitations of soft power in international relations.

2. Japan’s historical and current experience is especially relevant to these questions, as this country, being the only non-western military and economic great power for most of the twentieth century, has a singular record of using culture and identity politics as a means to foster national interests abroad, but also adopt its policy to meet the demands of maximizing soft power as a leverage in international politics. More than any western power, the Japanese case shows much clearer the efficacy and limitations of the use of soft power on a long-term basis and is therefore relevant not only to the UK to answer these fundamental questions, but also to understand the position of other non-western countries such as China and India in formulating their own soft-power strategy.

Japan’s Historical Experience with Soft Power
3. Soft power as a means to foster national interests through persuasive attraction rather than coercion has been at the core of Japan’s foreign policy ever since it gave up its isolation policy in the nineteenth century and set its primary foreign policy goal on joining the western powers on an equal footing. In this relation, Japan was as much a generator of soft power as it was on the receiving end of it. The japonisme of the late nineteenth as well as the enthusiasm of the American ‘beat generation’ for Zen Buddhism and haiku poetry, the fascination of the general western public with Japanese high aesthetics and more recently with popular culture, but also the interest of business circles with the underlying philosophy of Japan’s postwar economic success since the 1960s (e.g. ‘Total Quality Management’, kaizen) demonstrate some facets of Japan’s capability to develop cultural attraction on its own terms.

4. This intrinsic fascination for Japan’s own culture was supplemented with the prestige that Japan gained through rapidly adopting to the ‘standard of civilization’ and thus proving itself ‘trustworthy’ towards the western powers. In fact, Japan’s foreign as well as domestic policy can be seen as historical proof, as it were, of the relative efficacy of soft power. Starting in the 1870s, Japan’s domestic modernization and its foreign policy were geared towards selectively adopting institutions of soft power (material culture, education, political thought and institutions such as the constitution, western literature and arts etc.) from the west and thus demonstrating co-operation and trustworthiness. Japan then used this prestige in turn as leverage to improve its standing in international politics with considerable success. The ability to re-negotiate equal treaties with the western powers in the 1890s (50 years earlier than China), Japan’s inclusion as ‘great power’ in 1919, the western powers’ acquiescence
with Japan’s position as hegemon in East Asia before 1940, the relatively lenient treatment of Japan during the American occupation and speedy re-integration into the western community in the postwar years all are attributable in part to the enduring sympathies of western audiences and political leaders for Japan due to its soft power and ‘soft prestige’.

5. At the same time, Japan’s historical experience also gives ample proof of the limitations of soft power as a precise political ‘tool’ to influence foreign relations. Neither Japan’s soft power nor its prestige among western powers eventually prevented war with Russia, Germany and the US. Nor did Japan follow the cultural model of one single western country and was therefore more likely to follow its lead, but, as all countries which have the sovereignty to do so, adopted selectively from multiple sources. Even though it adopted many institutions from Britain (and ultimately formed a military alliance with it), it considered alternatives as well, and in real politics often acted independently from British interests. The same could be said for the impact which US soft power had on Japan in postwar years, although the close military alliance between both countries makes any causal attribution of their coordinated foreign policy to either soft or hard power virtually impossible.

6. Finally, Japan’s historical relations with China and Korea give testimony to the limitations of using soft power as a political instrument. Japan at various stages of its modern East Asia policy tried to use ‘culture’ as a means to foster its interests on the continent, either by inviting Chinese and Korean students to study in Japan, by propagating a ‘pan-Asian’ or ‘new culture’ (a hybrid of eastern and western) culture among the East Asian peoples, or by literally forcing a uniform Japanese culture on its Taiwanese and Korean colonial subjects. Not only did the latter, as a matter of course, generate ill-will and resistance, but the culture strategy in general backfired for the same reasons it did not work on Japan, either: ultimately, Chinese students went to Japan to study selectively and for purely pragmatic reasons to foster their own ends, not because of an intrinsic attraction to Japan. It is therefore not necessarily ironic that these ends later turned out to be to fight all the more effectively against Japan itself.

Japan’s Soft Power Today
7. The situation of Japan’s soft power (and prestige) today reflects a similar ambivalence as described in its historical development, although new aspects have come to the forefront, due to Japan’s changed economic and strategic environment. Today, Japan’s soft power in the global perception largely has come to be defined by popular culture or, as the journalist Douglas McGray famously called it in 2002, by “Japan’s Gross National Cool”, i.e. manga, Japanese animation, films and mini series, video games and cute ‘characters’. The dominance of pop culture in the global perception and in soft power discourse is attributable to several factors: While Japan’s economy (by GDP) still ranks third worldwide, the long post-1990 recession and China’s spectacular rise as another non-western economic power during the same time has much helped to destroy Japan’s myth of uniqueness and economic allure. The dominance of pop culture over Japan’s high culture may be also in part due to the ascendancy of youth culture in the globalized culture discourse in general. Notwithstanding, the prominence is also a true reflection of the sheer dominance or strong presence of Japanese products in markets. Thus, it is said for example said that Japanese anime constitutes 60 percent of the world’s animated television programming.

8. However, for a more differentiated discussion of soft power, we should also consider other means of Japan’s soft power strategy in current times. Thus, it has been argued that Japan’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) within the OECD framework constitutes a
means of soft power (a ‘power instrument’), as Japan was the world’s largest donor of ODA in the 1990s, with a focus on East and Southeast Asia, and thereby most likely influenced these target countries’ economic planning and thinking, with Japan as a developmental model. The Japanese Exchange and Teacher Program (JET) is another measure which familiarizes succeeding cohorts of young foreigners with the Japan. Moreover, the Japanese government since early 2000 has promoted several initiatives to ‘monetize’ Japan’s cultural and intellectual value, such as successive campaigns to promote Japan as a tourist destination (and thereby soften the stark imbalance between outbound and inbound tourism) or Prime Minister Jun’ichirō Koizumi’s declaration of Japan as an ‘IP nation’ and the launch of a national strategy to protect Japan’s intellectual property (this in itself being an acknowledgement of the increased value of Japan’s aggregated soft power). Finally, the recent successful bid in hosting the Olympic Games in 2020 must be seen as a means to increase Japan’s ‘soft prestige’ and, again, the decision in itself an acknowledgment of Japan’s relative ‘trustworthiness’ and, ultimately, of Japan’s soft power.

9. The motivation for all these initiatives mentioned above can be subsumed under the two strategic goals of public diplomacy and economic development. Thus, it is no coincidence that the primary ministerial drivers of many of these initiatives are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). It is quite natural to assume that Japan in times of prolonged economic recession would want to ‘monetize’ every forms of capital it has and promote the creative industries which generate it. However, the involvement of METI (and Japan’s recent IP strategy) may be also a reflection of the fact that Japanese industries, in fact, have difficulties to market their products because of licensing and piracy problems. Moreover, it is not always easy to decide whether an initiative pursues either diplomatic or economic objectives or, in fact, both in combination with other, less obvious aims. Thus, it has been argued that Japan’s renewed thrust of soft power-initiatives, including those of ‘Cool Japan’ also serves security purposes: Due to constitutional provisions (Art. 9), Japan’s military options are, at least in theory, severely restricted and, in any case, require additional argumentative support or justification. Thus, it has been argued that ‘soft power’ is the liberal compensation for Japan’s lack in ‘hard power’ to pursue its national interests abroad. However, considering Japan’s post-1990 naval build-up and increased radius of activity in ‘areas surrounding Japan’, it could be argued that, on the contrary, Japan’s renewed emphasis on soft power is also a trust-building measure to sheath the edges of its newly acquired hard power, especially with its East Asian neighbours.

10. The soft power balance of these initiatives is hard to measure and elusive. Surveys among Korean and Chinese youths who consume Japanese media culture seem to indicate that they are more sympathetic to Japan. However, this does not prevent the same youths from vociferously criticizing Japan for its stance towards its colonial and wartime past and its claims to historically contested territory. Thus, it could be argued that under strained relationships, soft power can at best soften an otherwise uncompromising antagonism and render attitudes more ambivalent, which, on the whole, could be seen as success of a particular soft power strategy.

11. However, it is the general consensus among discussants of Japan’s soft power that above and beyond such a general softening and ‘muddling’ of attitudes, soft power does not work as a ‘power instrument’ to promote clearly defined policy goals. This is due to a number of reasons, some of which are more specific to popular culture as soft power, but on a more abstract level could be given for the concept of soft power in general: Thus, fundamentally speaking, Japanese ‘pop culture’ which is the most successful today, has its origin in youth
subculture. Although it has by now moved into the mainstream, there seems to be an inherent contradiction when Japanese elite bureaucrats appropriate these contents to gear them to official national interests. Pop culture thus loses its claims to the subcultural and, thus, its allure and power. The same can be said, more abstractly, of any use of culture towards political ends, as it limits the former’s interpretive range and thereby trivializes it.

12. However, the real problem of ‘soft power’ is seen in the intrinsic difficulty to tie it to a specific national goal, a difficulty which increases the more successful and pervasive the content carrier of soft power becomes. In his seminal article on the ‘clash of civilization’ of 1993, Samuel Huntington once famously claimed that Japan’s radius of action was restricted due to its ‘uniqueness’ of its civilization. Although Huntington’s assessment of Japan’s civilization is largely based on a Japanese postwar myth and does injustice to the hybridity of its soft power (see above), it indirectly points towards the observation that popular culture originating in Japan is all the more successful and pervasive abroad, the less distinctly ‘Japanese’ it is. This phenomenon has been described as the ‘non-nationality’ (mu-kokuseki) of globalized Japanese pop culture or, as Koichi Iwabuchi’s called it, its ‘cultural odorless-ness’. Thus, to give a simple example, the pervasiveness of Japanese characters and anime series on children’s television programming is rarely associated with a distinct consciousness that these are particularly Japanese, let alone particular sympathy with its country of origin. Or it could be argued that the oversea success of Japan’s department store Muji is attributable to the fact that it is what the name literally says, a brand with ‘no brand’ (mujirushi). However, soft power which is successful because it is ‘universal’ is self-defeating in its purpose to promote specific national interest.

13. Finally, even if we assume a general consciousness in the recipients’ minds of Japan as the country of origin and a certain sympathy generated thereby (see par. 10.), this still leaves the agency of the recipients who ultimately will interpret Japan’s soft power on their own terms and use it selectively to foster their own ends. Thus, it is generally argued that even if Chinese or Korean audiences appreciate Japanese cultural products, the attraction it holds for them lies ultimately not in the fact that it is ‘Japanese’, but that it represents a standard of contemporaneity and consumerism which they aspire to themselves. Japanese ODA may be an example in case: recipients will gratefully accept it, but will use it to foster their own agenda which, as happened in the case of China, could ultimately result in turning the competition against Japan itself. However, in the sense that soft power thereby induces the recipient to aspire to common societal standards or economic concepts, it does have a valuable, if very general effect.

Conclusion
The case study of Japan’s historical and current experience with soft power demonstrates that soft power can be effective and induce a substantial change in national and collective behavior. However, this change is of a largely general nature in that it promotes a certain cohesion of motives and values among the originator and recipient which is still very much open to particular interpretations in national policy or collective perception. Thus, soft power is inadequate as a ‘power instrument’ to pursue specific policy goals or a narrowly defined agenda of national interests, but at its best is beneficial and constructive to create a ‘mood’ of co-operation and a tendency towards shared values.

August 2013
Select Bibliography


