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Witnesses: Maddalaine Ansell, Hugh Elliott, Barbara Hendrie, Andrew Mitchell and Keith Nichol

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Members present

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

Witnesses

Maddalaine Ansell, Head of the International Knowledge & Innovation Unit (Global), Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, **Hugh Elliott**, Director of Communication and Engagement, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, **Barbara Hendrie**, Deputy Director of Global Partnerships Department, Department for International Development, **Andrew Mitchell**, Director of Prosperity Directorate, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and **Keith Nichol**, Head of Cultural Diplomacy, Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Q1 The Chairman: Good afternoon, everybody. On behalf of the Committee, I thank the witnesses for attending today. We are very pleased to have an opportunity to exchange thoughts and enlarge our own understanding of the subjects to hand, and to do so in the presence of five very senior members of the Administration, from four different departments. That is excellent. I will not list all your roles because they are on the paper in front of the Committee. Any enlargement of particular work or interests can come when you answer some of our questions, which I will proceed with in a moment.

Before I do so, the Committee has to go through a necessary and important procedure, which is that each person who speaks in this first formal hearing of the Committee is obliged to state their interests and the possible relevance of their interests to the work that the

Committee is undertaking. This is a particular problem with this Committee because the scope of our international observance and involvement is very wide indeed. Nevertheless, that is necessary and therefore as the Chairman I must set the pattern by indicating that my interests and concerns are as in the *Register of Lords' Interests*, and cover my advice to international Japanese companies, a big investment fund from Kuwait, the Chambers of Commerce, various energy groups and the Council of Commonwealth Societies. I am the president of the Energy Industries Council. I am also a personal adviser to the Foreign Secretary on energy security and give him advice on a personal basis from time to time—whether he takes it is, of course, another matter. That is what I have to say before my questions to you now; other Members will be prefacing their questions with similar recitations, as they wish.

My first question is aimed mostly at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. We are very pleased that we had the chance to meet you, Mr Elliott, when you talked to us informally at a private session about some of the broad questions arising from our interest in soft power and the UK's influence around the world. You are now here in a formal role, so I will put a formal question to you—and to Mr Mitchell, and other members of the group if they wish to join in, but we shall be aiming questions at them specifically in due course so their time will come. Question: what is the standing of the whole concept of soft power in the work of the Government and of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office? Are all your departments—not just the FCO—conscious of this line of thought and the way in which it has developed in recent years? How much of a priority is soft power promotion for the Government, and where does it fit in to the phraseology and concept of the “global race”, which the Prime Minister was talking about today in fact, and many Ministers have spoken about, in which this country is now perforce involved more energetically and more critically than ever before? Perhaps I could start with you, Mr Elliott.

Hugh Elliott: Thank you very much, my Lord Chairman. It is a pleasure to be back in front of the Committee in a formal capacity with my colleagues from the other three departments. If I might start by addressing the definition of “soft power”, which is such a slippery term in some respects, it is worth recalling that the definition most commonly used, given by Joseph Nye, is as, “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”. It is worth dwelling on that for a moment. In many respects, I think it would be widely agreed that that describes the core business of the Foreign Office writ large. That is very much what we as an organisation seek to do. It would be possible to frame an argument under which almost anything that the Foreign Office did constituted an exercise of soft power to some degree. I hope that some concrete, specific illustrations of that will come out in our session this afternoon. Particularly when we address some more specific strands, processes and campaigns through which soft power is addressed, it will be important to bear in mind that those are only elements of a much broader framework in which the whole of the Foreign Office’s activity is touched in one way or another.

Specifically, the standing of soft power in the department is extremely high, we are extremely conscious of it in our work and it is a major priority for us. We believe that it is a central tool of our foreign policy and it is core to achieving the Government’s international objectives, which are to extend the UK’s influence, to promote international understanding through persuasion, and advance UK security and prosperity interests. The concept is threaded through our various departmental business plans and our individual country business plans through which work across government is brought together and articulated overseas on a country-by-country basis. These business plans integrate the breadth of soft power and how it is expressed through not just our diplomacy but our science and innovation, trade and investment and other work through the Government.

We believe that soft power works best as a tool for government when it is focused and tailored for specific regions, countries, themes or audiences as an integral part of policy. It brings together all our different elements of influence in pursuit of policy objectives that can unify. For example, we deliver soft power under that definition through our cross-government conflict prevention work; through international development, which I am sure we will hear about more later; through education and culture; through parliamentary exchanges; through the work of the British Council and the BBC World Service; and through our work in promoting human rights, for example, through the Foreign Office's Gulf initiative and Arab partnership, which are very specific examples of where we have sought to exercise influence. These cross-government efforts are aimed at strengthening regional security, at building commercial, economic, cultural and educational links and ties, and at key foreign policy priorities of the Government. I would like to mention that the visits by members of the Royal Family are instrumental in extending the UK's influence overseas.

A specific example of one campaign through which the Foreign Office has sought to change the international agenda through the exercise of its indirect influence and soft power would be the Foreign Secretary's initiative on the prevention of sexual violence in conflict, which he launched on 29 May 2012. I will not go into the detail for reasons of time, but this has culminated already this year in a declaration by G8 Foreign Ministers. We have been working through political and diplomacy channels and in the area of capacity development to practically strengthen the ability of governments on the ground to address this and move the stigma from the victims to the perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict, which simply had not been addressed by the international community before but now has been brought right up the agenda. We have been able to do that because we have had the ability to direct and focus the influence and attraction that we have towards this very specific agenda.

The GREAT campaign is another area that I am sure we will touch on, in which we have adopted very much a campaign approach to changing the dial. I would like to refer to the speech that the Foreign Secretary gave at the Lord Mayor's Banquet just a couple of months ago because this sums up the definition of how we can best exercise our influence internationally and the credibility that we have to do this. He said: "Britain is a diplomatic and cultural power, and one of the few countries that can 'turn the dial' in world affairs. We are diplomatically active in most countries on earth, able to project military force if necessary, outward-looking and open in our disposition, and skilled at using our democratic institutions, our experiences, our language and our culture to work with other nations to help them overcome their problems". As a broad introduction, I will leave it at that and perhaps my colleagues will continue if you would like answers from other departments.

Q2 The Chairman: Thank you very much indeed. That was an excellent opening survey and indeed, as you say, an entrée to your other colleagues to expand on that very telling phrase, "a diplomatic and cultural power"—and presumably, we hope, a trading and business power as well. Still within the framework of this question, perhaps I could ask your colleague from the Foreign Office, Mr Mitchell, if he would like to add a few comments on that aspect.

Andrew Mitchell: By all means. Thank you, Lord Chairman. To talk a little bit about the challenge, first of all, we recognise that sustainable economic growth in the United Kingdom will be delivered only through energetic action overseas. The United Kingdom is a strong economy. What the Foreign Office is in a position to do, working with its partners overseas, is to help to create the global conditions for continued and sustained growth. Through our missions overseas, through the person of the head of mission, our work is about using political insight and influence to promote British business interests, to work for open economies, to combat protectionism, and to work to remove barriers to business, including weak governance, overregulation and corruption. We use that wide network and strong

relationships to sustain an open, transparent, rules-based international economic system, and to advance international trade.

You mentioned in your introduction that the Prime Minister had been speaking again today about the global race. Through the work that we do overseas, we recognise the importance of the British economy being competitive. We recognise that we need therefore to bring to bear all the assets of Government overseas. The heads of mission in our embassies and high commissions around the world are responsible for integrating that work. There will be a single business plan in every mission overseas, a very important aspect of which will be how we pursue our prosperity interests around the world, using and leveraging the various assets of other Government departments to good effect. As my colleague said, if one has been in that position of leveraging our assets overseas, there is no doubt that our credibility—the quality of the influence we are able to bear—is a function of Britain’s soft power. We are a member of multiple international institutions. We have genuine global reach as a nation. We are a member of a number of multilateral international organisations that help to extend and expand that reach. From our perspective in supporting British business overseas, that is a very important aspect of the way in which we exercise that soft power.

The Chairman: That is the broad aims; we are obviously going to come on to the performance in a moment.

Q3 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Chairman, perhaps I might pose a supplementary question to the two representatives from the Foreign Office, particularly to Hugh Elliott. I know that it is your job to be as positive as possible about all the things that you are doing. Did you not feel, in what you said to us, that you were sounding a wee bit complacent, that there is nothing more to be done?

Hugh Elliott: Lord Foulkes, no, I did not. If I gave the impression of being complacent, I apologise. Absolutely not, this is an ever-changing panorama in terms of the context in which

we have to adapt to successfully project and use soft power in order to achieve the outcomes that we want. I know that questions may be directed to us in the future around the digital revolution, which is a major challenge for the Government, as it is for all institutions, in having to adapt to a transformation of the way in which people communicate around the world. So absolutely not, we are by no means complacent—lots more to do.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: You spoke about our democratic institutions. Let us be self-critical here. We know about some of our problems in our democratic institutions. Should we not be a bit more—not modest—careful in explaining what the United Kingdom and how we operate, and say that we have things to learn? The whole purpose of this Committee is not for us to say how wonderful we are and have been, but to find out how other countries are doing it and what new ideas there might be. Have you set your mind to that as well?

Hugh Elliott: Absolutely. We are very conscious that the ability to exercise this sort of influence is very much a factor of one's credibility as a nation. I referred to that before and I think it is a very important issue. One's credibility is also determined by the nature of positive bilateral relationships with important nations, as well as multilateral relationships, and those are achieved through understanding the interests and activities of others as much as of discussing one's own. So I absolutely agree with you.

The Chairman: I am going to be a slightly maddening Chairman, Lord Foulkes, and say that the thrust of your questions is absolutely right and we are going to come to the whole pattern of what is holding us back and what this Committee can contribute, but first, a smaller matter: did you have any interests to declare?

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Oh, yes, sorry. I should have said that right at the start. Apart from what is included in the Register, I am also president of the Caribbean Council but I am not paid for it.

The Chairman: Still in the framework of this question—we were on the prosperity theme—perhaps I can turn to Maddalaine Ansell of BIS to ask how her department sees this whole concept.

Maddalaine Ansell: Absolutely. We are very well aligned with the Foreign Office's objectives in this. The overarching objective for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills is to return the economy to growth, and we recognise that this needs to be export-led. As part of that, we are working very closely with the Foreign Office; for example, on encouraging rules-based trade with other countries, particularly the emerging powers that do not necessarily have the same systems that we do. We also work very closely with the FCO on science, innovation and education, not only for the direct benefits that this brings to growth or education exports but for the soft power collateral benefit that we gain through that.

Q4 The Chairman: Thank you very much. The words of the Foreign Secretary about diplomatic and cultural power were quoted. One of the phenomena that we will be looking at much more closely is the relationship between creativity and cultural activity and its consequent impact on business relations and other aspects of government. Perhaps Mr Nichol would talk to us for a moment about that.

Keith Nichol: Thank you, Lord Chairman. This area of soft power certainly is a priority for my Secretary of State. She sees it as central to the DCMS agenda. I echo the points that were made about what the Prime Minister said about the global race. We know that other countries are increasingly seeking to deploy their soft power assets, so we are in a competitive situation. There is absolutely no scope for complacency. When we hear very positive messages about how the UK is perceived as a world leader in culture and the creative industries, that is reflected economically through the export of creative industries—everything from fashion to film to broadcasting—but we cannot rest on our laurels.

We have been given a terrific position by London 2012 and it is a key part of our Olympic legacy to deploy our cultural assets for the benefit of the UK as a whole. In doing so, we also promote the UK's values around the world and we support our bodies in a way that is respectful of the arm's-length principle. What we cannot do, for example, is direct our cultural bodies to go to Singapore and put on a show there, but we can align our activity with what they want to do. Working in partnership with the Foreign Office, the British Council and UKTI, we have got an increasing alignment—a coalition, if you will—to pursue these activities in a way that benefits the UK collectively.

Reciprocity is absolutely vital here. This should not be just about us doing things to the rest of the world. It should be about us welcoming the best in contemporary culture from around the world to expose the UK audiences to that and, in doing so, build the trust that we need to have relations with countries for the future.

The Chairman: Thank you. Finally, I will turn to the Department for International Development. Barbara Hendrie, you are a considerable and established expert in very important fields to do with development. You are an anthropologist, I think. In the halls and portals of DfID—where you have a very substantial budget, of course—how do you all react when the subject of soft power comes up?

Barbara Hendrie: Thank you, my Lord Chairman. As you will know, DfID's mission is focused on development and poverty reduction. When we think about our contribution to soft power, it is primarily through the impact and the results that we produce in the integrity of our development programme. We have had very positive feedback for DfID as a global leader in development, generated out of our commitment to reduce poverty and to reach the international target of 0.7% of gross national income provided as official development assistance. We will be the first G8 country to hit that target this year, as well as the first EU country. Making good on our commitment has translated into the Secretary-General asking

Prime Minister David Cameron to co-chair his high-level panel on the post-2015 development agenda, which will basically set the global agenda for the new set of global development goals for the next generation. That panel has recently produced a very influential report. We feel that the capability of our development programmes generates soft power for the UK by enabling us to play a leadership role on the global development agenda.

The Chairman: Thank you. I think that brings us to the end of round one. We have had all the departments now giving their overview. Perhaps Lord Forsyth will develop this theme.

Q5 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: Thank you, Lord Chairman. I declare my interests as on the Register. The only thing I can think of that is not on the Register is that I am a patron of a charity that helps women in India. We have heard phrases like “turn the dial”, “soft power”, “collateral benefit” and “rules-based trade”, and Barbara Hendrie has just told us how marvellous it is that we have such a fantastic input in terms of resources towards development programmes. Can you focus on the outputs and tell me specifically what your departments have achieved in enhancing the UK’s attractiveness and influence abroad and in furthering the UK’s priorities, and how you measure that? Perhaps you could give us some examples of successes and how they have been measured and of failures and how they have been measured. It is very difficult to believe that there are systems in place that look at effectiveness if you are not able to come up with examples of failures and how they have been turned round, as well as successes.

The Chairman: Who would like to start? Mr Elliott?

Hugh Elliott: I would be happy to kick off. Thank you, my Lord Chairman. In terms of what we have done to enhance the UK’s attractiveness and influence, and the extent to which we have achieved what we have set out to achieve, I would like to answer this in two parts, if I may. I am sure that my colleagues will have a lot to contribute. I go back to my first point, which is that when we are talking about projecting the UK overseas and the UK’s

attractiveness and influence, we are talking about the whole broad range of the UK's foreign policy. I would refer the Committee to our annual report for 2011-12 and the annual report for 2012-13, which will come out shortly. I appreciate that that is just one part of the question—

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: Forgive me for interrupting you, but I am looking for specifics. For example, I am looking at the pound having fallen by about 25% and our exports remaining pretty well neutral. I am looking for specific examples of where you have achieved these objectives.

Hugh Elliott: Absolutely. I was just about to come on to that. I just wanted to reinforce the point that the generic issue is important because a lot of activity goes on underneath that. I will give you one specific example which is perhaps illustrative of what goes on around the world in so many ways, in so many different places and by so many different posts. This is something that was carried out by our embassy in Mexico. The problem with Mexico was that the UK brand was relatively low and that in the UK people were partly ignorant of Mexico or had insufficient knowledge of it as a potential market. The problem was that we were not exporting as much as we should have been doing. We were not exploiting the potential of Mexico as a bilateral partner to the degree that we should have been.

When we talk about the embassy, as I hope we will illustrate further on, we are talking across Government here, the embassy working as Government joined-up overseas. The embassy launched a campaign in 2012 to promote the UK in Mexico. I will not go through every detail, but there was a whole part of that campaign that had to address the problem of those perceptions. That was done partly through cultural visits and government visits; it was done partly through the blessing that was the Olympics last year, which gave us global projection and global visibility; and it was done partly through the GREAT campaign, which we will also hear about. In a nutshell, it was a sustained campaign, with top-level visits both

ways—the Prime Minister to Mexico, the Mexican President to the UK—and a whole series of events, some of them quite small; for example, little things such as putting GREAT branding on the disabled entrance to the UK embassy. That was quite a small but totemic thing to happen in Mexico City and it is still there on the pavement.

Cutting straight to the chase, what did that campaign achieve? The figures were that goods exports to Mexico went up by 13% from 2011 to 2012 to more than £1 billion, and that visitors to the UK increased by 7% to 84,000 in 2012. Those numbers may seem relatively small. What does “turn the dial” mean specifically? It means having that sort of impact in a relatively short space of time, and what we are doing around the world and focusing on priority markets and countries is to try to achieve that sort of specific objective.

The Chairman: Lord Hodgson, would you like to pursue the same theme but still wider?

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: I think that Lord Forsyth wants a follow-up.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: I asked each department if they would answer the question.

The Chairman: Fine. Which department do you want to focus on now?

Q6 Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: I want to hear from all of them. Perhaps we should start with BIS.

Maddalaine Ansell: Yes, of course. I can talk about some of the specific work strands that colleagues are leading on in this agenda. I might have to give the very specific achievements from my own area of science, innovation and education, because I will not otherwise have the details at my fingertips. Among the things we do, we ensure that we take a leading role in delivering trade liberalisation agreements that suit UK interests, including mobilising the Government to support an EU-US trade agreement. A fairly recent achievement in that area is that UK retailers are now able to operate in India in a way that they were not able to a year or so ago. We also look to tackle market access barriers and threats to UK business investment, both through the EU and through bilateral dialogues and direct lobbying.

Perhaps you would not usually describe this as a market access barrier, but one of the achievements we have made in Brazil is an agreement with FAPESP, which is the organisation that delivers research funding in the state of Sao Paulo, which is the most important state in Brazil for science funding. We agreed with FAPESP that it would use the same criteria as we do for allocating research funding. It is important to us that research funding is allocated for the most excellent research, decided by peer review. Some countries prefer to have a more top-down approach to allocating research funding. The achievement in Brazil was that by creating one single peer-review process involving Brazilian reviewers in a process that we would recognise, it has been possible for far more UK-Sao Paulo research to take place than would otherwise have been the case. We are currently following the same approach with the Ministry of Science and Technology in China, which also has quite a top-down approach, and we are looking to work with it to introduce peer-reviewing processes.

Another kind of market barrier that we are working to address is around a mutual recognition of qualifications in the education field. We are working very closely at the moment with India and the United Arab Emirates, and we hope very soon to be working with Russia, to find ways in which we can mutually recognise each other's qualifications, which makes it easier for students to study overseas and know that the degree they have achieved overseas will be recognised when they come back to the UK.

BIS also does a fair amount of work supporting the activities of the G8 and the G20. Again, in my own area, we are working to deliver the G8 science ministerial on Wednesday. We are also looking to encourage open access and open data, and to see if we can work together to tackle problems such as antimicrobial resistance, all of which are important for soft power because they enhance the UK's standing as a key science nation. We find that when countries are thinking about what areas they would like to work on with the EU, many of them think of science and education as important areas for engagement.

BIS also works very closely with UKTI, which we co-sponsor with the Foreign Office. Again, I do not have the figures at my fingertips but I know that UKTI has quite a comprehensive set of targets for measuring trade increases that are brought about by its activity.

Q7 The Chairman: That is an impressive list. Shall we just hear from DCMS on outputs?

Keith Nichol: Thank you. Of course, the Olympics was not solely a DCMS project but across Government as a whole, but there were a couple of outputs from the Olympics; for example, the Cultural Olympiad and the demonstration of our world-leading arts and culture. Shakespeare's Globe put on the "Globe to Globe" season during the Olympics: Shakespeare's plays in 37 languages from 37 countries around the world. That has already stimulated both another Globe season this year, as well as all sorts of demand from around the world for partnerships with arts organisations during the Shakespeare 400th anniversary in 2016. Those partnerships are flourishing. It is not something that came to an end at the end of the Olympics. We hear from around the world that the Paralympics was a tremendous vehicle in helping to create a more enlightened attitude towards disability in several countries. Having the first Olympics where every country sent a woman athlete was an output that Ministers regard as very successful.

In a different area, you have the work of organisations such as the British Library or the British Museum in preserving the archaeological heritage of countries such as Iraq or other post-conflict states. That sort of thing does not get much publicity but it builds trust in these countries as they rebuild themselves, and helps the UK become a partner of choice for those countries.

We have very clear figures on the outputs in terms of tourism. People do not come to this country for the weather; they come for our arts, culture and heritage. We see that specifically in not just increased numbers of visitors but increased visitor spend. In terms of economic growth, that is usually important.

In China last year we had the biggest ever festival of UK culture in China. That built on the experience from the Shanghai Expo, where Thomas Heatherwick's pavilion was voted by the Chinese public as the best national pavilion. He of course went on to create the Cauldron for the Olympics. He and other British architects and designers are winning multimillion pound contracts for major infrastructure projects around the world and we believe that our investment in culture and the creative industries is underpinning those successful bids for those contracts.

A final positive example is the recent joint venture that was announced between Pinewood and Bruno Wu, a major Chinese film producer. We believe that our film tax credits were important in attracting the Chinese to that; not just the Chinese but other Asian producers and Hollywood as well. Again, we are in a competitive position there.

You asked for failures. In terms of our values, we use sport in all sorts of multilateral contexts to tackle things such as racism in sport and anti-doping. That is where there is certainly no room for complacency. There are still examples of racism in sport in this country and we need to ensure that we have got our own house in order as we try to encourage the rest of the world to a more enlightened place.

The Chairman: I was very pleased to hear that about Shakespeare's Globe—as a former director of Shakespeare's Globe, I should perhaps have declared my previous interest. It is very interesting and raises all sorts of points that we are going to pursue later about the contact between government and the non-government sector.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: Perhaps, Chairman, to save time, it might be easier for the departments to let us have a note along the lines of my question in due course.

Q8 The Chairman: Certainly, we have had a long, long list of very useful items, which in due course we would like to see recorded in notes. Perhaps we can hear from Dr Hendrie as well on outputs.

Barbara Hendrie: Thank you, my Lord Chairman. Of course, we primarily measure our achievements and our outputs in terms of development outcomes. We can give you detail about, for example, the numbers of bed nets, children immunised and people provided with emergency relief assistance globally. We would be very happy to provide that sort of information.

In terms of soft power outcomes, of course this is not an explicit goal for the department; it is more of an indirect effect. But we do think that with the programme that we started in 2010 with countries that we call emerging powers, we are generating real soft power benefits for the UK, particularly with countries such as Colombia, Mexico and China becoming very interested in the UK model for how to establish a development co-operation organisation. We have had requests for conversations, workshops and sharing of information where countries are looking to the UK example as one possibility of how they might structure such organisations; for example, Mexico is just setting up its own development co-operation organisation. We are in conversation with Mexico at its request.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean: Sorry to interrupt you, but leaving aside emergency aid and immunisation programmes, you are looking at development aid. Surely in applying development aid, you try to advance the interests of British companies and so on, and have some degree of conditionality?

Barbara Hendrie: Well, of course, UK aid is untied so we cannot give any special consideration to UK companies bidding for procurement contracts, for example. There is nothing to bar British companies from bidding and we do everything we can to make information available when those contracts are tendered, but our aid is untied so we cannot give special dispensation to UK companies.

The Chairman: Perhaps I can just say to colleagues that if anyone wants to come in and make the discussion more flexible, I am very happy for them to do so.

Q9 Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: Following the point that Lord Forsyth was making, the excellent outcomes that departmental representatives are telling us about are fully laudable. However, is it possible that they are a little bit as one would expect you to produce from your departmental responsibilities? Actually, what we are looking for is that extra called soft power, which is something over and above the normal daily routine as one would expect it. In your views, that may not be the case; you may feel that the departmental outcomes are reflected in some way or another in the soft power concept and therefore they qualify as soft power. Over and above that, I would like to know what evaluation mechanisms you are using, individually or together. How do the different departments correlate how soft power is being evaluated, by each department and collectively? Or is that not in fact possible and you merely quantify it as an extra piece of icing on your normal departmental cake? I have not yet been able to analyse that from the nice outcomes that have been presented.

The Chairman: Would anyone like to have a go at that? Mr Elliott again?

Hugh Elliott: I would be happy to kick off. I am sure that colleagues will have views. I think the underlying question is: is there an overarching articulated soft power strategy across Government covering all the potential areas of soft power? The answer is no; that does not exist.

Lord Janvrin: Can I come in with question 7?

The Chairman: We are going to come to co-ordination in more detail in a moment. If anyone has short questions now, that is fine. Sorry, were you in the middle of—

Hugh Elliott: I certainly was, my Lord Chairman, but I am at the Committee's disposal.

The Chairman: Carry on, Mr Elliott, I am so sorry.

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne: My question is on evaluation techniques.

The Chairman: I see: evaluation, not co-ordination.

Hugh Elliott: A broad, overarching, completely comprehensive strategy touching every issue of soft power does not exist. The Government have decided to focus in on specific areas where there is indeed a great deal of collaboration and co-ordination across soft power, and I suspect that we will come on to some specific examples later around the emerging powers framework. I would also like to suggest that my colleagues talk a little bit about the GREAT campaign, which brings together a number of different elements of the UK's soft power and how it is projected, and has some very hard metrics for how it is actually measured.

I have two observations as to the underlying question. It is absolutely the case that the broad definition of soft power is so loose that it is an area where it can be difficult to apply very specific metrics. That is absolutely a fair comment. But when you focus it in on specific campaigns, it is absolutely possible to apply those metrics. Perhaps Keith would like to say a few words from the GREAT point of view.

Keith Nichol: Thank you. The GREAT campaign is a marketing campaign across Government and a number of external agencies that was set up to coincide with the Olympics. We saw the Olympics as a terrific opportunity to market the UK more strategically. It has had until now three very clear pillars: one is around promoting more trade and inward investment, and there is a particular science and innovation angle to that; the second is around promoting more tourism to the UK; and the third is around promoting higher education. We want more students to come to the UK, not just because that has financial benefits but because it is one of the things that we know build trust in the UK among a generation that may include the future leaders of their countries. We are seeing both short-term outcomes and, I hope, longer-term outcomes from this.

In terms of tourism, there is fairly robust analysis of the VisitBritain figures—which I am sure we can send to the Committee if that would be helpful—that where the GREAT campaign has focused on particular countries, there has been an increase in the number of visitors

from those countries above and beyond what we would expect from normal business. The British Council has told us that in terms of international students considering a UK education, the GREAT campaign has helped to stimulate more positive views toward that. Again, because it started only last year, we do not yet have the actual outputs but we feel that we are moving in the right direction. In terms of free advertising for the UK and all its assets, from a £30 million investment in the entire campaign, we appear to have had advertising that would have cost the public purse £85 million had we chosen to commercially seek that visibility. This is all emerging after 12 months. UKTI is putting together clear figures on inward investment and exports. As the campaign continues, we believe that we are going to have some very crunchy evidence to point to.

The Chairman: Several people want to come in this point. Lady Goudie? We will get to you eventually, Lord Hodgson.

Q10 Baroness Goudie: I declare my interests that are on the Register. I am co-chair of the All-Party Group on Global Education for All, which is important to mention, because of the departments and those who are assisting us with that. I have only one short question, and it is to the Foreign Office, on the subject of co-ordination across departments. Was there not a recommendation by Lord Carter of Coles that there should be a soft power board within Government? I looked it up but could not find the membership of it, but it was a clear recommendation. It was quite some time ago but I found that it was still there in the Cabinet Office minutes. That would be rather vital to what we are talking about today, and to the future, because without that type of very senior co-ordination, certain things are going to get lost—not the main policy but a number of issues will get lost.

The Chairman: Mr Elliott?

Hugh Elliott: Thank you very much, Lady Goudie, my Lord Chairman. Indeed, you are absolutely right, this goes back to the Wilton review back in 2002, which initially set up the

Public Diplomacy Strategy Board, which the Carter review then assessed and decided to change its focus a little bit and turn it into the Public Diplomacy Board. This was indeed re-set up in line with the Carter recommendations in 2006. It included several leading external thinkers in the area of soft power, including Simon Anholt, who produces the *Nations Brand Index*. The board served a valuable initial purpose in bringing together and giving direction to cross-Government soft power activities, especially around areas of best practice, but the decision that Ministers took over time was that the most important thing moving into the run-up to the Olympics was to focus on what was going to be a unique event and to focus what are always limited resources on making the very most out of that specific event. My colleague Andrew Mitchell, who was much more involved in the Olympics, might like to say a word or two about that.

Andrew Mitchell: On the specific example of the Olympics, I should say that I was the Foreign Office's Director for the Olympics and Paralympics in the run-up to the Games. The key point here is that this was a collaborative effort, not just across Government but with a variety of external agencies, the Mayor of London and, of course, LOCOG. We were in a position to build a campaign that was effectively an external campaign marketing Britain's strengths in the context of the Olympics. This was led by the Foreign Office but coordinated across Government, as I say. That campaign had a variety of features associated with it. At its heart was the desire to demonstrate that Britain is indeed not just a country of strong institutions but a modern, diverse, highly innovative society—one that brings together the best of traditional strengths of institutions with an ability to be relevant in the world today. In the context of that campaign, we had something like 1,500 events that we hosted in various places overseas. We developed a campaign that supported those events. We estimated at the time that something like 2 billion people were touched in some way by that global public diplomacy campaign; 70% of our posts took part in the campaign and we ran a

number of global events, such as one in which we did 100 somethings on 100 days to go to the Olympics. This was an enormously successful campaign around the world. It was a relatively permissive environment in which to run a campaign of this kind because of course there was a tremendous amount of attention on the UK, but it was a very strong part of how we co-ordinated our public diplomacy efforts—our soft power efforts—in the run-up to the Olympics.

The Chairman: Lord Janvrin, did you want to come in on this theme?

Q11 Lord Janvrin: Yes, I would, but I had better do my interests. I am deputy chairman of HSBC Private Bank in the UK. I am on the board of trustees of a number of charities in this field, including the Royal Foundation, the Gurkha Welfare Trust, the Entente Cordiale Scholarships Trust, the National Portrait Gallery and Philanthropy Impact. I am on the advisory board of the UK India Business Council, and I am a former and now honorary member of the Queen's Household.

You said that there is no overall strategy but you have strategies in particular areas. I think I am right in saying that a business plan produced by the FCO some years ago talked in terms of producing an overall strategy. Is that now not the case and you are not going to try to draw the threads of soft power together in an overall strategy? If not, why not? The other element that I would like to come on to, but I do not know whether now is the time, is learning from other countries. But can I ask the overall strategy one, which is specifically for the FCO?

The Chairman: Yes, let us come on to other countries later. It is Mr Elliott yet again, but if anyone else wishes to come in, please do so. We want to keep this comprehensive.

Hugh Elliott: In the interests of completeness, I will clarify for Baroness Goudie that the Public Diplomacy Board has since lapsed.

The Chairman: Yes, that we understand.

Hugh Elliott: The question about the intention to publish a soft power strategy goes back to my answer to the previous question. A great deal of work went on at official level in 2011 across government departments—this was not just the Foreign Office, although the Foreign Office was leading the work; and it was not just across departments, it was with outside organisations, our arm’s-length bodies, academics, NGOs, business and the voluntary sector—looking at exactly this broad issue of soft power. Ministers having looked at this, the decision was that with the Olympics looming extraordinarily large we should indeed focus very much on the Olympics and getting the most out of the Olympics as the unique opportunity for soft power projection that the United Kingdom had at that point in time. As for the future, I cannot really speculate.

Baroness Prosser: It is a fairly straightforward question, I hope, Lord Chairman. My interests are as recorded in the register of interests, but I should also mention that I am the secretary of the All-Party Group on Ethics and Sustainability in Fashion. My question goes to Mr Nichol. Was the UK’s reputation enhanced or damaged by the recent disaster in Bangladesh, both by the disaster itself and the positive response of some British companies, which has brought about quite a good result for lots of workers in Bangladesh? Not all British companies responded positively but the overall result has been quite helpful. Do you think that it impacted upon the view of the Bangladeshi people of the UK as a trader?

Keith Nichol: It certainly shaped people’s perceptions in this country as well as in Bangladesh and around the world. If such a tragedy serves to bring to light the circumstances in which these textiles are created, that is a positive thing in the sense of learning from such a terrible experience. It illustrates a point that relates to Baroness Nicholson’s question about how we measure the impact of all of this. You are absolutely right. The reaction of UK businesses and companies in the fashion and textiles industry was, if anything, possibly more important than the Government’s response. That role of ethics in business is shaping how

the UK is perceived around the world. We have to recognise the limits to the Government's influence in all this. The Government can act in all sorts of ways to try to promote positive images of the UK but there are many external factors, including the role that business plays, that shape the way we are perceived around the world.

Baroness Prosser: I think the view was that the Government's response was pretty negligible, really; they hardly said a word, which was a bit of a shame.

The Chairman: That is another question, I feel. Lord Ramsbotham?

Q12 Lord Ramsbotham: Thank you, Lord Chairman. I declare only one interest that is not on the Register, which is that I am a former soldier and I was at one time involved with post-conflict reconstruction operations with and for the UN and the World Bank. Following on from what Lord Janvrin said about co-ordinating a part of the strategy, and also something you said at the beginning, Mr Elliott, about your responsibility for cross-government conflict prevention, as I remember from my work at that time, intervention and post-conflict reconstruction somewhere was conflict prevention somewhere else. All the time we have been speaking, Afghanistan has been going through my mind, as indeed Iraq has, because I always felt that with Iraq we never really co-ordinated the soft power and indeed a lot of the other economic development that we could have raised from our intervention and taken advantage of it. We have now got 2014 looming, and if we are not careful we will lose all the advantages that we have as a nation in Afghanistan. Who is actually co-ordinating what is going on? I know that the MoD training is part of the soft power development but who is actually co-ordinating it?

The Chairman: Any offers? Mr Elliott again.

Hugh Elliott: Thank you very much, Lord Chairman, Lord Ramsbotham. The co-ordination is done under the auspices of the National Security Council. It is important to say a few words about that, not just in respect of Afghanistan, where I know a lot of attention is being

paid, as one would expect, to 2014 and to the whole range of areas in which the Government and the United Kingdom can effectively project soft power. More broadly than Afghanistan—and perhaps I should have mentioned this in the answer to Lord Janvrin—it is important to note that in terms of strategy around soft power, Ministers decided that rather than taking a completely global approach, the National Security Council would focus on key emerging powers and within that develop a specific strand around soft power. Perhaps my colleague Mr Mitchell would like to say a word or two about that.

The Chairman: We had reports about 18 months ago that our military forces in Afghanistan were becoming more involved in—or Ministers thought that they should become more involved in—civil power, civic operations and social reconstruction. Where would that idea have come from and which department would have overseen any change of emphasis in the military's role?

Hugh Elliott: I imagine that would have been done under the auspices of the National Security Council but I am not an expert on this issue. Perhaps it would be acceptable to write to you and answer that specific question.

The Chairman: Right, thank you. Sorry, you were just suggesting who should answer Lord Ramsbotham's question.

Hugh Elliott: Perhaps Mr Mitchell can talk a little bit about that.

Andrew Mitchell: When we talk about the emerging powers and the work that we do in the Foreign Office, in co-ordination with others, in engaging with the emerging powers, I recognise that that is not the totality of our targets for soft power in the world. It is discrete from the question of how we engage in the context of Afghanistan, but it is worth noting that the National Security Council has indeed decided to form a co-ordinating sub-committee on the emerging powers. This is part of the emerging powers initiative. Again, that broader emerging powers initiative is a response to the shift of power to the south and

the east and the recognition that economic opportunity will increasingly come from a shift towards new export markets and new opportunities in those fast growing economies. As a consequence, the Foreign Office has undertaken a process of opening or upgrading 20 new embassies, consulates and trade offices in countries such as India, Brazil, El Salvador and Paraguay. We have upgraded or opened nine new posts, and we are working to upgrade further embassies and consulates in countries such as India, Liberia and Paraguay as part of an attempt to move our resources to those areas of the world where we feel that the combination of our ability to influence through soft power and by other means and to support our businesses is highest. There is also a dedicated emerging powers team within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that supports that work, which is an innovation.

As I mentioned, the work itself is co-ordinated through a sub-committee of the National Security Council that is charged with work on the emerging powers. This focuses on four strands of work: trade and investment; building alliances with the emerging powers to establish the rules-based international economic system that I talked about earlier; security issues; and cultural and people-to-people links. This is an exemplar of a project that the Government have undertaken, that they are co-ordinating across government, using the machinery of the National Security Council to do so.

I will also say a word about how we co-ordinate overseas. Of course, the head of mission in any given country will have a business plan, which will integrate the various measures that are part of the work that the mission undertakes. That is a broad spectrum of activity from trade and investment targets, which will be written into the business plan, through to outcomes associated with, for example, defence diplomacy work or other aspects of the work that we do overseas. That mission will also have a set of communications objectives and a team supporting those communications objectives.

To answer your question, in the context of Afghanistan, the Afghan-facing communications in Kabul are delivered by a cross-departmental British embassy communications team through a range of media. In Afghanistan social media is a particularly effective means of communicating with people: more than 32,000 people, including a high percentage of 18 to 24 year-olds, are following the British embassy in Kabul's Facebook page. The dedicated communications operation within the British embassy in Kabul integrates the various aspects of activity and support from other Government departments in delivering that communication.

The Chairman: Lord Foulkes, you wanted to ask a question on this, and then I would like to bring in Lord Hodgson.

Q13 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: In answer to Baroness Goudie, you said that the Public Diplomacy Board has lapsed. In answer to Lord Janvrin, you said that the National Security Council has a sub-committee dealing with the emerging powers and co-ordinating that work. But that is not anything to do with the business plan for co-ordinating soft power in every country of the world, which is what was originally proposed in the FCO business plan for 2010-12. What I do not understand is where you all meet together to discuss co-ordinated activity to put our soft power plans into action. Where do your Ministers meet together? Which fora do you meet in?

Hugh Elliott: With regard to the business plan and the soft power strategy, as I indicated, Ministers decided to focus in on the Olympics—

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: But they are past, the Olympics have finished. They have been finished for a long time. That is living in the past.

Hugh Elliott: There is a great deal of work being done to make the most of the Olympic legacy. There is a great deal of business that is being done on the back of the Olympics. We believe that it is very important to make the most of that legacy. There are a number of

other sporting opportunities that we can learn from on the back of the Olympics, such as the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, where a great deal of work and collaboration is going on across Government and with the Scottish Government. That is an ongoing area, and Lord Coe would certainly take the view that we are only halfway there—10 years in, we have got another 10 years of work to make the very most of the Olympics in London.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: That is sport; that is only one aspect.

Hugh Elliott: That is one area. Another area where the Government get together to discuss and collaborate across government is in the National Security Council with regard to the emerging powers. Another area is around the GREAT campaign in order to project Britain overseas. Another area where Ministers decided that it was important for us to link up more and make the most of what Britain has to offer in order to project our soft power is around the education strand of the industrial strategy, which will be published in the near future. My answer is that there are a number of different areas in which this work is being taken forward in a highly co-ordinated way.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: But nowhere where all of them are being taken forward together.

The Chairman: We are pursuing two strands here and, as Chair, I am trying to think how best to develop them. One is the co-ordination, which is not only transdepartmental but ministerial and indeed the Cabinet and the Cabinet committees are involved here. We will want to pursue that, possibly, and Baroness Prosser may have a question on that in a moment. First, can we pick up Andrew Mitchell's comments earlier about emerging markets? There are reports—and indeed, ministerial utterances—indicating that our performance in emerging markets is not good, that we are behind the others; we have arrived and found the Germans already there, the French already there and so on. Lord Hodgson has great experience in this area and would like to pursue that.

Q14 Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Chairman, I have to make the declaration: I have no interests to declare, except those that are in the Register, which I do not think are particularly relevant to our discussions here. In fact, probably the nearest I get to having something to declare is the fact that my wife is a member of the Foreign Secretary's advisory panel on preventing sexual violence in conflict situations. The fact that I do not quite know what the title is shows that I am not absolutely close to it, but I probably should put that on the record.

My question has largely been forked over in the questions we have had already. In particular, it deals with building our commercial economic interests in the light of the new emerging markets: Asia, Africa and Latin America. That is a pretty broad range, and although we have been told that we have a genuine global reach, should we not be finding some focus and some segmentation in order to increase our impact using the resources that we have? It may be that bilateral, non-official things can go on elsewhere but where should the Government be focusing in a slightly narrower way, bearing in mind that, as we have been told, what appeals in Paris appals in Riyadh? We have also heard about the success the Australians have had in building a relationship with Indonesia with student visas. There is a saying about marketing campaigns: if you throw enough mud against a wall, some of it will stick. One sometimes wonders if we are not just throwing mud at the wall and hoping that some of it will stick.

The Chairman: I think we will ask BIS to start on that but, again, it covers all departments.

Maddalaine Ansell: Yes. We do attempt to prioritise. Again, I will talk most specifically about education and science. In education, we took as our starting point the list of emerging powers developed by the National Security Council. Then we did some analysis looking at which of those countries had demographics that suggested that there would be an increasing demand of education and which of them had expressed the desire to increase the number of

young people going on to tertiary education. We also thought about which of them indicated a willingness to work with the UK. From that, we developed a list of eight countries and one region—the Gulf—in which we are prioritising our efforts to co-ordinate all the major players that represent the education sector so that we can go together and demonstrate the breadth and depth of the UK education system. Around the edges of that, many universities are pursuing their own niche interests according to their own business plans but we are focusing our co-ordinated government effort on those countries and markets. Most recently, David Willetts led what we call a system-to-system mission to Mexico and Colombia, where he talked about, for example, supporting them in the commercialisation of science, which is a key interest in both those countries; how we could support them to create government-sponsored scholarship programmes; and how we could make it easier for them to send large numbers of their best students to the UK to study.

On the science side, we are still going through the process, working with various learned people from the scientific community—the Royal Society, other learned bodies, the research councils, et cetera—to think about how we should prioritise in our scientific bilateral engagement. Here we are thinking about the importance of maintaining the excellence of the UK research base by working with the best in the world—so we should not forget our traditional partners such as the United States, France, Germany and Japan as we think about the emerging powers—as well as about the kind of engagement that we should have with different emerging powers. There are some, such as China, Brazil and India, that are excellent in many fields of research and we would want to work with them to maintain our own excellence, but there are others that I perhaps will not name here that are not so strong yet in science and research. We have done analysis around what it is about the UK that is attractive to them and what might be a golden key to unlock other kinds of engagement, and there we are thinking more about how we can support capacity-building or

other kinds of scientific research collaboration. On the scientific side, it is still somewhat a work in progress but we are making quite good progress with our stakeholders.

The Chairman: Lord Hodgson, do you want to pursue that?

Q15 Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: If the other departments think that they have a series of focused programmes, it would be helpful if we could know about them, in so far as we can, because otherwise we are going to be up here at 30,000 feet but what we are trying to do is get down to 500 feet to see some quite precise deliveries and results. If these are on the record it would be helpful for us to see them.

The Chairman: Do you have a comment on that, Mr Mitchell?

Andrew Mitchell: Would it be helpful for us to write or to answer now?

The Chairman: Yes, it would be helpful to write. That is the way to do it, possibly.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Yes, it would be very interesting to see whether all departments are concentrating on the same markets.

The Chairman: Baroness Prosser, we have given this co-ordination issue quite a beating. Is there anything you want to add? There are examples of where one department seems to be working against another; for instance, in visas.

Baroness Prosser: Hopefully rather quickly, Chairman, because we have already had a bit of a run round the bush with this. I got the impression that you were slightly defensive about co-ordination. I hope you are not going to be because it seems to me that unless there is an overarching view in Government as to what each of you is getting up to something is going to fall between the gaps and/or one or t'other of you is going to be doing things that somebody else is doing, because they are all interrelated in very many ways. I was hoping that you were going to be able to tell us that there is some Government structure led by one or other of your departments that makes sure that that does not happen, but it appears that you are not able to say that. Perhaps you can enlighten us.

Andrew Mitchell: I hesitate to refer to the National Security Council again but it is quite important to bear in mind how the National Security Council deals with particular questions, not so much thematically but, for example, looking at a relationship with a country with which we have a long, strong and deep relationship that spans the interests of multiple Government departments. It is in the National Security Council that that variety of interests is brought to bear. The intention that Ministers have in dealing with issues in that way is precisely the one that you identify: namely, to ensure that we are not dealing separately in silos with issues associated with each of those countries but that the relationship as a whole with that country is dealt with in one place by the entire ministerial team. Now, there are certain sub-committees of the National Security Council that take particular issues away and work on them in more detail, but again on the basis of co-ordination between Government departments. As the Foreign Office's director for prosperity and broadly responsible for the global economy, I spend a significant amount of my time in co-ordination with other Government departments. Several of the units that I am responsible for are joint units with other Government departments. Co-ordination across Government is part of everything that I do and I could not do my job were I not co-ordinating with other Government departments. I would not underestimate the impact that the National Security Council has in defining the terms of that co-ordination.

The Chairman: Does the NSC meet regularly?

Andrew Mitchell: The NSC meets on a very regular basis, yes.

The Chairman: What, once a month?

Andrew Mitchell: I am not entirely sure; I would have to check that. But certainly the NSC and the various Cabinet committees and the NSC sub-committees meet on a very regular basis. They determine, for example, the pace and the scheduling of the work that we do on the emerging powers.

The Chairman: Right, I think that we should move on because we have taken a lot of your time and you have been very forthcoming. Thank you very much. Baroness Morris, did you want to add a word?

Q16 Baroness Morris of Bolton: Thank you. First of all, I declare my interests as set out in the Register. With relevance to this Committee, I am the Prime Minister's trade envoy to Kuwait, Jordan and the Palestinian Territories. I am chairman of the Conservative Middle East Council. I travel extensively in the region and declare all my trips in the Register. I am chancellor of the University of Bolton, which confers degrees around the world. I am president of Medical Aid for Palestinians, president of the World Travel Market Advisory Council and, until recently, was a trustee of UNICEF UK.

The Chairman: Thank you.

Baroness Morris of Bolton: I think that covers it all. I would like to move to a part of the world where I hope we have a head start in soft power, and ask how your departments are taking advantage of the UK's relationship with Commonwealth countries. In relation to a question Lord Hodgson asked, Mr Nichol talked about the GREAT campaign and how it was having an impact on international students. But we know, particularly in India, that there was very much a message going out that the UK was closed for business, that you could not get a visa. The Lord Chairman touched on whether or not one department is sending out one message but a different message is being received from another. Perhaps you could specifically touch on that when you answer, please.

The Chairman: After Mr Nichol, we will ask Dr Hendrie how DfID relates to the Commonwealth in particular, because it is a very important aspect.

Keith Nichol: Thank you, Lord Chairman. In terms of our engagement with the Commonwealth, again working across Government, obviously we very much have one eye on the Commonwealth Games next year in Glasgow. All our sporting activity is very much a

part of that. As with the Olympics, there will be a cultural festival around the Commonwealth Games. In that multilateral context, the sectors for which DCMS is responsible are very much joined up.

In terms of individual countries within the Commonwealth—for example, India—it may not have received much attention when the Prime Minister went to India recently but the British Council is initiating a five-year programme of cultural exchanges with India under the title “Reimagine”, and that is very much what we are trying to do now in building on multiyear programmes rather than a single season or year of activity. It allows cultural organisations to plan a bit further ahead; for example, next year has recently been declared the UK-Russia Year of Culture and I am sure that it will be a tremendous success, but it is quite late in the planning cycle for a cultural body to develop a programme of activity for the next 12 months. This “Reimagine” programme with India will cover a five-year period and we think that is a more sustainable way in which to build relationships.

Baroness Morris of Bolton: But can you just touch on the student visas, because it is a terribly important part? Here we are: we are trying to encourage more students to come. I absolutely understand that we have to protect our country and make sure that the people who come are coming here for the right reasons. We had the GREAT campaign yet, very much in India particularly, the message went out to Indian students that the UK was closed for coming, and numbers dropped considerably in nearly all UK universities.

Keith Nichol: I will make one point on that and, if I may, I think my BIS colleague may be able to enhance my answer. This is where it helps sometimes to look through the other end of the telescope. This cross-government co-ordination comes together in every country through our ambassador or high commissioner. In India, it is the high commission that brings together the visa services, the FCO team, the Intellectual Property Office, British Council

and UKTI. In that challenge, which I do recognise around visas in India, it is our high commissioner's role to address the perceptions around visas.

Maddalaine Ansell: Yes, we very much recognise the issue of falling applications from Indian students following some of the unhelpful rhetoric. Under the GREAT campaign, the Indian high commission have bid for some funding in order to promote the message that international students are welcome to come to the UK, and that there is no cap on the number of legitimate students, and to explain the post-study work rules. We hope that will help to correct some of the amplification in the Indian press of some of the issues.

Additionally with India, we have so far a rolling five-year programme called the UK-India Education and Research Initiative, where we work closely with the Indians to support research collaborations, to work through issues like mutual recognition of qualifications, and also to deal with issues like that. We are about half way through the second five-year programme and just about to go into the evaluation of that to see whether it is something we should continue for a third term, should funding be available.

Q17 The Chairman: Dr Hendrie, would you just like to comment, particularly on the Commonwealth aspect?

Barbara Hendrie: Yes, thank you. We have a particular commitment to expand our support for 13 of the poorest Commonwealth countries, because some of the countries in the Commonwealth do face some of the biggest challenges on various dimensions of poverty. We will be increasing over the period to 2015 from £1.5 billion to £2.2 billion spend in Commonwealth countries—these are the 13 poorest countries. We also fund a number of different programmes run by the Commonwealth Secretariat, including core funding for the Commonwealth Secretariat itself. Total funding of Commonwealth Secretariat programmes is in the order of £35 million. Within that, the core of support to the secretariat is about

£11 million, so we have an expanding programme of inputs and development co-operation with Commonwealth countries and the secretariat.

We are also working very actively to build development partnerships with South Africa and with India, where we are graduating, as you will know, our bilateral aid programmes, but still seeking to develop partnerships with those countries, particularly focused on third countries, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia, where we provide a platform for India and South Africa to bring their own development expertise to poorer countries. So we are seeking to thicken the relationship there once our bilateral programmes close.

Also, we work with the Commonwealth Secretariat to facilitate their engagement with different multilateral forums—for example, the G20. Alongside the Francophonie, we tried to enable the Commonwealth to get involved in conversations in the development working group of the G20.

Finally, we have been very active at the UN General Assembly in New York, to try to support a broader conversation—to help broker a broader conversation—across Commonwealth countries in relation to the negotiations that will happen at the UN around the next development framework, and trying to sow a sort of common approach informed by our common history and common values to development.

Q18 The Chairman: Just to carry on from that, I am going to ask Baroness Goudie to ask another question, but the two are linked. The Commonwealth, after all, has got this working language, which is ours, and that contains its own attitudes and its own DNA, and ought to give this country, as Baroness Morris rightly said, a huge advantage in promoting our soft power relations with what is a third of the entire planet—two and a quarter billion people. At the same time, the connectivity is now absolutely total. It is not just a question of speaking the same language; it is instant and continuous connection at every point, every day, between every level of activity between all these countries. It is a vast new tableau. Are

we—this is Baroness Goudie's question; I must not put it for her, but that is where we are going.

Baroness Goudie: I am very concerned. I do not think—I may be wrong—that we are communicating with all the countries that we should be communicating with. Also, thanks to technology now, we should be communicating with all the organisations—you have mentioned a few this afternoon; for example, there is the ILO, there are some of the organisations in Geneva, and some of the other organisations around the UN. Not only could we be selling our own ethical policy about how human rights should be run—about how the supply chain through these factories that Baroness Prosser has mentioned—by asking countries and companies to sign up to the Athens agreement which this Government, through the Home Office, has been pushing, but by doing this we would be able to give a better chance for companies from the UK who are international to do trade with those countries. I know that you do not like the pushing of companies, but we have to do this, including when there is a chance to allocate our companies to the new up-and-coming superpowers and the BICS countries.

At the same time, also around ethical matters, you were talking about selling education. It is not just senior education you need to be selling. We need to be selling the point of education of boys and girls, and also around violence. DfID is working with some NGOs, but we need to encourage the rest of the world to work with us through soft power. Australia in particular is doing a huge amount of work down in that part of Asia. We should be picking other parts of the BICS world—these other emerging powers—where we can work and we can then be seen to be offering something, and they will want to trade with us or buy from us in terms of our education, in terms of our law, in terms of how their parliaments should be run and so on.

We have got this opportunity, through the new wave of technology, which is moving very fast. It is moving faster than we can actually keep up with, but we have to do it, because other people are in there already, or pushing themselves in there.

The Chairman: This is a completely new world, is it not?

Baroness Goudie: Absolutely.

The Chairman: I would love to hear just a few comments from our team on that fact. Mr Eric Schmidt of Google told us that there are more mobile telephone subscribers on this planet than there are human beings. Work that one out.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: I have got three.

Q19 The Chairman: This must change all your work in all your departments, and I think that Baroness Goudie has really put her finger on it. Who would like to comment? Mr Elliott again—let us start with the FCO.

Hugh Elliott: I am very happy to kick off, my Lord Chairman. It is a fascinating and very wide-ranging question. I will attempt to give one illustration to talk to the issue of networks, partnerships, breadth of relationships and how we might articulate it and link it up with UK values, with a specific example around the arms trade treaty and how we are involved in that process, which is perhaps illustrative of the sort of way in which we are trying to make the link. Then I will speak briefly about what the Foreign Office is doing to integrate and professionalise ourselves in the use of—

Baroness Goudie: And cluster bombs. You did a lot on cluster bombs. It made a big impact, the work you did on that.

Hugh Elliott: —digital platforms.

On the arms trade treaty, the campaign that the British Government led is a very good illustration of the power of relationships and networks, because it was an issue that, in a sense, was brought to us by the NGO movement, saying, “Why don’t you do more on this?”

It was an issue on which we went abroad and looked at the sort of international partnerships and the sort of partners that we might have in order to help develop this in the international agenda. We ended up with countries such as, from the top of my head, Japan, Argentina and South Africa, countries with very different sorts of interest but a common set of goals on this particular issue, and with whom we decided that it would be important for us to lead.

We collaboratively put together a process, recognising that an issue like this needed a lot of energy and oomph behind it, so it was a process that very much we were absolutely instrumental in leading. All the time, we were building relationships with business, with NGOs, with the voluntary sector a lot, and having a lot of discussions all along the way. And that was not just in the UK, but globally and—to the aspect of your question about United Nations institutions—obviously the United Nations was absolutely crucial to all this.

In the end, cutting a long story short, that very open, collaborative, persistent, determined and focused approach, taking into account all those sorts of networks, did actually deliver a very concrete result in the form of the arms trade treaty, which was a tremendous success for all of those involved. I think that illustrates part of your point.

Obviously the digital area is crucial now for being able to reach all the people who we need to reach, whatever country they are in. I shall just give you a few examples of how we in the Foreign Office are professionalising our implementation of our digital strategy. We have set up a special unit to help us to do this. To take social media as a leading example of how well we are doing this—we are probably doing it just about as well as anybody in the world; perhaps the United States is a little bit ahead, as it has considerable resources to do this—we have 120 official Twitter channels around the world around our network and 120 Facebook pages. All our Ministers are on Twitter. Fifty of our ambassadors, as the face of Britain overseas, are on Twitter in addition to the official embassy accounts, personally being

involved and engaged with their constituencies. A particular example I would cite would be Lebanon, where our ambassador, Tom Fletcher, is extremely active in this area and reaching people whom traditionally diplomats might have struggled to reach.

This requires a very considerable investment in upskilling and training. At our recent leadership conference that we hosted for all our ambassadors around the world in London a few weeks ago, we held a special training session for ambassadors, which was massively oversubscribed. There was huge interest in this. There is complete awareness this is just going to be a natural way in which we need to do business. This is all part of the implementation of the Foreign Office's *Digital Strategy*, which was published at the end of last year in December 2012, which sets out—and we can provide the Committee with this if it would be of interest—a very detailed process of transformation of how we do foreign policy to ensure that we make the very most of social media in the ways that we have to reach different parts of the world.

The Chairman: I think, actually, this Committee should be circulated, if possible, with that document, which is clearly on a central part of our thinking.

Hugh Elliott: Certainly.

Q20 The Chairman: Very well. Are there any other points anyone wants to make? Lord Janvrin, you wanted to come in particularly on the inward-facing aspect of the scene. Or—

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Promotion of cultural norms came up as part of your response to Baroness Goudie, and indeed as part of her question. This may sound a trifle uncompromising; it is not meant to be. I was in Rio the day that Jean Charles de Menezes was shot in the Tube here in London, and there was a stupendous amount of press coverage in Brazil. My host, who was an Anglophile Brazilian businessman said, "It is because we are shocked that you haven't lived up to your past standards, but it will die away because we believe generally in Brazil that British justice will be seen, there will be an investigation and

the truth will come out. In any case, by the by, the Rio police shoot 1,000 people a year and nobody turns a hair.” But he went on: “Your reputation has been damaged by a completely different thing.” And I said, “Oh, what is that?” He said, “Your ambassador here is gay, and he has insisted on bringing his partner with him and he is being presented at events.” This is an unfortunate thing to say, but he clearly thought this was very, very serious in a conservative Catholic country. I understand our cultural norm—I am not resiling from it—but we have to think about to what extent we wish to push it on to other people as part of our soft power developments.

The Chairman: Can we generalise that question, rather than be specific?

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Of course. I am not trying to say—

The Chairman: I would prefer it if we generalised. To what extent are we in danger of pushing and imposing our own values, which we adhere to and cling to very strongly, a little too readily on others? Can I put it in more general terms? What do you think? Is that a fair criticism, Mr Elliott?

Hugh Elliott: I think it is very important that we do make the most of our values. We believe that British values are very strong, and we do not believe we should compromise our values in the exercise of our foreign policy. That said, of course we need to be sensitive to how, in seeking to achieve what we are trying to achieve, our actions come across in specific cultural contexts.

Q21 The Chairman: Lord Janvrin, I have one more comment after you, but you ask the penultimate question.

Lord Janvrin: I want to come back to the question of a wider strategy. Forgive me for doing so, but I think it is very important, and I will explain right at the end. I can see that in terms of interdepartmental co-ordination, it works probably extremely well through the National Security Council, et cetera—you have explained that. But you have also said—quite

rightly in my view—that soft power is often about what other non-governmental agents do and how they join, if you like, in trying to support and indeed help the government policy, whether it be the arms trade treaty, et cetera. There is therefore in my view a government leadership role for a lot of non-governmental players and agents in this. I wonder whether, to have if you like the best leadership role, we need an overall strategy that people know about. In other words, this is not interdepartmental co-ordination; this is a leadership role. My question to you is: would you find it useful for this Committee to think in terms of an overall soft power strategy?

The Chairman: There is a question. Would anyone like to start on it? Mr Elliott again, or Mr Mitchell, or the cultural side?

Hugh Elliott: I would be happy to—

Lord Janvrin: I would quite like to hear other people's views as well. Poor Mr Elliott has been fielding—

The Chairman: If I could just add: a number of other bodies, not just this Committee, are looking at very much that question as well. I think a report is about to come out from the British Council on these things. The British Academy—or is it the Royal Academy?—is looking at them as well. There is a new sort of seriousness in international cultural relations which I think we have got to somehow reflect more effectively. I think a great deal hangs on your question, but it may not be possible to answer it in the last few minutes.

Maddalaine Ansell: Could I give a short answer? A couple of years ago, the National Security Council Emerging Powers said that it would be very good if there were a sub-committee involving the wider stakeholders around education and research. We set up such a sub-committee and looked at how we could co-ordinate across the piece our activities with those in universities, colleges, research councils, et cetera, and other Government departments. What we found was that the meetings happened, but they were not as focused

as people would find most useful. What we ended up doing is splitting it, so we now have one that focuses on international education, and a different one that focuses more on science and research. I suppose for me one of the questions is whether it is actually more useful to take smaller topics rather than a whole piece, so that the stakeholders who turn up are interested in the whole of the meeting and feel that they have something to say, rather than are sitting there kind of silently while we are talking about trade aspects or cultural aspects, when in fact their area of expertise is science or education or arms trading.

The Chairman: Right. Mr Nichol, do you want to add something?

Keith Nichol: I think from a cultural perspective Lord Janvrin's question is very much in sync with my Secretary of State. She has observed that, culturally, we have this fantastic web of activity all over the world. We have probably about 1,400 arts and cultural organisations active in all sorts of countries but, until very recently, we had no coherent sense of where they are going or what they are doing. So what we are trying to do now—I hope it is not an heroic exercise—is to start to map that activity and to see where it is possible to align it with wider HMG and UK interests. That is one way of aligning cultural activity among the cultural players with business. If we know that the Royal Ballet is going to be in Brasilia in 2015, it may be that there are ways in which we can align that activity with trade and commercial activity in a way which makes the whole greater than the sum of the parts. In that respect, there is an opportunity to do that but, as I touched on earlier, we also have to respect the arm's-length principle and not prescribe which cultural bodies go to which countries, so there is a balancing act for us there.

Q22 The Chairman: That is a very useful and important answer. I am going to end, because we have had quite a session, with a question which probably lies on the frontiers between ministerial responsibility and official responsibility, and therefore you are perfectly entitled to duck it and say it lies on the other side of the fence. We have talked about all the

tremendous efforts we are doing in all these fields—cultural, diplomatic, scientific, medical, educational—and it is very exciting and admirable, but we do also know that we have some pretty sour and difficult relations with some countries. Our Caribbean friends are forever raising the advanced passenger duty issue, and it is very sore and causes many problems. We only have to have a moment's discussion with our Chinese colleagues here in town or anywhere and they will tell us that our links with the Dalai Lama are absolutely weakening and destroying everything. I do not want to go into these questions but just to ask you: is it the case that some of these hot political issues are making the projection of our soft power much more difficult? If it is, are we satisfied that there is the right feedback inside the Government between those of you who are trying to do this job and the political and diplomatic forces that sometimes seem to be working completely the opposite way? Does it worry you?

Andrew Mitchell: I am not sure which side of the line it really does fall on, but I will venture an answer. In so far as the way that we act in the world is consistent with our values and our principles, in a sense our role is to ensure that the work that we do takes account of the shocks and the various misdemeanours that this occasionally throws up. I would say that we do of course attempt to do that in the Foreign Office, and certainly as a former head of mission myself I certainly saw my role overseas as helping to anticipate the risks associated with that kind of a potential problem, and then to manage those risks once they had transpired. But if I can say that that is in the ordinary course of diplomacy—it has happened for 100 or 200 years and it will continue to happen—I guess it is about being true to your principles, sticking to your plan, and managing the impact that that has.

The Chairman: I think that is a very fair reply to—I agree—a slightly difficult question. Have any of my colleagues got any final point they wanted to put? No? I think in that case I would like to thank all five of you very much indeed. You have been very forthcoming. It has

raised perhaps rather more questions than it has all answered, but those are matters for us to pursue in this Committee in future sessions, so thank you all very much indeed. We are most grateful. Could you just leave, because we have got just two or three minutes of private deliberation. Could I ask colleagues to stay for a second? Thank you very much.