Finding Britain's role in a changing world:

Projecting the UK's values abroad

The Foreign Policy Centre

Executive Summary

2021 is going to be an important year for the UK's global ambitions. Exiting both the post-Brexit transition period and, vaccines permitting, the toughest COVID restrictions the UK will have an opportunity to set out its vision for the future through the publication of the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy and to put that new strategy into practice through its dual leadership of the G7 and the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP).

This new publication sets out a wide range of ideas for how the UK can do things differently in the future to support and promote its values in its foreign policy. The UK should carve out a new niche that builds on its soft power strengths and history as a global hub to position itself as a, or even *the*, 'library of democracy' by providing the necessary tools to support those defending human rights and democracy around the world. This requires support for the UK's world class universities, NGOs and media outlets and getting the Home Office to better provide sanctuary to activists in need and access for those wanting to visit the UK. The UK should build on the success so far of the new Magnitsky sanctions and use aid to better support open societies and human rights objectives.

Given the tendency of kleptocratic autocrats and their hangers on to funnel their money to or through UK jurisdictions, the fights against corruption and to support democracy are mutually supportive. Delivering overdue legal reforms and enhancing the capacity of enforcement bodies will be crucial, as will be increasing the use of Unexplained Wealth Orders. The UK must also learn the lessons of its own COVID procurement issues to boost credibility on transparency and accountability.

The UK's new trade function needs to be made more accountable to Parliament and the public, with deals containing stronger human rights and environmental protections, as well as a focus on supporting developing country economies to flourish. It should seek to make trade one plank of broader and more comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreements that combine it with more detailed plans for security, scientific, academic, cultural, aid and environmental collaboration.

To help the UK deliver an ambitious agenda this research suggests several recommendations including:

- Positioning the UK as a 'library of democracy', a global hub for supporting liberal democracy and human rights;
- Increasing the use of Magnitsky sanctions, expanding their remit to cover corruption and giving Parliament a role in proposing relevant cases;
- Passing the Registration of Overseas Entities Bill and planned reforms to limited partnership law, improving registry access and connectivity, and perhaps a new national asset registry;
- Continuing to expand the investigative capacity of Companies House, the National Economic Crime Centre and its constituent agencies, and increase the use of Unexplained Wealth Orders;
- Taking action on libel tourism and repression of international journalists by introducing UK anti-SLAPP legislation and improving conducts codes for lawyers and financial services;
- Making trade negotiations more transparent and accountable to Parliament and the public, with deals containing a stronger development focus and more enforceable human rights and environmental clauses;
- Integrating trade deals better alongside the UK's other diplomatic objectives through more comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreements;
- Returning to the legal and manifesto commitment of 0.7 per cent GNI invested in Overseas Development Aid as soon as possible, with a sunset clause if any legal changes;
- Improving Parliamentary and Ministerial oversight and setting an ethical framework for the deployment of cyber capabilities, with a focus on defensive and combat support functions; and
- Delivering more ambitious commitments for climate action through the UK's Nationally Determined Contribution, better use of the aid budget and the use of the financial sector.

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1. Introduction: Projecting the UK's values abroad

By Adam Hug[1]

This essay collection asks, and tries to answer, the question 'what can Britain do now?' It is an examination of the emerging tools and strategies the UK can use to support and promote its values in its foreign policy. While in a number of areas there is continuity in British rhetoric and policy, outside the European Union (EU) the UK is required to rethink the way it operates in order to continue to exert influence on the world stage.[2] Not only must it build on its existing strengths, as set out earlier in this publication series, but find new ways of working.

Building on the cross-governmental principle behind the Integrated Review, the UK's emerging foreign policy must effectively use all available resources inside and outside government, hard and soft power, to support its foreign policy objectives and its chosen values.[3] As set out in the first collection in this series, *The principles for Global Britain*, and in Cat Tully and Sophie Middlemiss' essay in this publication, a sensible approach has to start from a clear understanding of Britain's place in the world and buy in from the public, particularly the younger generation and others often excluded from the policy making process - a 'whole of nation strategy' as Tully and Middlemiss put it.[4] In their essay Ruth Bergan and David Lawrence make the case that this principle applies equally to ensuring public participation in discussions over trade policy. A positive and transformative

[1] Adam Hug became Director of the Foreign Policy Centre (FPC) in November 2017. He had previously been the Policy Director at the FPC from 2008–2017. His research focuses on human rights and governance issues, particularly in the former Soviet Union. He also writes on UK and EU foreign policy. *Image by Rian (Ree) Saunders under (CC).*

[2] Ben Judah, Surprise! Post-Brexit Britain's foreign policy looks a lot like the old one, The Washington Post, July 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/07/13/surprise-post-brexit-britains-foreign-policy-looks-lot-like-old-one/

[3] What those values should be.

[4] Finding Britain's role in a changing world: The principles for Global Britain, FPC, September 2020, https://fpc.org.uk/publications/the-principles-for-global-britain/

agenda for the future of UK foreign policy and how it can be a force for good may, at least have a chance to begin healing some of the divisions over the country's future. As a middle power in a fast changing world, enduring polarisation and division over the UK's national strategy is not a luxury we can afford.

Prior to Brexit, although participation in the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy did not prevent the UK from showing international leadership where there was the necessary political will, the need to participate in determining and supporting sometimes lowest common denominator positions generated by consensus dulled the edge of some of its decision making. The UK now has the opportunity, if it so chooses, to show greater speed of action, and greater creativity and skill in the delivery of its foreign policy to compensate for and potentially outweigh the loss of diplomatic clout given by EU membership.[5] In broad-terms, the UK's foreign policy planners will need to recognise the implications of the UK being a less important market and partner for other world powers, most notably the US, seeking to access and influence the EU. It retains key strengths but will need to lean into the greater flexibility that the post-Brexit environment provides.

There is a need for policy makers to accept the unavoidable fact of the UK's '*relative*' decline in geopolitical influence, but also understand that with the right level of political will it does not mean the UK has to do less in absolute terms and that it can still make a real impact with the right policies and strategies.[6] The politically expedient, but somewhat strategically confused, recent decisions of increasing defence spending while cutting international aid pull in opposite directions the effort to reposition the UK on the world stage.[7] However this shift, relative to other powers, makes it all the more important that it uses its time now wisely to help shape the international architecture that it will live with into the future and find innovative ways to burden-share in areas where the UK lacks capacity alone. Ignoring or denying the need to respond to these shifts in the geo-political landscape will hasten and exacerbate British decline, in both relative and absolute terms. Finding the right tone in the Integrated Review and the Government's wider messaging will be key, focused on national pride about what Britain can do without resorting to jingoism, striving for the UK to be exceptional without claiming exceptionalism.

Finding a new role: The 'Library of democracy'

It's far from original to reference the old Dean Acheson quote about Britain having 'lost an empire and has not yet found a role', but it feels once again relevant with Brexit and shifting US priorities untethering the UK from its more recent mooring as a balancing force between European and US interests in the wider Trans-Atlantic partnership.[8] Often that recent role was described as being a bridge, something that led more cynical critiques to claim, usually unfairly, that Britain was being walked over by either of those partners. So part of the current process of reassessing the UK's position post Brexit is trying to identify and agree on its new role in the international order. To help Britain find that niche it could well be worth seeking to adapt another mid-20th Century aphorism to meet today's challenges.

In the early phase of the Second World War, prior to Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt described America's role as being the 'Arsenal of Democracy', where the US would provide tools used by

[5] Dominique Moisi, The isolation of the United Kingdom is no longer splendid, Institut Montaigne, July 2020, https://www.institutmontaigne.org/blog/lisolement-du-royaume-uni-na-plus-rien-de-splendide

[6] Recent polling data suggests the British public is perhaps more attuned to the UK's position than some it is political class by answering the question 'Do the British overestimate or underestimate how important the UK is on the world stage?' as Overestimate: 44%, Underestimate: 19% and Get it about right: 17%. See: Twitter Post, YouGov, Twitter, November 2020, https://twitter.com/YouGov/status/1328378446565748736?s=20

[7] In terms of managing the Government's political coalition.

[8] Like the many US leaders who would follow, with a brief interregnum during the Trump-era, Acheson was adamant that the UK's future (and its future utility to the United States) lay through greater integration and cooperation with Europe. See: Guardian Century, Britain's role in world, The Guardian, December 1962, https://www.theguardian.com/century/1960-1969/Story/0,,105633,00.html

others in the fight for the future of democracy.[9] Despite recently promised increases in defence spending there is little public appetite to use such power widely to try to impose its values on others given the troubled legacy of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, as set out in the FPC's previous *Protecting the UK's ability to defend its values* publication, in a number of overlapping areas including academia, NGOs, media outlets and cultural institutions the UK remains a leading global player.[10] If the UK wants to build on these strengths to be a force for good in the world, it could perhaps start to frame its emerging global role as becoming a, or even *the,* 'Library of Democracy'.

Like the role of the library in communities around the country, the UK could act as an important resource and meeting place for the community of democratic nations. Similarly, as with libraries, there have sometimes been questions about their role in the modern world but they have adapted to become hubs that provide access to technology, hosting support services and activities that enable citizens to make change in their own lives. This new positioning would build on the UK soft power strengths and longstanding role as an international hub.

To play this role effectively care must be taken to protect the UK's globally focused NGOs, academic centres of excellence and international media platforms (not least the BBC) during the current economic downturn. It must also look at ways, through a truly Integrated Review, to reform Home Office practice to ensure the UK is better able to provide asylum to human rights defenders, independent journalists and other dissidents seeking a place of refuge from persecution, while similarly making it easier for international experts to visit for conferences and other short-term research collaborations. There needs to be greater recognition amongst policy makers that, irrespective of the rights and wrongs of the UK's negotiating objectives with the EU, the Government's willingness to actively embrace even a 'specific and limited' breach of international law in undermining a treaty it had only recently signed has hurt its standing in the wider international community, not only amongst EU member states with whom the UK seeks to work with diplomatically in future. UK Aid must also fully support the Government's Open Societies strategic objective by supporting human rights defenders and NGOs abroad, while working to avoid conflicts between human rights and development priorities.

Some of the noises coming out of the initial stages of the Government's now delayed Integrated Review suggest that it is thinking creatively about other ways for the UK to make its mark. These include placing a more active role in some of the more ostensibly mundane but important international bodies that set international standards and regulations, particularly in the digital space. In the past some authoritarian states obtained outsized roles in bodies such as the Internet Governance Forum by committing resources to them, including hosting the annual conferences, when others lacked the focus. If the UK wants to play a more prominent role it can build on its strong academic, legal, NGO and service sector resources to help take a more active role in global rule setting, and to compensate in part for no longer being able to directly influence the development of rules in its largest export market, the global rule and standard setting EU.

Another way the UK hopes to enhance its role on the global stage is to be a place for mediation in the world's conflicts. To support this objective it can draw on a strong pool of talent in the UK's peacebuilding and development sector to assist its experienced diplomats in this endeavour. However the UK will need to be strategic around understanding where its history and present policies support (or at least do not hinder) it to play a brokering role, given that in large parts of the world Britain brings certain baggage to the table that a Norway or a Switzerland do not.

The determination to make a policy pivot to the Indo-Pacific remains clear in the ongoing discussion around the Integrated Review, albeit it is less certain to what extent resources and capability will

[9] Radio Address Delivered by President Roosevelt From Washington, December 1940, https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/WorldWar2/arsenal.htm

[10] Finding Britain's role in a changing world: Protecting the UK's ability to defend its values, FPC, September 2020, https://fpc.org.uk/publications/protecting-the-uks-ability-to-defend-its-values/

follow the shifting of policy focus. The narrative of burden sharing seems sensible in this context but needs clearer articulation of why our regional partners would want the UK to play a more active role in their backyard, what we might be able to bring to the table to support them and where they may wish to see reciprocal assistance elsewhere. The UK will need to find areas where it can 'add value' in a region that is not our own rather than simply mimic capability and roles played by the US, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea and other allied Pacific powers. As Ben Judah and Georgina Wright note in their essay strengthening bilateral partnerships with Australia and Japan will be important, as too could be exploring what membership of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) for the UK could mean, though many thorny issues around agriculture and labour rights may make this strategically appealing opportunity unviable.[11]

The desire to root new partnerships in the principles and promotion of democracy is a positive response to the strategic challenge of rising authoritarian powers; a topic set out in the earlier *The principles for Global Britain* publication in this series. The topic of new organisations and groupings tasked with that purpose will be addressed again in the upcoming *Partnerships for the future of UK Foreign Policy* publication, but it also a feature of a contribution by in this collection by Jonas Parello-Plesner from the Alliance of Democracies. Parello-Plesner's essay points out that democracy promotion is likely to feature highly in President-Elect Biden's upcoming administration.[12] However, it is also worth noting that another major, often intersecting, policy theme in Biden's administration is tackling the impact of kleptocracy and transnational corruption, an area where the UK still has a lot of work to do.[13]

Transparency and accountability

Getting Britain's house in order on issues around transparency and tackling corruption are essential if the UK wants to play a positive role in the world. It is also an important part of efforts to improve how the Britain is perceived around the world, as for too many countries the UK and its territories and dependencies are where their unscrupulous leaders and oligarchs park their money, acting as a global hub of opaque financial practices and corruption. So there is a need for the Government, through the Integrated Review and wider work, to look at the extent to which money flows into UK jurisdictions, through the British property industry, its legal, public affairs and service sectors from authoritarian elites, shady businesses or criminal groups. It should look at the ways in which these illicit money flows are used to influence the UK and how UK firms that are complicit in enabling criminal or ethically dubious behaviour abroad undermine the reputation of this country.

In these times of COVID pressure on the public finances there has never been a better opportunity to link these issues around tax justice, anti-corruption and transparency to ensure those benefiting from the UK's property market and financial sector pay their fair share (both to the UK and to their home countries). Despite the ongoing challenges it is important to recognise that there have been some positive recent steps that start to tackle these long-standing problem. Proposed changes to improve and verify the data of Companies Households are welcome but will need to be built on, legislated and implemented.[14] Similarly, the current requirements on beneficial ownership and the

[11] Greater collaboration with likeminded Pacific partners could help increase the UK's role in region in line with stated Government objectives. However there are clear concerns being raised by important stakeholders. See: Comprehensive and Progressive Transpacific Partnership: Submission to the Department for International Trade, TUC, https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/TUC%20CPTPP%20consultation%20final%20response_0.pdf; and Government starts bid to join the CPTPP, NFU, https://www.nfuonline.com/news/eu-exit/eu-exit-news/government-starts-bid-to-join-the-cptpp/. The incoming Biden administration may seek to join the deal and in doing so may seek to renegotiate the deal in ways to mollify concerns of the US Trade Unions that form an important part of his political base which may have positive ramifications for the UK's potential membership.

[12] See: Dr Robin Niblett CMG, A New US-UK Democratic Agenda Could Be on the Horizon, Chatham House, November 2020, https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/11/new-us-uk-democratic-agenda-could-be-horizon?utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=organic-social&utm_campaign=us-election&utm_content=uk-us-partnership

[13] Josh Rudolph, Covert Foreign Money: Financial Loopholes Exploited by Authoritarians to Fund Political Interference in Democracies, Alliance for securing democracy, August 2020, https://securingdemocracy.gmfus.org/covert-foreign-money/

[14] Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, Companies House, Lord Callanan and The Rt Jon James Brokenshire MP, Reforms to Companies House to clamp down on fraud and give businesses greater confidence in transactions, Gov.uk, September 2020,

use of Unexplained Wealth Orders are important but the institutions responsible for administering them need to be resourced properly. The Government must make Parliamentary time to introduce the Registration of Overseas Entities Bill to move this agenda forward.[15]

The recent 2020 Spending Review has set out plans for 'an additional £63 million to tackle economic crime, including support for the National Economic Crime Centre (NECC), along with £20 million for Companies House reform'.[16] Expanding the capacity of the NECC and the enforcement ability of its constituent partners such as the National Crime Agency, Serious Fraud Office and HMRC could facilitate more investigations into transnational corruption and to increase the use of Unexplained Wealth Orders but further funding is likely to be required.[17] Nevertheless, this cash injection should help to give Companies House greater capacity to conduct proper verification of the information provided to existing beneficial ownership registers. The Government should also look at ways to crack down on the use of paid proxies and examine possible restrictions on the ability of opaque corporate entities from jurisdictions without properly equivalent transparency rules from registering without proving information on their ultimate beneficial ownership. Further measures could also include ensuring that at least one accountable person for each UK registered entity should be based in the UK.[18]

Beyond Companies House, improving and opening access to Land Registry data could assist investigative journalists and other researchers by potentially removing or reducing the access fees to help them cross check information with other registries. In the medium term the Government should look at how to better join up information about assets held by different institutions such as considering the development of a consolidated national asset registry, a case made strongly in the essay in this collection by Alex Cobham, Andres Knobel and Robert Palmer. Improved access to relevant data should support efforts to pressure the UK property industry to increase the number of Suspicious Activity Reports filed to HMRC when buildings are being bought by opaque international investment vehicles.[19]

Despite progress being promised in 2018, the Government has yet to find Parliamentary time to address the transparency problems facing a number of forms of UK investment vehicle.[20] A notorious example are the Scottish Limited Partnerships that, unlike their English equivalent, have their own legal personality and combine both limited disclosure requirements but no taxes on the partnership itself. The term 'Scottish Company' has become synonymous with corruption across the Former Soviet Union and UK-based tax advisors promote them on the basis that: 'there are no taxes in the UK, providing that the partnership does not trade in the UK and partners are not residents of the UK'; 'no requirements to submit financial statements; 'no requirements to submit tax declaration'; and crucially 'high confidentiality'.[21] Irrespective of the Government's anti-corruption

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/reforms-to-companies-house-to-clamp-down-on-fraud-and-give-businesses-greater-confidence-in-transactions

[15] Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, Draft Registration of Overseas Entities Bill, Gov.uk, July 2018, https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-registration-of-overseas-entities-bill

[16] HM Treasury, Spending Review 2020, Gov.uk, November 2020, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spending-review-2020-documents/spending-review-2020

[17] NECC, Improving the UK's response to economic crime, NCA, https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/national-economic-crime-centre; Ed Smyth, The UK's new National Economic Crime Centre, Kingsley Napley, November 2018, https://www.kingsleynapley.co.uk/insights/blogs/criminal-law-blog/the-uks-new-national-economic-crime-centre

[18] The Dark Money Files Podcast - Episode Companies House: It's time to reform (maybe, if we can find the time and money), https://www.thedarkmoneyfiles.com/podcast

[19] HM Revenue & Customs, Estate agency business guidance for money laundering supervision, Gov.uk, October 2020, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/money-laundering-regulations-2007-supervision-of-estate-agency-businesses/estate-agency-guidance-for-money-laundering-supervision; Estate Agents only made up 0.13% of SARs in 2019 according to the National Crime Agency. See: UK Financial Intelligence Unit: Suspicious Activity Reports Annual Report 2019, NCA, https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications/390-sars-annual-report-2019/file

[20] Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, Limited partnerships: reform of limited partnership law, Gov.uk, April 2018, https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/limited-partnerships-reform-of-limited-partnership-law

[21] Scottish Limited Partnership (SLP) and Main Advantages, TBA, https://www.tba-associates.com/company-formation-scotland/scottish-lp/limited-partnersh/advantages-and-uses/

commitments if the UK Government is keen to prevent further erosion of support for the Union then it should urgently consider removing something legislated in London that besmirches Scotland's reputation.

There remains a fundamental question: what benefits do corporate entities that register in the UK but do not provide goods or services in the country, do not pay tax here and do not have owners based here actually bring to Britain, other than damage to our national reputation? For example the UK's reputation was recently brought into question when it was found by RFE/RL that a company believed to have been gifted a substantial slice of commercial development land in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, was in fact based in the Hertfordshire market town of Kington. Given that the companies' directors are based in Belize and according to RFE/RL the owners are believed to be in Uzbekistan it is unclear how the UK gains from such an arrangement.[22]

A related area where the UK needs to do better to improve its reputation is on libel reform. Worryingly, UK law firms are at the forefront of global efforts to intimidate journalists and other investigators into the proceeds of financial crimes through the use of strategic litigation against public participation ('SLAPP').[23] This form of vexatious legal action can have wide reaching consequences far beyond the UK's borders. Despite the reforms made in the 2013 UK Defamation Act, there are still significant challenges for journalists and media organisations around the world when defending themselves against UK libel claims.[24] The cost of mounting a defence is extremely high, the burden of proof required places an enormous onus on the defendant, proceedings can be lengthy and a negative verdict can result in a potentially crippling damages pay-out.

The UK libel system's significant chilling effect makes journalists, researchers and activists uniquely mindful about the reach of potentially being dragged into the UK courts even if both they and the subject of their inquiries are based abroad. Journalists have reported that claimants often rely on the mere threat of the cost involved in UK libel proceedings being so intimidating that "journalists won't even try to defend themselves" and remove the article in question.[25] Libel tourism, and the threat of such extra-territorial action, significantly undermines the UK's values leadership internationally by chilling freedom of expression and undermining the UK's global leadership on these issues.

UK legal firms have been hired to send journalists all over the world cease and desist letters threatening legal action if they do not halt their investigations or remove investigations from their publications. For example at the time of her murder in October 2017, the Maltese investigative journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia had at least 42 civil libel suits open against her, many of which were brought through UK-based law firms, acting for foreign banks and wealthy individuals and continued to be pursued against her family after her death.[26] In January 2020, a libel case filed against Paul Radu, co-founder of OCCRP and a Romanian citizen, was due to go to trial in the UK. The claimant, who was named in an award-winning OCCRP report investigating concerns around money laundering, successfully filed the case by stating he lived in London despite being a serving MP in Azerbaijan.[27] On the eve of the trial, the claimant offered to settle on favourable terms for Radu, but as OCCRP noted this settlement ended almost two years of being embroiled in a costly and time-

[22] "Gift" for $ 11.5 million – Mayor of Tashkent Artykkhodzhaev donated land to about a hundred entrepreneurs to a company associated with the president's son-in-law, Radio Ozodlik, November 2020, https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/30975077.html

[23] Unsafe for Scrutiny: Examining the pressures faced by journalists uncovering financial crime and corruption around the world, FPC, November 2020, https://fpc.org.uk/publications/unsafe-for-scrutiny/

[24] A gathering storm: The laws being used to silence the media, Index on Censorship, July 2020, https://www.indexoncensorship.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/a-gathering-storm.pdf

[25] Paul Radu, How to Successfully Defend Yourself in Her Majesty's Libel Courts, Global Investigative Journalism Network, February 2020, https://gijn.org/2020/02/26/how-to-successfully-defend-yourself-in-her-majestys-libel-courts/

[26] Letter: press freedom campaigners call for action on 'vexatious lawsuits', The Guardian, July 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/20/letter-press-freedom-campaigners-call-for-action-on-vexatious-lawsuits

[27] Miranda Patrucic, Madina Mammadova and Ilgar Agha, AvroMed May Have Received Millions Through Laundromat, OCCRP, September 2017, https://www.occrp.org/en/azerbaijanilaundromat/avromed-may-have-received-millions-through-laundromat

consuming lawsuit.[28] A common theme of SLAPPS is how they are used as an attempt to distract from important public interest reporting, harass journalists and tie them up in legal action as a way to disable their ability to continue investigating. Often cases might never reach court, having achieved their aim prior to that stage.[29]A recent Foreign Policy Centre survey of global investigative journalists networks found that the UK was by far the most common source of legal pressure on their activities and that 61 per cent of their investigations had found a link to UK financial or legal jurisdictions.[30]

Many countries have struggled with meeting best practice standards when responding to pandemic procurement given the urgency of the crisis, but some of the concerns raised about close proximity between suppliers and the British Government raise issues not only domestically (some of which is beyond the scope of this publication) but it will have a lingering impact on the UK's reputation and its ability to support international best practice standards. There needs to be a transparent and independent review into recent procurement problems in order to learn lessons for the future.[31] The need to improve transparency and accountability in domestic processes, as well as providing better value for money for tax payers, would help improve the UK's reputation and give it greater credibility when advocating for change internationally.

As mentioned earlier in this publication series the UK's introduction of 'Magnitsky' personal sanctions against international human rights abusers, through an amendment to the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018, has been an important step forward in giving the Government powers to put pressure on rights abuse around the world, particularly given the concentration of ill-gotten gains stashed in UK jurisdictions as mentioned above. The current Foreign Secretary has been a longstanding advocate of such measures and so far has been willing to use them against those of regimes traditionally friendly to the UK, such as Saudi Arabia over the murder of exiled journalist Jamal Khashoggi, as well as traditional rivals. There is a strong argument to ensure the relevant teams in the newly merged Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) are properly resourced to ramp up the number of sanctions issued. The remit of the sanctions needs to be formally widened to include concerns around corruption as part of the wider suite of tools available to tackle that issue. One difference between the US Global Magnitsky Act and the UK provisions is the lack of a formal role for the British Parliament in proposing potential cases where such sanctions should be applied. While the differences in capacity between Parliamentary and Congressional staffs should be noted, giving Parliament a formal role could help ensure the tool is use to cover a wider range of cases and encourage the FCDO to overcome institutional or perceived diplomatic barriers to its use.

Trade and aid

This publication comes out just after an important decision about Britain's role in the world, the decision to cut the proportion of national income spend on Official Development Assistance (ODA) aid from the legally mandated and manifesto committed 0.7 per cent to 0.5 per cent from 2021, and ahead of an even bigger one on the details regarding the UK's future trading relations with the EU.[32] The aid cut is a decision taken ostensibly due to the impact of the pandemic on the public finances (something which had already triggered a separate £2.9 billion in year cut for 2020 as a function of

[28] OCCRP, OCCRP-Related Lawsuit Settled, January 2020, https://www.occrp.org/en/40-press-releases/presss-releases/11496-occrp-related-lawsuit-settled

[29] The editor is thankful for the input of his colleague Susan Coughtrie who leads the leads the FPC's Unsafe for Scrutiny project.

[30] Unsafe for Scrutiny: Examining the pressures faced by journalists uncovering financial crime and corruption around the world, FPC, November 2020, https://fpc.org.uk/publications/unsafe-for-scrutiny/

[31] To fix procurement, the UK has to open it up, Centre for the Study of Corruption, November 2020, https://scscsussex.wordpress.com/2020/11/30/to-fix-procurement-the-uk-has-to-open-it-up/

[32] 2015 Act Michael Moore commits to 0.7% ODA. See: International Development (Official Development Assistance Target), Act 2015, UK Public General Acts, https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/12/contents/enacted/data.htm; The Conservative and Unionist Party, Get Brexit Done – Unleash Britain's Potential, Manifesto 2019, https://assets-global.website-files.com/5da42e2cae7ebd3f8bde353c/5dda924905da587992a064ba_Conservative%202019%20Manifesto.pdf

the reduction in national income).[33] However given it occurred less than a week after a major uplift in defence spending, to tackle capacity shortfalls, it is clear that this represents the Government having 'moved £4 billion from aid to defence' in the words of Foreign Affairs Select Committee Chair Tom Tugendhat.[34] One small area of comfort for the cause of international development is that the Government restated its commitment to the OECD's ODA rules in the face of backbench pressure to loosen requirements to enable UK funds to be spent in a wider number of ways to support the armed forces or trade promotion. This pressure on the ODA rules is likely to persist and must be guarded against for the UK's credibility as a donor to be maintained. However, the Government does remain committed to attempting international reform of the shared criteria at some point. Part of that necessary reassurance to the development sector should be a swift and comprehensive completion of the review of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (*ICAI*) in a way that protects and strengthens its independence and oversight.[35]

Concern over the impact of aid reduction is not only, or indeed primarily, about damaging Britain's reputation and influence, but at its core it is about the impact of an over £5bn cut (compared to 2019) on the lives of those most in need around the world.[36] Many Government decisions have significant real world impacts, for good or ill, on people but if former International Development Secretary Andrew Mitchell is correct that the scale of the cut could lead to 100,000 preventable deaths, mainly in children, this should have given the Government greater cause for pause.[37] The cut has been announced as a temporary measure in response to COVID-19, yet despite this stated framing of the action the Government has made it known that it seeks to repeal the 2015 International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act. This is because it believes, as a planned rather than accidental cut, legal change is required but it is a move that could pave the way to make the cut *de facto* permanent.[38] The Foreign Secretary has said both that the Government "cannot see a path back to 0.7% in the foreseeable, immediate future", and the somewhat more positive but vague "we will revert to 0.7% as soon as the fiscal position allows", which could mean anything from the point at which the economy initially rebounds through to any number of politically contingent assessments of the deficit or national debt.[39]

Although the Integrated Review has yet to be completed the Foreign Secretary has announced in a letter to the International Development Select Committee that all aid spending will be focused on addressing seven global challenges: Climate Change and biodiversity; COVID and global health security; Girls' education; Science, research, technology; Open societies and conflict resolution; Humanitarian preparedness and response; and Trade and economic development.[40] It also states that spending will focus only on countries where the UK's development, security and economic interests align, such as sub-Saharan Africa and the Indo-Pacific region. While it may be that poverty reduction is a cross-cutting theme of these priorities it is not explicitly stated in either the letter or

[33] Department for International Development, Foreign & Commonwealth Office and Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending for 2020: First Secretary of State's letter, Gov.uk, July 2020, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/official-development-assistance-oda-spending-for-2020-first-secretary-of-states-letter/official-development-assistance-oda-spending-for-2020-first-secretary-of-states-letter

[34] Cristina Gallardo, UK curbs Global Britain ambitions as coronavirus bites, Politico.EU, November 2020, https://www.politico.eu/article/coronavirus-forces-uk-to-downsize-its-global-britain-ambitions/

[35] Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, Independent and Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) review: terms of reference, Gov.uk, October 2020, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-commission-for-aid-impact-icai-review-terms-of-reference

[36] William Worley, Breaking: UK cuts aid budget to 0.5% of GNI, devex, November 2020, https://www.devex.com/news/breaking-uk-cuts-aid-budget-to-0-5-of-gni-98640

[37] Eleanor Langford, A Foreign Office Minister Has Resigned From Government Over Plans To Cut International Aid, Politics Home, November 2020, https://www.politicshome.com/news/article/minister-resigned-international-aid-baroness-sugg-andrew-mitchell-spending-review

[38] International Development (Official Development Assistance Target), Act 2015, UK Public General Acts, https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/12/contents/enacted/data.htm

[39] Official Development Assistance: Volume 684: debated on Thursday 26 November 2020, Hansard, https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-11-26/debates/A2442925-0DA2-4262-B564-1C6FEE24881A/OfficialDevelopmentAssistance

[40] Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP, Letter to Sarah Champion MP, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, November 2020, https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/3683/documents/36094/default/

the subsequent Parliamentary Statement, despite previous ministerial statements that reiterated its importance. Therefore, if the Government wishes to retain a focus on poverty reduction as part of its plans it should publically state this in order to provide reassurance on this hugely important issue. Plans also announced to consolidate the FCDO's strategic overview of ODA spending across Government and move away from reliance on enormous contracts with consultancies are broadly to be welcomed.

The UK's new ability to set its own international trade agenda provides a powerful tool for the UK to back its international values if it is willing and able to use it effectively. This publication builds on arguments set out in the earlier *Finding Britain's Role in a Changing World: Building a values-based foreign policy* published jointly with Oxfam UK and *The principles for Global Britain* publication.[41] As set out briefly in the latter publication, new UK trade deals should seek to support rather than undermine regional trade integration by developing countries, learning from the initial mistakes of the EU's Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and with an emphasis on it being a full and inclusive partnership.[42] The UK should seek to build on the EU's 'Everything but Arms' approach, but give developing country partners greater flexibility, including a more generous interpretation of the 'substantially all' requirement on rules of origin so that they can protect infant industries and support regional supply chains, allow for longer phasing periods and a pro-development use of schedules, as well as giving partner countries the maximum policy space possible to allow them to implement rules in ways most suitable to their development.[43] The UK should seek to move away from the use of Investor-State Dispute Settlements (ISDSs) and instead look to coordinate with its aid policy by supporting rule of law initiatives in partner countries where possible, something that should fit within the Government's current 'Trade and economic development' priority.[44]

The imminent withdrawal of the UK from the EU's Single Market and Customs Union has led to a rush to try to conclude bilateral trade deals, many of which copy over existing arrangements that currently apply to the UK as part of EU membership. One area of ongoing dispute is around the extent of Parliamentary and public scrutiny around the development of trade deals, with both the Government and campaigners identifying examples that support their respective cases that the UK's new arrangements are more or less transparent and accountable than their peers. What would seem undoubtedly true is that the UK's Parliament and stakeholders have less structured input into the development and decision making around such deals than the European Parliament, and therefore UK representatives within it previously, has over the direction of EU trade deals. Getting these scrutiny arrangements right is important to help improve accountability and quality of the agreements entered into, not least given their potentially significant implications for domestic law and policy if a deal is substantive. In this collection Ruth Bergan and David Lawrence suggest a number of sensible suggestions for improving Parliamentary scrutiny, including publication of the Government's initial negotiation objectives that is subject to a debate and vote, providing a regular release of negotiating texts (or at least headline information) after each round, leading to a final guaranteed debate and vote on the final deal. This enhanced Parliamentary scrutiny should be supported by 'regular engagement with civil society, including environmental groups, businesses and trade unions, and the publication of an independent Sustainability Impact Assessment.'

[41] Programme: Britain's role in the world, FPC, https://fpc.org.uk/programmes/britains-role-in-the-world/

[42] The EU's new Africa strategy now has a clear pivot: High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa, March 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/communication-eu-africa-strategy-join-2020-4-final_en.pdf

[43] Preferential Market Access – European Union Everything But Arms Initiative, UN, LDC Portal, https://www.un.org/ldcportal/preferential-market-access-european-union-everything-but-arms-initiative/

[44] For discussion on this issue see: Royal African Society and APPG on Africa, The Future of Africa-UK Trade and Development Cooperation Relations in the Transitional and Post-Brexit Period, February 2017, https://royalafricansociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/APPG-for-Africa_Future-of-Africa-UK-Relations-Post-Brexit.pdf; and the upcoming contributions by Ruth Bergan- who has kindly advised on some of these policy suggestions.

In terms of the deals the UK is currently trying to negotiate there is clearly scope to strengthen human rights and environmental clauses to make them actionable in the case of a breach by either party. Given that the UK is not envisaging formal human rights dialogues or other consultative mechanisms attached to its deals, greater enforceability will be required in order for these UK deals to not be seen as a diminishing the importance of values compared to the previous, still very imperfect, EU deals the UK used to be part of. Both the EU's various different models of agreement (from Partnership and Cooperation Agreements to Association Agreements) and the innovative mechanisms such as the Agreement on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability (ACCTS) created by New Zealand and others, as explained in Bergan and Lawrence's essay, can provide a blueprint for the UK to frame trade as an integrated strand of building improved bilateral relationships.[45] So as the UK moves forward and the immediate post-Brexit rush subsides, the UK should look at how it can better make trade an integrated plank in the development of new Strategic Partnership Agreements that bring trade agreements alongside more detailed plans for security cooperation, and scientific, academic and cultural collaboration; as well as environmental partnerships (including potentially new international carbon trading arrangements if the UK is unable to formally link with the EU ETS in future); people-to-people contact; and, finally, where relevant aid support.

Emerging challenges

In this collection, Luke Murphy and Dr Joe Devanny respectively tackle two of the most pressing global challenges, climate and cyber security, and give ideas for how the UK should respond to them.

Along with the G7, the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow will be a huge opportunity for the UK to show global leadership to tackle a pressing challenge, if handled with care and the level of political focus required. It will also create an opportunity for engagement with China on an issue of shared interest, allowing for a parallel diplomatic track that maintains opportunities for dialogue, even as the UK takes action on the defence of democracy and human rights, digital security and other areas that recognise the risks of China poses to the values the UK espouses. Murphy outlines a number of practical measures in terms of domestic investment and regulatory change that can help boost Britain's position but it is also in the diplomatic arena where the UK needs to show greater focus if they are to emulate the success of the French leadership of the COP that led to the Paris Agreement.

While COVID-19 has understandably disrupted preparations, not least in delaying the Glasgow Conference by a year, between late January and early November the UK lacked a standalone lead for the process, between the removal of Claire O' Neill as COP President and the arrival of former International Development Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan in a somewhat more constrained role as International Champion on Adaptation and Resilience for the COP26 Presidency. Trevelyan's appointment may help take pressure off the somewhat overburdened Business Secretary who is formally acting as President of the COP, and it is to be hoped that her work will be backed by high level support from the Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister to show that the COP is a genuine diplomatic priority. Climate action provides a useful mechanism for engaging the incoming Biden administration, whose appointment of former Secretary of State and Presidential Candidate John Kerry as the US's climate envoy is a signal of its importance to the new US leadership. Despite Trevelyan's appointment and in light of Kerry's there are still calls for the UK to appoint a more senior political figure, a 'grand fromage' in the words of Defence Select Committee Chair Tobias Ellwood MP, to act as full-time President of the COP.[46]

The UK should also look at the history of successful interactions between Government and Civil Society, such as the Make Poverty History campaign in the 2000s around the UK's 2005 G7

[45] The UK has kept the title 'Partnership and Cooperation Agreement' in some of the deals rolled over from the EU but there is a need to expand more on the non-trade elements of the deal, which shorn of access to previous EU support mechanisms feel somewhat light'.
[46] Jessica Parker, Alok Sharma 'overloaded with day job' to juggle UN summit role, BBC News, December 2020, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-55143808

Presidency and the role that it played in the promotion of UK global values leadership and in their implementation. This may require wider work to build trust between Government and the third sector in light of recent disagreements over aid and other matters.

The Government's recent defence announcement makes clear that improving the UK's cyber capabilities will be a central part of Britain's security over the years to come.[47] As Devanny makes clear in his essay, along with the additional funding the UK needs a clearly defined ethical framework to underpin its new Cyber Strategy and there is also an important role for enhanced oversight. Devanny rightly urges a focus on cyber defence and limiting offensive capability to its role in tackling defence and security infrastructure rather than seeking ways to target civilian infrastructure.

Brand Britain

After several years of introspection around its relationship with Europe the UK now needs to get on the front foot facing the world; not only through its policies but also in how it is perceived. This approach needs to be based from a clear understanding on how other countries currently perceive the UK and the need to ensure the UK is still seen as being outward looking and engaged, exploring new ways to boost its soft-power attractiveness. To that end, work needs to be done to effectively map attitudes towards the UK, both in key power centres and in countries that the UK is looking to grow its influence and engagement.

Presenting Britain's message to the world should flow from the priorities and strategies set out in the Integrated Review. It is to be hoped that there is an emphasis on developing a positive vision for the country that can reach out beyond the domestic rancour of the last few years. A vision that rests on a narrowly partisan assessment of the UK's interests and priorities would not achieve the buy-in of the wider public, including many that are critical to the UK's soft-power success, and therefore lack the longevity only obtained through coalition building.

The current Government should learn from the still relatively recent experience of the 2012 Olympics, which were used to present a clear positive vision of the UK (centred on the UK being a young, dynamic, diverse and tolerant country) and how the idea of sustainability and legacy were a core part of the message, showing the UK has a long-term plan. It will need to look at the scope for the Commonwealth Games and other cultural and sporting events over the coming years to help shape perceptions of the UK and enhance its soft power, helping these vital industries for Britain's global standing recovery from the horrific toll of COVID-19. To that end, it is to be hoped that the Festival UK 2022 initiative can disentangle itself from the Brexit culture war, in part a product of its initially unhelpful genesis as Theresa May's 'Festival of Brexit Britain', to be a genuinely inclusive showcase of the talent the UK has to offer and provide a focus on ideas and principles that can unite across political and ideological divides.[48]

The Government needs to find a way of working collaboratively with the UK's City Regions (Combined Authorities) and devolved nations to help promote the country on the world stage. Once the immediate impact of COVID has abated and the rancorous Mayoral elections have passed, the UK should look at the importance of retaining London's position as a global city, while strengthening the ability of Metro Mayors, devolved nations and other regional and local leaderships to strengthen the country's voice abroad as well as supporting trade and investment as part of the Government's levelling up objectives.[49] The Government also needs to find a way to engage more effectively with

[47] Prime Minister's Office and 10 Downing Street, PM to announce largest military investment in 30 years, Gov.uk, November 2020, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-to-announce-largest-military-investment-in-30-years

[48] Also can provide much needed financial support to a Covid raddled arts sector. See: Gaby Hinsliff, Don't snark – this 'Brexit festival' may turn out to be just the tonic we need, The Guardian, November 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/nov/27/brexit-festival-eu-national

[49] Aware of the challenges posed by the current position of the Scottish Government in that regard for a directly cohesive message though there remains opportunities both to sing from the same hymn sheet about the shared values irrespective of Scotland's future in the UK and around the importance of

the UK's diaspora of British leaders in international institutions, businesses, NGOs and cultural institutions abroad to learn from them and provide new opportunities for dialogue.[50]

Effectively projecting the UK's values abroad will require a clear vision of what the Government intends to do, combined with sufficient resources, political commitment and a commitment to reform the status quo both at home and abroad. This publication hopes to give some suggestions about how it might deliver such an ambitious agenda.

[50] This was to be a larger section of this project but will now be a bigger piece of work in 2022.

What our authors say

Cat Tully and Sophie Middlemiss argue that for too long, the making of national strategy has remained an elite, government-led, behind-closed-doors endeavour. It is time for that to change. The UK needs to use this moment, with the unveiling and implementation of the Integrated Review, to initiate a strategy development process that is both more participative and more focused on the long-term good of the country and of future generations of UK citizens. Their essay reflects on the findings of the recently concluded pilot of the National Strategy for the Next Generations programme – and makes recommendations on how to strengthen long-term thinking and public voice in the making of future national strategy.

Jonas Parello-Plesner argues that UK needs to find its raison d'etre for a 'Global Britain'. Together with the incoming Biden-administration, the UK should pursue a pro-active role as a convenor of democracies.

Ben Judah and Georgina Wright argue that 2021 will be a pivotal year for British diplomacy, with the UK hosting the G7 presidency and co-chairing the COP26 conference in Glasgow. They argue that the UK can continue to be a successful foreign policy player, but only if it is focused and able to deliver on its promises. It must forge a strong relationship with the new incoming US administration, rebuild ties with the EU and as strengthen relations with Japan and CANZUK countries.

Alex Cobham, Andres Knobel and Robert Palmer write that from the late 1990s to the mid-2010s, successive UK governments sought to project positive values abroad in the area of financial transparency, accountability and integrity – an area which has risen back to the top of the global agenda during the pandemic, and where the UK public, like many others, is increasingly energised. Despite reputational setbacks in recent years, there remains a powerful opportunity to project positive values by making this the centrepiece of the UK's chairing of the powerful G7 group of countries in 2021 and delivering on a number of practical reforms they propose.

Luke Murphy makes the case for a strong environmental dimension to UK foreign policy. As host and President of the G7 and host of the all-important international climate summit, COP26, the UK has a unique opportunity to forge a leadership role in the world on climate change. This essay argues that to make the most of the opportunity, the UK must ensure that it gets its own house in order in terms of delivering ambitious domestic commitments on decarbonisation. Murphy argues that the UK must also take some key actions at the international level including building progressive partnerships, embedding a net zero mentality in aid, trade and finance and through carving out a future role in the shaping of international agreements and institutions. 2021 could be a crucial year in redefining what the UK's role is in the world, it is an opportunity in terms of the climate crisis that it, and the world, cannot afford to miss.

Ruth Bergan and David Lawrence argue that in January, for the first time in nearly 50 years, the UK will 'take back control' of its trade policy. This provides a unique and enormous opportunity to reimagine our trading relationship with the world, and a chance to ensure that trade addresses our shared global challenges - from climate change to social justice. This essay sets out three pillars for a socially and environmentally just trade policy after Brexit. It explores how we can make trade democratic, through public participation and proper scrutiny processes, while protecting high standards and climate ambition. Achieving this will require a radical departure from the Government's current trajectory, but offers an exciting and progressive alternative trade policy.

Dr Joe Devanny points out that over the last decade, the UK government has started to talk more openly about its offensive cyber capabilities. But what sort of cyber capabilities does the UK require to secure its objectives and project its values overseas? Is there a coherent ethical basis for deciding how to develop and use offensive cyber? Might success require restraint? There is a burgeoning

literature on covert action as an instrument of state policy and a growing literature on the legal and strategic dimensions of offensive cyber operations. Less attention has been paid to the domain's specifically ethical dimensions. This essay briefly explores the need for an ethic of responsibility to highlight the role of active and informed political leadership in offensive cyber operations. It argues for the importance of rigorous and reflective processes to help political leaders to understand the complexities, risks and system effects of operational decisions. It recommends that the UK should pursue counterforce (defence and security) rather than countervalue (civilian) targeting. The UK should also adopt a principle of 'minimum effective offensive cyber capability' in framing its vulnerabilities equities process around a presumption in favour of disclosure to enhance the global public good of cyber security.

Dr Victoria Honeyman's essay focuses on the future of Britain's Overseas Development Aid policy with the merging of DFID into the FCO. It looks at what the potential future could be for FCDO and how the ODA policy of the British government might be impacted, both purposeful and accidental, due to the administrative change, and the motivating factors behind Johnson's reorganisation of Whitehall foreign policy making. It concludes that the creation of FCDO is likely to undermine and adversely affect Britain's overseas development aid policy, but that the ring-fencing of DFID budgets and projects could make the merger more effective and allow for more 'joined-up government' if that is the aim of the Johnson government.

2. The UK needs a national strategy for the next generations to guide future foreign policy

By Cat Tully and Sophie Middlemiss[51]

The NSxNG approach to making future UK foreign policy and wider national strategy
In the context of Brexit and COVID-19, there is a growing sense that we need to collectively build 'a new normal' with a more uniting national narrative, and to 'relaunch' a refreshed Britain not just domestically but on the world stage. But to do that, we will need more than a new strategy document developed in the traditional way (closed-door, top-down) and closely held at the heart of Government.

The national strategy we need will shape and define our country's role in the world after a crossroads moment in our national story. The country – all generations, all ages – will have jointly

[51] Cat Tully is the founder of SOIF, the School of International Futures. Cat has extensive experience as a practitioner, helping governments, civil society and businesses to be more strategic, more effective, and better prepared for the future. Prior to setting up SOIF, Cat was Strategy Project Director at the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and Senior Policy Adviser in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. Before working in government, she worked in strategy and international relations across the not-for-profit and business sectors, including Christian Aid, Technoserve, and Procter and Gamble. Cat has also worked for the UN, the EU Commission and the World Bank. She is a trustee of the Foundation for Democracy and Sustainable Development, a global board member of Academics Stand Against Poverty, a member of United Nations Learning Advisory Council for the 2030 Agenda, and a member of the Advisory Group of the British Foreign Policy Group.
Sophie Middlemiss (SOIF). Sophie leads on SOIF's NSxNG Programme and its wider policy work. She joined SOIF from a decade in the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, where she worked in the Strategy Unit, as a Ministerial speechwriter, and on UK policy towards Russia, Georgia, Ukraine and India. As a strat comms consultant, she has written for global figures including Bill Gates, Kofi Annan and Mo Ibrahim and been published in TIME, Newsweek and The Observer. She has also worked for the OSCE in Kosovo, joined election observation missions in Macedonia and Ukraine, and written for Rough Guides / Berlitz on travel in Russia, Hungary and (in a forthcoming book) Serbia.

experienced a period of uncertainty unprecedented in recent decades. As a result, many people are more willing to move beyond short-term self-interest and divisive narratives to focus on a better shared future.

The time is thus ripe for a new approach to designing a long-term, outward-facing national strategy for the UK. Two of the most critical tools of future foreign-policy making will be structured long-term thinking (strategic foresight) and public participation (giving citizens a voice). In policymaking, these two are most effectively used in conjunction – as *participatory foresight*. Such approaches are – as yet – poorly utilised in national strategy development in the UK Government. While other areas of policymaking in the UK are opening up to public voice and participation, national strategy has remained an elite, government-led, behind-closed-doors endeavour.

We at the School of International Futures (SOIF) and our partners in the National Strategy for the UK's Next Generations programme – who include the Democratic Society, the APPG for Future Generations, Today for Tomorrow, the University of Cambridge Centre for the Study of Existential Risk, Agora think-tank, Restless Development, Shout Out UK, RUSI and the Kings College London's Grand Strategy Centre – are working to bring a diverse public voice, and in particular the voices of future generations, into the process of shaping our country's future place in the world.

Following the completion of a pilot phase focused on engaging public thinking about the UK's future global role, we are launching a full programme in 2021. Our pilot phase activities engaged over 500 young people across the UK and included a 'tester' Citizens' Assembly session, a series of structured futures workshops, historians' seminar series, and an online survey.

The NSxNG coalition unite around the belief that a resilient, long-term future national strategy (which would maximise the UK's future position in the world across all the tools at our disposal) should:

1. First, represent the interests of future as well as current generations of UK citizens
2. Second, be participative, supporting all citizens to have a voice in national futures
3. Build a more meaningful, united and plausible national narrative
4. Draw on past, present and future insights about the UK's role in the world – using the tools of applied history, public participation and strategic foresight.

There is now strong interest both inside and outside the UK Government in: a) thinking from first principles about Britain's role in the world, and b) designing a new long-term national vision and positioning that puts at its heart the needs, wellbeing and interests of future generations.

Why focus on the long-term and the UK's next generations?

Being on the front foot in planning for the long-term can be hard, when confronted by major strategic shocks such as COVID-19 that dominate the short-term horizon and will have long-term implications. However, all-consuming current crises, however volatile and uncertain the present, the UK cannot afford strategic paralysis and a reactive posture. Strategic confidence and a proactive global posture for the UK require an open, structured approach to understanding the long-term global environment, the threats and opportunities it presents, and the UK's possible role in it. Looking ahead only five to ten years – tempting in turbulent times – makes it harder for policymakers to think genuinely differently. We need to look out at least 25 years (a generation).

SOIF's work in long-term futures thinking with a range of international governments and organisations (from the UN to the OECD, Malaysia to Germany, Oman to Chile) demonstrates that a shorter time horizon also encourages linear thinking (people are typically tempted to forecast

continuation, or worsening, of the current situation). Considering our future on a longer time horizon and exploring alternative scenarios opens up more optimistic dynamics and opportunities.

Meanwhile, there is a growing recognition (both in the UK and internationally) of the need to build intergenerational fairness into policymaking, expanding our moral responsibility 'forward' to the future generations who will inherit the long-term consequences of our actions. Focusing on the next generations allows us to think through the human implications of decisions made today. It makes long-term consequences (often unintended) immediate and tangible. It makes a compelling moral case for long-termism.

The global environment to 2045: why national strategy must be long-term

Any scan of the horizon-scanning literature suggests that the next 25 years will bring changes in our external environment that will impact the UK significantly: from environmental and ecosystemic impacts, to emerging technology, shifting demography and value shifts that will have impact nationally as well as globally.[52] At the same time, when we step back and survey the long-term trajectory of the UK's global role – as the participants in our NSxNG programme have been invited to do – the stark but unavoidable conclusion is that the UK's global influence is declining relative to others', and our ability to shape the external environment in which we operate diminishing.

The UK's political leaders – of any stripe – will be under increasing pressure to demonstrate impact and influence in addressing ongoing global challenges: poverty, development, peacekeeping, hybrid conflict, social justice, biodiversity, human rights, and governing emerging technologies such as AI. Government cannot navigate these emerging pressures and uncertain expectations in isolation, or by focusing on the short term. Only by taking a long-term strategic horizon and incorporating citizen engagement can Government develop a resilient national strategy that will equip the country to navigate this complex and ever more challenging environment.

The role for public participation as a tool of foreign policy

The British people are a key part of our national resilience. If our national security paradigm is – as many in the field tell us - expanding to be more centred on human security; if our national resilience and security depends ever more on the people (whether in terms of public health, innovation, cyber threats, disinformation, or polarised discourse), then the people need to be co-creators of policy. Harnessing the creative input and energy of citizens is not a nice-to-have but a must-have in uncertain times. We must build beyond one-off 'set-piece' national conversations or events to thicken the 'connective tissue' between Government and the public on national strategy issues (see *Recommendations* below). Participative conversations about the future require insights about the past. As forecaster Paul Saffo puts it: "To look ahead, one must first look back twice as far".[53]

Meanwhile, the development of future National Security Strategy should be expanded to be treated as the development of Whole-of-Nation Strategy, moving beyond the artificial division of foreign and domestic policy issues and apparatus. Technology, health, migration, data, reputation connect what happens at home to abroad, and are critically important for our posture and position overseas. Effectively linking the domestic and international requires both a whole-of-government approach (across Whitehall departments) and local engagement (in communities).

[52] Global Trends. Paradox of Progress, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, United States, https://www.dni.gov/index.php/global-trends-home; Guidance: Global Strategic Trends, The sixth edition of Global Strategic Trends, Ministry of Defence, October 2018, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-strategic-trends; and Global Trends to 2030. Challenges and Choices for Europe, European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS), April 2019, https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/ESPAS_Report.pdf

[53] Paul Saffo, Six Rules for Effective Forecasting, Harvard Business Review, July 2007, https://hbr.org/2007/07/six-rules-for-effective-forecasting

Messages for the UK Government from the 'next generations'

Five key messages emerged from our recently concluded pilot into a 'Next Generations' approach to making national strategy. They demonstrate the ambition, but also the realism, with which young people look at the UK's future role.

1. *It is time for an honest reassessment – perhaps a 'managed, relative decline'.* This emphasis on tackling head-on the issue of relative decline underlines the urgent need to work on a new national narrative that can inspire pride and hope in the UK's future global role. That narrative work must emerge from a more participative approach to the development of national strategy.
2. *The UK must make the hard choices - and reorient fast to survive.* Our work with young people to date in this programme has revealed an appetite for honest language and clear choice-making. Whatever choice is made about the UK's future role, our respondents underlined that the world is changing fast and the UK cannot afford decades agonising over its own role.
3. *Keep putting values at the centre – acting as a force for good and steward for a rules-based system.* We heard a strong sense that values and multilateral engagement must remain at the core of what the UK contributes – but that we must also address the domestic issues that undermine our moral authority. Participants emphasised that the UK has a global role to play, convening others — or leading — on climate change, social justice, welfare, challenging aggression, responsible innovation, mediating conflict, and disrupting the spread of corruption and misinformation.
4. *Build the assets to support UK influencing, especially on innovation.* The UK has significant soft power levers, including through our networks, ideas, innovation and influence. A stronger role in 'innovation diplomacy' and building effective governance regimes should be supported by investing more in UK research, science and tech and building a strong base in innovation exports; improved social security; a 'green transition'; and doubling down on education.
5. *Recognise we must put our own house in order domestically.* Participants stressed that our future global role would hinge on 'domestic' issues such as devolution, State of the Union, health, the economy, social security, social mobility, affordable housing.

Recommendations: making national strategy in a new way

First and foremost, we recommend that the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy marks not the end-point of the national strategy development process for the years ahead, but the beginning of a five-year National Strategy journey to build a new national narrative and the supporting apparatus of government – such that the UK is better equipped to deliver integrated, future-facing and agile national strategy and policymaking.

Progress in three key areas is necessary to sustain this journey. The UK needs:

1. *Political consensus around the need for public dialogue on the UK's future role in the world* – with our political leaders committed to the outputs of such a dialogue. Including:
    i. Bringing political leaders, including next generation leaders, together to listen to public narratives that are optimistic but realistic;
    ii. Building a broad-based bipartisan understanding of the challenges and opportunities of the UK's 2045 operating environment (trends, drivers, uncertainties, shocks); and
    iii. Develop cross-party approaches and mechanisms for responding to citizens' proposals.

2. *To conduct an independent public dialogue on National Strategy* that is well-designed and conducted. Including:
    i. *Use public participation to set high-level parameters, principles and direction.*

ii. *Move beyond polling to listen to and understand public perspectives*, drawing on expert input and data alongside modes of participative engagement (such as Citizens' Assemblies; injecting discussions of the UK's place/role in the world into existing local and community forums).
iii. *Look specifically at how different generations and communities see the UK's past, present and future role in the world* and how to give younger Britons a greater sense of national pride and role in our future national story.

3. *To build a national security apparatus that is orientated to support whole-of-government, agile and future-facing national strategy,* and that encourages stewardship of future generations' wellbeing. This cuts across many areas, but should include:
   i. *Building in the obligation to consider future generations' wellbeing* (setting new obligations on Ministers to act for the long-term, designating Select Committees and other oversight bodies - such as an ombudsman or Future Generations Commissioner).
   ii. *Widening out to a concept of National Strategy that cuts across the whole of government and beyond.* Taking previous approaches to integration across Government departments (such as Fusion and One HMG) much further into a truly cross-Whitehall strategic endeavour. Align domestic ministries (DfE, BEIS, HO, MOJ) and local authorities behind the UK's National Strategy.
   iii. *Introducing incentives into the civil service that drive behaviour and culture change towards more citizen engagement* on national strategy/security and foreign policy issues (incorporate notions of 'stewardship' and 'wellbeing of future generations' into purpose and mission of civil service; develop a participatory long-term policy making guide for the Civil Service.
   iv. *Review existing institutions, structures and processes to ensure they are long-term future-oriented*. Reorient the Treasury and machinery of government (including NAO, Select Committees) around a long-term, systems approach, and a new National Strategy Council that replaces the NSC. Strengthen the work of existing institutions and teams with long-term perspectives, like MOD's DCDC, BEIS GO-Science and the Government Foresight network.
   v. *Capability and skills development within the national strategy community and civil service*. Broaden policymakers' use of Horizon Scanning and Foresight. Radically improve the teaching of strategic thinking skills to civil servants, Ministers and MPs. Empower young people through an improved civic education offer, including on thinking about the long-term future.

If we make these changes, we can equip the UK not only to make national strategy better in the future, but to make more impact on the world stage in a generation's time.

3. How the UK becomes a global force for Democracy and Freedom

By Jonas Parello-Plesner[54]

The Government's current Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy seeks to position the UK after Brexit and in the context of a Biden-administration taking office.

My suggestion to this new direction is for the UK to position itself as a global force on democratic values. It demands bold steps as seen with the UK's handling of Hong Kong and secondly, it should be undertaken both through the proposed novel D-10 grouping and in a broader alliance of democracies, particularly on how to set the digital standards. Naturally, such an approach does demand consistency at home, so that UK's own democratic practices underpin the global approach.

These last years, the UK's bandwidth has been consumed by Brexit. Undoubtedly, the effects of the departure will linger for years to come. The author being a Dane, will miss the UK inside the EU. Yet there is no doubt that the referendum on leaving the EU was also a radical democratic exercise. And on that basis, it is now time to shape a new future for the UK. The focus on Brexit has clouded a discussion of the novel ways the UK can contribute globally. The EU has many merits, but quick and bold-decision making is not one of them. The UK is now unhindered to be able to take quicker actions on its own.

The UK's swift actions following China's implementation of the draconian National Security Law, which basically turned off the lights for Hong Kong's remaining freedoms, stands out. By speaking truth to raw authoritarian power and calling out the Chinese breach of the Sino-British Joint

[54] Jonas Parello-Plesner is the Executive Director of the Alliance of Democracies Foundation chaired and founded by former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen. *Image by FCO under (CC).*

declaration, the Johnson government took the needed moral high ground. And equally so by following it up with granting up to three million Hong Kong citizens with BNO-passports the right to prolonged residency in the UK and a path to full citizenship. The EU did not come out as forcefully. And the US forfeited its natural leading role on democracy promotion by President Trump's overall transactional approach and in the case of Hong Kong. This example underlines the kind of role a 'Global Britain' should carve out for itself in the international system. Moreover, with a Biden-administration in Washington, there will be new-found demand for the UK playing such a role.

That is why the concept of the D-10 – basically expanding the G-7 with the democracies of India, Australia and South Korea, is very timely but so far has remained a slogan without concrete follow up. The UK's upcoming chairmanship of the G-7 allows it, to put it into practice.

Meanwhile, President-Elect Biden also has a much stronger focus on democracy promotion and seeks to restore the US to a leading role among democracies. As part of his electoral platform, a Summit of Democracy is planned which will also include cooperation with civil society and with the technology sector, where our public democratic debate is increasingly, in particular during the pandemic, conducted online. Earlier, President-Elect Biden was also part of the efforts of the Alliance of Democracies Foundation chaired by former NATO Secretary General Rasmussen. Biden spoke at the Copenhagen Democracy Summit in 2018. He was a driving force in establishing the associated Transatlantic Commission on Election Integrity and its Election Pledge against election interference and disinformation. Biden signed as a presidential candidate. The next natural step would be to build an international alliance on election interference and more broadly on the rules of the road for our digital democracies. That could be one component for the D-10 to tackle.

During the four years of fruitless discussion under President Trump around Russian election interference, China expanded its capabilities to thwart civil liberties through ubiquitous surveillance and face recognition tools. The situation in Xinjiang is the pinnacle of this nefarious approach. And globally, Chinese-run tech companies have expanded. There is a tension here with unfettered free trade and investments flows. Chinese companies often bring along the authoritarian standards of the motherland.

The Huawei discussion about allowing that company to build the next 5-G generation of our wireless societies showed that democracies need to safeguard their critical infrastructure. After some initial flip-flopping, the UK took the correct and secure path on this by blocking Huawei. Both that is just a surface symptom of the bigger digital divide between the superpowers, China and the US. This battle for digital supremacy will not end with Trump's departure from the White House. It is entrenched in the US administration and in Congress across the aisle. These days that is a rare occurrence.

And many more topics lure in this battle for digital supremacy from facial recognition, artificial intelligence, to quantum computing. The UK can play a role in settings such standards and mediating between the US and EU regulation. Working with Japan, who has already lead initiatives on securing data flows could be beneficial. Yet there are also growth opportunities for the UK in becoming a hub for such democratic digital standards. A new report shows that 'safety tech' businesses is on the rise soon making UK the safest place to be online with more than 70 companies in London, Leeds, Cambridge and Edinburgh holding a quarter of global market share.[55]

What is likely to change is that President Biden is expected to seek cooperation with allies to meet the challenge from China and other authoritarians in the technological realm. Trump's brute tactics of announcing on Twitter, a sudden and uncoordinated ban on TikTok, will be a thing of the past. Instead allies, such as the UK, will likely be tasked by a new administration on how to help craft digital rules which ensure democratic standards around privacy and data collection are respected. In

[55] New report reveals UK as world leader in online safety innovation, Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and Caroline Dinenage MP, Government, May 2020, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-report-reveals-uk-as-world-leader-in-online-safety-innovation

a certain way, this allies-first approach can become more demanding. Under Trump, allies would not always have to take a stance on Trump's moves on China because he did not seek to coordinate or amplify them through allies. A Biden-administration will. Thus, the UK must be bold and pro-active on this agenda of a concerted democratic pushback on China's digital authoritarianism. Looking at the many prominent members of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China from the UK, it seems to indicate that, at least in Parliament, the moral backbone would be intact for such an approach even it could as a minimum lead to China threating the UK as it has done systemically with Australia, Canada, Sweden and other democracies over the years. Only by the UK working through a united front of democracies, will it be possible to dent China's aggressiveness. As Tom Tugendhat MP, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, suggested in an article that historically, the UK Royal Navy was a front runner on establishing the rules of the sea waves. Now a similar approach means pulling partners together to shape the modern equivalent- the digital realm.[56]

Such initiatives on behalf of the world's democracies would also have a good underpinning. In the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee's report, 'A brave new Britain? The future of the UK's international policy', an international survey by the British Council shows that a 'substantial majority of respondents saw the UK as prioritising human rights and democracy in its foreign policy.[57] This was especially pronounced in responses from Commonwealth countries'. This indicates that the UK could also galvanise Commonwealth countries as a unique asset in developing cooperation among democracies.

As my former colleague Ben Judah eloquently put it, jumping from G-7 to D-10 under UK stewardship could become 'a grand strategy for the democracies that will work to keep China in check, India close, and the US steady in the turbulent years to come.'[58] That is also what I suggest that 'Global Britain' should carve out a new role for itself.

[56] Tom Tugendhat, Britian must play a key role on an increasingly competitive world stage, Raction, October 2020, https://reaction.life/britain-must-play-a-key-role-on-an-increasingly-competitive-world-stage/?utm_source=POLITICO.EU&utm_campaign=a264c5e4f2-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_10_22_05_09&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_10959edeb5-a264c5e4f2-190445165

[57] House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, A brave new Britain? The future of the UK's international policy, Fourth Report of Session 2019-21, House of Commons, October 2020, https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/3133/documents/29251/default/?utm_source=POLITICO.EU&utm_campaign=a264c5e4f2-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_10_22_05_09&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_10959edeb5-a264c5e4f2-190445165

[58] Erik Brattberg and Ben Judah, Forget the G-7, Build the D-10, Foreign Policy, June 2020, https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/10/g7-d10-democracy-trump-europe/

4. 2021 – A pivotal year ahead for 'Global Britain'

By Ben Judah and Georgina Wright[59]

Ever since the referendum, Boris Johnson, Theresa May and other Conservative Party politicians have presented Brexit as the first step toward building a new 'Global Britain'. As Johnson declared in a speech in late 2016, pointing to China, "as Global Britain, our range is not confined to the immediate European hinterland as we see the rise of new powers."

But despite these promises, there has been little to no broader foreign policy debate in the country. Instead, Britons seem to have become caught between three temperaments. There are the catastrophists, who argue the UK will become irrelevant on the international stage as a result of Brexit; the nostalgics, who see a powerful Britain through the lens of a great colonial power; and the denialists, who refuse to accept that Britain must adapt to a changing global context. All are characterised by a surfeit of emotion and deficit of strategy– and none have answers to the key questions their government must now answer if the UK is serious about remaining a global power.

2021 could go down in history as a turning point in British foreign policy. Downing Street hopes to finally have the capacity to deliver on 'Global Britain' and take it centre stage, with the UK chairing both the G7 and co-hosting the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow. The Government will publish a new national strategy, dubbed the Integrated Review, which will generate a roadmap of the UK's long-term foreign policy commitments and priorities. And just last month, the Government pledged a £16.5 billion increase in the UK's defence budget. But more needs to be done to make

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British foreign policy a success: it needs a long-term vision where it clearly sets out priorities and ambitions, and must ensure that it can deliver on them. This essay builds on the ideas set out in an earlier article co-authored for the World Politics Review.[60]

A realistic Britain

The UK remains an important player on the global stage. Despite low productivity, the British economy remains dynamic, as London has the highest concentration of fast-growing companies among cities in Europe.[61] The UK is still a respected partner with an extensive diplomatic footprint few can match, spanning most countries in the world. It plays a vital role in European security due to its top-class intelligence services and military presence in Europe and abroad. British officials play agenda-setting roles on the international stage, including at the G7, G20, NATO, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the UN Security Council. As a stakeholder in the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization, and thanks to the strength of its own financial jurisdictions, most of all the City of London, the UK has had enormous regulatory sway over the global financial system. The British government also remains a policy leader on everything from international development, to anti-corruption efforts, to the fight against climate change.

Still, it is undeniable that Britain's reputation, leadership and influence in global affairs have all taken a hit. Since 2016, both of Britain's most important partnerships, with Europe and the US, have come under huge stress. The complexity of Brexit has meant that much of the UK's focus over recent years has been on untangling itself from the EU, rather than on crafting a new strategic partnership with the bloc. A month away from the end of the transition period, it is still unclear on what terms the UK will be cooperating with the EU from 1 January 2021.

Biden's victory also changes things. After years of EU bashing under Trump, Biden has promised to repair the transatlantic relationship. His appointment for Secretary of State, Tony Blinken, has singled out the EU as one of the US' most important partners. This raises important questions for the UK: what role does it want to play in the transatlantic relationship now that it has left the EU, but is still very much part of Europe?

A focused Britain

If you want to imagine what 'Global Britain' could be, a close look at Britain's stand over Hong Kong this summer is a good place to start. In terms of actions, allies and openness, the measures taken by London contained the ingredients of what British foreign policy has been in the past and could be in the future: confident, values-driven and capable of swift action.

When news broke in May that Beijing was considering levying unprecedented restrictions on Hong Kong through a new national security law, the British government moved quickly to oppose the move and respond. Not only did the UK shift its geopolitical posture toward China, but it played a leadership role by setting the policy of opposing Beijing's overreach, and getting like-minded countries, like France and Germany, to back it. British diplomacy also engaged strategically with allies, first gathering Australia and Canada and then the US to support its cause—demonstrating that the Anglosphere countries could work as an 'action group' to push back against China, and swiftly.

The UK's decision to offer a pathway to citizenship to more than three million Hong Kong citizens was met with widespread acclaim in US policy circles, as it combined a principled defence of the rule

[60] Ben Judah and Georgina Wright, In the Aftermath of Brext, What Can 'Global Britain' Be?, World Politics Review, October 2020, https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/29149/how-a-global-britain-could-cope-with-the-brexit-consequences'

[61] Maxine Kelly, FT 1000: the fourth annual list of Europe's fastest-growing companies, Financial Times, March 2020, https://www.ft.com/content/691390ca-53d9-11ea-90ad-25e377c0ee1f

of law with greater openness to immigration from Asia. British policy has not reversed China's strategy toward Hong Kong, but it has sent a strong signal that the UK remains an independent player able to stand up for its interests and values.

These events, and the UK's role in them, reveal that the country has an opportunity to participate in the reshaping of geopolitics in the Asia-Pacific. Australia, France, Germany and the US are all looking at new ways to engage there, but there is currently no global grouping structured around meeting the challenge of China's influence, the way that NATO checks Russian ambitions. Britain has a unique opportunity to encourage one, if it leverages its strengths to create goodwill and work with allies, like it did for Hong Kong.

Steps toward this are happening already. There has been a sharp uptick this year in ministerial meetings of the Five Eyes intelligence alliance between the UK, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. They have gone beyond its usual intelligence-sharing remit to discuss collaboration in the fight against the pandemic, and there is a mutual desire to deepen this cooperation further. Another proposal that has generated interest in Washington—and could be another conduit for action in the Asia-Pacific—is the potential D10 grouping, an alliance of ten democracies made up of the members of the G7, plus Australia, India and South Korea.[62]

The UK will also need to strengthen bilateral alliances. First, a successful 'Global Britain' would need to build an alliance with Japan. Luckily, London is knocking on an open door. Not only has Tokyo agreed in principle to Britain's first post-Brexit free trade deal, it also wants Britain to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership – the successor to the US-led Trans-Pacific Partnership, which Trump scuppered after taking office in 2017 – and has expressed a keen desire to join Five Eyes.

The second alliance is with Australia. First and foremost, a 'Global Britain' will need to take a more realistic approach to its collective ties with Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Some Brexiteers dream of a new bloc around 'CANZUK' akin to the European Economic Community; this is an imperial fantasy. But there is still much that Britain could do to share burdens and coordinate foreign policy and security with Australia. Opportunities could include developing joint agendas and proposals for the future of Five Eyes and the G7. Given the bipartisan consensus within the US on the need for a tougher approach to China, this UK-Australia dialogue could eventually develop into an annual 'G-Group' style meeting for the UK, Australia and Canada to coordinate where they stand vis-á-vis the US. The UK and Australia could also make new, joint security investments and deployments in the Asia-Pacific, and allow close-to-free movement between the two countries, as well as between the UK and New Zealand.

The UK should also continue working closely with Canada. The two governments recently coordinated their responses to Hong Kong, Belarus' flawed election and the recent flare-up between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and have co-funded a new Global Media Defence Fund at the UN. This could similarly grow into new joint security investments and deployments to meet threats posed by Russia and a new close-to-free movement travel agreement with Ottawa.

In terms of agility, Britain has much to learn from Tokyo, Canberra and Ottawa, as well as Oslo, about being a successful middle power, even if some in the UK still aspire to great-power status. Japan, for example, exists outside regulatory blocs, but has run a focused strategy supported by a successful domestic industrial policy, while Norway has chosen to concentrate its international

[62] Erik Brattberg and Ben Judah, Forget the G-7, Build the D-10, Foreign Policy, June 2020, https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/10/g7-d10-democracy-trump-europe/

efforts on conflict resolution and mediation. These are models for what 'Global Britain', with the right domestic reforms, could eventually be.

Much closer to home, the UK should aspire to become the EU's partner of choice. The EU is also exploring the idea of smaller groupings, where one or a group of member states work together to tackle a specific foreign policy issue, like capacity-building in the Sahel or establishing safer routes for asylum-seekers. There may be scope for greater British involvement and input into the design of these projects, especially on issues where the UK and EU share common interests. London should embrace the EU's offer of a comprehensive security and foreign policy deal—and push for one that gets it as close as possible to achieving permanent 'observer status' in its policymaking.

Britain should not be afraid to push for new formats too. It could, for example, consider broadening the remit of its E3 partnership with France and Germany beyond discussing Iran, to include European and international security. And where the UK is already influential, like in NATO and the UN, it should push for reform. A 'Global Britain' that invests in as many channels of influence as possible could come to enjoy privileged partnerships – or, to use a dated but still emotive term, 'special relationships' – with both Washington and Brussels.

Finally, Britain should seek to join as many multilateral trade agreements and bodies as possible. In addition to joining the CPTPP, it should launch a broader strategy in Asia to reinforce, associate or where possible even join key security bodies, including the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum; 'the Quad', a security dialogue among Australia, the US, India and Japan; and the recently proposed Resilient Supply Chains Initiative involving Australia, India and Japan.[63] These ties will also help the UK react to heightened competition between the US and China.

By expanding its alliances into the Global South, as well, the UK could buttress its ability to bring countries together. On tackling epidemics, for example, Britain could help countries that have strong research facilities, like the US, France, Germany and Switzerland, coordinate with countries that have frontline experience handling public health crises and new outbreaks, like South Africa. Through other alliances, it could put forward new ideas and launch multilateral regulatory processes on a range of issues that are vital for British interests, from eliminating kleptocracy and money-laundering, to adapting to climate change, to building better supply chains and new critical infrastructure like 5G.

This is what 'Global Britain' can be: a mid-sized country that reinforces the multilateral system through close alliances with the US and the EU, and new, deeper ties with democracies in the Asia-Pacific. Building trust and credibility with these allies can help the UK make up for its post-Brexit loss of regulatory influence and its vulnerability to US diktats over 5G and other emerging technologies. And at a time when many countries appear to be marching toward more individualism, Britain could choose to play a vital role in strengthening the multilateral system, and ensuring it is a fair and robust one.

A Britain that delivers

Ultimately, though, the UK will be judged not by what it promises on the international stage, but by what it does. The Government's recent threat to breach the Withdrawal Agreement it negotiated with the EU less than a year ago has been seized upon by critics at home and abroad as proof that the country is heading toward political isolation. The House of Lords has removed the controversial provisions – though the Government has said it would reintroduce them unless talks with the EU

[63] Amitendu Palit, The Resilient Supply Chain Initiative: Reshaping Economics Through Geopolitics, The Diplomat, September 2020, https://thediplomat.com/2020/09/the-resilient-supply-chain-initiative-reshaping-economics-through-geopolitics/

over the Northern Ireland Protocol made progress. This has not gone down well in Brussels. And in his phone call to the Prime Minister, President-elect Biden warned that the Brexit outcome must respect the Good Friday Agreement. The Chancellor's recent announcement that the UK would reduce aid spending from 0.7 per cent to 0.5 per cent of GDP has also disappointed partners across the developing world.

Building a good reputation can take years, but it can be lost in a matter of days. In the long-run, this behaviour could have serious consequences for the way the UK is perceived internationally, and damage the attractiveness of its domestic market for foreign direct investment. It might even prevent the British government from negotiating trade deals in the future. To create a 'Global Britain', the UK, above all, will need to command the trust of other countries. It will need to continue to invest in its diplomatic network, and it must be mindful of the tone it uses to convey its global ambitions.

The UK must ensure that it has the means to live up to those ambitions. COVID-19 will inevitably redirect the Government's purse, with knock-on effects on public finances. British leaders will need to make careful and considered choices about where to invest and reallocate funding, ensuring that they prioritise the issues and regions singled out in its foreign policy review. The UK will also need to be honest about trade. Even if, by some miracle, it replicates all the deals the EU has with its trading partners and secures new deals with the US, India, China and the Gulf states, those arrangements would only increase Britain's GDP by 0.2 per cent after 15 years, according to government projections.[64] If the UK is serious about becoming an export-oriented economy that is productive and grows in the long-run, its trade deals will need to be supported by a strong and well-considered industrial strategy.

The UK will need to protect some other budget lines; for example, it should continue to protect funding for the BBC World Service and the British Council, which are vital tools of soft power. It could do more to protect journalists abroad, perhaps through the Global Media Defence Fund with Canada. It should also quickly move to restore aid spending to 0.7 per cent. Beyond that, the UK should increase its efforts to support and fund research on artificial intelligence, quantum computing and life sciences to remain competitive in these areas with the tech powerhouses of the US and China.

The UK must also make sure that it can act decisively. Johnson's decision in June to merge the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development into one foreign policy department may be one step in the right direction, as it will centralise decision making, staffing and budgeting. But the Government must think about how to hone and hold onto that expertise. These offices typically experience very high levels of staff turnover, with officials often choosing to work on very different policy briefs every three years. This has long contributed to a loss of institutional memory and some short-sightedness, as demonstrated by the UK's decision to drastically reduce the size of its Soviet desk shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall. To avoid this kind of thing happening again, the UK should consider building up its in-house expertise, as well as drawing on foreign policy expertise outside of government, in think tanks, universities, civil society and the private sector.

Finally, the UK needs a much more inclusive public debate to generate support for foreign policy. Successive governments have not always done a good job of explaining what they were doing on the global stage or why it mattered. While Johnson's government has promised a 'Global Britain' that

[64] EU Exit: Long-term economic analysis, HM Government, November 2018, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/760484/28_November_EU_Exit_-_Long-term_economic_analysis__1_.pdf

delivers for Britons all across the country, it still must demonstrate how its new foreign policy plan will benefit the UK as a whole, especially Scotland and the other devolved governments.

With the Brexit saga slowly drawing to an end, Britain needs to think about its future. The world needs the UK to be an agile actor, with the right resources and strong networks to be effective on the global stage. When it comes to strategy, political promises and vision are not enough; it will also need to show leadership, trustworthiness and a commitment to being a force for good in the world. British leaders will need to have a strong sense of the country's significant strengths and weaknesses, as well as a determination to use that knowledge to the greatest advantage. The longer Britain waits, the harder it will be to convince the global community that it is serious about the role it wants to play.

This essay was adapted from an article In the Aftermath of Brexit, What Can 'Global Britain' Be? published by World Politics Review in October 2020.[65]

[65] Ben Judah and Georgina Wright, In the Aftermath of Brext, What Can 'Global Britain' Be?, World Politics Review, October 2020, https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/29149/how-a-global-britain-could-cope-with-the-brexit-consequences'

5. Could the UK project positive values on financial transparency?

By Alex Cobham, Andres Knobel and Robert Palmer[66]

The global pandemic has put pressures on public services and on government revenue streams all around the world. Immediate measures being discussed include wealth taxes on those most able to contribute, and excess profits taxes on the few businesses that have benefited from state interventions to protect public health, such as Amazon. Underpinning such measures, and future possibilities for both revenue-raising and ending impunity for corruption, is the agenda for financial transparency and integrity.

The State of Tax Justice 2020 report identifies global revenue losses of $427 billion, due to the combination of corporate profit shifting and offshore tax evasion by individuals. Both types of tax abuse rely on a lack of financial transparency to go undetected. Together, as COVID-19 continues to thrive in each region of the world, they result in the loss of revenues equivalent to the annual salary of a nurse – every second.[67]

[66] Alex Cobham is chief executive of the Tax Justice Network, and a commissioner for the Scottish Government's Poverty and Inequality Commission. Recent publications include The Uncounted (Polity Press, 2019); and Estimating Illicit Financial Flows (OUP, 2020, with Petr Janský).
Andres Knobel is a senior researcher at the Tax Justice Network. He has also worked as a consultant on financial secrecy for the Inter-American Development Bank, ICRICT and the UN High-Level FACTI Panel.
Robert Palmer is the Executive Director of Tax Justice UK, which works to ensure the UK's tax system is fair and effective. Previously he helped establish the Open Data Charter secretariat. While at Global Witness, Robert led a global campaign to tackle the laundering of the proceeds of corruption, including by championing beneficial ownership transparency. *Image by Diliff under (CC).*
[67] Tax Justice Network, Global Alliance for Tax Justice and Public Services International, State of Tax Justice 2020, Tax Justice Network, 2020, https://www.taxjustice.net/reports/the-state-of-tax-justice-2020/

From the late 1990s to the mid-2010s, successive UK governments sought to project positive values abroad in the area of financial transparency, accountability and integrity. While that played differently under different governments, there was a common thread – a golden thread, if you will – around the importance of establishing the true ownership of assets and income streams, in order to fight corruption and to protect tax revenues.

For a variety of reasons including the legacy of the British Empire, that was always a complicated agenda. The UK has, in truth, pursued an ambivalent approach. Various policies designed to attract capital – both the shifted profits of multinational companies and the proceeds of outright corruption, have co-existed with efforts to limit at least some aspects of these behaviours. Nonetheless, the approach was largely successful in providing leadership opportunities to the UK and – to a degree – in supporting broader international progress. Events of recent years have complicated the position still further, but there remains a potentially powerful opportunity if the UK can make progress in cleaning out its own house in the coming years.

Specifically, the UK's chairing of the powerful G7 group of countries in 2021 provides a platform immediately in the wake of Brexit becoming a reality, to re-establish a role at the forefront of efforts to promote financial transparency and integrity.

The problematic context is that the UK, together with its Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, is the largest international actor in the provision of both financial secrecy *and* in profit shifting by multinational companies. The State of Tax Justice 2020 identifies the UK and its network as responsible for $160 billion of tax losses around the world annually, or more than a third of the global revenue losses due to cross-border tax abuse by companies and individual.[68] The opportunity to project positive values will depend on taking genuine, substantive steps to curb these abuses – and working internationally to propagate the advances.

The ABC of transparency, and UK leadership

The Tax Justice Network's ABC of transparency is a central element of the policy platform laid out after the organisation's formal establishment in 2003, and provides a broad structure in which to understand the main areas of policy progress over recent decades. While initially derided as utopian, each element of the platform has subsequently been adopted onto the global policy agenda.

'A' stands for the automatic exchange of financial information between countries, ensuring that the tax authorities in one country receive annual information on the foreign financial accounts of their tax residents. This area has arguably seen the greatest progress. The previous standard of information exchange 'upon request' has largely been consigned to history. The OECD Common Reporting Standard includes more than 100 signatories, including all significant financial centres except the USA, and provides for multilateral, automatic exchange. This has helped tax authorities around the world identify, and tackle, tax evasion.

The 'B' of the ABC relates to beneficial ownership transparency, and specifically the introduction of fully accessible, public registers of the ultimate beneficial owners of companies, trusts and foundations. The emphasis on *beneficial* owner is to distinguish from the legal owner, which is often simply another legal vehicle. To understand the potential for corruption, tax abuse and other crimes, it is necessary to know the identities of the warm-blooded human beings who stand behind legal entities. 80 countries have so far committed to disclosing beneficial ownership information.[69]

[68] Tax Justice Network, Global Alliance for Tax Justice and Public Services International, State of Tax Justice 2020, Tax Justice Network, 2020, https://www.taxjustice.net/reports/the-state-of-tax-justice-2020/.
[69] Open Ownership: https://www.openownership.org/

The 'C' refers to public, country by country reporting by multinational companies. This measure, based on an original draft accounting standard developed by the Tax Justice Network, effectively creates a transparency level playing field with small and domestic businesses that publish their annual accounts.[70] The measure, adopted into an OECD standard for all large multinationals in 2015, requires data on the economic activity, profits declared and tax paid, in each jurisdiction of operations. Publishing this data would lay bare the patterns of profit shifting, allowing both multinationals and the jurisdictions responsible for profit shifting to be held accountable. The OECD data remains privately provided to tax authorities only and has significant technical weaknesses; but the leading setter of sustainability standards, the Global Reporting Initiative, has now introduced a fully robust standard for voluntary public reporting which is seeing enthusiastic adoption from leading companies including Vodafone, Philips and Shell.

The UK's role in progress in each area has been valued. In broad strokes, the Labour government of Tony Blair elected in 1997 had taken the important step of recognising the threat posed to international development by the financial secrecy offered by 'tax havens'. The 2000 White Paper on Globalisation put down an important marker in this area, and coupled with the Oxfam report of the same year on the revenue losses imposed by havens, played a catalytic role in energising what became the international movement for tax justice.[71] The Blair government also initiated the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which played a role in the gradual development of higher standards of disclosure of multinational companies' payments to governments.

In terms of the ABC, the contributions are more specific and more recent. First, on automatic information exchange, the UK and its extended network of Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies are among the signatories of the OECD Common Reporting Standard. In addition, the UK repeatedly pushed under David Cameron to ensure the full inclusion of lower-income countries, so that the benefits of the new transparency being created for OECD members would not be denied to others.

The UK has shown perhaps the greatest leadership on beneficial ownership, with David Cameron making the creation of the UK register for companies a central component of his 'golden thread' approach that underpinned both the G8 summit and his subsequent international statesmanship, including a 2016 anti-corruption summit where a number of additional countries committed to introduce company registers. The EU also acted on this agenda, committing to public registers not only for companies but also for trusts and foundations, while the UK government has been much more reluctant to take action on trusts. A backbench amendment in the UK parliament also led to a (pending) requirement for public registers for companies in the Overseas Territories.[72]

Lastly, the UK's involvement in the rise of greater corporate transparency at country level dates back to the EITI but goes further. In 2016, an amendment to the Finance Bill made the UK government the first to legislate to make OECD country by country reporting data public. As yet, however, the Treasury has refused to make use of the powers granted, and it appears increasingly likely that the EU will move first.

[70] Richard Murphy, A Proposed International Accounting Standard: Reporting Turnover and Tax by Location, Association for Accountancy and Business Affairs, 2003, http://visar.csustan.edu/aaba/ProposedAccstd.pdf; Alex Cobham, Petr Janský and Markus Meinzer, A half-century of resistance to corporate disclosure, Transnational Corporations 25(3), 1-26, 2018, https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/diaeia2018d5a2_en.pdf

[71] HMG, Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor, White Paper on International Development, HMSO, 2000, https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/4613/1/whitepaper2000.pdf. Ruth Mayne and Jenny Kimmis, Tax Havens: Releasing the hidden billions for poverty eradication, Oxford, 2000, https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/tax-havens-releasing-the-hidden-billions-for-poverty-eradication-114611

[72] BBC, Ministers back down on tax haven company registers, May 2018, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-43965546

A Global Asset Registry: Recommendations from the UK pilot

Critical to both international anti-corruption efforts and the prospects for effectiveness of wealth taxes, the proposal for a global asset registry relates to the creation of a searchable register, containing both public information and information accessible only to relevant tax and legal authorities, showing the beneficial ownership of all significant asset classes.[73] This would be achieved by enabling connectivity between existing registers, and creating additional data sources where necessary; and with the potential to extend within countries and across borders.

In 2019, the Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation (ICRICT) undertook a scoping study of asset ownership information available in the UK (with a final report due out in December 2020).[74] The UK was in part chosen because of its relatively advanced position in some areas, and the report found that most assets that could be subject to a national asset registry are already required to register some ownership information with a government authority (e.g. land, cars, yachts, jets and stock of non-listed companies) or at least their ownership information is centralised by one or few private players, such as the central securities depository (for some listed stock and other financial assets) or the seven custodians offering vaulting services for gold and other precious metals. However, the report identified shortcomings, including the fact that government registries are not always centralised, or they may have incomplete information (e.g. no price or value information), or they may contain no public access to ownership information. In addition, there is no registry at all (either by the government or a private actor) for art objects, antiques, jewellery, cash and crypto-assets such as bitcoins.

The study makes a series of recommendations to address the gaps in UK asset transparency. In addition to the creation or expansion of registers, and the inclusion of price and value data, the study highlights the need for information to be published online for free, in open data format; and, importantly, for the publication of more comprehensive statistics, for example by income level, and type of asset for those assets that are considered confidential, such as bank accounts. A complementary measure would be to require self-reporting of wealth information on worldwide assets, potentially based on a threshold. This would be easy to implement because the UK already requires most of this information under inheritance tax. It would also allow the estimation of wealth, both to measure inequality and in case there is a future decision to levy a wealth tax.

Regardless of the approach to be implemented, the scoping study considered that the UK is well positioned to establish a national asset register containing ownership information at the beneficial ownership level, for a number of reasons. First, there is political commitment towards becoming a champion in transparency and open data, as shown by the UK's leadership in publishing companies' beneficial owners in online public registries where information is available for free and in open data format. Second, the UK already has experience and interest in analysing and measuring wealth, as shown by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) publications based on the Wealth and Assets Survey and wealth statistics published by the UK tax authorities (HMRC) based on inheritance tax returns. Third, the UK has the technology and capabilities to process and apply advance analytics to millions of data from different sources, as exemplified by HMRC's "Connect" software used to detect tax misreporting. Finally, the report notes that the UK's recent experience with Unexplained Wealth Orders demonstrates the intention to take action, in response to the information it collects, by freezing and confiscating assets whenever the owner cannot explain how they were acquired.

[73] See e.g. the work of the UK Wealth Tax Commission at https://www.ukwealth.tax/, including its forthcoming report; and the recent Treasury Select Committee evidence session dedicated to the potential: https://committees.parliament.uk/event/2744/formal-meeting-oral-evidence-session/.

[74] Andres Knobel, Pilot study for a UK Asset Registry–Phase 1: An assessment of available asset ownership information, ICRICT, December 2019, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a0c602bf43b5594845abb81/t/5dfa0c37437fa7242cbe3793/1576668258459/Pilot+stydy+for+a+UK+Asset+Registry-Phase1-revised+version.pdf

Opportunities at the G7 and beyond

Post-Brexit, the UK faces major challenges in many areas, including in establishing a new regime for its international trade. With the decision to end the independence of the Department for International Development and to set aside the aid commitment of 0.7 per cent of national income, the prospects for influence and international policy leadership appear limited. But the history of the UK's positioning on critical issues of financial transparency points to a potential opportunity.

Eight years on the UK's chairing of the G8 group of countries in 2013, the 2021 meeting of the G7 provides a global moment to re-establish the country's role in promoting financial transparency. Bold steps on transparency at home would be needed to set the basis; but the possibilities are clear and feasible. All major UK political parties are committed in principle to tackling tax avoidance and tax evasion, and polling for Tax Justice UK shows that 84 per cent of people want politicians to close loopholes to stop big companies and wealthy people avoiding paying tax, rising to 91 per cent for Conservative voters.[75]

In respect of the automatic exchange of financial information, the UK can set a standard for the publication of aggregate data on the financial account holdings of UK tax residents in each other jurisdiction, alongside the values reported to HMRC – providing an immediate accountability check on the extent of undeclared assets and related income streams, as well as identifying the most high-risk jurisdictions for non-declaration. The Australian and German governments have taken some steps in this area; the UK could create the standard. Adding in aggregate data on the holdings in UK financial institutions of tax residents of other countries would be world-leading, and a valuable service especially to those lower-income countries still excluded from the OECD exchange of data.

In terms of beneficial ownership, the UK should implement without further delay its stalled commitment to create a public register of the beneficial owners of foreign companies owning UK property, and could then build on its existing lead and announce steps towards joining up and addressing the gaps in the various ownership registers, setting a course for the broader asset transparency envisaged in the proposals for a global asset register to fight corruption and tax abuse.[76] And on country by country reporting, the UK could simply make use of the existing legislation and require multinationals to publish their OECD standard data – with effectively zero additional compliance costs, and the potential to bring in significant revenues.[77]

Finally, continuing to assist the Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories to achieve the same standards would be valuable – while also indicating the need for financial support for these jurisdictions to pursue alternative development paths. This should be the bare minimum to reflect the UK's historic and continuing responsibility for encouraging so many of these jurisdictions to pursue offshore financial services. That policy stance, based on reducing UK aid spending and bolstering the City of London's pre-eminence by encouraging illicit inflows, reflected the scant regard of policymakers at the time for the economic distortions and needless inequalities that resulted, as part of the broader damage of the 'finance curse'.[78]

[75] Tax Justice UK, Talking Tax: How to win support for taxing wealth, Tax Justice UK, https://www.taxjustice.uk/uploads/1/0/0/3/100363766/talking_tax_-_how_to_win_support_for_taxing_wealth.pdf

[76] Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, Draft Registration of Overseas Entities Bill, Gov.uk, July 2018, https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-registration-of-overseas-entities-bill

[77] Tax Justice UK, Simple tax avoidance measure could raise £2.5 billion, Tax Justice UK, 2018, https://www.taxjustice.uk/blog/simple-tax-avoidance-measure-could-raise-25bn

[78] On the UK government decisions and on the damage of an excessively dominant financial sector, including for the UK itself, see Nick Shaxson: 2011, Treasure Islands: Tax Havens and the Men who Stole the World, London: Palgrave Macmillan on the development of the UK's network; and 2018, The Finance Curse: How Global Finance is Making Us All Poorer, London: Bodley Head.

Taking the opportunity to promote positive values of financial transparency, with the platform of the G7 chair in 2021, will not be easy – but could fundamentally reposition the UK, support its dependent territories to find new economic futures, and make a major contribution to global financial transparency and to curbing the scale of international corruption and tax abuse.

Recommendations

- The UK should leverage its chairing of the 2021 G7 and its preeminent position in international finance by taking leadership on financial transparency, with commitments to:
    - publish aggregate data on the automatic exchange of financial information to curb further the threat of bank secrecy;
    - extend, improve and connect public registers of beneficial ownership to eliminate anonymous ownership of assets; and
    - put into practice the existing legislation to require public country by country reporting from multinational companies, to curtail profit shifting.
- The UK should ensure the rollout of all these measures across its network, by working with the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies - including through substantial financial support to repair the damage of the UK's having promoted their offshore financial secrecy role over decades, and to assist the transition to alternative economic development paths.

6. An environmental dimension to UK foreign policy

By Luke Murphy[79]

Four years on from the vote to leave the European Union (EU) much has been written about the UK's international role in a post-Brexit world. Only recently, however, has the climate crisis emerged as potentially the strongest candidate around which the UK could forge a genuine leadership role in the world and make the vision of 'Global Britain' a reality.[80]

As the host and president of the G7 and as the host (in Glasgow) of the international climate summit, COP26, the UK has been handed a golden opportunity to demonstrate leadership on tackling the climate crisis. To make the most of this opportunity, the UK must ensure that it gets its own house in order in terms of delivering ambitious domestic commitments on decarbonisation, as well taking some essential actions at the international level in building progressive partnerships, embedding a net zero mentality in aid, trade and finance, and through carving out a future role in the shaping of international agreements and institutions. The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, to be published in early 2021, also presents an opportunity to set out how the UK intends to champion ambitious action on climate through a pivotal year and in the years to come.[81]

[79] Luke Murphy is Head of the Environmental Justice Commission and Associate Director for the Energy, Climate, Housing and Infrastructure Team at the IPPR. *Image by Number 10 under (CC).*
[80] HMG, Global Britain: delivering on our international ambition, Gov.uk, September 2019, https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/global-britain-delivering-on-our-international-ambition
[81] Boris Johnson, PM statement to the House on the Integrated Review, November 2020, https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-to-the-house-on-the-integrated-review-19-november-2020

The UK as a 'climate leader' isn't new, but its role needs renewing

The idea of the UK being a world leader on climate is, of course, nothing new. Governments of all parties have ensured that over the past decade and more the UK has been able to lead the way with groundbreaking commitments, legislation and policies on climate. These include the groundbreaking Stern report in 2006, which looked at the economics of climate change, the world leading Climate Change Act passed in 2008 and being the first major economy to commit to a legally binding net zero 2050 target.[82]

However, while the net zero target passed last year marked a shift back towards the centrality of climate within UK policymaking, the previous few years had seen some weakening in terms of commitment and delivery. Perhaps most symbolically in 2013 when the then Prime Minister David Cameron called to 'get rid of all the green crap' and more importantly inadequate progress is being made in terms of meeting the 4th and 5th carbon budgets, both stepping-stones towards the overall reduction of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions.[83]

Why the UK and why now?

Nevertheless, the coming year offers a significant opportunity for the UK to renew itself as a global leader on climate. The question is, why the UK and why now?

The case for renewing the UK's role as a global climate leader is strong. Firstly, as the fifth largest historic emitter of carbon emissions in the world and as one of the prime exporters of an economic model that has proved to be unsustainable in environmental terms, the UK has a responsibility to ensure that its foreign policy recognises its historic legacy.[84] Secondly, there is the UK's record on leveraging international climate action. From the climate change act to the net zero target, the UK's visible action and leadership over the years in tackling the climate crisis has made a difference in spurring action from other countries.

Thirdly, there are the reputational and soft power benefits. At a time when the UK's standing in the world has been diminished as a result of its decision to leave the EU, as well as the threats to break international law as part of the UK Internal Market Bill, there is a need to rebuild partnerships and confidence in the UK as a trusted international actor – action on the climate crisis provides such an opportunity.[85] Moreover, the Government itself has recognised that such action provides an opening to enhance the UK's soft power.[86]

Fourthly, there are the economic benefits. The discussions on moving to net zero emissions has shifted worldwide from being a preoccupation of environmentalists to a recognised necessity of economists and policymakers. We're now moving into a third phase as many countries around the world see the transition to a net zero economy as one of boundless opportunity, an investment and not a cost.[87] In the past few months alone, China, South Korea and Japan have all committed to new

[82] Nicolas Stern. 2006. The Economics of Climate Change: The Stern Review, Cambridge University Press. https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/publication/the-economics-of-climate-change-the-stern-review/

[83] Rowena Mason, David Cameron at centre of 'get rid of all the green crap' storm, The Guardian, November 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/nov/21/david-cameron-green-crap-comments-storm; IPPR. 2020. Faster, further, fairer: Putting people at the heart of tackling the climate and nature emergency, interim report of the IPPR Environmental Justice Commission, http://www.ippr.org/publications/faster-further-fairer

[84] Laybourn-Langton L and Rankin L. 2019. Our responsibility: A new model of international cooperation for the era of environmental breakdown, IPPR. http://www.ippr.org/research/publications/our-responsibility

[85] Georgina Wright, UK threats to break international law make a Brexit deal even more difficult, September 2020, https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/blog/break-international-law-brexit-deal-difficult

[86] Written evidence submitted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (CLI0010) https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/3939/pdf/

[87] Camilla Cavendish, Climate diplomacy is winning its fight against a zero-sum mindset, The FT, November 2020, https://www.ft.com/content/e1127520-43f4-4324-9e08-59ac87648ca8

net zero targets.[88] The race to net zero has begun and if the UK is to seize the economic opportunities on offer then it cannot afford to be left behind.

Finally, there is the confluence of events in 2021 that should make climate diplomacy a top tier priority for the UK government. Next year the UK will ascend the G7 Presidency, host the vital climate summit in COP26 and Joe Biden will be sworn in as the 46th President of the United States. As host of both major events, the UK has the opportunity to demonstrate its 'internationalism and green credentials' according to the conservative MP Tom Tugendhat, chair of the Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee, and cement relations with the incoming democratic President who has been crystal clear in his determination to make tackling the climate crisis a domestic and international priority.[89]

If the UK is to put words into action, and place climate at the heart of its foreign policy, what does it need to do in practice?

Leading by the power of example

As the host of COP26 in 2021, the UK can help inspire the rest of world and leverage greater ambition and delivery from other developed countries. But to do so, the UK must get its own house in order first. The legal commitment to net zero by 2050 was a necessary but, on its own, insufficient means of doing so. The policy and investment needed to deliver must swiftly follow. The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, announced some bold measures in his recent '10-point plan for a green industrial revolution' but it fell well short of a strategy to deliver on our legal commitments.[90]

The UK must go further in terms of its targets, policies and investments. This should include an ambitious 'Nationally Determined Contribution' (NDC) – commitments by each country under the 2015 Paris Agreement to reduce emissions and adapt to the impacts of global heating - this would imply a reduction of at least 72 per cent in emissions by 2030 compared to 1990 levels according to new research by WWF.[91] This should be backed by the creation of new institutions including a 'Net Zero and Just Transition Delivery Body' charged with developing a national strategy and sectoral plans to deliver on our climate commitments.[92]

All of this must be supported by a significant increase in investment in projects ranging from sustainable public transport, such as the electrification of rail and bus networks, to nature investments including tree planting and peatland restoration. Only by getting the UK on track to meet its net zero commitments will it credibly be able to call itself a global leader on climate and maximise its influence through its foreign policy.

Building progressive partnerships and shaping climate politics

The UK also has an important role in building progressive partnerships and shaping global climate politics. Although diplomatic success can be hard to determine, some have pointed to evidence of the UK's impact in the past from the introduction of carbon market pricing in China to power sector reform in India.[93] Some ambassadors have also pointed to the closer bilateral relationships between the UK and countries in Latin America, leveraged through climate diplomacy.[94]

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[88] David Hackett and IIona Millar, A new global paradigm for global climate action, November 2020, https://www.bakermckenzie.com/en/insight/publications/2020/11/biden-victory-ushers-in-race-to-the-top and

[89] Leslie Hook, Katrina Mason and Derek Brower. Biden focuses on US climate diplomacy with key role for John Kerry, The FT, November 2020, https://www.ft.com/content/31d93942-6481-4e64-ba85-a6871a142862

[90] HMG press release, PM outlines his Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution for 250,000 jobs, November 2020, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-outlines-his-ten-point-plan-for-a-green-industrial-revolution-for-250000-jobs

[91] WWF, COP26: The UK's 2030 Climate Target to Cut Emissions, November 2020, https://www.wwf.org.uk/updates/cop26-climate-target-cut-emissions

[92] IPPR. Faster, Further, Fairer.

[93] Pete Betts, Summary Report of the International Advisory Group to the Committee on Climate Change in Relation to its Work on the UK's Long-Term Emissions Goal, May 2019, https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/International-Net-Zero-Advisory-Group-Chair-Report.pdf

[94] Ibid

As host to the G7 and then COP26, the UK will have an outsized platform and opportunity to wield influence and use its diplomatic expertise to drive progress on international climate action.[95] In this regard, there is much to be learnt from France's approach in achieving the 2015 Paris Agreement where its skillful diplomacy delivered a groundbreaking international agreement on climate.[96] Putting this into practice will require concerted effort to build key progressive partnerships and shape climate politics. Working closely with key allies like the EU and particularly the US where Joe Biden has placed a high priority on climate action, the UK should seek to create focused campaigns on key issues including through groupings such as the Climate Ambition Alliance.[97]

An important sign of progress will be the summit hosted by the UK government on 12th December at which Boris Johnson has called on world leaders to 'announce genuinely transformational net zero targets and bold climate finance pledges'.[98] Ensuring this happens in practice will rely not just on the strength of the UK's diplomacy but also its own NDC commitment as outlined above. Other areas that the UK should focus its diplomatic attention include key projects, such as the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative.[99] This immense infrastructure project poses significant challenges to the world's ambitions. The UK will need to work with key partners to influence China at every stage from financing to the laying of the infrastructure.

Finally, the UK should step-up its commitment to acting as a 'supporting partner' in providing policy, financial and technological assistance to those nations most affected by the climate crisis.[100] A key tenet of foreign and aid policy should be working with such less industrialised countries to build their capability and local institutions in order to accelerate their climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.[101]

Climate progress through progressive trade policy

Between 1990 and 2016, the UK reduced greenhouse gas emissions released within its national borders by 41 per cent, but those emissions from goods consumed in the UK but produced elsewhere fell by only 15 per cent.[102] Indeed, the UK's consumption emissions in the 1970s were just 0.2 per cent higher than our territorial emissions, whereas they are 37 per cent higher today.[103] But the UK also has much broader environmental impacts, the evidence suggests that if everyone in the world were to live like the average UK citizen, then we would need 2.5 planets worth of resources to sustain us.[104] In other words, much of the UK's wider impacts on the climate and our environment are currently being offshored.

As the UK seeks to strike its own trade deals outside of the EU for the first time in four decades, there is an opportunity for the UK to embed high environmental standards including robust standards on greenhouse gas emissions, as well as high product and labour standards, within any future trade agreements. The UK's relationship with the US will be central to making this approach a reality. In comparison to trading giants including the EU, China and the US, the UK is relatively small in global trading terms. But if the UK is able to lever similar commitments to high standards from

[95] ECIU, UK diplomacy and influence ahead of COP26, October 2021, https://eciu.net/analysis/briefings/international-perspectives/uk-diplomacy-and-influence-ahead-of-cop26

[96] Fiona Harvey, Paris climate change agreement: the world's greatest diplomatic success, December 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/13/paris-climate-deal-cop-diplomacy-developing-united-nations

[97] Climate Ambition Alliance: Nations Renew their Push to Upscale Action by 2020 and Achieve Net Zero CO2 Emissions by 2050, December 2019, https://cop25.mma.gob.cl/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Alianza-11122019-INGL%C3%89S.pdf

[98] HMG News Story, PM: 'Climate action cannot be another victim of coronavirus', September 2020, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-climate-action-cannot-be-another-victim-of-coronavirus

[99] Ibid.

[100] Laybourn-Langton et al. Our responsibility.

[101] ibid

[102] ECIU. UK diplomacy and influence ahead of COP26.

[103] IPPR. Faster, Further, Fairer.

[104] O'Neill D W, Fanning A L, Lamb W F and Steinberger J K (2018) 'A good life for all within planetary boundaries', Nature Sustainability, 1:88–95, doi: 10.1038/s41893-018-0021-4

countries with close diplomatic ties, the UK could punch above its weight in delivering progressive climate action. Moreover, the shape of the UK's Emission Trading Scheme, which will be in place from 1st January 2021, could also be central to the UK's approach to emissions reductions both at home and abroad.[105]

Financing the transition

The funds that the UK spends abroad through climate finance will be central to cementing its role as global climate leader. In that regard, the decision to cut Official Development Assistance (ODA) (international aid spending) from the world leading 0.7 per cent of GDP to 0.5 per cent for an undefined period is both a terrible signal in terms of the UK's supposed leadership and is also terrible climate policy. The UK has a committed a proportion of its ODA to both the mitigation of and adaptation to the climate crisis so a cut in the ODA budget is likely to feed into a reduction in the UK's spending on climate action abroad.

In light of this, the Government should now seek to do a number of things through its contribution to international climate finance. First, the Government should commit at the earliest opportunity to reinstate the 0.7 per cent target. Second, the need to mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis should be mainstreamed across the whole of the ODA budget and not just those parts dedicated to climate action. Third, the Government should make a significant contribution to the international Green Climate Fund and in doing so, seek to leverage similar commitments from international partners. The UK could use an increased financial pledge to recognise its status as the fifth largest contributor to cumulative emissions by explicitly linking its historic contribution to the scale of its financial commitment. The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) has calculated that a contribution of circa £20 billion between now and 2030 would be commensurate with the UK's historic contribution and the level of emissions reduction that such a figure could bring about through supporting less industrialised nations to mitigate and adapt to global heating.[106] The Government could also build on this commitment by extending such a 'fair share' approach to its other environmental impacts across the world.[107]

As a global financial centre, the UK has significant influence throughout the world on the direction of sustainable private finance. In recognition of this role, the Government has made making progress on this agenda a key priority for COP26 and the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, has made some recent announcements on the disclosure of climate risks and the issuing of green gilts.[108] But in many commentators' eyes this is the bare minimum that needs to be done.[109] The Government could for instance go further by requiring all firms to set themselves binding targets for emissions reductions as well as to disclose all of the emissions that arise from their supply chains and consumers use of their products.

Finally, the Government should confirm its intention to phase out UK Export Finance (UKEF) – the Government agency which provides export credit guarantees to companies trading abroad – support for fossil fuel projects, a practice which is wholly incompatible with global leadership on climate. Furthermore, UKEF should also seek to actively increase investment into low-carbon and climate compatible opportunities abroad such as offshore wind and decommissioning.

[105] Lindsay Edwards, UK greenhouse gas emissions trading scheme order published, November 2020, https://www.pinsentmasons.com/out-law/news/uk-greenhouse-gas-emissions-trading-scheme-order-published

[106] Laybourn-Langton et al. Our responsibility.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Alok Sharma, President Alok Sharma at launch of COP26 Private Finance Agenda, February 2020, https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/cop26-president-alok-sharma-at-launch-of-cop26-private-finance-agenda; HMT, Chancellor sets out ambition for future of UK financial services, News Story, November 2020, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-sets-out-ambition-for-future-of-uk-financial-services

[109] Leslie Hook and Matthew Vincent, Green business reporting rules at risk of pale response, The FT, November 2020, https://www.ft.com/content/ad01f2c9-9eb0-4db6-9898-220c688d16c2

International agreements and institutions

The UK has long held an influential role in the shaping, reform and creation of international institutions and agreements. In the pre-Brexit era, most of the UK's influence was through successful shaping of the EU's positions, amplifying Britain's influence in the world, within institutions such as the UNFCCC (although the UK acted on its own behalf withing the relevant international institutions for aviation and shipping and remained influential).[110]

In the post-Brexit era, the UK must seek to maintain its influential role on international agreements and institutions. As IPPR has previously argued, this could include seeking reforms of the World Bank, IMF and other multilateral development agencies and funds to increase their policy focus on and financial investment climate and environmental matters.[111] It will also entail the UK increasing its international profile as a country seeking to drive further climate ambition, as well as seeking to retain a strong influencing role in the determination of EU positions.

Conclusion

Tackling the climate crisis has now become a significant priority for the UK within domestic policy, which means that driving progress internationally is fundamentally in the national interest. Moreover, as previous experience has demonstrated it is a powerful tool in building the UK's soft power as well as its reputation around the globe. It will also provide economic opportunities and benefits to British companies at home and abroad. Perhaps most importantly, however, is the impact that the UK can have as a high-profile champion of ambitious climate action around the world. 2021 could be a crucial year in redefining what the UK's role is in the world; it is an opportunity that we, and the world, cannot afford to miss.

Recommendations

- **Lead by the power of example:** If the UK wishes to be a leader on tackling the climate crisis abroad, then it must get its house in order at home. That must include more ambitious commitments for climate action through its Nationally Determined Contribution, as well as the necessary policies and investments to deliver in practice.
- **Building progressive partnerships and shaping climate politics:** The UK must seek to use climate diplomacy to lever greater climate ambition internationally. This will involve forming close partnerships and coalitions with international partners, focusing on key projects to influence such as the Chinese Belt and Road initiative and acting as a 'supporting partner' to less industrialised nations.
- **Climate progress through progressive trade policy:** The UK must use its new freedoms to strike trade deals to pursue commitments to high environmental standards including robust standards on greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Financing the transition:** The UK should commit to reinstating the 0.7 per cent ODA target and mainstream climate action as a priority across the entire ODA budget and wider UK foreign policy. The UK should also make a contribution to the Green Climate Fund which is commensurate with its historic contribution to the climate crisis. The Government should also drive more ambitious action as the world's financial centre on sustainable private finance and bring an end to support for fossil fuel projects abroad.
- **International agreements and institutions:** The UK must seek to maintain its influential role on international agreements and institutions in relation to climate, including seeking progressive reform of institutions such as the World Bank, IMF and other multilateral development agencies in relation to climate and environmental matters.

[110] Pete Betts. Summary Report of the International Advisory Group.
[111] Laybourn-Langton et al. Our responsibility.

7. Three pillars for a sustainable trade policy after Brexit

By Ruth Bergan and David Lawrence[112]

In January, for the first time in nearly 50 years, the UK will 'take back control' of its trade policy from the EU. During and since the referendum campaign, Brexit-supporting politicians have presented voters with a narrative of Britain's place in the world as a buccaneering, free-trading nation. While this narrative can reasonably be queried (the British Empire was arguably as much a protectionist cartel as a force for open trade), it has been the justification for leaving the EU's customs union and single market and beginning new trade negotiations with the US, Australia, New Zealand and the Trans-Pacific area, while also renegotiating trading relationships with the EU, Japan, Canada and elsewhere.[113]

Regardless of the irony of leaving the world's largest trading bloc in order to seek more trade, it is clear that trade will be a key part of the government's ambitions for Brexit. Much less clear is what these ambitions will entail in practice: while the government is keen to strike new deals, they lack an overarching strategy and they have found themselves at odds with farmers, environmental groups, businesses, consumers and trade unions over the potential impact of these deals on all sorts of

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[113] See, for instance, analysis done by Ha-Joon Chang on the British Empire's use of tariffs; Chang, Ha-Joon. 2002. Kicking Away the Ladder: An Unofficial History of Capitalism, Especially in Britain and the United States. Challenge 45:63–97.

issues, from chlorinated chicken to the NHS. And yet, it is true that Brexit is an opportunity for the UK to rethink the role of trade in the 21st Century, to build consensus across different groups in the UK, and to develop a trade policy which benefits both people and the planet.

The UK has a unique opportunity to reimagine a socially and environmentally just trade policy. Achieving this will require strategic thinking about what values we want to underpin the UK's trade negotiations. Rather than rushing into negotiations, it will require democratising our processes for negotiating trade deals and setting clear lines on the environment and human rights. These three pillars - democracy, the environment and human rights - should form the core of our trade policy after Brexit. With them, our trade policy can be genuinely progressive and world-leading; without them, our trade policy poses a risk to our environment, sustainable development, and millions at home and abroad whose lives are affected by UK trade.

1. Democracy

Despite the rhetoric of 'taking back control', the government has done very little to empower British MPs, or indeed British civil society and ordinary citizens, to influence trade policy after Brexit. This risks creating a culture of mistrust between the public, businesses, MPs and government, and a lack of transparency about what is on the table in trade agreements. The absence of an overarching trade strategy from the Department for International Trade, with clear objectives and principles, also means that businesses and civil society are left in the dark about the government's objectives for new deals.

The UK would do well to learn lessons from TTIP - the proposed EU-US mega trade deal - which was met with significant opposition from European citizens, leading to its eventual collapse despite years of negotiations and political will from Brussels and Washington DC. TTIP collapsed in part due to public anger about the lack of transparency in the negotiation of the deal, as well as frustration that their own elected representatives could do little to scrutinise or stop the deal. The lack of transparency also meant that politicians struggled to assuage citizens' concerns about US food standards, the impact of TTIP on public services including the NHS, and Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS, which allows firms to sue governments for introducing regulations).

Ultimately, this meant TTIP caused a breakdown in trust between citizens and government officials who were in charge of negotiating trade deals. We should not be surprised that trade deals create a lot of anxiety among ordinary citizens, whose lives are touched in all sorts of ways by FTAs - from the food on supermarket shelves to the provision of health services to the protection of personal online data. Trade agreements can also lead to dramatic economic shifts and privilege certain industries over others, leading to economic uncertainty, which so often hits the poorest the hardest. These are all reasons for why it is essential that our post-Brexit trade policy builds consensus and commands democratic support.

Polling shows that British voters have particular concerns about the impact of trade deals on food and environmental standards, as well as concerns about public health and protecting the NHS. 80 per cent of voters would not accept chlorine-washed chicken or hormone-fed beef, and a majority of voters in areas which supported leaving the EU in the 2016 referendum - including those on lower incomes - support regulation on businesses to maintain high standards.[114] Polling also shows that consumers do not want animal welfare standards lowered and this is consistent across regions, age

[114] YouGov, Results - US Trade Deal, June 2020, https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/1xr2pyf6fi/YouGov%20-%20US%20trade%20deal%20Results.pdf; Unchecked UK, Attitudes of Younger Leave Voters to Regulation and Deregulation, May 2020, https://www.unchecked.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Attitudes-of-Younger-Leave-Voters-to-Regulation-and-Deregulation.pdf

and socio-demographic groups, including 76 per cent of C2DEs and 74 per cent of ABC1s, showing that even consumers with lower incomes still value high standards.[115]

It is important that these concerns of ordinary voters are reflected in the development of our trade policy after Brexit. This is perhaps why five parliamentary committees, including the International Trade Committee and the Lords Constitutional Committee, have called for fundamental reform to the way trade deals are negotiated. As things stand, MPs get no guaranteed debate or vote on new trade deals, there are no requirements on transparency, and the government can begin, conduct and conclude negotiations without notifying MPs or the public.

In order to build consensus and ensure that the UK's post-Brexit trade policy is fully transparent and democratic, the government should set out legislation which includes:

1. *Before negotiations:* Publication of the government's negotiation objectives and a guaranteed debate and vote for MPs on these objectives.
2. *During negotiations:* A high level of transparency, with regular release of negotiating texts after each round.
3. *After negotiations:* A guaranteed debate and vote for MPs on the final deal.
4. *Throughout the process:* Regular engagement with civil society, including environmental groups, businesses and trade unions, and the publication of an independent Sustainability Impact Assessment.

The process set out above would put democratic values at the heart of the UK's trade policy after Brexit. Other trade policy concerns - ranging from the environment and data to development and human rights - can be dealt with far more effectively if the underlying framework is democratic, open and transparent. This should be a key priority for the government as it embarks on a new chapter in Britain's long trading history.

2. The environment

Climate change presents the biggest challenge facing humanity, and is also a top priority for this government, which has committed to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Next year, the UK will host the COP 26 conference, which provides an opportunity for a radical new climate agreement between the world's leading economies. A Joe Biden presidency in the US makes this vision even more tangible. However, despite broad consensus about the importance of tackling climate change, there have been few attempts to ensure that the UK's post-Brexit trade policy is in line with these ambitions.

Trade policy impacts directly on the environment in a number of ways. In a general sense trade deals tend to act as a blunt instrument, aimed at increasing trade overall. This is problematic because it can lead, for example, to growth in high-carbon industries. However, the specific provisions of trade agreements can also mitigate against climate action. Two particularly important avenues are environmental regulation, including regulatory cooperation, and the use of investor courts to challenge environmental policies.

Environmental regulation

Approaches to regulation differ significantly between countries and the EU and the US have emerged as two different poles: the former gives greater weight to the precautionary principle, the latter to a 'science-based' approach. A significant policy choice for the UK as it negotiates new trade agreements is therefore which pole it chooses to align with, but it has yet to take a clear position. A number of provisions at the WTO already constrain the ability of member countries to regulate, for example by requiring that regulation be "no more trade-restrictive than necessary" for achieving

[115] Agriland, RSPCA poll reveals 75% want ban on lower welfare standard imports, August 2020, https://www.agriland.co.uk/farming-news/rspca-poll-reveals-75-want-ban-on-lower-welfare-standard-imports/

"legitimate policy objectives."[116] These rules have, for example, already seen Canada scale back its renewables programme.

Trade deals tend to go further and increasingly aim to align regulations between countries, which can create a downward pressure on standards which are designed to protect the environment and lead to a 'race to the bottom'. This is because trade deals are designed to promote trade rather than achieve environmental objectives: environmental chapters of trade agreements tend to be unenforceable, while regulations which limit trade - even if designed for important, environmental reasons - can be legally challenged and the findings of dispute settlement bodies enforced. Furthermore, trade deals increasingly include the establishment of 'regulatory cooperation chapters'. In order to implement these chapters, regulatory cooperation 'councils' are established as forums for regulators from the different parties to meet and cooperate in the development of regulations in ways that promote trade rather than raise standards, sometimes with special access for business groups.[117]

Investor courts (ISDS)

The UK is a signatory to various agreements that contain investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) provisions, which allow investors to sue governments for introducing regulations, which harm their profits. ISDS has been used to challenge all sorts of environmental policies around the world; including a US firm challenging a ban on fracking under the St.Lawrence river in Quebec, a Swedish energy firm challenging water pollution regulations in Germany, various mining firms challenging restrictions on mining across the Global South, and threats to challenge measures to phase out fossil fuel use in the Netherlands.[118] Evidence shows that ISDS has led to the US delaying the introduction of environmental regulations.

A better way?

Whilst the trade system has not so far responded adequately to the climate crisis, the foundation stones for action already exist. In the first paragraph of the founding agreement of the WTO, signatories recognise that trade rules should allow for "the optimal use of the world's resources in accordance with the objective of sustainable development, seeking both to protect and preserve the environment and to enhance the means for doing so in a manner consistent with their respective needs and concerns at different levels of economic development."[119] And whilst they are neither binding nor enforceable, there is an increasing trend to include environmental chapters in trade agreements.

Some countries are already choosing to build on these foundations to create a new model for trade agreements: New Zealand has teamed up with Costa Rica, Fiji, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland to negotiate an 'Agreement on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability' (ACCTS). ACCTS is the first serious multilateral attempt at ensuring that trade does not lead to environmental damage. The UK should consider joining the deal and pushing for it to go further in terms of coverage and the enforceability of its provisions.

There are a number of tangible steps the UK could take to put climate at the heart of our post-Brexit trade policy. First, the UK's new trade deals should be subordinate to our environmental commitments - including the Paris Climate Agreement. Shared ambitions on climate, biodiversity,

[116] World Trade Organization, Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, 1995, https://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/17-tbt_e.htm

[117] David Lawrence, Dynamic Alignment and Regulatory Cooperation between the UK and the EU after Brexit, Trade Justice Movement, September 2019, https://www.tjm.org.uk/documents/briefings/TJM-Dynamic-Alignment-and-Regulatory-Cooperation-after-Brexit.pdf

[118] Details on ISDS cases brought against environmental regulations can be found in: Ruth Bergan, Shaping Future UK Trade Policy: Investment Protection Provisions, Trade Justice Movement, September 2020, https://www.tjm.org.uk/documents/briefings/Shaping-Future-UK-Trade-Policy-Investment-Protection-Provisions.pdf

[119] World Trade Organization, Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization, 1994, https://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/04-wto_e.htm

energy, food and other standards should not be confined to the preamble or separate chapters of trade deals, which are unenforceable, but should be given equal enforceability. These chapters should make clear that trade deals are subject to the implementation by both parties of multilateral environmental agreements and that if trade measures put the parties in breach of those agreements, a specific process with potential sanctions will be triggered. Mechanisms that could be used to achieve enforceability might include: a process of mediation seeking to address issues amicably, a transparent arbitration process with opportunities for a broad range of stakeholders from both countries to engage and, as a last resort, the potential for unilateral sanctions to be imposed, for example the suspension of trade preferences including raising tariffs. Similarly, the UK should have a policy of conditionality, such that we only sign deals with countries that have signed and are implementing the Paris Climate Agreement. This would ensure that trade is prioritised with partners who share our values, and also provide an incentive for new partners to commit to climate action. It could be applied flexibly for developing countries, or for partners who can demonstrate good progress, with accompanying support to help those that need it.

The UK should then undertake an environmental audit of the provisions of its rollover agreements with a view to ensuring all aspects of deals are aligned with its climate ambition and design the detail of its trade agreements to ensure that they support climate action. Some elements of trade deals are already clearly in contradiction with such action. Public outrage about ISDS, as well as opposition from environmental NGOs, has already encouraged some countries to rethink the investment provisions in their trade agreements. South Africa has cancelled all Bilateral Investment Treaties, New Zealand no longer includes ISDS provisions in its trade deals and countries like India and Malaysia are designing alternative approaches. The UK should similarly exclude ISDS from existing and future agreements. This would ensure that companies cannot challenge regulations which are essential for tackling climate change, including those on emissions, fracking, energy production and transport. Second, the UK should commit to avoiding regulatory cooperation in trade deals, as it is currently done, and instead seek standard-raising cooperation in alternative forums with full transparency and engagement from civil society. For instance, committing to dynamic alignment with the EU on environmental standards will be crucial after Brexit.

3. Human rights

The third pillar of a sustainable trade policy is human rights. The rise of authoritarian regimes, notably China, as well as division and fragmentation in Western democracies, pose a threat to human rights around the world. Trade is intertwined with human rights, and global supply chains can fuel large-scale abuses - from the mass incarceration of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang to modern day slavery in India. Evidence shows that Western multinationals are often indirectly implicated in these abuses: for example, recent research identified 83 well-known brands which benefit from the use of Uyghur workers caught in potentially abusive labour transfer programs, including Nike, Adidas, Google and Marks & Spencer.[120] Similar concerns have been raised about labour rights in supply chains across Asia, Africa and South America.

Human rights are also intrinsically connected to sustainable development. As the world reels from the economic and public health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and prepares to confront the catastrophic impacts of climate change, developing countries are by far the most vulnerable. The UK has long been a global leader in international development, and Brexit could be an opportunity to build on this. Moreover, a poorly designed trade policy risks undermining the UN Sustainable Development Goals. However thus far there is little evidence that the Conservative government is taking up this opportunity. It has rolled over the EU's preference scheme for the world's poorest countries, which should help to provide continuity as the UK exits the EU. However, it has not taken

[120] Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, China: 83 major brands implicated in report on forced labour of ethnic minorities from Xinjiang assigned to factories across provinces; Includes company responses, March 2020, https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/china-83-major-brands-implicated-in-report-on-forced-labour-of-ethnic-minorities-from-xinjiang-assigned-to-factories-across-provinces-includes-company-responses/

the opportunity to improve these schemes, for example by offering more generous rules of origin to help support regional trade and make it easier for producers to benefit from the schemes. It has also agreed trade deals with Kenya and Cote d'Ivoire, rather than negotiating with regional blocs; this is hugely problematic as it will disrupt trade in the EAC and ECOWAS regions. Finally, the Government has not yet clarified whether it will seek to pursue negotiations on issues beyond goods, something that most developing countries have long resisted.

Trade policy has significant implications for trade and sustainable development. In addition to abuses in supply chains, trade deals can hinder the ability of governments to raise standards in areas such as labour rights, gender rights, economic justice and public health. ISDS cases have been used to challenge minimum wage rises and health measures such as bans on plain packaging for cigarettes and the introduction of a sugar tax.[121] Provisions in areas such as services and procurement tend to be blind to the different impact of changes in those areas on men and women. Liberalisation of services can lead to increased privatisation or reduced provision of 'less lucrative' services or in poorer areas, which can in turn lead to increases in cost or a requirement for greater care in the home, the burden of which is more often borne by women.[122]

The UK must put human rights and sustainable development at the heart of its post-Brexit trade policy. In practice, this will require a number of changes: first, trade negotiations with developing countries must prioritise the countries' development objectives and be done in such a way as to facilitate regional trade; for instance, the UK should offer the same preferences and opportunities to all countries in the East Africa trade bloc, rather than negotiate trade agreements which have the potential to lead to a 'race to the bottom' on standards and tariffs. In order to achieve this, the Department for International Trade needs to continue to operate in partnership with former DfID staff in the newly formed Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). Second, the UK must develop a clear strategy for its relationship with developing countries through a transparent process which engages with civil society in the UK and developing countries, including trade unions, NGOs and businesses to ensure a broad range of interests are represented.

Lastly, prioritising human rights will require looking beyond trade. The UK should support recent efforts at the UN for a Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights and consider primary legislation to enforce compliance amongst British companies operating overseas, as well as bilateral action with the EU. As things stand, human rights chapters in trade agreements tend to be unenforceable, and the UK is very willing to conduct trade with countries whose leaders have been accused of gross human rights abuses, such as Saudi Arabia.[123] As with climate change, enforceable chapters in trade deals as well as rights-based conditionality for trade will be essential for ensuring that our trade policy protects human rights.

Taking back control

Brexit gives the UK a once in a lifetime opportunity to reimagine our trade policy. Now is the time to decide what values should be enshrined at the heart of our trading system and pursue cooperation with our neighbours in addressing the global challenges ahead. Chief among these are climate change, the defence of human rights and sustainable development. The UK must take these challenges seriously and join with countries and initiatives that are already seeking to address them. Taking back control of trade policy, if done well, could lead to a better future for people and the planet.

[121] Ruth Bergan, Shaping Future UK Trade Policy: Investment Protection Provisions, Trade Justice Movement, September 2020, https://www.tjm.org.uk/documents/briefings/Shaping-Future-UK-Trade-Policy-Investment-Protection-Provisions.pdf

[122] Trade Justice Movement, Patriarchy and Profit: A feminist analysis of the global trade system, September 2018 https://www.tjm.org.uk/resources/reports/patriarchy-and-profit-a-feminist-analysis-of-the-global-trade-system

[123] Patrick Wintour and Luke Harding, UK on collision course with Saudis over new human rights sanctions, The Guardian, July 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/law/2020/jul/06/dominic-raab-to-annouce-uk-sanctions-against-human-rights-abusers

8. The ethics of offensive cyber operations

By Dr Joe Devanny[124]

Turn off the lights in Moscow? This is just one of the possible uses of offensive cyber operations (OCOs) briefed to the press by senior British defence sources.[125] Put simply, OCOs 'project power to achieve military objectives in, or through, cyberspace.'[126] In everyday language, we are talking about 'cyber attacks' – from knocking websites offline to disabling computers on a network, shutting down a power grid, manipulating centrifuges in uranium enrichment facilities, or undermining an adversary's air defences.

Over the last decade, the UK government has talked more openly about its cyber capabilities.[127] The latest step was the Prime Minister's recent avowal of the National Cyber Force (NCF), which has been operational since April.[128] Uncertainty remains, however, about the role of OCOs in wider UK strategy and how our political leaders are navigating the complex choices involved in deciding when to use cyber operations to secure national objectives and project British values overseas. For example, should OCOs only target an adversary's defence and security infrastructure, or should the

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[125] Caroline Wheeler, Tim Shipman and Mark Hookham, UK war-games cyber attack on Moscow, The Sunday Times, October 2018, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/uk-war-games-cyber-attack-on-moscow-dgxz8ppv0
[126] Ministry of Defence. 2016. Cyber Primer (2nd Edition). Shrivenham: Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre: 54.
[127] David J. Lonsdale. 2016. Britain's Emerging Cyber-Strategy. The RUSI Journal 161, no.4: 52-62.
[128] Gordon Corera, UK's National Cyber Force comes out of the shadows, BBC News, November 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/amp/technology-55007946

UK follow the contemporary trend in targeting civilian infrastructure, as implied in the Moscow scenario briefed to the press?

There is a burgeoning academic literature on covert action as an instrument of state policy.[129] There is also an extensive and growing literature on the legal and strategic issues raised by state and non-state cyber operations.[130] Cyber operations during an armed conflict are covered by the existing law of armed conflict, and should abide by the principles of necessity, distinction, proportionality and unnecessary suffering. Much cyber activity, however, takes place beneath this threshold. Domestic legislation – the Intelligence Services Act (1994) and the Investigatory Powers Act (2016) – provides the process for senior ministers to authorise operations such as equipment interference where these are deemed to be necessary, proportionate and have a sound legal basis in the interests of national security, economic well-being, and the detection or prevention of serious crime.

The joint nature of the NCF, combining personnel from GCHQ, the Ministry of Defence and other agencies, is an efficient use of limited expertise in this field: it houses under one roof, so to speak, the capability to operate under these different operational authorisations.[131] Whilst the UK has committed to abiding by international law in its conduct of cyber operations, there is legal uncertainty about when precisely OCOs should be regarded as reaching the level of a use of force.[132] Must they cause injury or physical damage, or could, for example, serious economic damage or the degradation of military infrastructure be sufficient to be interpreted as a use of force?

Whilst there is an international debate about the legal status of OCOs as a use of force or as an otherwise prohibited intervention in the sovereign affairs of another state, less attention has focused on the specifically ethical dimensions of political decisions to approve OCOs.[133] This piece aims to stimulate further ethical debate about OCOs as the NCF emerges as an instrument of the UK's wider national security strategy. Whilst there is not yet a substantial literature applying moral philosophy to this issue, there is no shortage of theories and traditions to draw on. One obvious step would be to apply the principles of 'just war' theory directly to cyber operations, another to frame discussion around acceptance or rejection of a realist approach to cyber dilemmas facing political leaders, according to which the UK should develop formidable offensive cyber capabilities and be prepared to use them to enhance national power and security.

As a shortcut, I employ Max Weber's distinction between the ethics of conviction and the ethics of responsibility, and the importance of the latter in exploring the challenges of political leadership.[134] Put simply, as voters we do not expect our elected leaders to make decisions solely on the basis of their personal beliefs. They should be mindful of a duty to act in accordance with the best interests of the nation – and perhaps with some broader conception of the common good, including global

[129] Elizabeth E. Anderson. 1998. The Security Dilemma and Covert Action: The Truman Years. International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence 11, no.4: 403-427; Austin Carson and Keren Yarhi-Milo. 2017. Covert Communication: The Intelligibility and Credibility of Signaling in Secret. Security Studies 26, no.1: 124-156; Austin Carson. 2018. Secret Wars: Covert Conflict in International Politics. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press; and Rory Cormac. 2018. Disrupt and Deny: Spies, Special Forces, and the Secret Pursuit of British Foreign Policy. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[130] Michael Schmitt (ed.). 2017. Tallinn Manual 2.0 on the International Law Applicable to Cyber Operations (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Brandon Valeriano, Benjamin Jensen and Ryan C. Maness. 2018. Cyber Strategy: The Evolving Character of Power and Coercion. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Ben Buchanan. 2020. The Hacker and the State: Cyber Attacks and the New Normal of Geopolitics. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; and the various contributions to the Fall 2020 edition of the Texas National Security Review, https://tnsr.org/volume-3-issue-4/

[131] Marcus Willett, Why the UK's National Cyber Force is an important step forward, International Institute of Strategic Studies, November 2020, https://www.iiss.org/blogs/analysis/2020/11/uk-national-cyber-force

[132] Jeremy Wright, Speech: Cyber and International Law in the 21st Century, May 2018, https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/cyber-and-international-law-in-the-21st-century; Jeremy Wright, Speech: Attorney General's speech at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, January 2017, https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/attorney-generals-speech-at-the-international-institute-for-strategic-studies

[133] Randall R. Dipert. 2010. The Ethics of Cyberwarfare. Journal of Military Ethics 9, no.4: 384-410; Edward T. Barrett. 2013. Warfare In A New Domain: The Ethics Of Military Cyber-Operations. Journal of Military Ethics 12, no.1: 4-17; and David J. Lonsdale. 2020. The Ethics of Cyber Attack: Pursuing Legitimate Security and the Common Good in Contemporary Conflict Scenarios. Journal of Military Ethics 19, no.1: 20-39.

[134] Max Weber. 2000. The Profession and Vocation of Politics. In Political Writings. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 309-369.

public goods. Defining the national interest is, of course, a contested, inherently political act. Nonetheless, political leaders are morally responsible for the consequences of their actions and omissions in pursuit of their conception of the national interest, however imperfectly articulated or socially divisive it might be.[135]

Political leaders are not the only moral agents involved in this OCO process. Officials and military officers have responsibilities for: shaping the processes that determine strategic priorities for intelligence collection, effects operations and the development of capabilities; producing submissions and plans for specific OCOs; and shepherding the equities process to determine whether vulnerabilities uncovered by UK cyber operators are retained for offensive or surveillance purposes, or are disclosed to enable patching, enhancing the global public good of systemic cyber security.[136]

A typology of offensive cyber and its ethical dilemmas

At this point, it is perhaps useful to explore a typology of activities that are pursued under the umbrella term OCO. In a recent speech, former National Cyber Security Centre chief executive Ciaran Martin proposed an escalating 'five tier structure of cyber warfare', conveniently forming a mnemonic acronym, HACKS.[137] Martin's lowest level is hacking in support of national security objectives, gaining access to adversaries' electronic devices, possibly degrading or deleting content. The second tier is 'adversarial infrastructure destruction' in which digital infrastructure, such as a terrorist organisation's online propaganda network, is destroyed. The third tier is 'counter-influence' operations, essentially the use of OCOs to achieve deterrence. The fourth tier is 'kinetic' attack, a cyber operation that causes significant damage to specific infrastructure, for example disrupting the electricity supply to a city (the Moscow example above) or taking a television network off the air. Finally, the fifth and highest tier is system-wide, all-out cyber attacks on military and civilian targets during an armed conflict that sees cyber used as part of integrated operations.[138]

The HACKS model is useful because it highlights the spectrum of severity on which any OCO can be placed. It also demonstrates the variety of ethical dilemmas posed by different OCOs, where some proposed operations are likely to command more universal agreement that they are morally justified. Few would argue against (appropriately authorised) cyber operations that disrupted the digital command-and-control infrastructure used to direct a terrorist attack or to mastermind a global ransomware campaign. Far more would question whether it could ever be ethical, or indeed lawful, for the UK to attack an adversary's national power grid or civilian air traffic control system.

Another way of thinking about this is to simplify Martin's structure – losing the HACKS mnemonic in the process, alas – so that the typology of OCOs is reduced to three tiers: skirmishing; strategic 'cyber solo' operations; and cyber operations integrated with non-cyber operations during an armed conflict.[139] At the basic level of skirmishing, states and other actors are competing for advantage in cyberspace. When a hostile state actor, terrorist or organised crime group uses digital infrastructure directly or indirectly to harm the UK – whether that harm is electoral interference, disinformation, preparation for an armed attack, or running a ransomware campaign – then the Government should have a relatively easy time justifying the necessity and proportionality of a counter-cyber operation to degrade, disrupt or destroy the digital infrastructure used by these hostile actors. Skirmishing could aim to pre-empt an attack, prevent a ransomware campaign, or punish a hostile state actor or

[135] Arnold Wolfers. 1952. "National Security" as an Ambiguous Symbol'. Political Science Quarterly 67, no.4: 481-502; Bob Jessop. 2015. The State: Past, Present, Future. Cambridge: Polity: 51.

[136] An outline of the UK equities process, its decision and oversight arrangements, has been published by GCHQ: The Equities Process, November 2018, https://www.gchq.gov.uk/information/equities-process

[137] Ciaran Martin, Cyber-weapons are called viruses for a reason: Statecraft and security in the digital age, King's College London, November 2020, https://thestrandgroup.kcl.ac.uk/event/ciaran-martin-cyber-weapons-are-called-viruses-for-a-reason-statecraft-security-and-safety-in-the-digital-age/

[138] UK Ministry of Defence. 2020. The Integrated Operating Concept 2025: 10.

[139] Dipert, The Ethics of Cyberwarfare: 403; David Betz and Tim Stevens, 2011. Cyberspace and the State: Toward a Strategy for Cyber-Power. London: Routledge for the International Institute for Strategic Studies: 97.

its proxy, increasing the 'tactical friction' and 'strategic cost' faced by the UK's cyber adversaries.[140] This tier includes operations to take down disinformation websites, as has been recently reported in efforts to counter anti-vaccine 'fake news'.[141] The dilemma is harder if an adversary's digital infrastructure is hosted in a state unaware of the malign activity. Ordinarily, we would expect the UK government to work with the government of that state to resolve the issue, but, *in extremis*, there would be a clear ethical case that it would be proportionate and necessary to conduct a specific and limited OCO to eliminate an imminent threat, even though that constituted a covert breach of the other state's sovereignty.

The second tier, strategic 'cyber solo' operations can be split into two: a lower tier that tries to deter adversaries by signalling that the UK has the capability to use cyber operations against adversaries' infrastructure, perhaps restricted to defence- and security-related infrastructure, but perhaps not; and a higher tier that actually involves using such capabilities, for example to enforce a red line when the lower tier of deterrence had failed. The interesting thing about this tier is that it inhabits the challenging grey zone of cyber operations that hover below the threshold of armed conflict. Even where the intention is only signalling and not to conduct an attack, the decision must be very carefully considered – not least for the potential that a pre-positioned implant is misinterpreted by the adversary as an indicator of an imminent attack, precipitating a crisis. Depending on the choice of infrastructure targets, this tier also raises broader ethical questions about the sort of internet that the UK should be trying to promote. Does it really want to be in the business of targeting civilian infrastructure, even if only for deterrent effect? Bearing in mind that, for deterrence to be credible, the adversary needs to believe that you will be willing to carry out the attack.[142] This tier of the typology also poses ethical questions about the second-order consequences, or system effects, of targeting infrastructure: does it undermine the rules-based approach to the Internet that the UK upholds elsewhere? Is there value, in other words, to acting in a more Kantian fashion, refusing to pursue civilian infrastructure targeting that, if universalised as the practice of all cyber-capable states, would exacerbate threats to critical infrastructure around the world?

The third tier of OCOs, cyber operations as part of an armed conflict, represent the highest level of possible damage but, paradoxically, pose the fewest new ethical dilemmas. This is because, as the UK has repeatedly emphasised, it considers cyber operations to be subject to the same body of law as other operations during an armed conflict. All such operations can, therefore, be assessed by traditional ethical principles of military necessity, proportionality, discrimination between military and civilian targets, and the requirement to avoid unnecessary suffering. This is the tier in which the UK can rely most confidently on the ethical principles that have evolved over decades of warfare.

This simplified typology encompasses a broad range of tactical, operational and strategic decisions about whether or not to use OCOs. It isn't clear yet what the proposed balance of missions is for the NCF: will it be primarily a cyber skirmishing force, a deterrent against hostile state actors, or a developer of OCOs to support integrated operations during armed conflict? As outlined above, whatever the priorities of the NCF, each of these decisions is implicitly ethical. An effective ethic of cyber responsibility requires deliberation, technical and strategic understanding that depend on agency (the role and character of individuals) and structure (the impact of routines and processes). These issues may or may not be addressed in the integrated review of security, defence, development and foreign policy. Whether or not they are, the National Security Council (NSC) and Prime Minister should have been using the review's process to reflect carefully on Britain's use of OCOs, which would require the application of moral reasoning.

[140] The quoted phrases are taken from the Command Vision of US Cyber Command, which provides a concise statement of the current US offensive cyber strategy. See: US Cyber Command, Achieve and Maintain Cyberspace Superiority: Command Vision for U.S. Cyber Command, April 2018, https://www.cybercom.mil/Portals/56/Documents/USCYBERCOM%20Vision%20April%202018.pdf

[141] Lucy Fisher and Chris Smyth, GCHQ in cyberwar on anti-vaccine propaganda. The Times, November 2020, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/gchq-in-cyberwar-on-anti-vaccine-propaganda-mcjgjhmb2

[142] Martin makes both these points eloquently in his speech: Cyber-weapons are called viruses for a reason, 10.

Optimising the ethic of cyber responsibility

One of the biggest challenges facing government is how to structure its underlying processes to provide sufficient support for political leaders to take informed ethical decisions about OCOs in support of national security, economic well-being or countering serious crime. There are already strategic processes that produce requirements and priorities for intelligence coverage, effects operations and capability development, and these will naturally shape the NCF's priorities. Even with the reported increase in the defence budget, difficult decisions still must be made about the balance of investment between the three tiers of possible missions outlined above. Another issue is raised by the limited pool of top cyber talent: with finite expertise to allocate to different missions, government must decide how to structure its wider cyber workforce, across not only OCOs but also digital espionage and the cyber security work of the NCSC.

A democratic state should configure its structures and processes of decision to guarantee that the relevant moral issues surface sharply in pre-decision debates in the presence of the appropriate (and appropriately-informed and actively-participating) accountable elected figures. Similarly, there is an argument that enhanced legislative oversight might help improve the quality of executive deliberation about OCOs, notwithstanding the need for operational secrecy.[143]

This issue was highlighted in contrasting approaches to US OCOs under the Obama and Trump administrations. The Trump administration reportedly relaxed the tightly-controlled authorisation process exercised by the Obama White House.[144] Trump's process afforded greater latitude for both US Cyber Command and the Central Intelligence Agency's clandestine cyber operations.[145] The contrast between administrations highlights the existence of a spectrum on which we can place any executive, according to the relative depth and rigour of its OCO processes.

Notwithstanding criticism of Obama's process as inflexible, it is clear that he took seriously the ethics of cyber responsibility. Under Trump's more devolved process, the importance of the responsible leadership exercised by unelected individuals arguably increased, for example head of US cyber command General Paul Nakasone.[146] Whilst the incoming Biden administration might not reset the authorisation process back to the strictures of the Obama era, it may nonetheless reassert a more prominent and hands-on role for the White House in active management of OCOs. This would be equally desirable in the British case, especially where questions exist about the current Prime Minister's attention to detail and priorities.[147]

A well-formed OCO process should clarify the important ethical dimensions, so that political leaders better understand the decisions they are being asked to take. Insofar as operational urgency permits, these decisions should be taken in the collegial environment of a committee, chaired by the Prime Minister and including the Attorney General and the relevant authorising ministers (the foreign secretary and defence secretary). Something like this process may already exist and even be used prudently by the Prime Minister. It is not imperative that the process be publicly avowed. Operational secrecy is manifestly necessary. But better communication might improve public confidence in the ethics of UK OCOs and that government is striking the right balance between OCOs and the public good of cyber security. Ciaran Martin's recent speech helped to advance such a public

[143] Joe Devanny, Richard Brown, Grant Christopher, Michael Endsor and Matthew Zelina, Written evidence by the International Centre for Security Analysis, King's College London, to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy's Inquiry on Cyber Security: UK National Security in a Digital World, UK Parliament, 2017, http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/national-security-strategy-committee/cyber-security-uk-national-security-in-a-digital-world/written/47199.pdf

[144] John Bolton. 2020. The Room Where it Happened: A White House Memoir. New York: Simon & Schuster: 174-175.

[145] Zach Dorfman, Kim Zetter, Jenna McLaughlin and Sean D. Naylor, Exclusive: Secret Trump order gives CIA more powers to launch cyberattacks, Yahoo News, July 2020, https://news.yahoo.com/secret-trump-order-gives-cia-more-powers-to-launch-cyberattacks-090015219.html

[146] Garrett M. Graff, The Man Who Speaks Softly—and Commands a Big Cyber Army, Wired, October 2020, https://www.wired.com/story/general-paul-nakasone-cyber-command-nsa/

[147] Rory Stewart, Lord of misrule: Boris Johnson: an amoral figure for a bleak, coarse culture, The Times Literary Supplement, November 2020, https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/boris-johnson-tom-bower-book-review-rory-stewart/

debate about the need to consider the cyber security implications of Britain's emerging offensive cyber strategy.[148]

Former cabinet secretary Lord Sedwill recently claimed that OCOs were part of a 'series of discreet measures' taken by the UK against Russian leaders and their interests after the 2018 Salisbury attack.[149] A hypothetical decision to approve cyber operations against, say, financial infrastructure to target illicit wealth might have been justified, in principle, as a deterrent or retributive act, necessary to protect national interests. This decision – in the grey middle tier of our cyber typology – should, however, balance expected *national* gains against wider ethical considerations such as the integrity of the financial system – a *global* public good, from which everyone benefits, including UK citizens. Adverse reputational impact on the UK as a lawful actor, if such an operation was exposed, should also be assessed. This approach would be consistent with the principles that the Government has previously stated would guide its cyber operations, but ambiguity – perhaps deliberate – remains about UK decision making in practice.

Operational exposure or compromise of a capability can lead to more than reputational damage. What happens if capabilities developed to enable British cyber operations are leaked, leading to their use by hostile actors? This hypothetical has a disturbing basis in fact: the widely-reported loss and disclosure of US National Security Agency hacking tools that led to waves of cybercrime, most notably the WannaCry ransomware that ravaged networks across the globe, including the National Health Service.[150] This is a striking example of the potential damage to the public good of cyber security when, rather than disclose vulnerabilities, states secretly buy or develop them for digital surveillance or OCOs.

In principle, there is nothing uniquely cyber-related about this dilemma: it would be dangerous if, for example, lax security at a military facility led to weapons and ammunition falling into hostile hands. The reason that the cyber debate is more urgent is that this has already happened, and the very nature of cyber operations is that adversaries can potentially detect and re-purpose cyber tools for their own ends. There are valid reasons of state for maintaining offensive cyber capabilities, just as there are reasons for retaining digital surveillance capabilities. There is, however, an equal need for rigorous, reflective processes to determine when to prioritise offensive or surveillance objectives over those of cyber security.

Decisions about the size and structure of national cyber forces are inherently political. They reflect an executive's risk appetite, prioritisation of objectives, and understanding of the system effects of approved operations. In some ways, ethical dilemmas are identical to other domains, e.g. the choice between counterforce (military) and countervalue (civilian) targeting. But in others, particularly the middle tier of our typology, the precision and non-lethality of OCOs potentially obscures their second-order effects. For example, a targeted operation against one bank account, or the non-disclosure of a vulnerability to use it for a specific offensive cyber operation, can be seen to achieve a specific and limited national objective, but how should political leaders weigh the broader implications and risks, such as eroding a global public good – cyber security or the integrity of financial infrastructure? As one former senior GCHQ official noted after the NCF announcement, offensive cyber has its place in national strategy, but it should not distract from the imperative to improve cyber security.[151]

[148] Martin, Cyber-weapons are called viruses for a reason.
[149] Tom Newton Dunn. 2020. UK Targets Putin Allies. The Times, 24 October 2020, Times2 1, 4.
[150] Lily Hay Newman, The Leaked NSA Spy Tool That Hacked the World, Wired, March 2018, https://www.wired.com/story/eternalblue-leaked-nsa-spy-tool-hacked-world/; Nicole Perlroth and Scott Shane, In Baltimore and Beyond, a Stolen N.S.A. Tool Wreaks Havoc, New York Times, May 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/25/us/nsa-hacking-tool-baltimore.html
[151] Conrad Prince, On the Offensive: The UK's New Cyber Force, RUSI, November 2020, https://rusi.org/commentary/offensive-uk-new-cyber-force

Recommendations

An effective ethic of cyber responsibility requires active and informed political leadership. This entails clear and sustained commitment from political leaders, but also that the right processes are available to ensure that the underlying risks are understood. Technical knowledge is needed to make informed decisions, but these decisions are ultimately political and freighted with moral considerations. To this end, a ministerial cyber sub-committee of the NSC should be reconstituted and it should meet regularly to review the totality of cyber strategy, including updates on current OCO. It should act as a forum for deliberation and decision about the dynamic balance between the different aspects of national cyber strategy. The ethical case for tier 1 (cyber skirmishing) and tier 3 (cyber operations during armed conflict, supporting integrated operations) missions is most compelling. There is a strategic imperative for both missions and it will be for ministers to decide how to balance these competing priorities for the NCF's capability development and operational activities. Tier 2 operations, including deterrent signalling of capabilities to undermine critical infrastructure, are ethically and legally more complex, to say nothing about their strategic efficacy. More research is needed about how the NCF might best incorporate tier 2 missions within its remit, without prejudice to its other missions.

The current vulnerabilities equities process, which only escalates the hardest cases to secretary of state level, should in future be placed formally under the NSC cyber sub-committee, to provide regular ministerial review of the findings of the official equities process. This improvement in ministerial engagement with the equities process is arguably worthwhile given the possibility of more disagreement in future at official level, as the NCF becomes a more active player in generating and seeking to retain vulnerabilities for offensive purposes. As the equities process diverges from its origins as a predominantly espionage- or security-focused debate, GCHQ-driven system, there is the potential for sharper disagreements about releasing or retaining vulnerabilities – particularly between NCSC and NCF if the latter pursues tier 2 targeting of civilian infrastructure. Given the strategic significance of these questions, it is right that ministers should take a more active interest in this process.

At this broader strategic level, it would also be advantageous to streamline existing ministerial cyber responsibilities. Whilst the most sensitive cyber operations will continue to be authorised by the foreign or defence secretaries, in dialogue with and after input from the Prime Minister's and Attorney General's respective offices, there is a strong argument for improving the quality of more continuous ministerial engagement with overall cyber strategy by creating a network of joint ministers of state across several departments with cyber-relevant operational and policy remits, e.g. between the Cabinet Office, Ministry of Defence, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Home Office and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Cyber issues are complex and interconnected: a network of ministers empowered to focus more intensely on these issues, understanding the cross-departmental overlaps and dilemmas, would improve the quality of ministerial involvement in and active management of this process.

Regarding wider oversight, it is welcome that the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC) will assume oversight of the NCF. This will, however, surely require uplift in the resources and independent expertise at its disposal, notwithstanding the Prime Minister's stated belief that it is already 'well equipped' to perform this task.[152] The ISC should also draw more of its secretariat from outside the operational community which it oversees. Whilst the mechanics of ISC oversight of the NCF are presumably still a work in progress, the Committee should also consider the benefits of conducting (and publishing some of the findings of) an annual review of the equities process, providing further oversight and improving public confidence in the accountability of that significant part of UK cyber strategy.

[152] Boris Johnson, HC Deb, 19 November 2020, c.496, https://bit.ly/3nUUoq5

As with other areas of defence strategy, the UK does not have the resources to exercise cyber power in the same league as the US. It must carefully balance its investment and deployment of top talent across all cyber missions. There are limits to what the UK can realistically achieve. Its allocation of resources must be guided by an incisive strategic assessment of national priorities. Such a strategic audit of the offensive cyber workforce and its mission priorities should be conducted following the agreement of national strategic objectives in the integrated review, as part of the next iteration of national cyber strategy due in 2021.[153] It should also be actively overseen by the proposed ministerial cyber sub-committee of the NSC. Furthermore, this review should be pursued explicitly within an alliance context. As with the FIVE EYES partnership in digital espionage, the UK should collaborate and, as far as possible, deconflict with the US and other close partners to ensure that the alliance derives optimum value from the UK investment in offensive cyber capability development and its conduct of OCOs.

Conclusion

In an ideal world, all cyber-capable state actors would agree not to target civilian critical infrastructure or to undermine the integrity of global public goods in cyberspace. Achievement of such agreement would be an incontestable victory for multilateral cyber diplomacy, delivering better norms of cyber competition between states – notwithstanding the severe difficulties that would await any formal verification process. In reality, however, unless adversaries – and perhaps also allies, in keeping with the interdependent nature of cyber competition – change their behaviour, it is possible that tier 2, primarily deterrent operations might well form an important part of the new NCF's mission.[154]

With this caveat, the UK is arguably better off prioritising its limited high-end cyber resources on tier 1 and tier 1 missions, concentrating on counter-cyber skirmishing and the development of counterforce capabilities to support integrated operations during armed conflict, rather than pursuing a countervalue approach to targeting civilian infrastructure. This is consistent with international law, as well as with British values and the liberal way of war, described by John Stone as being 'concerned with breaking things as an alternative to killing people'.[155]

In exercising the ethic of cyber responsibility, our political leaders should apply a principle of 'minimum effective offensive cyber capability.' The global public good of cyber security, from which everyone benefits, should be prioritised wherever possible. This is particularly the case in the equities process, only retaining the capabilities to conduct a carefully selected number of offensive operations and weighing seriously the potential risks that these capabilities would pose if the escaped into the wild. That these capabilities should be well protected is a given, but their very engineering should reflect on the damage caused by uncontrolled, self-propagating viruses. A responsible state cyber power should act in a more restrained and discriminating manner. The UK should be able to compete with and successfully deter less responsible or restrained cyber powers, such as Russia, without compromising our principles and pursuing a similar turn countervalue targeting of civilian infrastructure.[156]

[153] John Gearson, Philip Berry, Joe Devanny and Nina Musgrave, The Whole Force by Design: Optimising Defence to Meet Future Challenges, Serco Institute/King's College London, October 2020: 69.
[154] Paul M. Nakasone, A Cyber Force for Persistent Operations, Joint Force Quarterly 92, January 2019, http://cs.brown.edu/courses/csci1800/sources/2019_01_22_JFQ_CyberRoleForPersistentOperations_ Nakasone.pdf.
[155] John Stone. 2013. Cyber War Will Take Place! Journal of Strategic Studies 36, no.1: 106.
[156] Andy Greenberg. 2019. Sandworm: A New Era of Cyberwar and the Hunt for the Kremlin's Most Dangerous Hackers. New York City: Random House.

9. Downgrading DFID – How will Britain's Overseas Development Aid Agenda change now DFID is part of the FCO?

By Dr Victoria Honeyman[157]

For the last 23 years, since the birth of the Blair government, a key aspect of British foreign policy, and indeed Britain's global reputation, has been its overseas development aid (ODA) policy. Blair's creation of the Department for International Development (DFID) and the increasing budget for that department not only made ODA a key plank within Britain's foreign policy, but also massively increased Britain's visibility within the development field, building new relationships with developing nations and many former colonies. By increasing investment in the developing world, Britain was able to create new trade opportunities, rehabilitate its international reputation in the developing world and push its international priorities within a soft power agenda. However, the ODA budget has been under increasing pressure for over a decade, now being reduced to 0.5 per cent GNI following the Autumn Spending Review for the foreseeable future, because of both economic pressures and ideological disagreement in some quarters, primarily the political right. Boris Johnson announced in June 2020 that DFID would be merged into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), a move long favoured by many within the FCO and the Conservative cabinet. This article will consider what

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the implications of this change are likely to be and how the good work of DFID can be continued within the FCO, or whether it will be fatally undermined.

The aims of merger

For supporters of the merging of DFID and the FCO, it is logical for both departments to work as one. If the FCO oversees Britain's policy 'overseas' then Britain's relationship with developing nations should be part of that. As Johnson highlighted in his speech announcing the merger 'we tolerate a risk of our left and right hands working independently'.[158] The potential for mixed messages, alongside concerns over value for money are both longstanding arguments for the merger and were both mentioned by Johnson in the House of Commons announcement. With two separate government departments, both acting with different priorities at their heart, the possibility for mixed messaging and conflicting activity is evident. Johnson argued that this conflict, coupled with an overly generous ODA budget meant that UK aid was a 'giant cashpoint in the sky'.[159]

With the merging of the FCO and DFID, the newly created FCDO will have a much larger budget than the previous FCO even with the reduction to 0.5 per cent GNI, allowing the UK to strategically spent aid money, not necessarily in the poorest countries or on projects, which address the most pressing global need, but on projects which advance the UK's interests overseas. Quoted in the Guardian newspaper, Oxfam GB's Chief Executive Danny Sriskandarajah stated: 'Effectively what he's saying is, we're going to use our aid budget to pursue security and diplomatic aims. Those are noble aims, but that's not what aid is for'.[160] For the Johnson government, aid is another tool at their disposal for pushing Britain's global agenda and interests, which may be unpalatable for some supporters of Britain's previous ODA policy, but are not necessarily out of line with the actions of many other Western nations, including Canada and Australia, where self-interest and ODA are very closely linked.

The path forward for aid

The merging of DFID into the FCO has two potentially huge implications. Firstly, by removing the DFID Secretary of State (with those former responsibilities now falling to the FCDO Ministers), the influence and power of Britain's development aid agenda is reduced, becoming one voice amongst many competing voices. Secondly, the budget of DFID has dwarfed the FCO budget since its creation (standing in 2019 at £15 billion for DFID and £2.4 billion for the FCO).[161] It is likely that this departmental merging will allow the FCDO to spend money allotted to ODA spending in a wide variety of ways, some development orientated, some less so. If the British government want to preserve their hard-won developmental credentials, and that is not necessarily the case, they *could* ring-fence the newly reduced development budget ensuring that the FCO elements within FCDO do not either directly or indirectly influence ODA spending. However, that seems unlikely considering Johnson's comments that he wants to the two hands of overseas Britain to work together.[162]

Another potential option for the new department, which might benefit both Britain and the developing nations which it donates aid to, is an explicit statement of Britain's interests and priorities. 'Joined up government', as described by previous Prime Ministers, is a laudable aim, with different government departments working in unison to achieve a singular policy agenda. One way of trying to achieve this is being explicit on what that policy agenda is and potential ways of achieving it. However, if your aims are not altruistic or wedded to global goals (such as the UN Millennium Goals, for example), a public statement outlining your priorities might do more harm

[158] International Development and Foreign Office to Merge, BBC News, June 2020, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-53062858
[159] Amy Jones and Harry Yorke, Boris Johnson scraps overseas aid department, heralding end to 'giant cashpoint in the sky', Daily Telegraph, June 2020, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2020/06/16/lockdown-uk-news-update-boris-johnson/
[160] Heather Stewart and Patrick Wintour, Three ex-PMs attack plan to merge DFID with Foreign Office, The Guardian, June 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/jun/16/foreign-office-and-department-for-international-development-to-merge
[161] International Development and Foreign Office to Merge, BBC News, June 2020, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-53062858
[162] International Development and Foreign Office to Merge, BBC News, June 2020, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-53062858

than good. A more private statement, shared only within government, would certainly be helpful in outlining your aims, and this is something, which the new FCDO will almost certainly produce.

The subsuming of DFID into the FCO raised concerns amongst those in the development field. Indeed, in response to Johnson's announcement of his plans, 188 charity organisations wrote to the Prime Minister asking him to reconsider his decision as it was an 'unnecessary and expensive distraction'.[163] To date, there has been little work by the Johnson government to allay these concerns but it is possible that, once the complex issues of COVID-19 and Brexit have been dealt with, a clarification of Britain's development aid agenda may be developed. However, there has been no indication that the Government are keen to allay fears or that the merging is simply an administrative reshuffle. Instead, the merger has been presented as a policy change, meaning that the Johnson government may well have abandoned many of the priorities and relationships, which DFID has focused on since 1997. The reduction in ODA funding certainly seems to be playing to the Conservative base and indicates that Britain's relationship with the developing world is not one which they prioritise, even after Brexit.

Beyond Johnson

Inevitably, Johnson will eventually leave office, as will the Conservatives. Looking beyond the current government, the future of Britain's relationship with developing nations will be extremely important in a post-Brexit world. While, to some, development aid may be driven by altruism, charitable urges or even colonial guilt, one advantage of Britain's donor status has been the impact on Britain's bi-lateral relationships. By building (or buying) good will and strong working relations, ODA funding is a way of Britain creating new markets and new trading links in a strong global marketplace. Any future government will need to consider how important these linkages are, and how much they are willing to pay for them in the future. Once that decision has been made, they will then have to sell that idea to the British public. The 0.7 per cent spend on ODA is enshrined in law, but the reduction to 0.5 per cent GNI ODA under Johnson, with no specific date on when the figure may rise, suggests that development aid is no longer universally accepted by MPs from both main parties as being beneficial to the UK. It is possible, particularly in the light of the financial hardships, which are expected following COVID-19 and Brexit, that a future government might argue that development aid spending was a luxury which Britain cannot afford permanently. The real question is – is Britain's ODA policy a luxury, which Britain cannot live without?

It seems likely that the merger of DFID and the FCO will eventually enable or encourage a strategic plan on British foreign policy. The merging of the two departments happened while the current strategic planning exercise was ongoing, rather than waiting for its recommendations on completion. Such a planning exercise would be incredibly useful, allowing Britain to really 'join up' some elements of its foreign and development aid policy. While altruism is a noble pursuit, many nations have, at least in some part of their ODA policy, an element of self-interest, and ODA and self-interest do not have to run counter to each other. The situation in Yemen had demonstrated the strange juxtapositions, which governments can so easily fall into. Why would a nation such as the UK provide development aid to a nation ravaged by war, while at the same time, providing the very weapons which are being used to terrorise the population? Securitisation has become a key battleground within the developing world and there is some disquiet over developed nations, such as the UK, using their ODA budgets to 'clean up' their military activity overseas. Without a clear line of sight, a clear commitment to the developing world and a desire to deal with short-term problems and 'bumps in the road' in the pursuit of longer-term benefits, these two policies usually end up being uncomfortable bedfellows, and unfortunately immediate financial benefit usually wins out over longer term potential benefits, even economic ones.

[163] Peter Stubley, Boris Johnson urged to reconsider 'unnecessary and expensive' DFID merger by almost 200 charities, The Independent, June 2020, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/boris-johnson-dfid-foreign-office-overseas-aid-charity-a9578321.html

As we enter a new Brexit world, the issue of 'Global Britain' also needs some attention here. If Britain is, as successive Prime Ministers have suggested (for example, May at the Conservative Party Conference, Johnson as reported in the New York Times), keen to build trade linkages with members of the Commonwealth and the wider world, cutting development budgets or downgrading the importance of aid projects could be hugely counterproductive.[164] While conditional aid was eliminated from DFID practices in 1997, it would be foolhardy to believe that the spending of millions of pounds of British money in developing nations on important infrastructure projects and societally vital programmes has not been in Britain's long-term economic interest. Indeed, in 2012, the coalition government introduced a new design for aid being sent from the UK. Each sack, box or pallet was emblazoned with a new 'Union Jack' flag, with the words 'UK Aid', ensuring all recipients knew who to thank for their charity.[165] The developing world is a growing market and that means there is more competition than ever to monopolise new markets. Without the relationships which DFID and British aid have nurtured, those relationships will be much harder to come by. Even if aid funding returns to the 0.7 per cent level, it is likely that different priorities and accounting will change the nature of funding without a Secretary of State to defend it, meaning that the 'Global Britain' brand, and the associated benefits which Johnson is so keen to collect, may well be damaged, the very opposite of his intentions in subsuming DFID into the FCO.

In the much longer term, as is so often the case in government, it is possible that this newly merged department may once again be two separate ministries. DFID could be resurrected again as it was in 1997 (the original Overseas Development Ministry had been created until Wilson but was merged by Heath into the Foreign Office in the early 1970s). However, to do that you would need to have a party and a leader, as you did in 1997, who are really committed to their ODA policy and are clear about what they want that policy to achieve. Without such a commitment, and the money and political capital required to push through such a separation, particularly in the light of resistance from the FCO which would be extremely likely, any plan for separation would fall apart quickly, potentially disabling Britain's ODA plans.

Conclusion

The merging (or subsuming) of DFID into the FCO was a move long expected by those within the development world. Relentless pressure has been put on DFID since 2010 (and perhaps before), driven by external economic pressures on Britain, cuts in domestic spending, reporting of corruption or the mishandling of DFID funding and ideological objections. Spending large amounts of money overseas is a difficult policy to justify when children are slipping into poverty in the UK, even if that poverty is relative. It certainly is real to those experiencing it. Despite this, DFID and its 0.7 per cent funding has been relatively protected, first by the Cameron government and then the May government, despite expectations to the contrary. The merging of DFID into the FCO was, in some senses, inevitable, and it seems likely that this is a practical outcome of a downgrading of the development aid policy, with the Johnson government keen to pursue more direct investment opportunities. The reduction in the aid budget to 0.5 per cent GNI certainly suggests that foreign aid is not central to the wider foreign policy priorities of the Johnson government. This means the longer term, but potentially more sustained, building of good will, which ODA funding produces, appear to be being sacrificed and downgraded.

With the economic damage of COVID-19 and Brexit, Britain's ODA budget is already expected to contract in the financial year 2020/21 and the long-term financial future of the policy could be in jeopardy. Like so many projects, its future is dependent on how long Johnson remains in Downing Street and how long the Conservatives remain in office. A Labour government might well be

[164] Theresa May calls for 'truly global Britain', BBC News, October 2016, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-politics-37535867; Mark Landler, Boris Johnson's 'Global Britain': Inspired vision or wishful thinking?, The New York Times, July 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/03/world/europe/johnson-brexit-hong-kong.html

[165] New logo: Flying the flag for UK aid, Government website, June 2012, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-logo-flying-the-flag-for-uk-aid

expected to be more sympathetic to protecting and ringfencing ODA funding and policymaking. Commenting on the proposed merger of DFID and the FCO, leader of the Labour Party, Sir Keir Starmer tweeted that 'abolishing one of our best performing and most important departments diminishes Britain's place in the world'.[166] However, with worsening economic conditions and global uncertainty, even that is not guaranteed, and it may well be that the merger of DFID and the FCO becomes a permanent feature, at least for the next decade or more. With other nations waiting in the wings to build relationships in developing nations and reap the financial rewards, the developing world cannot and will not wait.

[166] Widespread criticism of the government's plan to merge DFID with FCO, BOND, June 2020, https://www.bond.org.uk/news/2020/06/widespread-criticism-of-the-governments-plan-to-merge-dfid-with-fco

10. Conclusions and recommendations

By Adam Hug[167]

The Government's roadmap for 2020 has not quite unfolded the way they might have initially hoped, with a global pandemic liable to disrupt even the best laid plans. The current delay to the Government's Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy has been part of adapting to that new reality. Although some of the main outcomes of the Integrated Review, such as the merger of the FCO and DFID, the increase in defence spending and the ODA cuts, have already been announced, the document's postponement to early 2021 could enable it to play an important role in setting out the Government's vision for the future as part of a year of action centred around the UK's leadership of the G7 and COP.

As set out in the introduction the UK should build on its soft power strengths and history as a global hub to position itself as a, or even the, 'library of democracy' by providing the necessary tools to support those defending human rights and democracy around the world. To play this role effectively the UK will need not only to protect its world class universities, NGOs and media outlets but to get the Home Office on the same page to better provide sanctuary to activists in need and access for those wanting to study or visit the UK for conferences. UK aid needs to actively support the Government's Open Societies objectives by supporting human rights defenders and NGOs, with human rights impacts be fully considered when providing development aid. The UK should build on the success so far of the new Magnitsky sanctions and use its new found flexibility outside the EU to act fast in response to emerging crises, taking opportunities for British leadership.

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The fight against corruption is an issue that dovetails well with the goal of supporting democracy, given the tendency of kleptocratic autocrats and their hangers on to funnel their money to or through UK jurisdictions. Delivering on overdue legal reforms and enhancing the capacity of institutions working in the sector are crucial, as will be the increasing willingness to use powers such as Unexplained Wealth Orders. Learning the lessons from the UK's own issues with COVID procurement will be important to boost credibility on transparency and accountability.

The UK's new trade function needs to be made more accountable to Parliament and the public, with deals containing stronger human rights and environmental protections, as well as a focus on supporting developing country economies to flourish. It should seek to make trade one plank of broader and more comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreements that combine it with more detailed plans for security, scientific, academic, cultural, aid, and environmental collaboration.

The UK has a lot to do in order to effectively use 2021 to relaunch itself on the world stage but there are a number of recommendations for action that can help it achieve its goals. These might include:

- Positioning the UK as a 'library of democracy', a global hub for supporting liberal democracy and human rights;
- Increasing the use of Magnitsky sanctions, expanding their remit to cover corruption and giving Parliament a role in proposing relevant cases;
- Making Parliamentary time available to introduce the Registration of Overseas Entities Bill and planned reforms to limited partnership law;
- Improving access to existing public registers and find further ways to connect their information, such as the development of a consolidated national asset registry;
- Continuing to expand the investigative capacity of Companies House, the National Economic Crime Centre and its constituent agencies, and increase the use of Unexplained Wealth Orders;
- Taking action on libel tourism and repression of international journalists by introducing UK anti-SLAPP legislation and improving conducts codes for lawyers and financial services;
- Making trade negotiations more transparent and accountable to Parliament and the public, with deals containing a stronger development focus and more enforceable human rights and environmental clauses;
- Integrating trade deals better alongside the UK's other diplomatic objectives through more comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreements;
- Returning to the legal and manifesto commitment of 0.7 per cent GNI invested in Overseas Development Aid as soon as possible, with a sunset clause in any legal changes;
- Improving Parliamentary and Ministerial oversight and setting an ethical framework for the deployment of cyber capabilities, with a focus on defensive and combat support functions; and
- Delivering more ambitious commitments for climate action through the UK's Nationally Determined Contribution, better use of the aid budget and the use of the financial sector, as well as ending government support for fossil fuel projects abroad.

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