

House of Commons
Foreign Affairs Committee

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE ANNUAL
REPORT 2002**

Third Report of Session 2002–03

PREVIOUS REPORTS AND MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

The following Reports and Minutes of Evidence have been published by the Foreign Affairs Committee in this Parliament. They are available from The Stationery Office and are also on the Committee's website:

http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/foreign_affairs_committee.cfm

Session 2001–2002

REPORTS

1st Report	Gibraltar	HC 413
2nd Report	British-US Relations	HC 327
1st Special Report	Appointment of Parliamentary Representatives to the Convention on the Future of Europe	HC 509
3rd Report	Laeken European Council	HC 435
4th Report	Zimbabwe	HC 456
5th Report	Human Rights Annual Report 2001	HC 589
6th Report	Turkey	HC 606
7th Report	Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism	HC 384
8th Report	Strategic Export Controls: Annual Report for 2000, Licensing Policy and Prior Parliamentary Scrutiny	HC 718
9th Report	Private Military Companies	HC 922
10th Report	Zimbabwe	HC 813
11th Report	Gibraltar	HC 973
12th Report	FCO Annual Report 2002	HC 826

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

Evidence	The Inter-Governmental Conference 2004: The Convention on the Future of Europe	HC 965–i
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Session 2002–2003

REPORTS

1st Report	The Biological Weapons Green Paper	HC 150
2nd Report	Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism	HC 196

House of Commons
Foreign Affairs Committee

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE ANNUAL
REPORT 2002**

Third Report of Session 2002–03

*Report, together with
Proceedings of the Committee,
Minutes of Evidence and Appendices*

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The Foreign Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and its associated public bodies.

Current Membership

Rt Hon Donald Anderson MP (*Chairman*) (*Labour, Swansea East*)

David Chidgey MP (*Liberal Democrat, Eastleigh*)

Sir Patrick Cormack MP (*Conservative, Staffordshire South*)

Fabian Hamilton MP (*Labour, Leeds North East*)

Eric Illsley MP (*Labour, Barnsley Central*)

Andrew Mackinlay MP (*Labour, Thurrock*)

John Maples MP (*Conservative, Stratford-on-Avon*)

Bill Olnier MP (*Labour, Nuneaton*)

Greg Pope MP (*Labour, Hyndburn*)

Rt Hon Sir John Stanley MP (*Conservative, Tonbridge and Malling*)

Gisela Stuart MP (*Labour, Birmingham Edgbaston*)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No.152. These are available on the Internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publications

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at:

www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/foreign_affairs_committee.cfm

A list of Reports of the Committee in the present Parliament is on the inside front cover.

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Footnotes

In the footnotes of this Report, references to oral evidence are indicated by 'Q' followed by the question number. References to written evidence are indicated by the page number as in 'Ev 12'.

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THIRD REPORT

The Foreign Affairs Committee has agreed to the following Report:

FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2002

Introduction

1. This Report aims to provide a brief overview of the work of the Foreign Affairs Committee during the past calendar year (2002). During the year, we published 12 Reports, on subjects ranging from Zimbabwe to the War on Terrorism, and held 24 oral evidence sessions with a wide variety of witnesses. We also made seven visits overseas as a Committee: to Spain, Turkey, the USA (twice), Cyprus, Denmark and Gibraltar.¹ We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all those who have helped us in our work—witnesses, officials at home and abroad, those who have submitted memoranda to our inquiries and many others.²

2. The Committee also organised 47 informal meetings during the course of 2002. These are extremely valuable opportunities for Members to discuss key issues of the day with visiting politicians and diplomats from a wide variety of countries. We were particularly pleased to meet Mr Hamid Karzai, Leader of the Interim Authority (now President) of Afghanistan, during his visit to the United Kingdom in January. We are also always pleased to receive up-to-the-minute briefings from British ambassadors and high commissioners serving overseas, and, as appropriate, from non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In this way, the Committee is able to maintain a ‘watching brief’ on a far greater range of international topics than would be possible merely by undertaking more formal inquiries. A full list of our informal meetings can be found at Annex A.

3. We have divided our Report into five main sections, which approximately reflect the work we carried out in 2002: continuing scrutiny of foreign policy; scrutiny of specific foreign policy issues; scrutiny of Foreign & Commonwealth Office publications; pre-legislative foreign policy scrutiny; and other scrutiny activities. We also comment on how we have assisted the House in carrying out its wider role of holding the Government to account, the response of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to our scrutiny, and our future programme. Some of our work naturally falls into more than one of these categories and we have reported on it under the heading which we felt to be most appropriate. In drawing up our Report we have taken note of the Liaison Committee’s list of “core tasks” for select committees.³

¹ Four overseas visits were also made by Members and staff travelling in a representative capacity to conferences and meetings in Spain, Belgium, Latvia and Denmark.

² Detailed information on the Committee’s other activities in the parliamentary session 2001–02 may be found in the Sessional Returns 2001–2002, *House, Committees of the Whole House, Standing Committees and Select Committees*, HC 1, p 172.

³ The Liaison Committee is appointed under Standing Order No. 145 to, “consider general matters relating to the work of select committees”. The chairmen of the 33 select committees sit on the Committee. More information on its work can be found at: http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/liaison_committee.cfm. Details of the “core tasks” may be found in: Liaison Committee, Second Report of Session 2001–02, *Select Committees: Modernisation Proposals*, HC 692, para 33.

Continuing scrutiny of foreign policy

Seventh Report of Session 2001–02, Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism (HC 384)

4. In 2002, we continued the ‘rolling’ inquiry we had announced the previous year into the foreign policy aspects of the war on terrorism.⁴ Since the shocking events of 11 September 2001 in New York, Washington DC and Pennsylvania, we have followed both international developments and the British response extremely closely. Our initial reactions to, and analysis of, the attacks were contained in our *British-US Relations Report* in 2001, for which we visited New York and Washington in November of that year.⁵ This was followed by a series of evidence sessions, informal meetings and a further visit to the USA by some of us in the early part of 2002, which culminated in our Seventh Report of the last Session: *Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism*.⁶ In that Report, we examined the key aspects of the Government’s foreign policy prior to 11 September, its immediate reaction to the events of that day and the conduct of the war in Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom). We registered our support for a great deal of what the Government had done during that period. We commended the contribution of British politicians and diplomats to the creation of an international coalition against terrorism and the successful overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan. We also noted the key role the United Kingdom was, and is, playing in the fight against terrorism. However, we urged the Government to continue giving priority to the gathering of intelligence at this time and to examine closely the root causes of terrorism.

Second Report of Session 2002–03, Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism (HC 196)

5. In December, we published our second Report of the year on this very important issue, again titled *Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism*.⁷ In it, we updated our assessment of the continuing threat posed by global terrorism and commented on a number of developments since our earlier Report. These included: the threat posed by Iraq to global security and the implications of different policy options to tackle that threat; the series of terrorist atrocities that had occurred in the previous six months, particularly in Bali and Mombasa; the latest assessment of the state of the al Qaeda network; the relevance of the enduring conflict between Israel and Palestine; the legality of possible military action against Iraq, and the extent of states’ rights to act in “pre-emptive self-defence”. We concluded that, although important progress had been made in a number of areas, the threat posed by al Qaeda, and other terrorist groups, remained high at that time. The Committee also believed that the situation regarding Iraq was an extremely serious one and would need to be tackled with determination and some urgency by the United Kingdom, and others, if an acceptable resolution were to be achieved. While making a number of recommendations to the Government and expressing concerns over its policy and operations in some areas, we were pleased to conclude the Report as follows: “We commend the Government for its firm and committed leadership in the war against terrorism. We conclude that Britain has contributed substantially to ensuring that the ‘international coalition’ remains a reality,

⁴ “Foreign policy aspects of the war against terrorism”, Foreign Affairs Committee press release no. 7 (Session 2001–02), 13 November 2001.

⁵ See: Foreign Affairs Committee, Second Report of Session 2001–02, *British-US Relations*, HC 327. All Select Committee publications can be accessed on the Committee’s website, at: http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/foreign_affairs_committee.cfm.

⁶ Foreign Affairs Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2001–02, *Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism*, HC 384.

⁷ Foreign Affairs Committee, Second Report of Session 2002–03, *Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism*, HC 196.

more than a year after the devastating attacks on the United States.”⁸ The Committee intends to carry on with its work in this vital field.

Third Report of Session 2001–02, Laeken European Council (HC 435)

6. Another important element of our continuing scrutiny of Foreign Office policy is our on-going inquiry into developments in the European Union (EU).⁹ During 2002, we examined the Foreign Secretary prior to each of the European Councils: Laeken, Barcelona, Seville and Copenhagen. We subsequently published his oral evidence, providing accessible information to Members of the House and the wider public on the United Kingdom’s priorities and ambitions during each six-month presidency of the Union.¹⁰ We also produced a Special Report in January 2002 on the *Appointment of Parliamentary Representatives to the Convention on the Future of Europe*, drawing to the House’s attention the importance of choosing its own representatives to this seminal Convention.¹¹ We were pleased to note that following our Report a Member of the Committee, Ms Gisela Stuart MP, was chosen by the House to act as one its representatives at the Convention and has subsequently been elected to the Praesidium and chaired its Working Group on National Parliaments.¹² All Members of the Committee are *ex officio* members of the Standing Committee on the Convention on the Future of Europe, set up last year to examine in detail the work being done at the Convention. We consider this role of supplying the House with the information it needs to act on European Union matters to be one of our most important tasks, and look forward to continuing it in the future.

Sixth Report of Session 2001–02, Turkey (HC 606)

7. In a separate inquiry, we examined the United Kingdom’s relations with one of the largest candidate counties of the European Union, Turkey, and subsequently published the findings in our Sixth Report of last session.¹³ While recognising the many difficulties that Turkey’s application to join the Union faced (in terms of its size, human rights records, border disputes, etc.), we concluded that it could be a valuable member of the EU in time. We noted the important role Turkey was playing in the fight against terrorism and that, while more needed to be done on issues such as the treatment of ethnic minorities within the country, marked progress had been made in a number of traditionally contentious areas. We urged the Government to do all it could in assisting Turkey to meet the Copenhagen criteria and in ensuring that no cultural or religious bar should be placed in the way of Turkey’s membership of the Union. The Government’s Response to our Report welcomed our findings and we were pleased to note that a number of the issues we had raised were being dealt with, for example the re-broadcasting of the BBC World Service in Turkey.¹⁴

Eighth Report of Session 2001–02, Strategic Export Controls (HC 718)

8. In this section of the Report, we also wish to highlight the work done by Members of the Committee as part of the ‘Quadripartite’ Committee. This body consists of Members from our Committee meeting concurrently with those of the Defence, International Affairs

⁸ *Ibid.*, para 246.

⁹ “Britain and the European Union”, Foreign Affairs Committee press release no. 3 (Session 2001–02), 20 July 2001.

¹⁰ Foreign Affairs Committee, Third Report of Session 2001–2002, *Laeken European Council*, HC 435; Minutes of Evidence and Appendix, Session 2001–02, *The Barcelona European Council*, HC 698–i; Minutes of Evidence and Appendix, Session 2001–02, *The Seville European Council*, HC 974–i; and Minutes of Evidence and Appendix, Session 2002–03, *The Copenhagen European Council*, HC 176–i.

¹¹ Foreign Affairs Committee, First Special Report of Session 2001–2002, *Appointment of Parliamentary Representatives to the Convention on the Future of Europe*, HC 509.

¹² *Votes and Proceedings*, 28 January 2002, p 89.

¹³ Foreign Affairs Committee, *Turkey*, Sixth Report of Session 2001–02, HC 606.

¹⁴ Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Sixth Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee Session 2001–02, Turkey: Response from the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs*, Cm 5529, July 2002. Information on the FCO, including its responses to Committee Reports, can be accessed at: www.fco.gov.uk.

and Trade and Industry Committees in order to examine the Government's Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls.¹⁵ This system of joint scrutiny was established in the last Parliament, with the Committees' First Report being published in 1999.¹⁶ We were keen to continue this practice and in July last year the four Committees published their first joint Report of the current Parliament: *Strategic Export Controls: Annual Report for 2000, Licensing Policy and Prior Parliamentary Scrutiny*.¹⁷

9. The Report examined the impact of world events since 2000 on export control regulations and looked, in particular, at the situation with regards to India, Pakistan and Israel. The four Committees considered both the general application of the Consolidated Criteria, which govern the export of arms, and specific cases, such as the granting of an export licence for an air traffic control system to Tanzania. The Report commended the achievements already made by the Government in improving the transparency and administration of the export control system, but argued that more still had to be done in a number of areas. It also urged the Government to bring forward proposals, as soon as possible, for involving Parliament in some form of prior scrutiny of export licences.

Scrutiny of specific foreign policy issues

Fourth Report of Session 2001–02, Zimbabwe (HC 456)

Tenth Report of Session 2001–02, Zimbabwe (HC 813)

10. The Committee produced reports on two specific areas of foreign policy in 2002: the situation in Zimbabwe, on which we produced two reports, and the future of Gibraltar. In our two reports on Zimbabwe, we continued the work done by our predecessor Committee in monitoring the situation in that country.¹⁸ The first, published in February, reported to the House the oral evidence we had heard from the Secretary of State, Rt Hon Jack Straw MP, and from Baroness Amos, Minister of State in the FCO, on the deteriorating economic and political situation in Zimbabwe, prior to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in March.¹⁹ The second, fuller, Report (published in July) gave a more detailed analysis of the state of affairs before and after the March presidential elections in the country and examined issues surrounding land reform, freedom of expression and the response of the United Kingdom and the European Union to developments there.²⁰ On the basis of the evidence received, we felt fully justified in condemning the actions of Robert Mugabe's government, and especially their role in the illegal seizure of land. We supported the Commonwealth's decision to suspend Zimbabwe and recommended the maintenance of effective sanctions against the regime by the United Kingdom and the EU. While recognising the difficulty of the United Kingdom's position as the former colonial power, we urged the Government to remain closely involved with the plight of the Zimbabwean people and to counter most strongly all misrepresentations of its policies and motivations. We intend to maintain a close interest in future developments in Zimbabwe.

¹⁵ The Report provides information about licensing decisions and exports in the previous year and relevant policy decisions.

¹⁶ Foreign Affairs Committee, Third Special Report of Session 1998–99, *Committees' Inquiry into the 1997 and 1998 Annual Reports on Strategic Export Controls*, HC 540.

¹⁷ Foreign Affairs Committee, Eighth Report of Session 2001–02, *Strategic Export Controls: Annual Report for 2000, Licensing Policy and Prior Parliamentary Scrutiny*, HC 718.

¹⁸ Foreign Affairs Committee, Minutes of Evidence, Session 1999–2000, *Zimbabwe*, HC 477–i.

¹⁹ Fourth Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 2001–02, *Zimbabwe*, HC 456.

²⁰ Tenth Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 2001–02, *Zimbabwe*, HC 813.

Eleventh Report of Session 2001–02, Gibraltar (HC 973)

11. Like our predecessor Committee, we have monitored carefully all developments affecting the future of Gibraltar, with Reports being most recently published in June 1999, July 2000, April 2001 and December 2001.²¹ In our latest Report on the subject, published in November of last year, we examined a number of related issues: the Brussels Process talks and their possible outcome²²; the British Government’s agreement to enfranchise Gibraltarians for the European elections in 2004; allegations over pensions and statistics in Gibraltar; the means through which Spain exerts a degree of control over the territory (for example, through border controls); and the future of the defence and financial services sectors.²³ Our inquiry took place against the backdrop of heightened public interest in Gibraltar’s future in all three interested parties—Gibraltar, the United Kingdom and Spain—and high-level negotiations between the British and Spanish Governments, which were eventually to prove fruitless. The Report was published as polls closed in Gibraltar on a referendum, organised by Gibraltar’s government, on the question of Anglo-Spanish joint sovereignty. The result of the referendum was an overwhelming rejection of any such proposal.²⁴

12. Our Report concluded that it would be a long time before any joint sovereignty proposal could be made acceptable to the people of Gibraltar. We were critical of both United Kingdom and Spanish foreign policy on this issue, and their failure properly to consult, or “woo”, Gibraltarians. It was also vital that the military, telecommunication, flight and other restrictions, imposed by Spain, were ended as soon as possible.

Scrutiny of Foreign & Commonwealth Office publications

Twelfth Report of Session 2001–02, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report 2002 (HC 826)

13. A great deal of our work involves the examination of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office’s written output, in the form of reports and other documents. In drawing up our Report on the War against Terrorism, for example, we scrutinised in detail the Government’s dossier on Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction.²⁵ As our predecessor Committee did in the last Parliament, we examined closely the Office’s annual report and published our findings in November as our Ninth Report of the last session: *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report 2002*.²⁶ We made a number of recommendations relating to the content and layout of the Report, as well as on substantial issues such as the FCO’s ability to react quickly to crises (following the Bali bombing incident on 12 October).

Fifth Report of Session 2001–02, Human Rights Annual Report 2001 (HC 589)

14. We also continued the practice of our predecessor Committee in scrutinising the FCO’s Human Rights Annual Report. This document sets out the Foreign Office’s work in promoting human rights overseas during the previous year, and has been published annually since 1997.²⁷ Its publication in its present form was a direct response to the

²¹ Foreign Affairs Committee, Fourth Report of Session 1998–99, *Gibraltar*, HC 366; Ninth Report of Session 1999–00, *Gibraltar: Follow Up*; Sixth Report of Session 2000–01, *Gibraltar*, HC 319; and First Report of Session 2001–02, *Gibraltar*, HC 413.

²² “The Foreign Secretary and Spanish Foreign Minister relaunch talks on Gibraltar, FCO press release, 26 July 2001.

²³ Foreign Affairs Committee, Eleventh Report of Session 2001–02, *Gibraltar*, November 2002, HC 973.

²⁴ Leading article, *Daily Telegraph*, 9 November 2002.

²⁵ FCO, *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction: the assessment of the British Government*, TSO, September 2002. See: www.official-documents.co.uk.

²⁶ Foreign Affairs Committee, Twelfth Report of Session 2001–02, *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report 2002*, HC 826.

²⁷ FCO, *Human Rights Annual Report 2001*, Cm 5211, September 2001.

recommendation of our predecessor Committee.²⁸ As in previous years, we examined the Minister responsible, in this case Rt Hon Peter Hain MP, and reported his evidence and our analysis to the House. We argued strongly that the Government had to show terrorists that, “human rights are central to its vision of a civilised world,” and made a number of recommendations on specific issues, such as forced marriages.²⁹ The Government subsequently agreed with many of our findings and the 2002 report reflected a number of the changes we had previously suggested.³⁰ We aim to continue this systematic scrutiny of the FCO’s major output in the future.

Pre-legislative foreign policy scrutiny

Ninth Report of Session 2001–02, Private Military Companies (HC 922)

15. The FCO did not publish any legislation in draft in 2002 but the Committee produced Reports on two government green papers during the year. Our Ninth Report of Session 2001-02, published in July, examined the proposals contained in the *Private Military Companies: Options for Regulation* paper, produced by the FCO in February.³¹ This green paper was largely the result of recommendations made by our predecessor Committee in 1999, which had urged the Government to set out its proposals for legislating on the control of private military companies (PMCs) following the ‘Sandline Affair’.³² In our Report, we concluded that the proposed legislation was necessary to curtail the activities of disreputable companies, whose activities were detrimental to the United Kingdom’s interests. We urged the Government to establish a centrally-held registry of information on contracts between PMCs and Government departments, and recommended a number of detailed changes to the options set out in the Paper.

First Report of Session 2002–03, The Biological Weapons Green Paper (HC 150)

16. Our second piece of work in this area, was our First Report of Session 2002-03 on *The Biological Weapons Green Paper* (published in November 2002).³³ The green paper, which had been published in April, set out the Government’s continuing strategy to defend the UK against the threat of biological weapons and to strengthen the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC).³⁴ In its Report, the Committee welcomed the Government’s commitment to dealing with this serious threat at an international level, and its decision to launch a public debate on the issue through the green paper’s publication. We made a number of detailed observations and recommendations relating to the provisions of the paper, and to the attempts to enhance international co-operation in this field. The Report also highlighted the need for the Government to ensure control of the biotechnological research being carried out in United Kingdom universities and research institutions.

²⁸ Foreign Affairs Committee, First Report of Session 1998–99, *Foreign Policy and Human Rights*, HC 100, para 170
²⁹ *Ibid.*, para 3.

³⁰ FCO, *Foreign Affairs Committee Session 2001–2002 Annual Report on Human Rights: Response of the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs*, Cm 5509, May 2002.

³¹ Foreign Affairs Committee, Ninth Report of Session 2001–02, *Private Military Companies*, HC 922; Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Private Military Companies: Options for Regulation*, HC (2001–02) 577.

³² Sandline International, a UK-based PMC, had been involved in the export of arms to Sierra Leone in contravention of an UN embargo. For further details, see: Foreign Affairs Committee, Second Report of Session 1998–99, *Sierra Leone*, HC 116–i.

³³ Foreign Affairs Committee, First Report of Session 2002–03, *The Biological Weapons Green Paper*, HC 150.

³⁴ Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Strengthening the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention: Countering the Threat from Biological Weapons*, Cm 5484, April 2002.

Other scrutiny activities

Financial scrutiny

17. At around one and a half billion pounds a year, total public spending on the FCO is relatively small compared to many other government departments. However, the Committee has always taken a keen interest in the FCO's management and allocation of resources. In our scrutiny of the Department's Annual Report we gave close attention to financial matters, including the Office's progress toward the annual efficiency-saving target and the recently agreed contract with Cap Gemini Ernst and Young (CGEY) to deliver the Prism ICT (Information and Communication Technology) programme.³⁵

18. One expenditure issue on which the Committee has maintained a close 'watching brief', for a number of years, is the FCO's management of its extensive property portfolio. The Department has substantial estate assets, with a total value of over one billion pounds as at 31 March 2001 (83% of the FCO's total assets).³⁶ The Department is currently pursuing a policy of "asset recycling", whereby properties that have, "become surplus through reprioritisation, or fail to be operationally effective or good value for money, are being sold," in order to fund increased investment in ICT.³⁷ We commented, and made recommendations, on several aspects of this programme and other property-related matters in our reports during 2002. We highlighted, in particular, the importance of looking beyond the pure monetary value of buildings owned by the FCO, to the overall contribution that they made to the effectiveness of British diplomacy.³⁸

Examination of Public Service Agreements

19. As part of our Report into the Foreign Office's Annual Report, we examined its 2001 Public Service Agreements (PSAs) with HM Treasury. These set out how the FCO's performance is to be measured against its objectives (for example by setting consuls abroad the target of issuing 95% of passports within five working days). We concluded that the PSA targets generally reflected, "with relative accuracy the work and aims of the FCO". However, we noted that it was very difficult to measure objectively much of the Office's progress against these targets in any simple way, for example to what extent it had helped to "reduce tension in South Asia".

Scrutiny of the Foreign Office's associated public bodies

20. The two principal public bodies associated with the Foreign Office are the BBC World Service and the British Council. Like our predecessor Committee in the last Parliament, we have maintained a close interest in the important work carried out by both these bodies, for example through visits to their premises and meeting their staff when abroad.³⁹ The Committee also took oral evidence from representatives of both organisations during our inquiry into the FCO's Departmental Report. We were pleased to note in our Report for that inquiry that the two bodies had received significant, real-term increases in their funding following the 2002 Spending Review, as had previously been recommended by the Committee.⁴⁰

³⁵ Foreign Affairs Committee, Twelfth Report of Session 2001–02, *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report 2002*, HC 826, paragraphs 49–72.

³⁶ FCO, *Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2002 Departmental Report*, Cm 5413, June 2002, p 136.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p 138.

³⁸ Foreign Affairs Committee, Twelfth Report of Session 2001–02, *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report 2002*, HC 826, paragraph 56.

³⁹ For example in Cyprus and Turkey, see: Foreign Affairs Committee, *Turkey*, Sixth Report of Session 2001–02, HC 606, pp 48–49.

⁴⁰ Foreign Affairs Committee, *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report 2002*, paras 44–46.

Scrutiny of major appointments

21. The Committee has not inquired into any major appointments by the Secretary of State or other senior ministers this year. However, we indicated in our Report on the *Foreign and Commonwealth Annual Report 2002* that should the Government choose to make a political appointment to an ambassador-level diplomatic post, we would wish to inquire into the nominee's suitability for the position and to invite them to provide oral evidence before us, if we felt that course to be necessary.⁴¹

Departmental response

22. We are pleased to report that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, through its Parliamentary Relations and Devolution Department (PRDD), has continued to respond promptly to the needs and requests of this Committee. It has generally responded in a timely fashion to our Reports, and where it has not been able to produce a reply within two months it has provided an explanation and successfully sought an extension to the deadline. We welcome the fact that these replies have all been produced in command paper form, reflecting the importance attached by the FCO to our scrutiny. The Committee expresses its gratitude to all members of the Office for the assistance rendered to us during the course of our year's work, particularly when travelling abroad.

Assisting the House

23. The Foreign Affairs Committee, like all select committees, aims to assist the House in its duties, principally by aiding well-informed debate on issues of national consequence and in exercising detailed scrutiny of the executive. Two of our Reports were the subject of debates in Westminster Hall during 2002: that on *British-US Relations*, which had been published in the previous year, and our initial Report on *Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism* published in June.⁴² In addition, our work, particularly that on the war against terrorism, has been frequently referred to during debates in the Chamber and has provided valuable insight into matters of interest and concern to Members from across the House.

The future

24. In this Report, we have set out our work over the last year. By its nature, much of our work is reactive, responding to the output of our own Government and to the actions of other nations and organisations. It is, therefore, very difficult for us to envisage in detail our programme for the coming year. However, we intend to continue our work in scrutinising the foreign policy aspects of the war against terrorism, following the developments in Iraq and elsewhere very closely. We will also examine the Foreign Secretary prior to major EU Councils and other international meetings (as we did prior to the NATO Prague Summit in October).⁴³ In March, we plan to visit the Islamic Republic of Iran to explore a range of issues arising from our inquiry into the war on terrorism, as well as developments in British-Iranian relations. This visit was one our predecessor Committee had hoped to make in 2001 but was unfortunately prevented from so doing by the General Election. As in 2002, we also intend to take evidence on the FCO's Departmental Annual Report and on its Human Rights Report. We hope that our work will continue to be useful to Parliament, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the press and public, in illuminating the vital issues of foreign affairs.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, paras 83–84.

⁴² The Committee's Second Report of Session 2001–02, *British-US Relations* (HC 327) was debated on 25 April 2002 in Westminster Hall; the Seventh Report of Session 2001–02, *Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism* (HC 384) was debated on 31 October 2002. For details of the debate, follow the links to the appropriate day at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmhansrd.htm>.

⁴³ Minutes of Evidence and Appendix, Session 2002–03, *The Prague NATO Summit*, HC 66–i.

ANNEX**Informal Meetings held by the Foreign Affairs Committee in 2002*****Session 2001–02***

Thursday 10 January 2002

The Special Team on Intelligence and Information Gathering, Liberal Democratic Party, Japan

Wednesday 16 January 2002

Hon Joe Bossano, Leader of the Opposition, Gibraltar

Tuesday 29 January 2002

Hon Lt General Mompoti Merafhe MP, Foreign Affairs Minister from Botswana, and HE Mr Roy Blackbeard, High Commissioner, Botswana High Commission

Monday 31 January 2002

Hamid Karzai, Leader of the Interim Authority, Afghanistan

Tuesday 5 February 2002

Mr John Bolton, Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, US Department of State

Wednesday 6 February 2002

International Crisis Group staff: John Prendergast and Fabienne Hara, Co-directors, Africa Programme and Charles Radcliffe, Vice President (Government Relations)

Monday 11 February 2002

Mr Solomon Passy, Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Affairs

Monday 11 February 2002

Sir David Logan, Former British Ambassador to Turkey

Wednesday 13 February 2002

HE Dr Alisher Faizullaev, Uzbek Ambassador

Wednesday 27 February 2002

HE Mr Alexandros Sandis, Greek Ambassador

Tuesday 12 March 2002

Mr Petar Ladjevic, special advisor to President Kosunica of Yugoslavia

Thursday 14 March 2002

Members of the Iraqi National Congress

Thursday 11 April 2002

Mr Mircea Geoana, Romanian Minister for Foreign Affairs

Wednesday 17 April 2002

Mr Gareth Evans, President and Chief Executive, International Crisis Group

Monday 22 April 2002

Mr Jasem Mohamed Al-Khurafi, Speaker of the Kuwaiti National Assembly

Monday 22 April 2002

Mr Zoran Djindjic, Prime Minister of Serbia

Thursday 25 April 2002

Sir Jeremy Greenstock, UK Ambassador to the United Nations

Monday 29 April 2002

Mr Afif Safieh, Palestinian General Delegate to the United Kingdom

Tuesday 30 April 2002

Emily Lau, Member of the Hong Kong Legislative Assembly

Wednesday 1 May 2002

Professor Ismael Qasimyar, Chair of Afghan Commission tasked with organising the Emergency Loya Jirga

Monday 13 May 2002

Delegation from the Norwegian Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs

Tuesday 14 May 2002

Delegation from the Iranian Parliament (The Majles)

Wednesday 15 May 2002

Parliamentary Delegation from Bosnia & Herzegovina

Wednesday 15 May 2002

Dr Vladimir Baranovsky and Professor Alexander Dynkin, Directors of the Institute of World Economy & International Relations (IMEMO) based in the Russian Federation

Thursday 16 May 2002

Hon Assad Shoman, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Belize, accompanied by Mr Alexis Roberto Rosado, High Commissioner

Monday 20 May 2002

Hon Peter Caruana, Chief Minister, Government of Gibraltar

Wednesday 12 June 2002

Mr Klavs Holm, Minister, Danish Embassy, London

Wednesday 12th June 2002

Dr Jose Ramos Horta, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, East Timor

Wednesday 12 June 2002

Mr Steve Crawshaw and Mr John Sifton, Human Rights Watch

Tuesday 18 June 2002

Meeting with Amnesty International's "Stop the Killing" Global Israel/Occupied Territories Speakers Tour

Tuesday 18 June 2002

Chairmen from the Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of Romania

Wednesday 19 June 2002

Mrs Kristina Ojuland, Foreign Minister of Estonia

Wednesday 10 July 2002

Delegation from the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA)

Monday 15 July 2002

Parliamentary Delegation from the Chagos Islands

Monday 23 September 2002

Mr John Prendergast, Co-Director of the Africa Programme, International Crisis Group

Tuesday 24 September 2002

HE Professor Şükrü Sina Gürel, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Thursday 24 October 2002

Foreign Affairs Committee, the People's Republic of China

Tuesday 29 October 2002

HE Mr Abdul Kader Jaffer, Deputy High-Commissioner of Pakistan

Thursday 31 October 2002

Mr Alexander Downer, Australian Foreign Minister

Wednesday 6 November 2002

Community Leaders from Matabeleland

Session 2002–03

Tuesday 12 November 2002

Mr Andrew Leung, Director-General, Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office

Thursday 21 November 2002

Mr Martin Lee, Member of the Hong Kong Legislature

Monday 2nd December 2002

Mr Kosachev, Deputy Chairman of the Russian Duma's International Affairs Committee

Wednesday 4th December 2002

Mr Korkmaz Haktanir, Turkish Ambassador

Wednesday 4th December 2002

Mr Yiannakis Omirou, Leader of the Cypriot Movement of Social Democrats (KISOS)

Friday 6th December 2002

Mr Jean-François Copé, French Minister of State for relations with Parliament and Government Spokesman

Thursday 19th December 2002

Dr Ali Ahani, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE RELATING TO THE REPORT

TUESDAY 5 FEBRUARY

Members present:

Mr Donald Anderson, in the Chair

Mr Eric Illsley

Mr Andrew Mackinlay

Mr John Maples

Mr Bill Oler

Mr Greg Pope

Sir John Stanley

Draft Report (*Foreign Affairs Committee Annual Report 2002*), proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraph 1 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 2 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraph 3 read and agreed to.

Paragraphs 4 and 5 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 6 to 9 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 10 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 11 to 23 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 24 read, amended and agreed to.

Annex agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report, as amended, be the Third Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chairman do make the Report to the House.

[Adjourned until Tuesday 11 February at half-past Two o'clock.]

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