

3.30 pm

## Lord Howell of Guildford (Con)

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My Lords, I congratulate the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, on promoting this today, although I think he needed another 10 or 15 minutes to cover all the huge issues that we are addressing here. This is a further opportunity for your Lordships to make an input both into the forthcoming review of defence, diplomacy, development and so on that has been announced, and indeed to the strategic defence review. I assume that the grand review of our global strategy and foreign policy will come before the strategic defence review—in other words, we could have a strategy before we review it—but I have no idea which way round that will happen. It would not surprise me if they came the other way around; you never know.

I say that this is a further opportunity because we have already had two major reports from your Lordships in recent years: *UK Foreign Policy in a Shifting World Order* in December 2018, and *Persuasion and Power in the Modern World* back in March 2014, not to mention several books and other reports in between, all of which covered the issues which the review is supposed to look at. The *UK in a Shifting World Order* report from the International Relations Committee had 66 recommendations for action to reposition Britain in the totally novel international landscape into which we have now moved. So why we need a vast review again now beats me. Whitehall moves at tortoise speed; many of us would have thought that this sort of report was obvious 15 years ago and should long since have led to decisive action and changes.

I will choose six fundamental lessons from those reports and other conclusions quickly in my few minutes. First, we are now acknowledged as the number one soft power nation in the world, if we care to deploy this enormous resource, which we should do. Hard military power is of course necessary, but it will be used in the future only with other allies and coalitions of the willing, or in conjunction with soft power resources—so-called smart power. With soft power go soft management techniques, soft protection techniques and the soft economics of a global economy increasingly dominated by knowledge products and services in the digital age and by cyberspace, transforming the whole pattern of international trade.

Secondly, we must increasingly engage with and work with the great Asian powers. People go on about the need to reassert the power of the West but, frankly, that is a completely dated 20th-century concept. The great new 21st-century areas of growth and dynamism, the new sources of influence, wealth and trade, and the new consumer markets now lie outside the European Union and no longer exclusively in the Atlantic or western sphere at all. We have to secure good access to those markets, powers and groupings to survive.

The Commonwealth network, which the noble Lord mentioned—or the “family of people in the truest sense”,

as Queen Elizabeth put it in her recent Christmas message—is one of several hugely advantageous routes into the new growth markets and high technology zones of Asia: that is, Asia Pacific, Asia south-east, Asia central and near Asia, and increasingly of course a changing Africa as well. None of this means turning our back on the great United States of America, always our friend. But it does mean a new and different relationship and new links with Asia, as it draws ahead not just in markets and growth but in technological edge—as we see all too clearly from the Huawei issue—and its influence in the Middle East, which we tend to ignore but which is powerful.

Thirdly, we have now entered a completely new phase of 21st-century networks in which we must engage: the revived Trans-Pacific Partnership, COMESA, the Pacific Alliance, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, the new ASEAN and even the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. The old organisations are still important—NATO is our neighbourhood watch, and we have to stay on guard against Russia of course. But I must say that anyone who has seen the Bolshoi’s latest production of “Giselle”, which is probably the most stunning ballet production ever, should marvel at this manifestation of soft power and be reminded that we are not just up against a plain old-fashioned Cold War enemy; we will have to think much smarter to deal with that than we do at present.

Fourthly, and above all, we must make much better use of the enormous and modern Commonwealth network, although we are no longer at the centre of it. If, in this information age, soft power is increasingly becoming the means of advantage—promoting brands, reputation and interests and, hopefully, trade, as well as winning allies and subduing hostility—here for Britain is the soft power network to beat them all. There is no question of trying to resurrect Pax Britannica; that has long gone, as indeed has Pax Americana. We are just one

member state out of 54, with plenty to learn from the others as they expand their trade and investment links, not just with us but with each other.

Fifthly, although the old ideological divides are almost dead in the new technological age, we must promote new and fairer forms of capitalism—socialising capitalism, if you like, to bring new wealth and status to billions of households and families across the planet.

Sixthly, some say we should merge DfID into the FCO to create one giant international departmental force. Frankly, I do not very much favour too much departmental juggling—although I have done quite a lot of it myself in the past—but I have no doubt that DfID and the FCO, and other departments, including the MoD, should work much more closely together on the ground than they do now, as global understanding grows of how aid and development and poverty alleviation and security really work and meld together, and where the real solutions lie. Certainly we need a combined effort to tackle the real global causes of global warming and ever-climbing carbon emissions, rather than just contenting ourselves with greening our own lovely country of Britain. Desirable though that certainly is, it does not necessarily lead to the tackling of climate change that is needed on a much bigger scale.

Once Britain has navigated through the present dangerous seas, the nation's luck will be in—unless of course we throw it all away. Britain will be sitting plumb in the midst of the world's best networks, both digital and real, and will be a safe haven, even more than it is now, for the world's investors—and that will give us more power and capacity than ever to contribute to a safer, more peaceful and fairer world.

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3.38 pm

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[Lord Browne of Ladyton \(Lab\)](#)

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My Lords, my noble friend Lord McConnell reminded us in his opening remarks that few, if any, of the forces that will influence our common future on this planet respect or can even be bound in any form by national boundaries. We all know this but, unfortunately, many times we behave as if we do not, thinking that we can influence these things without partnerships across the world. I pay tribute to my noble friend, congratulate him and thank him for the way in which he has introduced it. I am honoured to follow the noble Lord, Lord Howell, another noble Lord who has a global vision—a perspective that he shares with us regularly and always to our benefit—and I thank him for his contribution.

We are at the start of a new decade, and tomorrow we leave the EU. Things are going to change—there is no doubt about that. The time is right to engage with the challenges posed by the announcement in the Queen’s Speech of an

“Integrated Security, Defence and Foreign Policy Review ... covering all aspects of international policy from defence to diplomacy and development.”—[*Official Report*, 19/12/19; col. 9.]

But we need to live up to those words. In his contribution to the Queen’s Speech debate on 7 January, at col. 65, my noble friend Lord Robertson of Port Ellen described, in a few short sentences, by reference to the 1997-98 strategic defence review, the level of consultation that a proper review of this nature requires. As I recall, his wise advice attracted universal approval from your Lordships’ House, including from the Front Bench. Beyond approval, the Government have a responsibility to act on that advice.

Thanks to my noble friend Lord McConnell, we have two and a half hours of debate today, but that is insufficient by a long way for your Lordships’ House. On that point, surely it is not an unreasonable expectation that, in winding up, the noble Baroness the Minister can give your Lordships a clear undertaking that, at an early date before decisions are made, the Government will find time to debate the proposed review more fully so that Parliament has a proper opportunity to help to shape the review process. If she cannot do so and the Government do not find the time to do it, it will be difficult to avoid the conclusion that their talk about wide-ranging consultation is meaningless.

My noble friend asked an Oral Question about the proposed review, on 8 January, at col. 178. He was being a bit unfair to the Government; it was a bit early to ask the questions he asked, but they are on the record. I am sure that, in the intervening three weeks, the Government have thought about the review and are

now in a position to give better answers to the questions he posed, because their answers then were all engaging but lacked substance.

Today, I intend to use my time to focus on the imperative of peacebuilding as the essential route to building a safer, fairer and cleaner world. From my experience of the views of those whom we charge with the responsibility of delivering our country's hard power, I say without fear of contradiction that that view is shared by those very brave people. Since it was first coined—it was in the context of the Vietnam War, I believe—the phrase “We cannot do this by military means alone” is a common approach favoured by almost every senior military officer who has experienced the reality of modern conflict.

That was certainly the case when I served as Secretary of State for Defence; if anything, that phrase is even more pertinent in respect of the security challenges we face today. A modern nation must navigate all kinds of problems to be truly secure. This is truer when the risks and threats it faces emanate from abroad—as is the case with the UK, as confirmed by the constant assessment of threats that have informed successive national security strategies in this country. Almost all of the threats that we identify at any given time in these strategies emanate from abroad. Investing money in good governance, education, infrastructure and the alleviation of poverty directly will challenge the root causes of insecurity in the countries from which these threats emanate. The deployment of military force will often, at best, tackle only the symptoms. Our recent experience suggests that the deployment of military force, when it is not properly thought through, can and does make matters worse.

So, while ensuring that the resource commitment to defence reflects our ambition for our defence capabilities, the review should aim to create a paradigm shift in the way we think about peace. In large measure, that work has already been done for us. In the extensive work of the Institute for Economics and Peace, based in Sydney, Australia—the organisation which publishes the Global Peace Index—we will find a template for how to do that, which will assist significantly in helping to meet that challenge. Before I go any further, although this is not formally a registrable interest, I should make it clear that I not only admire the work of the IEP but have agreed to serve on its board of advisers. So I have an interest but not a formal one.

Using data driven-research—the data seldom lies—the IEP has developed metrics to analyse peace and quantify its economic value. For 13 years, it has been developing and publishing national indices, calculating the economic cost of conflict and violence, analysing country-level risk and both understanding and

promoting positive peace. Its research is now used extensively by Governments, academic institutions, think tanks, NGOs and inter- governmental institutions, such as the OECD, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the United Nations.

The data, which is ideologically neutral, points to the value of policy interventions that create and sustain peaceful and resilient societies. Positive peace is associated with many social characteristics that are considered desirable, including—the evidence proves this—stronger economic outcomes, higher resilience, better measures of well-being, higher levels of inclusiveness and more sustainable environmental performance; in other words, an optimal environment in which human potential can flourish.

If reports are to be believed, this is just the kind of thinking that will be attractive to the Prime Minister's principal adviser and which will push back against the growing narrative that we need to use our significant development arm for the purposes of our own interests exclusively. So we need to leverage it for trade purposes and other purposes.

Also, have we learned nothing? This is exactly where we were in the 1990s. As a result of a sustained approach to the use of aid in our national interest, we ended up with the national scandal of the Pergau dam. Thankfully, with a Labour Government, and through a series of steps culminating in 2002 with the passing of the International Development Act and the earlier creation of DfID as a separate government department with its own Secretary of State, the UK established a framework and a transparency to ensure no repeat of Pergau. If we take a step back from where we are now, we will end up back where we were in the 1990s, and that is back to aiding corruption.

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3.46 pm

## Lord Chidgey (LD)

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My Lords, I too add my congratulations to the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, on securing this debate and on the admirable way he opened it, given the little enough time we have to debate these important subjects.

It is well understood that conflict and authoritarianism create an environment in which development and humanitarian conditions rapidly deteriorate, frustrating aid objectives and security interests at home and abroad. We should recognise that conflict, insecurity and authoritarianism are the leading causes of human suffering, human rights abuses and humanitarian crises. They allow organised crime to flourish, nurture violent movements and their terror tactics, thus undermining UK and international security. They impact on the promotion of women's rights and gender equality, and undermine the rules-based order on which our security depends. They impede the efforts of international co-operation to tackle global issues such as climate change, migration and cybersecurity.

Uniquely, this integrated review faces a whole new range of issues brought about by our imminent departure from the European Union, and therefore the decisions taken in the review will not be effective just for five or 10 years, but potentially for generations to come—generations who will judge us harshly if we get it wrong. In this new Government, there has been much talk about a global Britain, a nation ready and able to take its place among the leaders in and of the world once again. Well, excuse me, I have never for one minute doubted the place the United Kingdom occupies in the community of nations, and I doubt that the average Brit has either. Our contribution as a nation to the advancement of democracy, culture, the humanities, the sciences and the rule of law is a matter of record, and the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, has spelled out our engagement at the top table very clearly.

What we need now are policies and institutions that adjust, redefine and manage our collective needs and aspirations in the 21st century. There are several policy documents, including the national security strategy, which increasingly emphasise the linkages between various aspects of policy, for example between peace and poverty reduction in the developing world, or between security, overseas aid and climate change. As the House of Lords Library points out, governmental structures

reflect these linkages. They all have objectives to enhance the UK's global influence using a range of tools. The new Government have yet to announce any changes to departmental responsibilities, but speculation abounds over whether DfID will be subsumed into the FCO. There is a very strong argument that delivery of the Prime Minister's "compassionate global Britain" requires an independent Department for International Development led by its own Secretary of State.

The Department for International Development is the premier aid agency in the world and is recognised as such by many. No other comes close to it in terms of impact. The world's foremost experts sit in 22 Whitehall, and their record speaks for itself: millions saved from disease; millions put through education; and millions of women empowered to lead their communities, as well as to control their own bodies and thus perhaps address the problems of overpopulation. It is right to suggest that the Foreign Office has been subject to decades of funding cuts, but the answer to a lack of resource is not as simplistic as putting DfID under the control of the Foreign Secretary or by merging DfID with the Foreign Office. You need defence, diplomacy and development working hand in hand to ensure that a global Britain is one that exudes the virtues of the UK and promotes our core values.

The FCO, DfID and the MoD have very distinct and different missions. That is not to say that the issues these departments work on do not complement one another. As the US General Jim Mattis famously told the American Congress:

"If you don't fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition ultimately."

In order to effectively address catastrophic crises, international peace and security must be prioritised as a top-level objective of national foreign, security and defence policies, towards which all other aspects and tools of foreign policy, including trade, development diplomacy, need to contribute.

The ability to shape international peace and security is not held by government alone. Academics, businesses and think tanks have expertise that is relevant to the review. Non-governmental organisations have expertise in fragile contexts, drawn from humanitarian development and peacebuilding work in places where the government footprint may be small. Saferworld, RESULTS UK, Global Witness and Bond are some of the NGOs, to name but a few, which know this well. And the communities affected by conflict, including women and young people, often have the most sustainable solutions for addressing conflict. Their views are vital to informing the UK's understanding. Our national security cannot be sustainably



achieved if the security needs of unstable communities are not understood and addressed.

Given the Prime Minister's intention to make this the

“deepest review of Britain's security, defence and foreign policy since the end of the Cold War,”

the UK should include consultation where these groups and the UK public can participate. Only then can we have a long-term sustainable foreign policy that puts people and the planet at the heart of it. I implore the Minister to give us some clue about that in her response and to map out exactly what the Government plan to do in terms of allowing a full and proper consultation on these vital issues.

The way we act and the way we plan will provide a road map for how we will engage on the world stage over the next 50 years. We need a bolstered, fully funded Foreign Office working hand in hand with an independent Department for International Development, led by its own Secretary of State, supported by a strong and robust defence programme. That is how we can deliver a global Britain, and we need to get it right because our children and our grandchildren demand it.

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3.53 pm

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## Lord Ricketts (CB)

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My Lords, the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, gave us an admirable review of a complex and interlinked series of issues that we face as we leave the EU. He has got us off to a very good start and offered us a tempting menu of dishes to choose from. I will focus particularly on the “safer world” part of the menu.

I am very much looking forward to hearing the maiden speech of the noble Baroness, Lady Penn; she is almost there. She brings expertise on development in Africa and recent, up-to-date experience from the very heart of government, which will be a real asset to us. Although we may be a slightly select group in the House today, I promise the noble Baroness that we will be appreciative and attentive to all she has to say.

Since the start of this year, we have begun to see the outlines of what a post-Brexit foreign policy will be like for this country. I offer three pointers that I think are already clear. First, we will find ourselves aligning with our European friends more often than with the US on international foreign policy issues. In many ways this is not surprising, because we are in the same geography and are the same size as our European partners. That was very clear in the Johnson Government's first international security crisis, the killing of Soleimani by the Americans just after Christmas. The strongest and clearest statement made by the British Government in that crisis was the joint declaration by the Prime Minister, Chancellor Merkel and President Macron. That rightly emphasised the importance of preserving the Iran nuclear deal and a dialogue with Iran and signally failed to make any reference at all to the US strike, still less condone it.

On the so-called US peace plan for the Middle East, I studied in *Hansard* what the noble Lord, Lord Ahmad, had to say earlier today. He tiptoed around the minefield with admirable dexterity, but the message was clear: we have always supported the European position that there needs to be a genuinely negotiated two-state solution. The US plan is light-years away from that.

Our proposed digital services tax is along the same lines as France's and has run into the same sort of criticism from Washington.

As the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, says, as the year advances the Glasgow climate summit will loom larger and larger on our international agenda. There, again, we will work closely with European countries to build a consensus, and I fear the US may be one of the obstacles to achieving that.

Secondly, while it is true that we will often make common cause with European partners, we need to make sure that the tensions with Washington do not cut across the absolutely fundamental defence and security partnership with it. That will be a real challenge when we come to a free trade agreement, because it will be far more difficult than Ministers have already told us to find ways of achieving an agreement with the Americans that is at the same time acceptable to British

public opinion in sensitive areas such as food security. We will have to ensure that that does not sour the wider relationship.

One area in which we should work closely with the Americans is the future of NATO, to give a clear and convincing answer to President Macron's challenge that the organisation is brain dead. I do not believe it is, but we need to do some serious thinking about its role, purpose and narrative in the world, which are moving on rapidly from their post-war origins, as the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, said. A NATO reflection process is under way, and the British and Americans ought to be providing real thought leadership on that.

My third pointer to the shape of foreign policy to come is that we will constantly be caught up in the wider US-China competition for global influence, particularly in the high-tech area. That was the real story behind the sharp disagreements over the last few days on Huawei. I do not believe it was ever really about national security. We have all now seen the painstaking work done by the world-class National Cyber Security Centre. From what I understand, the technical communities on the two sides of the Atlantic were never far apart on how we could manage the risks. The problem was that the British issue of how to find a British solution to our own circumstances became a political football between the China hawks in Washington and the Chinese technology industry.

The weakness of the American position struck me all along: it did not have an American solution to the 5G problem to offer. Its increasingly strident efforts to influence the British Government's own decision went too far and became counterproductive. I pay tribute to Britain's National Security Council for taking a calm and measured decision despite the noises off. This is not the last time we will find ourselves caught up in this competition. Outside the EU, I am afraid we will be all the more vulnerable to the kind of lobbying and arm-twisting that is bound to go on, as we have to reconcile our interest in trade and investment with our wider values and security objectives.

Those are the three pointers I offer your Lordships. Plotting a way through these minefields would be easier if we knew where we were going. The old narratives—of a bridge between Europe and America, or of Tony Blair-style liberal internationalism—are more or less played out, as Dean Acheson might have said. We need a new vision for Britain in the world. It has to take account of the fact that this country is international by instincts and interests, but we also need a real honesty about where our influence can best be deployed. We do not need declinism, if there is such a word, but we do need honesty.

Of course, as noble Lords have already said, we have huge assets to deploy. Our Armed Forces are world-renowned, as are our soft power assets. I have argued before in this House for full resourcing of the Foreign Office. I will not make that case again, but I will touch briefly on three other important vectors of influence in the world.

I agree with other noble Lords about the value of maintaining DfID as a fully fledged department of state. It is having a good afternoon here, actually. I have worked very closely with DfID, including as Permanent Secretary. I have great respect for its professionalism. I know that it is held in high regard around the world. Co-ordination between DfID, the MoD and the FCO should happen in the National Security Council, but I would not tinker with DfID's position in Whitehall.

If we were the French and we had a cultural promotion arm as effective as the British Council, we would double its budget. If we had an instrument for the promotion of our culture and language half as powerful as the BBC, we certainly would not be squeezing its funding and obliging it to shed jobs.

We need to look to where we have assets and make the most of them. It is a moment for hard strategic thinking about Britain's role in the world and where we are trying to go. That should be the starting point for this integrated defence and security review, which I welcome. As the Minister knows, I had a modest role in the 2010 review. It is time to refresh it. We have in our National Security Council the right forum to produce the kind of global comprehensive view that the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, offered us in opening the debate.

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4.01 pm

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## **Baroness Penn (Con) (Maiden Speech)**

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My Lords, it is an honour to speak after the noble Lord, who is such an expert in the area we are discussing, although I am not sure whether to thank whoever put

today's list together or explain to them the impact that it has had on my nerves. I wish, though, to thank the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, for calling this debate. As he has already noted, we met nearly a decade ago in Malawi, a country that I know he has close links to from his time as First Minister of Scotland and since. I was there working for the Tony Blair Africa Governance Initiative. I reassure your Lordships that I am not confused about which side of the Chamber I should be sitting on, but I hope that that spirit of working across parties is something I can continue in this place.

Indeed, the thread that binds my previous roles together is not a tribal attitude to politics but a belief in the good that government can do. From working with the noble Baroness, Lady Featherstone, in the coalition Government to launch the consultation that resulted in marriage equality; working with the Governments of Malawi and, before that, of Sierra Leone to help to drive the vital projects for their development; and, most recently, working with such a talented team in Downing Street to deliver changes such as the energy price cap, a record NHS spending settlement and, alongside the noble Lord, Lord Woolley of Woodford, developing the first ever race disparity audit in government, I hope to have in some way helped to advance that good. I plan to continue to do so from my new role in this place. I look forward in particular to contributing to forthcoming legislation to implement the essential work done by Sir Simon Wessely's review of the Mental Health Act, and will support the landmark domestic abuse Bill, which is the culmination of so many years of work not just by government but by so many up and down the country.

Another common thread across my career has been the presence of wonderful female role models. First and last among them was my boss in No. 10, Theresa May. Theresa's advice to many young women wanting to make a difference was: always be yourself, do things your own way, and never give up. I also take on the mantle of baby of the House from a succession of talented women, most recently my noble friend Lady Blackwood, and before that my noble friend Lady Bertin. I take a moment to congratulate my noble friend Lady Bertin on the arrival of baby Edward eight weeks ago. She may no longer be the baby of the House, but she will always hold the record of being the first lady Peer to have had a baby while being a Member of this House. As thoughts have turned in recent weeks to potential reforms to this House, I am sure it will want to consider the introduction of proxy voting for new parents, as has been done in the House of Commons.

Another inspirational woman in my life was Kate Gross, the first CEO at the Africa Governance Initiative, and a firm believer in the good that government can do.

When Kate was diagnosed with bowel cancer and had to step back from her work, she encouraged people to write her their news. Her reply to one of my missives about my studies at that time has stayed with me:

“Politics, and public life in general, needs more good women.”

It was followed by a strict instruction to take her words seriously,

“and repay me by doing some interesting and awesome things.”

Kate died on Christmas Day 2014, aged 36, leaving behind her husband, Billy, and her twin boys. I hope to honour her instructions while in this place. It is with Kate’s words in mind that I turn to the topic of this debate.

That Christmas, I was back in Sierra Leone, temporarily working for AGI again, as it supported the Government there in their fight against Ebola. The UK’s contribution to that fight is a great example of the issues which we are debating this afternoon. Over 750 British troops, alongside the RFA “Argus”, which was carrying three helicopters, were deployed to provide crucial logistical support, including building treatment centres and ensuring safe burials. Our scientists supported emergency research to understand the spread of Ebola and help to develop a vaccine to defend against it. Our NHS staff volunteered on the front line of Ebola treatment centres, saving lives and preventing further spread. Our diplomats worked to co-ordinate the international response. Our aid budget helped to fund not only that response but the economic recovery that had to come once the outbreak was over. Five years on, just last week we hosted the UK-Africa Investment Summit in London, bringing together UK and African businesses and Governments as they announced commercial deals worth billions of pounds and more aid money to unlock further investment and create thousands more jobs.

The UK’s response to Ebola demonstrated the importance of our ability to draw on multiple capabilities —defence, diplomacy and development—to keep the UK safe and simply do the right thing. In that light, and as we look forward to the integrated foreign policy, security and defence review this year, I would like to ask one question of the Minister and seek one reassurance. The question is: are the Government undertaking an updated national risk assessment, and will they publish an updated national risk register in advance of the review? In 2017, the United States national security strategy assessed great power competition, not terrorism, to be the primary focus of US national security. Our own national security capability review in 2018 took account of the resurgence in state-based threats. A clear assessment of this Government’s current view on the range of

threats to our security, including over a longer-term strategic timeframe, would help to inform the contribution of experts, including those in this House, to that review. The reassurance is that, as the review is undertaken, the Government will think holistically about how to draw on all our capabilities to deliver a more effective single strategy, while acknowledging the importance of their independent strengths, expertise and leadership. We cannot deter state aggression or contribute to peacekeeping efforts without a world-class military, but the fight against climate change or anti-microbial resistance can be won only through diplomatic efforts and by supporting a different path of development. We cannot counter the terrorist threat without expert intelligence agencies and co-operation with our allies, but the ideologies that breathe life into those terror groups cannot be challenged without political stability and a path to prosperity that can provide an alternative offer of hope.

I close with some words of thanks to those who have made me feel so welcome since I joined this House: the doorkeepers, all the staff, and my introducers, my noble friends Lady Evans of Bowes Park and Lord Taylor of Holbeach, who have helped me navigate through this place with gentle guidance and, always, a smile. I thank your Lordships for making me feel so welcome, and for listening to my first utterances in this place with patience and good humour.

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4.08 pm

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## Lord McInnes of Kilwinning (Con)

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My Lords, it is a great pleasure and a privilege to congratulate my noble friend Lady Penn on her excellent maiden speech. It was accomplished, intelligent, erudite and demonstrated the huge knowledge that she is going to bring to your Lordships' House. I first met her when she came to interrogate me on Scottish politics when I was at Harvard. I ended that interview far more nervous than she was when entering the Chamber today, I am sure. We are very lucky to have

someone with her knowledge of government, not only from working in the Home Office and the cockpit—Downing Street—but with NGOs and other international development agencies. Her thoughts and wisdom will make a huge contribution to your Lordships' House.

I thank the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, for bringing this important debate before your Lordships' House, not least because I was not able to speak in the debate on the gracious Speech. I shall focus on two areas: the importance to the entire United Kingdom of the review the Government are undertaking, and the specific importance of Britain's ability to continue on a joint departmental basis to bring stability to fragile states.

Today, on the eve of leaving the EU, I welcome the Government's commitment to a full root-and-branch review of what "global Britain" will mean for security, international aid and foreign policy. Too often over the past three years, "global Britain" has only been shorthand for many as to what our economic and trading focus is to be in a post-Brexit world. The Government's review will, I hope, provide the opportunity to ground the phrase "global Britain" in the idea of Britain being a respected force for good in the world.

While we were in a pre-Brexit world—can we believe such a thing ever existed?—your Lordships' Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK's Influence identified the importance of smart power, which was an integration of our focus, utilising all departmental avenues and ensuring, importantly, that we have a clear sense of ourselves as well as a clear focus on all that we want to do in the world.

As part of having a sense of ourselves, I would urge the Government to consider in their review the importance of Britain as a force for good in binding the United Kingdom together. Increasingly, with inevitable strains and demands being put on our United Kingdom, it is important that the entire country has a sense of pride and security. The institutions through which many people still identify pride in the United Kingdom are the serving Armed Forces, our excellent diplomatic network and our internationally respected international aid commitment. These are all key foundations of the integrity of this country. To be the only country in NATO that meets both its 2% defence spending commitment and its 0.7% international aid commitment should instil pride in all of us. It would be unwise to in any way destabilise this national pride through a desire to rebrand or undermine any of our previous commitments.

I hope my noble friend the Minister can reassure me that any changes arising from the review will be judged not only by costs but by a sense of Britain being a



force for good in the world. If not, I fear we could undermine some of the key bonds that keep our United Kingdom together. I also ask the Minister that any review also consider how all parts of the United Kingdom may feel part of the new integrated security, defence and foreign policy review. We have heard already from the noble Lords, Lord McConnell and Lord Ricketts, about the importance of COP 2020 being in Glasgow this year, demonstrating that the whole United Kingdom is part of that global Britain.

Secondly, I would like to focus on our role in international development, its role in ensuring stable and self-sufficient states and how priorities must be maintained in a post-review environment. Like other noble Lords, I am aware of the chatter about departmental mergers as Whitehall moves into a clear delivery mode following Brexit. However, I would be concerned if we were to undermine DfID's footprint in Whitehall through merger. The importance of a Secretary of State in Cabinet and—dare I say it to the noble Lord, Lord Ricketts?— a Permanent Secretary in Whitehall should not be underestimated.

I will now turn to the safer part of the Motion of the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, and refer specifically to the importance of state stability. For global Britain to be recognised as a force for good in the world, it must be the market leader in supporting fragile states and building stability and resilience in them, which we know are the best ways to promote development and reduce poverty and inequality. We also know that the days of an appetite for the traditional model of liberal peace-building in an interventionist, military- traditional mode are clearly behind us—because of not merely the problems of past interventions, but international cynicism over western countries making such interventions.

Development requires a stable platform that can be achieved only by peaceful political solutions. The work of the Stabilisation Unit and the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund is essential to ensure that the UK has a nuanced security and development policy and is prepared to use defence capability to avoid humanitarian disaster; probably more importantly, it is also there to help avoid the root causes of destabilisation and war.

To be successful, our interventions must have at their core the creation of participatory stability in countries. To be inclusive, that will require dialogue with all actors in conflict states and destabilised states. Much of this work has to be done at the grass-roots level to build confidence in a solution that will allow the kind of stability required for economic and public policy development.

To do that will require Britain to be seen not only as a force for good but as a fair player, with the eradication of human misery as our primary purpose. Britain cannot do everything, of course, but strengthening failing states is the most cost-effective way of building towards self-sufficiency in many parts of the world. It is no accident that 50% of our foreign aid is spent in fragile states. That is because fragility produces the requirement for foreign aid investment. By introducing stability, we will do much to make a safer, fairer world and, importantly, further to establish and augment Britain's reputation around the world.

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4.16 pm

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## Lord Houghton of Richmond (CB)

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My Lords, I add my welcome to the noble Baroness, Lady Penn. On the grounds of age alone, she is a most welcome addition. I am an ex-Chief of the Defence Staff and was well turned 60 when I arrived, but I still feel slightly intimidated by this place, so she is in good company.

I am delighted to make a small, short contribution to this important debate. I am moved to do so primarily because of concern that a debate that talks about the integration of defence capability into diplomatic and development policy may run the risk of obscuring defence's prime purpose. In making this point, nothing I have to say fundamentally parts company with the words of my former boss—and I hope, therefore, friend—the noble Lord, Lord Browne of Ladyton. I start by emphasising that I absolutely support the idea—not new—that the available spare capacity of the Armed Forces should be beneficially employed on such things as pre- and post-conflict stabilisation operations, capacity-building tasks and peace-support operations.

I also recognise that there will inevitably be times of crisis, both at home and overseas, when it will be entirely appropriate to employ the Armed Forces to help resolve such crises. I spent much of my active career involved in crisis response,

whether it was Ebola in Sierra Leone, hurricane relief in the West Indies, providing Olympic security or eliminating foot and mouth disease. Armed forces are highly useful assets.

As an aside, I was often surprised that wider government did not always recognise that the most important capability that the Armed Forces contributed to any crisis resolution was an ordered system of command and control, and I firmly believe that any integrated review of defence and security would do well to recognise our national deficit in the standing architecture of command and control for domestic crisis.

However, I go back to my main point. The beneficial involvement of defence capability with the softer skills of diplomacy and development should not detract from the primary function of the Armed Forces. Our primary purpose is complementary to, not permanently integrated with, soft power. This is a subtle but important difference. Increasingly, defence capability has a significant role to play in ameliorating some of the security risks that emanate from what are termed the new vectors of threat, particularly in the new domains of space, cyber and so on. However, the major contribution of defence, in the current and foreseeable global context, is to provide the effective deterrence that buys time for diplomacy and development to do their job in helping to remove the potential causes of conflict.

I stress again that, at the tactical level of integration, defence can and should support diplomatic and development goals, but we must not slip into the somewhat deluded mindset that starts to make such activity the *raison d'être* for armed forces. We should constantly be mindful that defence is built on a subtle paradox: the more capable it is, the less likely it will be called upon to be used. That is especially so when, given that we currently live in relatively peaceful times, we might slip into the belief that, in some remarkable way, peace has somehow become naturally occurring. That is not something that I recognise.

The only other marker that I would lay down at this point is: whatever the outcome of the forthcoming review, defence should not be left in the difficult situation where the capability it purports to have bears little relationship to the available funding. There is nothing more frustrating or demoralising than to be institutionally underfunded and yet not be allowed to admit it.

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4.20 pm

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## Lord West of Spithead (Lab)

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My Lords, I too thank my noble friend Lord McConnell for securing this debate and for his splendid introduction to it.

There is no doubt that our nation needs to reassess its place in the world. We need to alter the country's core strategic assumptions to better prepare for a more unpredictable and competitive future. The linkages between globalisation, climate change and geopolitical competition must be better understood in the upcoming foreign, security and defence review if the United Kingdom is to prosper and secure its national objectives and interests into the 21st century.

The UK is not a superpower like the United States or China, but it is a global power, unlike Japan or Germany. Not only has Britain's history been global but its maritime tradition, its deep belief in free trade and the mindset of its people mean that it is outward-looking, and many think tanks around the world over the last 12 months have assessed the UK as the third most powerful and influential country in the world.

That of course relates to the UK's soft power—the English language, the BBC World Service; its academic excellence, with world-renowned universities; its scientific excellence; the arts; sport; its geographic position on Greenwich meridian, courtesy of the Navy, which makes it very handy for the City; the rule of law and globally respected legal system; and so on. As an aside, I believe that we need to be very focused on ensuring the survival, and indeed growth, of the World Service and BBC Monitoring in any future BBC funding debate.

Equal to, if not more important than, soft power is the hard power that backs up that soft power: nuclear weapons; a globally deployable military capability, with proven willingness to use it; world-class intelligence services; and membership of military alliances. Soft power is as nothing without hard power in any geopolitical context. Does the Minister agree?

Historically, it was our nation's military power that ensured that, with the United States, we were able to put in place, post World War II, a rules-based system for world order that has lasted to the greater good of the world until fairly recently. That rules-based order is now under challenge, particularly by authoritarian regimes. Military power also ensured that we were a permanent member of the UN Security Council, alongside the USA, the Soviet Union and China, and our military power was a critical part of winning the Cold War. Therefore, military power is important geopolitically.

We are in the process of leaving the EU and the review will need to assess what impact that has on defence and security. Personally, I think that it will make almost no difference to our military security and have only a minimal impact on our broader security, but of course it necessitates a review of our nation's global alliances, how we sit in that world and what our posture is.

As regards nuclear, I have an area of concern. There has been a steady dismantling of the myriad treaties, primarily between Russia and the USA, that tried to limit the numbers and types of nuclear weapons and enhance confidence-building measures. Apart from the more general nuclear non-proliferation treaty, which will be reviewed in April and May, the only one remaining is the New START treaty, which will lapse in 2021 with nothing in its place.

The lack of dialogue between Russia and the US when both are spending trillions on updating and producing new nuclear wonder weapons—those that do not sit in any category previously looked at—is chilling. Both countries now seem to be of the opinion that nuclear weapons can be used for warfighting, which is madness. The situation is dangerous. Does the Minister agree that, as a nuclear power, we can have some influence on the dialogue to get things changed?

The immense growth in threats from cyberattack in our increasingly digitised world must be confronted, and utilised for our own ends—indeed, we sometimes do this. We should embrace the fourth industrial revolution, maintaining our leads in AI, quantum physics and mathematics, but ensuring that our research, which we are very good at, is then put to practical use and applied in all aspects of our lives and wealth.

Clearly, these changes have an impact on warfighting but they do not do away with the need for kinetic effect. Cyber is not an easy way to cut defence spending as, I am afraid, some in the Treasury and the National Security Council seem to think; rather, it will add to cost. There are a number of other key strategic factors. We are responsible for 14 overseas territories worldwide; we still run global

shipping from London—for example, the IMO and all the insurance teams are based here; and we are the biggest European investor in south Asia, south-east Asia and the Pacific Rim, with consequent benefits to our balance of trade.

It is therefore not surprising that we need a maritime and global strategy. To help the UK compete more robustly against authoritarian competitors and, indeed, to create stability in failed and fragile states, both defence and diplomatic spending need to be made more efficient and then increased to levels akin to those of the past—as during the Cold War, for example. It is only in that way that we will make the world more stable, safer and all the other things that noble Lords have spoken of trying to achieve.

We can no longer continue cutting defence spending while hoping that we, and the world, will stay safe. We should invest in science, engineering and technology, which are of course strategic resources. We should clearly articulate where there is a need to maintain a sovereign capability; for example, in telecommunications—as highlighted by the current issue over 5G—energy supply, nuclear submarine and shipbuilding, aircraft manufacture and cryptography.

Military power is an enabler. Without the stability provided by military forces in many parts of the world, the aid agencies cannot work; indeed, the noble Baroness, Lady Penn, mentioned this issue in her maiden speech. Diplomacy and foreign aid need to work hand in glove. We learned this lesson too late in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was our military capability that enabled us to stabilise the situation in Sierra Leone well before the Ebola virus and then move that poor benighted country along the road to recovery.

Finally, I turn to a case where defence and diplomacy did not work together—an object lesson in what happens when defence is cut in an arbitrary way to make government and Treasury savings targets. In 1981, it was decided to pay off the south Atlantic patrol ship HMS “Endurance” to save some £16 million over a five-year period, because defence was having to take huge cuts. We now know that that decision was seen by President Galtieri as the green light to invade the Falkland Islands. While we saved £16 million, the subsequent war cost our nation £3.5 billion and 300 lives. That is what happens when you get defence spending wrong.

I look forward to the review that is unfolding and hope that this House will have a considerable input.

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4.28 pm

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## Baroness D'Souza (CB)

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My Lords, grateful thanks are due to the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, for tabling this Motion, and I congratulate the noble Baroness, Lady Penn, on an excellent maiden speech.

There is today much talk about merging the machinery of aid and diplomacy, and it is legitimate to question whether such a coming together would significantly improve either development aid or foreign policy. We have a profusion of terms: cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy, cultural relations, hard and soft power and, of course, smart power. Despite some confusion as to what each approach actually means, there is no doubt that international relations are increasingly important as nations become ever more interconnected and interdependent. Our world is changing rapidly, and today no nation can measure its power by the size of its military might alone.

If the intention is to foster durable relations using the vehicle of soft power, the essential component is that the input is both wanted and/or needed and is durable. Ill-judged inputs are counterproductive. However, the foreign policy of a donor nation may not match the expectations of a recipient country and therefore not result in improved cultural relations. There is always the danger that policies designed to placate the domestic audience may in fact undermine the soft power potential. This is why it is important to distinguish between foreign policy objectives and cultural relations. The former at the extreme could look like propaganda, while the latter at the least might simply encourage friendships between individuals and groups.

In Sri Lanka the British Council runs an innovative programme to encourage and support young entrepreneurs, especially in the field of social enterprise. I met several successful young people, each of whom had been involved in setting up local and regional programmes to harness energy and resources for community development. This constitutes an independent soft power approach that is likely

to have long-term benefits, including contributions to the growth of civil society, economic well-being and respect for the UK as a nation. I suggest that this is different from promoting the export of goods and services. So we might arrive at a definition of soft power or cultural relations as “the mutual exchange of culture between peoples to develop long-term relationships, trust and understanding for the purpose of generating genuine good will and influence abroad”.

The unique advantages of soft power as an instrument of influence lie precisely in its differences from political power. NGOs are often able to cross the border between national cultures and, as a result, cultural relations grow organically without government intervention. Cultural relations at their best have long-term vision and goals, eschewing short-term convenience and political advantage. The active intervention by Governments and/or diplomats in such cultural links changes their nature and may undermine the reputation and credibility of a given cultural programme.

However, how the UK interacts more broadly with the rest of the world has to shift, if only because of radical changes in the shape of nations and their interactions with one another. These include digital empowerment, the growing role of protest groups, the complexity of modern trade supply chains and accelerated urbanisation. These factors combine to shake up the existing international balance of power towards the rising economic and political importance of non-western nations. Following Brexit, we will enter a wholly new world of competing blocs and protectionism. Turkey, Russia and Iran all actively seek to extend their areas of influence, and a looming confrontation between the USA and China and the EU is likely.

The fact that the overseas development budget now nears £14 billion per year while the Foreign Office budget has gradually tightened has perhaps prompted questions about the role of diplomacy and aid in fostering a more humane and safer world. Should more of this generous aid be employed in furthering the UK’s foreign policy? Given that trust in people generally runs ahead of trust in the Government, the promotion of British industry and commerce, while not antithetical to sustained development, will have the impact of soft power only if it matches local perceptions and is accompanied by components such as adequate training, maintenance and longer-term impact evaluation.

The greater government investment and involvement, the greater the tendency to deliver propaganda. After all, states do not really have friends, only interests. Mixed diplomacy on the face of it seems to be an excellent approach, but is it? My view is that it blurs the distinction between soft power and political diplomacy. A



recent survey of 30 countries shows the UK to be in second place on the list of soft power outreach—pace the noble Lord, Lord Howell, who said it was first; it has slipped a little—having ceded first place to France in recent years. The USA, however, is decreasing its influence. As we all know, the US State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs runs a wide number of overseas programmes, including exchanges, tours and exhibitions, which are subject to oversight by the Secretary of State, the White House and Congress. Inevitably, therefore, all cultural exchanges will be inherently influenced by state policy objectives.

So if we make a distinction between traditional diplomacy and soft power and at the same time acknowledge that changes in approach are urgent, where does that leave the FCO’s priorities in helping to create a safer and fairer, not to mention cleaner, world? It is suggested by many who research these matters that we first need to understand soft power and how it relates to hard power. In turn, there has to be a shift in the mindsets of those who design foreign policies to fit in with reshaped global politics. Soft power encompasses cultural strengths and diversity, and success will come only from a long-term commitment. Therefore, embassies need to be “super-facilitators”, supported with the resources to include enhanced language training for diplomats, expertise in social media and a thorough grounding in the political and cultural contexts in which diplomats are called to work.

The UK already has an overriding advantage in that it is so deeply connected to the Commonwealth, especially through the CPA, a uniquely valuable network. These links are not always fostered to their full advantage as partners in soft, hard and smart power initiatives. We also have the British Council, the BBC World Service, as many have mentioned, a massive development budget, and a £1.2 billion Conflict, Stability and Security Fund. We should be a prime mover in strengthening the network of international relations, using both soft power and more sophisticated diplomacy.

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4.35 pm

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## Baroness Stroud (Con)

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My Lords, I thank the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, for securing this debate and for his long-term commitment to these issues. I also congratulate my noble friend Lady Penn on her maiden speech. I look forward to seeing the amazing things that she will do during her time in this House and the collegiate way in which she will undertake her work.

In this debate, I will restrict my remarks to the way in which nations develop and how we have observed that safer and fairer nations are actually built. I hope that this might provide some interesting thinking to feed into the Prime Minister's welcome review.

How a person, community or nation develops along the pathway from poverty to prosperity has long been a concern of mine. From my time spent living in the Walled City in Hong Kong to my current role at the Legatum Institute—I refer to the Members' register of interests—the question of how a nation builds a safer, fairer and more prosperous society has challenged me greatly. At the Legatum Institute, we have undertaken a piece of work entitled *How Nations Succeed*. We have analysed which nations, over a 60-year arc, have built fairer and safer societies from a starting point of fragility, such as Colombia, and which, with exactly the same starting point, have struggled to do the same, such as Nicaragua.

From this work, we have observed a number of lessons, but noble Lords should not worry—I will reference only three. As we have heard this afternoon, the number one need for any country is self-evidently to deliver security, peace and stability for its people—hence the safer world element of this debate. However, there is also a need to strengthen the social contract between a Government and their citizens. What can they really expect of one another? Then there is the need to create a positive environment for investment and to improve conditions for enterprise and flexible labour markets, all of which ultimately lead to a fairer society.

Noble Lords will be grateful to know that I will not unpack these one by one. However, what is interesting to note here is that there is not a clear connection between the development of a nation and the distribution and focus of aid to it. To put it simply, what we have observed is that nations that receive aid but do not take responsibility for their own development do not thrive on a national

scale, even if some of their people benefit in the short term. However, nations that take responsibility for their own destiny drastically outperform the development of those reliant on foreign assistance, regardless of their starting point.

Against this background, let us first look at the issue of security and the creation of a secure foundation for a nation. No nation will be able to make the transition into a safer and fairer world without first delivering safety and security for its people. Stable governance, free from violent conflict and upheaval, is an essential requirement for development, as we have seen over the years in, say, Botswana. Countries need safety and security, effective governance and a stable political environment to thrive. It is therefore no coincidence that poverty is concentrated in high-risk settings. Some 87% of people who currently live in extreme poverty are in countries where security in all its forms—political, social or environmental—is fragile.

Globally, we are seeing the first welcome signs of increased safety and security following a trend of declining safety and security. This is crucial to establishing greater fairness. The relationship between wealth generation and security is essential, as we have heard. A nation with a basic level of safety and security is much more likely to create the conditions necessary for producing wealth, or fairness, for its citizens.

As nations transition from violence to stability, the next important step is to strengthen the social contract between a Government and their citizens. Our research shows that the strength and health of institutions has a stronger relationship with social well-being than aid in the long term; this points to where the greatest development leverage is likely to be in future. Improving the quality of institutions can stimulate increased economic well-being and thereby increased fairness. In the long term, the quality of institutions therefore has a substantial impact on social well-being, while the integrity and accountability of government is strongly related to the sort of fairness outcomes we long to see in the developing nations, in people's health, education and living conditions.

This is because with stable Governments and institutional trust comes the ability to foster a positive investment environment. In our research, we have observed that the opening up of the world's economies has led to an extraordinary reduction in the number of people in poverty. Absolute poverty rates have fallen; the proportion of families living on less than \$1.90 a day has more than halved since 2000, and it continues to fall. We must not forget that the greatest anti-poverty achievement in the history of mankind has actually happened in our

lifetime. Mainstream economists on the left and right, and in the centre, agree on the central role that free trade, property rights, the rule of law and entrepreneurship have all played in creating a fairer world. In our focus on aid, we must not hinder or constrain this metanarrative that is changing the world faster than any aid programme could.

The final lesson we learned when analysing how nations succeed is that countries which have developed over the last 60 years, such as Indonesia, have done so across multiple fronts concurrently: strengthening their institutions, growing their economies and improving the well-being of their people. This has seen a decrease in mortality rates across all age groups and a growing life expectancy. Our research shows that in living conditions and education, 85% of countries across the world saw an improvement over the last 10 years. Education systems are affording more people the opportunity to learn, with higher enrolment rates at each learning stage. Women are spending more time in school on average, for example in a country such as Mauritius. These improvements to living conditions, health and education foster communities and nations that are resilient enough to weather the challenges that an unpredictable world can provide.

There is significant food for thought in this debate, as we consider the way forward and the role that Britain should play in international development. If we are really focused on supporting the development of nations, do we need a conversation around how nations really succeed and develop? To build a compassionate world, we should certainly focus on providing assistance at times of crisis, famine and flood. Stability is absolutely the basis on which all prosperity is predicated. But if we really want to learn from effective models and use our defence, diplomacy and development to support emerging nations, should we work with the instincts of a nation where it is committed to development? Across all fronts, the nations that have forged the pathway from poverty to prosperity have worked to attract the people, ideas and capital that they need to succeed.

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4.45 pm

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[The Earl of Sandwich \(CB\)](#)

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It is a pleasure to follow the noble Baroness and her positive remarks. Who would not sign up for a debate with positive aspirations such as we would expect not only from the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, but perhaps from Scotland? I have certainly done so with enthusiasm. I congratulate the noble Baroness, Lady Penn, on not only her speech but her African experience and her cross-party approach, which is so important.

Bringing the three Ds together also reflects the current concern about the merger of two or three ministries. I will come to that later, but, first, I want to emphasise the role of international development. Whether you are confronted by starving children in Africa in an emergency appeal or are listening to reporters in the Middle East of the quality of Jeremy Bowen, you can be in no doubt about the extent of poverty and misery around the world. The media have done us a great service in bringing these issues home to us. The problem is that there are so many calls on our time that we have to be highly selective.

The United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, said in his 75th anniversary address last week that the world faces four looming threats to human progress: surging geopolitical tensions, the climate crisis, global mistrust and the downsides of technology. The background to aid and development seems more turbulent than ever and our separation from the European Union does not seem to improve matters, although of course with our development record we shall find our own feet eventually.

The 17 UN SDGs are our principal guidelines in a peaceful world. Although we have only 10 years to reach them, we have to thank the many UN agencies working tirelessly to achieve these goals and encouraging us to meet them. The indicators are still being revised and refined, but I was glad to read that refugees and IDPs, which, ironically, were omitted at first from the SDGs, are at last included.

I would expect poverty reduction to remain the primary focus of our DfID efforts, while we need to acknowledge the urgency of climate change. However, we cannot be too high-minded about leaving no one behind; it is more complicated than that. The state of poverty even in the least developed countries differs from place to place. It is hard to define, and we find that poor health and education as well as low economic growth affect families differently, since people live in different circumstances and come from varying social backgrounds.

To my mind, the key to poverty reduction is to identify the most practical channel of assistance, and here I pay tribute to the non-government sector in which I have worked. I was on the staff and board of Christian Aid for 17 years; I also worked with Save the Children, CARE International and Anti-Slavery International. Through these organisations, I had a lot of opportunities to see NGO work on the ground. I maintain that the quality of aid through NGOs is higher, and that is why DfID has supported them since the time there of the noble Baroness, Lady Chalker. They may not always meet an auditor's definition of value for money, but they generally represent good value. As the noble Baroness, Lady D'Souza, said, they often provide access to remote or endangered parts of the world such as those talked about by the noble Baroness, Lady Stroud.

Emergency work falls into a different category, but will the Minister confirm that we are looking seriously at the means of working alongside ECHO in the coming years? It is the EU's most effective channel of emergency aid and the UK has spearheaded much of its work in the past. Similarly, I hope she can confirm that the UK will continue to participate in the EU's CSDP missions. I realise that the new Prime Minister would like to have a clean break tomorrow, but only by realigning ourselves urgently alongside our European friends and allies will we both defend ourselves and save lives on all these programmes.

Trade can of course be another form of development, and NGOs have long recognised this through the Trade Justice Movement, the Fairtrade Foundation and initiatives such as Divine Chocolate, which is part-owned by the cocoa farmers themselves. The UK-Africa Investment Summit demonstrated the importance of development and trade working together to ensure that British investments in Africa are accountable, socially responsible and directly benefit the poorest communities.

Turning to climate change, I was a little surprised that in the title of this debate the phrase "cleaner world" is used instead of "healthier world". It is arguable that the climate change crisis is so urgent that it must dominate even the development agenda. I recognise the urgency of every Government's response, but personally I cannot raise it above the level of development. It is in the least developed countries, of course, where the urgency is felt most. I welcome the UK's support for the Ayrton fund, which focuses on new technology to tackle climate change in developing countries—I am sure the Minister is going to mention it—and the doubling of our International Climate Finance funding. This may have been a response, and I hope it was, to the International Development Committee's report last year, which urged such action. I notice that this funding is substantially

to assist small farmers and local communities. Will the Minister confirm that NGOs will qualify for this alongside private sector initiatives and the CDC, since they are often the best way of reaching local communities?

Returning to ODA and the integrated review, in the new era we need to celebrate global Britain and to me that means our role in international development. UK aid has made a huge difference across the African continent by getting more girls into school, tackling food insecurity and reducing child mortality. We must now build on the legacy of our development work. We do not diminish the experience that there is in Germany, France and other countries when some of us boast somewhat about the UK's particular contribution. I am all in favour of the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, which has proved a good example of joined-up government.

I know that the FCO does good development work on its own too, as the noble Lord, Lord Ricketts, will confirm, and of course we have heard about the MoD in Africa. But merging DfID with the FCO, or even having both departments run by the Foreign Secretary, risks dismantling the UK's soft power and leadership on international development and suggests that we are turning our backs on the world's poorest and on the greatest global challenges of our time: extreme poverty, climate change and conflict.

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4.52 pm

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## Lord Purvis of Tweed (LD)

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My Lords, it is always a pleasure to listen to the noble Earl in these debates, with his thoughtful and experienced comments. A common thread in the debate, so well presented by the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, has been soft power, as ably defined by the noble Baroness, Lady D'Souza. It has been a consistent feature in all the contributions, whether the focus has been on defence and security, development or diplomacy. At its heart, soft power is how the UK is perceived in

the world, not how the UK perceives the world. The noble Earl said nice things about Scotland, where I live, and since I am speaking at a Burns supper tomorrow night in Inverness, I am reminded of the Bard:

“O wad some Pow’r the giftie gie us

To see oursels as ithers see us!”

It is quite remarkable how the world does see us—we start from a good base and in many respects it is because of the point made by the noble Lord, Lord McInnes. Our foreign policy, our diplomacy and development policy are a creature of all four nations, not just one. All have made contributions. He was referring to the excellent maiden speech by the noble Baroness, Lady Penn, and I was reflecting, as the baby of another Parliament when I sat in the Scottish Parliament, that the second Head of State, after Her Majesty, who spoke at the Scottish Parliament was Bakili Muluzi of Malawi. The Scottish links, historical and present, with development and supporting African nations are very strong indeed and I was so pleased to hear her refer to that. As a former baby myself, in a different place, I recall what Charles Kennedy once said to me: “Parliamentary babies and toddlers are to be seen and heard.” I hope that we will hear very much more from the noble Baroness in the House.

I think it has been consistent across the debate that we welcome the review. It is right to reflect on what kind of global citizen we are and should be, but, as the noble Lord, Lord Ricketts, indicated in referring, as others have, to the Foreign Secretary’s recent speech in another place, it is better to start with the direction in which we wish to head and then look at how we achieve that ambition. I hope it will be an open review and not just internal to the departments. We have seen references in the Foreign Secretary’s speech to global Britain—someone unkindly pointed out not long ago that it was a slogan in search of a strategy. If global Britain is to carry on through this review, it would be beneficial if it is not just about updating technology or the machinery of government but starts from the principal opportunities around the globe on which the UK can take leadership. It will fail if driven simply by how other departments can access DfID budgets.

As my noble friend Lord Chidgey indicated, another element to be cautious about is that the review will of course be led by the FCO and linked with DfID, the MoD and DIT working together. As other noble Lords indicated, the British Council and the BBC World Service are also of critical importance to the UK’s global presence. We were due to have the soft power strategy published; when the noble Lord, Lord Howell, ably led the International Relations and Defence Select Committee,



on which I serve, we called for this to be published on a number of occasions. It would be helpful to know whether it is still intended to be published in advance of this review or whether it will be wrapped up within the review.

As my noble friend indicated, if we lose the single Department for International Development, with a Secretary of State, it would dramatically reduce our capacity in the world to be advocates for good. We are the only country in the G7 which has legislated to enshrine 0.7% on our statute book; we meet it and are a leader on it. If we do not have a Cabinet-level Minister to bang the drum around the world, that will diminish our ability to do so.

As the noble and gallant Lord, Lord Houghton, and others said in this debate, it is interesting to reflect that it is welcome to co-ordinate but not always preferable to integrate between departments. It is often good to be aligned, but often preferable not to be combined. Often our Ministers serve the UK best when they can come from a specific aspect of the UK's position in the world rather than always believing that one HMG are good.

This leads me on to the development point. When the UK met its 0.7% target—which we have continued to do—I remarked in this House that, being in a broad cross-party coalition, as a Liberal I was very pleased because we had met the Liberal manifesto commitment. That commitment was given in 1970, and the assumption after the Pearson commission was that private sector and aid transfers would be met by 1975 and development would take track. It is because we are so far away from that that financing the global goals and other countries meeting their obligations are so important. That is why I was disappointed not to see any mention in the supporting materials of the Foreign Secretary's speech or some of the background briefings that one of the core purposes of our review will be our contribution to meet the global goals and how we will work with other countries so that they can meet them.

The core element of our development budget has been reflected on by the Independent Commission for Aid Impact. In the autumn, it said in its review of UK aid from 2015 to 2019:

“The government has clearly signalled its intention to use the aid programme to pursue direct UK national interests, in particular, by helping to position the UK as a key trade and investment partner with frontier economies. While the pursuit of mutual prosperity is not necessarily in conflict with good development practice, the focus needs to remain on building long-term opportunities, rather than securing short-term advantage.”

I hope that that thrust is to be a core element of the review.

While I am asking for clarification, the noble Lord, Lord Howell, asked a relevant question regarding the timing of other strategies. I mentioned the soft power strategy; we are led to believe that there is an Africa strategy, but that has not been published; and there is likely to be an updated national security strategy. It would be helpful to know how all these will be linked. On Africa, this is important because one of the signature elements of UK development with regard to that policy was announced in August 2018, when Theresa May indicated that the UK was to be the largest G7 investor in Africa by 2022. That was to set the stage for the UK-Africa Investment Summit, which took place last week. I have seen no reference to that target, either in the Prime Minister's speech or from the Government. It would be helpful if the Minister could confirm whether that target is indeed still valid.

I had mixed emotions this morning with regard to the impact of tomorrow on us. I walked across Parliament Square and saw 10 still, rather limp union flags hanging from the flagpoles. It might be just because of the angle at which I saw them, but they looked as if they were at half-mast, and were set against a grey, dreich sky. I think this is meant to be a celebration. However, I was cheered up because my destination was Chatham House, where I and the members of the International Relations Committee received a superb briefing on Africa and the opportunities there. If we are to be successful in the review and if our strategy is also to be successful, it will probably be seen in our relationship with the most exciting, growing, innovative continent on earth, and UK-Africa could represent all the best that could come out of this review.

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5.01 pm

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**Baroness Wheeler (Lab)**

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My Lords, I also thank my noble friend for securing this debate and pay tribute to his vital work across the international development field and on the all-party parliamentary group. The House will realise that I am standing in for my noble friend Lord Collins, our FCO and international development spokesperson, who was not able to be here today. He hates missing these important debates, but I know that he is with us in spirit and will avidly read *Hansard* as soon as he possibly can.

I also welcome the noble Baroness, Lady Penn, and congratulate her on her maiden speech. I am pleased to say that she recently became a fellow vice-chair of the cross-party Specialised Healthcare Alliance of charities, so I have the pleasure of working closely with her on these important health care services in the future, to which I look forward.

As we have heard, the debate takes place against an important backdrop. Our geopolitical relationships are being reset at 11 pm tomorrow night, when we leave the EU, and we now have a majority Government undertaking a detailed integrated review of our foreign, defence and security policy. We await its outcome but, from information being dripped out to the media, it is clear that big changes are coming, not least for defence procurement and how the UK approaches development.

I am confident that there is consensus in this House around the aims set out in the debate of striving to create “a safer, fairer, and cleaner world”. But how we utilise defence, diplomacy, and development policy to reach this ambition is more difficult. That is why the integrated review must include a wide-ranging and public consultation and not be conducted behind the closed door of the Prime Minister’s senior adviser.

Throughout our approach to each of these issues, the UN sustainable development goals must continue to be the base for all our efforts. These internationally recognised ambitions, if achieved, will put an end to global challenges, including hunger, extreme poverty, and all forms of violence against women and girls, ensuring that, in their place, every individual has access to key rights, including safe drinking water, quality education and modern energy. In the developing world these individual rights, if achieved, will engineer a cleaner, happier environment for us all.

The UK has a vital role to play in diplomacy as the promoter of a rules-based order and the international primacy of law. We must urge state actors to interact through international institutions and use these as our primary mechanism for

defusing tensions and distancing ourselves from the populism which treats our self-interest and values as two combating aims. Above all, we must recognise that a co-operative foreign policy is the greatest strategy to realise national and global security. Among the unpredictable events on the global stage, which characterised the last decade, and likely the next, the UK must stand tall as a stable force for universal development, reaffirming our commitment to the United Nations as a means of peace, and exploring options available there to find a solution to the world's crises.

When institutions fail to mitigate conflict and defend human rights, we must work with our allies to sanction those at fault and offer remedy for those who have become victims. The international stage is a platform for the UK to advance not only our own interests but our values too. The international community expects the UK to promote these values, but this Government failed to live up to them in the last Parliament. We need assurances that they will now do so. Under this Government, the UK has often shied away from enacting these principles.

In respect of the treatment of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang province in China, for example, Amnesty International has reported that up to 2 million of them may be mass detained in political re-education camps. Uighur activists have also reported that they have been forced to denounce Islam, swear loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party and eat pork and drink alcohol, but the Foreign Office's criticism has been contained to not much more than a whisper. Can the Minister tell the House how the FCO will ensure that UN observers have access to the detention centres in the immediate future?

On the greatest threat of all to global security—climate change—the UK must start to utilise our diplomatic standing to unite world powers on the mission to cut emissions. The Paris agreement was an opportunity to do exactly this, but when President Trump walked away, our Government chose not to step on his toes and instead gave up on those ambitions. As Glasgow hosts COP 26, the UK must begin a new chapter in climate diplomacy and show real leadership to save our planet, not least by dedicating sufficient diplomatic resources to make the summit a success. During Boris Johnson's reign as Foreign Secretary, the FCO cut climate staff by 25%. What action are the Government taking to ensure that the summit will have the diplomatic resources it needs to ensure its success?

On development, the same principles that guide our diplomacy should also guide our development policy. Using the model of the sustainable development goals, the UK can extend beyond the principle of alleviating suffering and lay a claim to shaping the world in the vision of our values.

However, if we are to make any significant contribution to global development, the Government need dedicated focus; at the very least, we must continue strongly to support a separate Department for International Development, alongside the Foreign Office—and, indeed, a separate Secretary of State with resources amounting to at least the internationally agreed 0.7% of gross national income.

The Government must also ensure in future that any spending earmarked as aid is consistent with ODA spending rules. At present, it is difficult to know exactly how true to this the Government are, since there is often an alarming lack of transparency and accountability on spending details. All too frequently, there is not enough information on spending on certain schemes and evidence to suggest that aid has been misspent.

For example, the Government have conceded that the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, which is partly classified as ODA spending, has supported the rule of law programme in Pakistan, which aims to

“increase Pakistan’s civilian capacity to investigate, detain, prosecute and try terrorists.”

Thus, it would not be wholly unreasonable to assume that, on this occasion, aid has not been spent on helping the world’s most vulnerable. Can the Minister detail what steps the Government will take to promote greater transparency in their aid spending?

On defence, the repeated erosion of international co-operation and institutions is endangering global security. Negotiations on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation have stalled, undermined in part by the USA’s unilateral decision to tear up the Iran nuclear deal and its withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. To achieve a safer world, the UK must maintain a Trident continuous at-sea nuclear deterrent as well as seek greater transparency, accountability and monitoring of nuclear weapons. We must also stay committed to spending 2% of GDP on defence, with NATO as the cornerstone of the UK’s defence policy, while looking to increase financial contributions for UN peacekeeping operations. Co-operation in the EU’s piracy and Balkans operations must also continue after we leave. Do the Government want our future security relationship with the EU to be on a case-by-case basis, or with a bespoke agreement?

Regrettably, years of government cuts and mismanagement of major projects have severely affected the UK’s capability as a global player. Recruitment and

morale are in free fall across the Armed Forces and mismanagement has hampered projects, resulting in delays and increasing costs. The recent revelation of a six-year delay and £1.35 billion overspend across the defence nuclear estate is just one example. Can the Minister confirm whether the integrated review will examine how falling recruitment and morale has impacted on the UK's ability to operate globally?

We owe all of our armed services personnel, veterans and their families the very best support, including pay rises, decent housing and new avenues for representation. Defence policy also has a role to play in tackling the new challenges of modern technology and conflict driven by the climate crisis. It is not good enough for the Government to indicate intentions without the drive to take a lead in developing international agreements on the use of autonomous weapons and reducing carbon emissions. Will the integrated review look at the use of modern technology in warfare, and will it include the Ministry of Defence in any cross-departmental strategy to combat climate change?

This has been an excellent debate. I have certainly learned a great deal, and I thank all noble Lords who have spoken in it. The Government have a responsibility to promote our values and interests on the global stage. This crucial moment in our nation's history should not be marked as the end of UK-EU co-operation, whether that be on defence, peacekeeping or conflict prevention. Instead, we must make a renewed effort to utilise our standing on the world stage to promote and enact our values. It is only through these means that we can contribute to building a safer, fairer and cleaner world.

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5.10 pm

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**The Minister of State, Department for International Development (Baroness Sugg) (Con)**

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My Lords, I thank the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, for introducing this debate and all noble Lords who have taken part in it. As the noble Lord highlighted, there are many international events and issues that we face this year, and as my noble friend Lord Howell said, this has been a wide-ranging debate which has covered a lot of interesting issues. However, two and a half hours is not probably long enough and I will do my best to respond to the many issues raised. If I am not able to do so, I will follow up in writing.

I am pleased that my noble friend Lady Penn chose this debate in which to make her maiden speech, and an excellent one it was too. I am delighted that she has joined our Benches and I look forward to her future contributions on the important issues that she highlighted. As the noble Lord, Lord Browne, said, many of the challenges facing us as we enter the third decade of the 21st century do not respect international borders. The Government are committed to building a safer, fairer and cleaner world, and the contributions today have highlighted the importance of using all the tools available to us in defence, diplomacy and development policy to do so. From promoting the rights of girls to be educated, to combating the devastating effects of climate change, to responding to the biggest health issues around the world, we are a country that leads on the world stage. We are the only major country that meets both the NATO target of spending 2% of our GDP on defence and the target of spending 0.7% of our GNI on international development. Those are the targets the Government published in the Conservative Party manifesto and they will honour the commitment to meeting them.

The UK is a development superpower. Our global leadership projects our values, helps to protect our interests and secures our place in the world. Development is central to bolstering the rules-based international system, a role that the UK is committed to. After Brexit, as we leave the European Union tomorrow, we will continue to bolster our crucial international alliances and institutions. We will stand up and be counted in the UN, NATO, the Commonwealth, the G20, the G7 and the World Trade Organization. We are proud of our peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts, as we are proud of our record on reducing global poverty and helping to save lives around the world.

The first duty of any Government, along with building a safer, fairer and cleaner world, is the duty to keep people safe. Since the last strategic defence and security review in 2015, we have seen the emergence of new challenges and indeed new opportunities. Many questions have been raised about the new strategic review. It will be the deepest review of Britain's security, defence and

foreign policies since the end of the Cold War. It will reassess the United Kingdom's place in the world, covering everything from defence to diplomacy to development. I fear that I may frustrate many noble Lords by not being able to answer their detailed questions on the review at this point, but I will do my best to say as much as I am able to.

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## Lord West of Spithead

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Has the review actually started or do we have a date for when it will start? After talking to people in some of the departments, I think they seem to have started it without having been told to do so. I just wonder where we stand.

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## Baroness Sugg

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If the noble Lord will allow me, I shall go through where we are with the review. However, I fear that I may not be able to satisfy his question.

Many noble Lords have made helpful suggestions which we will make sure are fully considered by the review team. The noble and gallant Lord, Lord Houghton, talked about how the review should relate to defence, and my noble friend Lord Howell highlighted the important contributions which have already been made by your Lordships' House in its reports. I was delighted to read in the *House*



magazine article by the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, that he punched the air in delight when he heard about the strategic review. As the noble Lord, Lord Ricketts, says, it is a moment for hard strategic thinking.

The integrated security, defence and foreign policy review will assess three areas: first, how the UK can strengthen and prioritise its alliances, diplomacy and development; secondly, how we will reform Whitehall to support integrated policy-making and operational planning across departments and agencies; and, thirdly, all aspects of deterrence and the ways in which technological surprise could threaten UK security.

My noble friend Lord McInnes asked whether we will make sure that all parts of the UK are represented. We will listen to and learn from voices across the United Kingdom. The review will engage and collaborate with a range of stakeholders to ensure proper challenge and scrutiny. As the noble Lord, Lord Purvis, said—I will not attempt to repeat Burns—our reputation overseas is a reflection of all four nations of the UK. It is important that we include all four nations in the review.

My noble friend Lady Penn asked about the refreshing of the national risk register. It is under way and will happen in the first half of this year.

Many noble Lords underlined the importance of consultation in the review, and I agree. It is important that we speak to the organisations and groups that should contribute. We will engage and collaborate with a number of parties domestically and internationally, as I say, to ensure proper challenge and scrutiny throughout the process. We will listen to and learn from different voices from across society—from academics, international partners and, of course, Parliament. I am afraid I do not have further detail on the review. More will be forthcoming, but at this point that is all the detail I am able to give noble Lords.

I take the opportunity to underline the incredible work our Armed Forces do overseas to ensure the security of our people at home and abroad. The Government are fully committed to supporting them through enshrining the covenant into law and the Office of Veterans Affairs. The noble Lord, Lord West, and the noble and gallant Lord, Lord Houghton, spoke of the importance of sufficient spending for defence. The UK has never dropped below the 2% defence spending target through our membership of NATO, cementing our position as the leading European ally in NATO. We spend the most on defence in Europe, £41.5 billion in 2020-21. Our manifesto commits us to exceeding 2% and increasing the budget by at least 0.5% above inflation in every year of the new Parliament.

The noble Lord, Lord West, also encouraged us to use our influence as a nuclear power as we approach some of the challenges we face at the moment. We are collaborating closely with our E3 partners to trigger the dispute mechanism to help resolve the impasse we face. We are very clear that in triggering that mechanism we are seeking to bring Iran back into compliance with its commitments.

The noble Lord, Lord Howell, and the noble Baroness, Lady D'Souza, spoke about soft and hard power. Sadly, we have dropped from the number one position in the soft power ranking to number two. It is really important that we recognise the full scope of soft power, which the noble Baroness, Lady D'Souza, set out. Our strong second-place ranking is a testament to the depth and durability of our soft power assets, which include the culture, education and digital sectors. As the noble Lord, Lord West, highlighted, true global security is achieved through effective deployment of both hard and soft power.

The noble Lords, Lord McConnell and Lord Chidgey, spoke of the multiple challenges caused by conflict in our world, and the noble Lords, Lord Chidgey and Lord Browne, spoke of the importance of ensuring that we promote international peace. There is a clear rationale for the UK to prioritise conflict prevention. It is estimated that 80% of the world's poor will be left behind in fragile and conflict-affected states by 2030. We will not be able to meet the sustainable development goals, or indeed UK national security objectives, without peaceful and stable societies around the world. Not only does conflict prevention save lives, it reduces national security threats, helps us achieve our development goals and ultimately will save money. Across government we have developed a range of conflict policy frameworks and tools, many of which the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, spoke of in his speech. The noble Lord, Lord Browne, highlighted the importance of sustaining peace, and the UK fully supports the UN Secretary-General's sustaining peace agenda. We share his aim of an ambitious increase in activities aimed at preventing outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict. Last year, we contributed £16 million to the UN Peacebuilding Fund, providing funding for the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs.

Our role at the UN is incredibly important. Our commitment to building a safer, fairer and cleaner world is championed through our active involvement in many multilateral organisations. We promote our values and our key international priorities bilaterally and multilaterally, but particularly through our role at the UN. We will continue to work there with our partners and allies to pursue our campaign against modern slavery, our Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict

Initiative, and on freedom of religion and belief, including addressing the plight of religious minorities where they face persecution. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council we have a prominent role in upholding international peace and security.

The noble Lord, Lord McConnell, spoke about reform of multilateral agencies. We will continue in our efforts to pursue reform. We are working very closely with the UN to ensure that it becomes more efficient and more effective, and generally to strengthen the rules-based international system. We strongly support the Secretary-General's reform initiatives on peace and security, on development and on management. We will keep our focus on them to ensure they are fully implemented.

However, as my noble friend Lord Howell highlighted, there are 21st-century networks that we must be part of and influence. As we leave the EU, we must continue to bolster our bilateral and multilateral alliances through strengthening our historic ties, but also through forging new partnerships. We will reach out beyond our traditional alliances to advance relations with new partners and build broader coalitions that involve emerging powers.

The noble Lord, Lord Ricketts, spoke about the importance of our involvement in the future of NATO and highlighted France's comments. Of course, we recently hosted the leaders meeting in London. Allies agreed to a reflection process to further strengthen NATO's political dimension, which the UK fully supports. We look forward to the NATO Secretary-General's proposal on that and to fully engaging with it.

My noble friend Lord Howell spoke of the importance of the Commonwealth, as he regularly does. We have an incredibly important relationship with it. We have an unbreakable connection to the Commonwealth and its shared values. We remain committed to its aims and objectives. We were very proud to host a successful CHOGM and are looking forward to the next one in Rwanda. With its 53 member states, including us, and one-third of the world's population it has really shown commitment to working together to tackle the global challenges we face and to maximising opportunities over the past 70 years. That must be celebrated and encouraged.

The noble Earl, Lord Sandwich, spoke about our future relationship with the European Union after we leave tomorrow. We will continue to collaborate closely with our ECHO colleagues on a number of humanitarian reform priorities. We are pleased to be working together with them as donor representatives in the Grand

Bargain's facilitation group. We are of course looking for a positive relationship. The EU will be an important partner in global challenges and ECHO will remain an important partner in humanitarian response. Our political declaration sets out that the UK and the EU will continue to support implementation of the SDGs, and we will look to establish future dialogues and discussions on how we can co-operate with the EU.

The noble Lord, Lord Ricketts, spoke about our future foreign policy challenges and the importance of working together on them with the EU and other partner Governments across the world, including the US. When we talk about global Britain and our future, we must be more engaged and more outward-looking than ever before. Our future relationship with the EU will be different, but that does not mean that the UK and the EU should stop acting together to alleviate poverty and to tackle the many shared global challenges we face, where the EU will remain a very important partner.

Turning to the "fairer" element of the debate, one of the central purposes of my department, the Department for International Development, is to tackle inequalities and to help build a fairer world. As my noble friend Lady Stroud said, we have seen great progress in recent decades: the number of the world's population living in extreme poverty has fallen by 36% since 1990. That is over 1 billion fewer people living in extreme poverty. But, while the number of extremely poor people falls globally it continues to rise in sub-Saharan Africa. Noble Lords mentioned the importance of our Africa partnership. Forecasts indicate that nearly 90% of the extreme poor will live in sub-Saharan Africa by 2030.

There is much unfairness and inequality in the world. It is not fair that children still die from preventable diseases, which is why we are committed to continuing our role as a leader in global health and a major contributor to Gavi. It is not fair that millions of girls are still denied an education, which is why the provision of 12 years of quality education for girls is one of the Prime Minister's key priorities. It is not fair that hundreds of millions of women are denied access to contraception, which contributes to the issue raised by my noble friend Lord King. That is why, last year alone, DfID provided 23.5 million women and girls with modern methods of family planning. We also remain committed to the promotion of universal human rights.

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## Lord Purvis of Tweed

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On sub-Saharan Africa and the Africa partnerships, is there an Africa strategy and will it be published? Is the target that the Government announced—that we will be the top G7 investor in Africa—still in place?

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## Baroness Sugg

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Last week's Africa investment summit showed that we are very keen to develop and deepen our partnerships with Africa. As far as I am aware, there is no plan to publish an Africa strategy but as can be seen, we are working on a number of projects with our African partners. In a speech at that summit, the Prime Minister made it clear that he wants to be the most impactful investor in Africa.

Many noble Lords touched on the importance of climate change and the environment in the "cleaner" section of this debate. This links to many of the points previously raised about ensuring a safer and fairer world. Many of the most fragile and conflict-affected countries—where, increasingly, the extremely poor will live—will be significantly exposed to climate change and less able to cope with its impacts. Protecting the most vulnerable and ending extreme poverty depends on making these countries resilient to the twin risks of instability and climate change. As the noble Earl, Lord Sandwich, highlighted, in September last year the Prime Minister announced the doubling of our international climate finance to at least £11.6 billion over the following five years. That will help to

ensure that we can continue assisting countries to build their capacity to deal with the dangerous effects of climate change and support lower-carbon development. That was one of the focuses at the Africa investment summit, and we expect much of that investment to go to our partners in Africa.

We very much look forward to hosting COP 26 at the end of this year. We continue to be a strong, progressive voice in negotiations. We are working incredibly hard to secure an ambitious global agenda, not only as a convenor but also as a leader. We are calling on countries to come forward with updated emissions reduction commitments and long-term climate strategies. We want COP 26 to be a milestone for greater ambition, cleaner energy and a more resilient future, supported by green financial systems.

Many noble Lords from all sides of the House have expressed their views clearly and eloquently on the machinery-of-government changes. I am afraid that I have little to say on this. As has been said before from the Dispatch Box, the Prime Minister is of course responsible for all machinery-of-government changes, but I will make two points. First, as this debate has made clear, it is incredibly important that we use defence, diplomacy and development together to achieve our goals. Departments already work incredibly closely in this area. At the Africa investment summit, for example, the FCO, DfID and the DIT worked together seamlessly. I spent many hours around tables with officials, and I actually did not know which departments they represented, which is a sign of how closely they were working together. We see that also in the response to global events such as Ebola, as mentioned by my noble friend Lady Penn: the MoD, the FCO and DfID coming together incredibly quickly on the ground to drive rapid decisions and help prevent a health crisis that could have been far deadlier than it was, both in the region and globally. Of course, we can always work more closely on the ground, as my noble friend Lord Howell highlighted. Seeing more colocation between DfID and the FCO is important. They now share a 1HMG platform in country. When I have visited various countries, I have seen the head of DfID country office and the ambassador or high commissioner working hand in hand; that is incredibly important. That is how we will ensure effectiveness in our actions overseas. We do that already but we must do more. There is lots more that we can do, and the strategic review will look at that.

Secondly, the Government are committed to the international development agenda. That can be seen through our manifesto, with its commitments to maintain spending at 0.7%, to 12 years of quality education for girls, to ending preventable deaths and to tackling malaria. The integrated security, defence and

foreign policy review will create the opportunity to reassess how the UK engages internationally. As noble Lords would expect, DfID and FCO teams are proactively supporting the work there.

I am running out of time and I apologise if I cannot answer all noble Lords' questions, particularly those from the noble Baroness.

On the specific point about China, the UK continues to call on China to allow UN observers immediate and unfettered access and will continue to do so.

The debate has covered a wide range of issues. I am sure that I have not answered all the questions and I will follow up with a more detailed letter. I apologise again that I am not able to satisfy noble Lords' requests for more details on the strategic review. Those will follow in due course.

The importance of integration in our policy going forward is clear. Being a truly global Britain is about reinforcing our commitment to be a force for good in the world through our efforts to end conflicts, combat climate change and promote our values of democracy, human rights and the international rule of law. We must take an integrated whole-of-government approach to this, ensuring that we use all the tools we have of defence, diplomacy and development policy to build a safer, fairer and cleaner world.

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5.31 pm

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## Lord McConnell of Glenscorrodale

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My Lords, the Minister might feel that she has not satisfied Members of your Lordships' House in her reply but all involved in today's debate will join me in saying that she manages to include a remarkable amount of detail in the way in which she closes these debates. I am sure I speak on behalf of everyone in saying that we are grateful for that. At the risk of making her job more insecure with praise from the Opposition Benches, I hope she will be able to take part in the

next debate on this topic at some point in the future, depending on events over the next two or three weeks.

I also thank the noble Baroness, Lady Penn. I congratulate her on her maiden speech, which showed the impact she will have on our debates in your Lordships' Chamber in the future. We look forward to that.

Two brief points arise from this debate. First, all of us who have spoken in today's debate have shown the value that we attach to all three departments— the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign Office and the Department for International Development—the professional work that they do and the networks that they give us throughout the world. In looking for an ever more integrated approach to policy, we all understand the critical importance of all three in strengthening that integrated approach. I hope that message is conveyed back to the Prime Minister.

Secondly, on this important date, the day before we leave the European Union, when there has been much talk about our role in the world—either from those who opposed that decision and are worrying about it, or from those who supported it, believing that there was an opportunity for a more ambitious global role—today's debate has shown the desire to have the United Kingdom placed globally in a role that makes the maximum impact on creating a fairer, safer and cleaner world. If we can take that message forward in 2020, after all the division and difficulties of 2019, I hope today's debate has made a contribution.

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Motion agreed.

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