

# INSIDEOUT



The magazine of the FCDO Association

Issue 67 • Spring 2024

## Ballot bonanza

Is democracy at stake in 2024?

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## Spring 2024 Issue 67

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Cover: Clockwise from left – Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, Joe Biden, Claudia Sheinbaum, Rishi Sunak, Keir Starmer Narendra Modi, Cyril Ramaphosa.

PHOTOS: WHITE HOUSE, GOVERNMENTZA, UN, SECRETARÍA DE CULTURA DE LA CIUDAD DE MÉXICO, 10 DOWNING STREET, UK PARLIAMENT

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“A lifestore of skills, activities, interests and opinions”

## From the Editor

It's my and Janet Rogan's great pleasure to bring to you the Spring 2024 edition of *Inside Out* containing a selection of topical features and more personal career recollections – the latter highlighting some events of the past witnessed by members and demonstrating the rich seam of experiences and acquired skills amongst the Association's membership.

We've already begun to plan the magazine's summer edition in which we would like to include yet more personal reminiscences. If you have one to share, please send it to me by **Monday 13 May** at **edward.glover@fcdo.gov.uk**. We would like to hear from you.

### Our King Charles Street office

As I've reported before, we and The Pimpernel Trust now share the same office – room KG15 in King Charles Street. Accordingly – and after some delay partly due to the introduction of the FCDO's new IT system – we've begun the process of closer operational harmonisation to make the best use of our respective resources to mutual benefit. Implementation will take time to achieve but we hope in due course to offer FCDOA members a better service from our King Charles Street office.

Reminder: the KCS office is normally manned from Monday to Thursday each week. The phone number is 020 7008 0967 and the email address **fcdo.association@fcdo.gov.uk**.

### Our virtual office

Lucie Portman, our executive secretary, now operates our virtual office two days a week from Bucharest, where her husband Giles is the new British ambassador. Lucie's email address remains unchanged – **lucie.portman@fcdo.gov.uk**.

### Other possible connections

Recently, we've had discussions with the chief executive of The Royal Asian Affairs Society and the Director of The Royal Africa Society about closer links between us and them. This initiative, to be pursued in the months ahead, is part of our effort to broaden contact in areas of mutual interest.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Edward Glover,**  
**FCDOA Chairman**



# 2024: A Mega Election Year

And it's a make-or-break year for democracy world-wide, writes **Edward Glover**

PRETENDING TO OFFER VOTERS A CHOICE WHILE TAKING STEPS TO ENSURE THE OPPOSITION DOESN'T WIN – CAN, AS SOME ARGUE, RESULT IN 'COUNTERFEIT DEMOCRACY' SOMETIMES LASTING LONGER THAN PURE DICTATORSHIPS

**M**ore voters than ever will go to the polls this year as no fewer than 64 countries (plus the European Union) representing about 50% of the global population hold national elections. Their results will in many cases prove consequential for years to come.

The 2024 elections list – excluding a handful of autocratic regimes such as China and Eritrea who dispense with elections entirely – spans two categories:

- Those countries where outcomes are genuinely uncertain and where 'freedom and fairness' scores are traditionally high and
- Those whose outcomes are all but predictable, given histories of low scores.

Yet the latter are still worth attention because their consequences may contribute further uncertainty to the unstable, perilous world that confronts us daily.

The November 2023 election in New Zealand – which Ian Hay-Campbell witnessed and which he writes about in this edition – was a precursor. Its aftermath is still unfolding. Earlier this year there was the election in Taiwan – its outcome reinforcing China's hostile approach to the island it has repeatedly threatened. Bangladesh's poll in February – boycotted by the main opposition party in protest at a crackdown on political dissent – led to the expected outcome. In March Vladimir Putin predictably won re-election. Pundits are scrutinising the outcome to judge the depth of support for his 'special military operation' in Ukraine. In April and May nearly a billion voters are eligible to go to the polls in India, while in South Africa the ANC, in power since the end of apartheid, may lose its majority.

In the summer, for the first time ever two women will battle it out in the Mexican presidential elections, while in November, it will be a re-match between Donald Trump and Joe Biden in the US presidential election – its outcome likely to have wide, and possibly adverse international consequences. Finally, there will be the UK parliamentary election taking place against a dismal and uncertain economic backdrop.

## The conduct of elections

Elections – at least those held on a level playing field – are a test of honesty and fairness. Voters enter the polling booth, confident their vote will be honestly counted and correctly attributed to the party or individual for which they chosen to vote. But not all elections are fair.

*The Economist* magazine recalled some time ago the argument of Niccolò Machiavelli, the 16th century adviser to unscrupulous princes, that men rise to great fortune "more through fraud than through force". It commented that modern autocrats are not shy to do the same – seeking to retain power through the art of electoral manipulation.

Such a strategy – pretending to offer voters a choice while taking steps to ensure the opposition doesn't win – can, as some argue, result in 'counterfeit democracy' sometimes lasting longer than pure dictatorships. Staging such elections makes those inclined to autocracy seem more legitimate and thus less open to being ostracised internationally. And sometimes permitting an opposition party to participate within defined and controlled limits gives them someone to demonise.

Election rigging is not new. Rife in 18th century England, it only began to change following the *Great Reform Act* of 1832 which introduced major changes to the electoral system of England and Wales. It was followed by *The Second Reform Act* in 1867. But the process of democratising the UK election system was only completed in 1928 with the passage of *The Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act* in 1928, equalising the franchise to all persons, male and female, over the age of 21.

Most contemporary attempts at election-rigging are subtle – to manipulate the result just enough to win without allowing the country's reputation to nosedive. The process starts with steps not directly tied to the election process – such as paying the police, army, and public employees more to ensure their loyalty; possibly co-opting judges; using public broadcasting



IF DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS ARE NOT TO DISAPPEAR COMPLETELY, MORE ATTENTION NEEDS TO BE PAID TO THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS AND MORE PRACTICAL SUPPORT GIVEN TO THOSE INVOLVED IN OBSERVATION

platforms for propaganda; and making life difficult for observation groups.

This approach sets the scene for stage two – nobbling the election itself. Such steps include:

- Fiddling electoral boundaries
- Not updating electoral rolls to remove dead voters
- Restricting voter registration (for example, conditions relating to voter ID), accessibility to polling stations, and the issue of permits for opposition rallies and
- Popular opposition candidates are often barred from running for office and sometimes locked up or in the worst cases killed (for example Alexey Navalny).

And then there is technology. Many fear that IT – especially AI – could make election-rigging even easier, thus swaying some voters, especially in countries with low literacy and declining press freedom. This could be marginal if ruling parties already possess the tools to spread disinformation.

## Election observation

It is against the backdrop of electoral manipulation that the international observation of elections is more crucial than ever – not just on the day but equally importantly in the months leading up to the election and in the immediate aftermath.

The OSCE has over the years been one of the leading international observation bodies. It seeks to send teams to the 57 participating member states, if invited, to monitor the preparation of elections and their conduct on the day. After elections, it produces reports which it submits to the state in question, listing its findings on election conduct and making recommendations for changes in respect of future elections. Monitoring the follow-up to whatever recommendations are made and encouraging their implementation before the next election are crucial.

If democracy and human rights are not to disappear completely, more attention needs to be paid to the conduct of elections and more practical support given to those involved in observation. The key to doing so is ensuring that organisations such as the OSCE – and its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights – receive adequate funding and support from member states, including the provision of personnel to participate in election observation teams.

## Conclusion

Robust institutions matter. In countries where they exist, where there are ingrained democratic habits – together with resistance to institutional malaise coupled with robust checks and balances – it is harder to alter a genuine result expressed by voters at the ballot box. In countries with weaker institutions less keen on scrutiny, international observation of electoral procedures and outcomes is essential. If such aims and standards are compromised, we will have to live with the uncomfortable consequences.

*Inside Out* will revert to the elections' theme later in the year. ■





PHOTOS: CC GOVERNOR-GENERAL/GOVERNMENT HOUSE

New Zealand's new coalition government, with the Governor-General of New Zealand Dame Cindy Kiro (front centre) flanked on the left by the new Prime Minister the Rt Hon Christopher Luxton (National Party), Deputy Prime Minister Rt Hon Winston Peters (NZ First) on the right and coalition partner Rt Hon David Seymour, leader of the ACT party (second left)

# Steady as she goes?

Editorial Committee member **Ian Hay-Campbell**, who is originally from New Zealand, returned there on a visit in November 2023. His arrival coincided with the formation of New Zealand's new coalition government following the previous month's General Election. He has recorded his impressions

**W**alking into another country's election can be a confusing business even if you've been trying to follow developments from abroad. Nowhere more so than in New Zealand with its proportional voting system known as MMP – Mixed Member Proportional Representation. In a general election, New Zealanders get two bites at the cherry.

As a friend explained to me: "I might like my local MP and think that he/she has done a good job, so I'll vote for them. But I don't like that person's party, so I'll cast my second vote – for the 'list' candidate – for another party." My friend then went on to talk about the possibilities of 'electoral overhang' but at that point I asked him to stop! Suffice to say it's an extremely complex system that many New Zealanders don't fully understand.

## Inevitable coalition

One of its effects, however, is almost to guarantee that no single party will achieve a majority, thus usually requiring some kind of power sharing. When the votes were counted after the election on 14 October last year, the National Party had clearly beaten its Labour rival. Of the 123 MPs that sit in the single-chamber Parliament, National ended with 48, Labour with 34, the Green Party 15, ACT 11, NZ First 8 and Te Pati Maori 6. National needed the support of others to

THE THREE PARTIES ENTERED A FORMAL COALITION THAT INCLUDED MINISTERIAL POSTS FOR ALL OF THEM AND A PRESENCE FOR EACH IN CABINET... IT WAS CLEARLY A WELL WORKED THROUGH SERIES OF MEASURES THAT GAVE ALL THREE MUCH OF WHAT THEY HAD BEEN CAMPAIGNING FOR



The Labour Party under the leadership of Jacinda Ardern won a rare outright majority in the October 2020 election

government and chose to invite the ACT Party and NZ First Party to form an administration.

For much of my month in New Zealand the country waited while intense negotiations amongst these three took place. Finally, agreement was reached and on 27 November the new government was sworn into office by the Governor-General in Wellington.

But there was a difference with previous political agreements. This time the three parties entered a formal coalition that included ministerial posts for all of them and a presence for each in Cabinet. Looking at the texts of the agreement between National and each of the other two parties, it was clearly a well worked through series of measures that gave all three much of what they had been campaigning for. This doesn't of course guarantee a more harmonious and effective coalition, but it was perhaps a more hopeful initial sign.

### Why this result?

Back in 2019 and 2020 Labour, led by Jacinda Ardern as Prime Minister, had been riding high in the polls. So much so that the party – exceptionally – won a majority of seats in Parliament in the October 2020 General Election. It owed much of its popularity to Ardern's skillful and effective communication skills as seen in her response to the Christchurch mosque shootings in 2019 and her handling of the Covid-19 pandemic.

She was not infrequently being held up internationally as well as in New Zealand as a most effective public political operator. But by the time she announced her resignation in January last year stating, "I no longer have enough in the tank to do it [the job of Prime Minister] justice," the party, had been on a downward trajectory for months. The new leader inherited a fractious party with ministerial resignations; policy disputes, particularly over tax issues; numerous missed targets, especially in housing; and a punishing level of inflation post-Covid. In the end, many Labour supporters, disillusioned, simply failed to vote. It was a time for a change of regime.

It's perhaps important to remark that changes of this sort in New Zealand are not generally extreme. Nearly all New Zealand politicians would characterise themselves as either centre-left or centre-right. In this case, the move was to the right.

### New kids on the block

Remarkably, the new Prime Minister, Christopher Luxon, a social conservative, had been in Parliament for only three years and leader of his party – the National Party – for no more than two. It makes him pretty much an untried political quantity. Following 17 years working abroad, much of it in Canada, he became CEO of the country's national carrier, Air New Zealand. He has declared that he wants to apply his business skills to improving the country's economy and help the nation's 'squeezed middle' with tax cuts, financed in part by cutting back on the size of the civil service.

The leaders of the two junior coalition partners, with their own brands of centre-right policies are David Seymour and Winston Peters. Seymour has led the ACT New Zealand Party since 2014. Aged 40 and of mixed Maori and *Pakeha* (European) parentage, he is strongly free market and shares Luxon's views on what he sees as government waste and excessive spending. His current appointment as Minister for Regulation gives him a platform to work on repealing what he and his party see as anti-libertarian legislation.

The third coalition leader is the veteran politician, Winston Peters. Peters, now 78, is an



THE NEW GOVERNMENT IS LIKELY TO ESCHEW LESS OF AN 'INDEPENDENT' APPROACH IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS THAN ITS PREDECESSOR. THIS IS SPEARHEADED BY FOREIGN MINISTER WINSTON PETERS WHO IS SEEKING TO ALIGN NEW ZEALAND MORE CLOSELY WITH THE UNITED STATES

exceptional and somewhat unique political survivor. He became an MP way back in 1978 and in July 1993, having fallen out with National, founded his own party – the populist and nationalist NZ First. He and his party have supported both Labour and National at various times, Peters generally holding the portfolio of Minister of Foreign Affairs, a position he holds in the current coalition along with being Deputy Prime Minister.

A mercurial personality, he has a famously tetchy relationship with the press. This is not surprising: most journalists in New Zealand are left of centre and their standard of reporting (with some honourable exceptions) not particularly high. Despite Winston Peters' undoubted political experience, he has limited political appeal. Maybe he is simply too much of an individualist for a conformist society like New Zealand's. Like David Seymour, he has mixed Maori/*Pakeha* parentage.

### Handling a sensitive historical issue

But these two have something else in common, the implementation of which is already causing concern and protests in sections of New Zealand society and likely to provoke more.

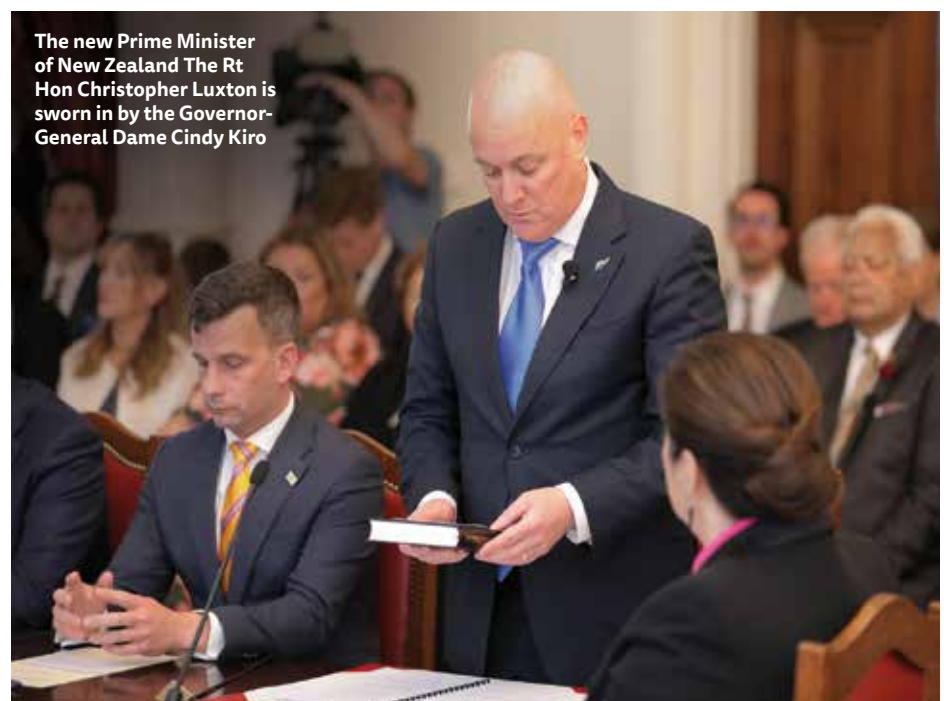
It is what its proponents would call the rolling back of the 'Maorification' of New Zealand. This is a major and complicated subject which I attempt to explain in the accompanying article (p6-7). Suffice to say that the coalition has laid emphasis on public services for all New Zealanders being prioritised and based on need, not race; and introducing a *Treaty Principles Bill* into Parliament. This is aimed at establishing beyond doubt that sovereignty rests with the Crown and that concepts like 'co-governance' and 'partnership' that might allow for power sharing between Maori and other New Zealanders are invalid.

### Other priorities

In other fields the government aims to rebuild the economy and reduce the cost of living; restore law and order including cracking down on gang members and youth offenders; improving health and education; and delivering better housing and infrastructure.

There are also indications that the new Government is likely to eschew less of an 'independent' approach in foreign affairs than its predecessor. This is spearheaded by Foreign Minister Winston Peters who is seeking to align New Zealand more closely with the United States. At a United States Business Summit in a speech made just three days after taking office, he spoke of a vacuum that had developed in New Zealand's foreign policy in the last three years, adding: "There are few relationships that matter more to New Zealand than our relationship with the United States. We have repeatedly worked together in times of international crises and in the face of major global challenges, and we will continue to do so." Wellington may well involve itself in 'Pillar II' of the AUKUS defence pact that currently involves Australia, the UK and the United States.

With the (major) exception of the 'Maorification' agenda, the challenges this centre-right administration faces are not dissimilar to those facing other Western governments. But they are certainly likely to test the new Prime Minister's negotiating skills to the utmost as he leads his three-party coalition for the next three years. ■







A modern reconstruction painted by Marcus King in 1938, showing the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi

CREDIT: KING, MARCUS, 1891-1983. THE SIGNING OF THE TREATY OF WAITANGI, FEBRUARY 6TH, 1840. 1938. REF: G-821-2. ALEXANDER TURNBULL LIBRARY, WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND/ RECORDS/22308135

# The Māori Debate in Aotearoa

The recent New Zealand election polarised views over indigenous rights. **Ian Hay-Campbell** provides the historical context and asks how the new coalition government will manage this divisive issue

**“Prime Minister Christopher Luxon & Co have unleashed a raft of petty vindictive acts to put Maori in their place because they want them subservient. After decades of action supported by all governments to revive te reo, they are trying to stamp out any official mention.”**

(Sandra Coney, politician, writer & historian)

**“It’s not an attack on the Maori language – it’s an attack on the elite virtue signallers who have hijacked language for their own socialist means.”**

(Winston Peters, NZ Deputy Prime Minister)

Following the general election, the New Zealand government had only been in office a few weeks when unedifying exchanges like the two above took place. What is often missing in the important subject of the position of the Maori in New Zealand society today is any form of measured public discussion. There are possible reasons for this but first, a bit of background.

# ETHNICITY VERSUS NATIONALITY



**New Zealand's Parliament buildings in Wellington. Inset: New Zealand's bilingual passport**


## The history

The Maori people (defined as people who so identify, based on tribal affiliation derived from one or more ancestors) comprise about 17% of the population. Their position and welfare in New Zealand society has been a live topic for many years, not least because many are amongst the least well off. There has been a growing recognition that the Treaty of Waitangi – the agreement between the British authorities and a group of Maori chiefs that was first signed in February 1840 (it was then taken around the country for others to sign) – did not provide the protection to the Maori it was intended to.

For much of the 19th and 20th centuries, during the steady influx of Europeans and others into the country resulting in wars over land, many Maori and their *iwi* (tribes) felt cheated out of their birthright. After years of agitation, the Waitangi Tribunal was set up in 1975 by Act of Parliament as a permanent commission of inquiry to make recommendations on claims brought by Maori relating to perceived breaches of the Treaty. Since then, according to the Tribunal, over 1,000 claims have been fully or partially settled.

There remains continuing disagreement over precisely what the parties to the Treaty of Waitangi signed up to and what is understood by 'the principles of the Treaty'. There are two versions of the document – one in the English language and one in Maori and there are acknowledged differences between the two. Central to the continuing debate is the issue of sovereignty. Many contend that the Maori ceded sovereignty to the British and that, today, the 'Crown' (today, the New Zealand Government) is the supreme authority.





THE LEAKED HE PUAPUA REPORT CAUSED AN UPROAR BECAUSE IT INCLUDED REFERENCES TO 'SELF-DETERMINATION' FOR THE MAORI WITH OUTCOMES RANGING FROM THE RIGHT OF PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT TO FULL INDEPENDENCE

For others, the Treaty represents a 'partnership' or a form of 'co-governance' between the two signing parties, the consequences of which are still to be determined fully. They cite a 1987 Court of Appeal ruling where Justice Robin Cooke said that the Treaty relationship was "akin to a partnership".

For still others, the issue is how sovereignty has been exercised since then. These people would argue that, in effect, all sections of New Zealand society, willingly or unwillingly, have accepted that 'the Crown' is the undisputed authority by right of exercise over the years. Despite this, some are pushing for a changed constitutional arrangement.

In the aftermath of the setting up of the Waitangi Tribunal, governments engaged with promoting *Maoritanga* – the traditions, ideals and culture of the Maori people including te reo Maori, the Maori language, spoken today by only 4% of New Zealanders.

## The position now

Half a century on, *Maoritanga* revitalisation has been promoted systematically *inter alia* in broadcasting, the arts, education, and the public services. For example, Government departments changed their titles into both Maori and English and New Zealand passports are in both languages. The country's name is often referred to as Aotearoa/New Zealand or, not infrequently, Aotearoa on its own.

The last initiative by the previous government was to start to change road signs so that they would be displayed in both languages. Co-mingling of languages in tourist signage (and sometimes by tour guides) is also common, causing some confusion to foreign visitors.

## Public opinion

It should be noted that this is not a 'Maori versus the others' issue. Just as there are Maori who don't support the drive for 'Maorification', there are many middle class, intellectual *Pakeha* (people of European descent) who do, sometimes labelled as the 'Kelburn Left' – a reference to a Wellington suburb where the main university is situated and where many academics live. Its counterpart – according to some – is the 'Remuera Right', a wealthy Auckland suburb. It would also be true to say that while the older generation is often hostile to these changes, the younger generation tends to be more comfortable with them.

Some point out that there are other minority groups in the country in need of attention. There are *Pasifika* people, many with social needs, from places like the Cook Islands. They comprise 9% of the population. Asian communities such as those from India, China, the Philippines and South Korea make up 15.3% and are growing rapidly.

But many Maori (and their supporters) claim to take pre-eminence over these on the grounds that they are the indigenous population of New Zealand. The tenor of this debate was not helped by Winston Peters, himself part-Maori, declaring in the lead up to last year's election that the Maori cannot be indigenous because of their Pacific and Asian origin. The fear of being accused of having racist or neo-colonialist views is one important factor inhibiting meaningful debate.

## Revelations

Heightening concerns for some over these developments has been the way they were introduced without much public discussion or even knowledge, largely supported by the media. The pace accelerated significantly under the last Labour Government.

In February 2021, fulfilling an election pledge by Jacinda Ardern to the Maori caucus in Parliament, the *Matariki Public Holiday* Act became law creating a national public holiday marking the start of the Maori New Year. Much more controversially, later that same year, a report came to the attention of the opposition political parties called *He Puapua* (translated as 'a break in the waves' in te reo Maori). This had apparently been commissioned by the Labour Government's Ministry of Maori Development and was to inquire into appropriate measures to achieve the goals set out by the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*.

The leaked report caused an uproar because it included references to 'self-determination' for the Maori with outcomes ranging from the right of participation in government to full independence. A *Vision 2040* would provide a roadmap for this with 2040 marking 200 years since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi.

The mood of suspicion was not lessened by the knowledge that the Waitangi Tribunal, in addition to hearing land claims from Maori, has now also taken on what it terms *Kaupapa* inquiries ('thematic' subjects). One of these areas is New Zealand's constitutional arrangements (unlike Australia, New Zealand has no formal constitution). A panel will consider claims concerning grievances relating to constitution, self-government, and the electoral system. For many, this has set alarm bells ringing.

## The role of the media

Doubts have also been raised over the role and attitude of the local media. Because of a sharp decline in revenue during the Covid-19 outbreak, the government decided newspapers and the State-funded broadcasting service needed a helping hand and in 2020 set up the *Public Interest Journalism Fund*. This amounted to NZ\$55 million – equivalent to about £27 million – to be administered by an independent government funding agency, *New Zealand On Air*. Among other goals, it declared,



# ETHNICITY VERSUS NATIONALITY

JUST A COUPLE OF WEEKS INTO THE LIFE OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT A GROUP OF PROTESTERS DEFACED A DISPLAY OF THE ENGLISH VERSION OF THE TREATY OF WAITANGI IN NEW ZEALAND'S NATIONAL MUSEUM TE PAPA IN WELLINGTON ON THE GROUNDS THAT ITS DECLARATION ABOUT BRITISH SOVEREIGNTY WAS MISLEADING, IF NOT UNTRUE

media recipients of funding must aim to “...actively promote the principles of Partnership, Participation and Active Protection under *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* [Treaty of Waitangi] acknowledging Maori as a *Te Tiriti* partner”.

For many New Zealanders this caused concern over the ability of the media to report impartially. The Fund is now in the process of being wound up. But doubts remain, particularly given the media's self-confessed left-wing bias and the lack of space given to extensive discussion of the subject. Journalists seem readier to report spirited clashes and name-calling, than attempting a deeper analysis of the issues at stake. Some contrast this with the space and time given to the debate in Australia last year, preceding the Australian Indigenous Voice referendum held in October on the Aboriginal question.

## A referendum?

Mention of referenda is a reminder that New Zealand occasionally holds these, particularly on 'conscience issues' (for example, consumption of alcohol, suicide) or fundamental changes to the voting system. The prospect that this could happen over elevating the status of *Maoritanga* is likely to cause protests from some Maori concerned that, as a minority group in society, they cannot hope for what they would consider a just outcome in any national referendum.

Although there are no plans for it at present, there could in future be a move to hold a referendum on abolishing the separate Maori seats in Parliament. This had already been recommended by a Royal Commission in 1986 on the grounds that Maori would achieve better representation through the proportional party-list voting system. Maori organisations subsequently made representations that saved the separate seats with the result that today Maori are, if anything, over-represented in Parliament (33 members of Maori heritage out of 123 seats).

## What now?

And so, we come to the new coalition government installed at the end of last year with two of the parties – ACT and NZ First – committed to putting the brake on these developments, or at least slowing the pace. All work has been stopped on *He Puapua*.

More generally, the coalition has pledged to “reverse measures taken in recent years which have eroded the principle of equal citizenship”. This includes removing the idea of 'co-governance' from the delivery of public services which “should be prioritised on the need of need, not race”. A comprehensive review is planned of all legislation that includes 'the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.' And government departments with dual Maori-English names have been told to have their primary name in English, except for those primarily related to Maori.

Unsurprisingly, those Maori in support of the previous policies and their *Pakeha* supporters were quick to mount protests over what they saw as back-pedaling on previous commitments. Just a couple of weeks into the life of the new government a group of them defaced a display of the English version of the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand's National Museum *Te Papa* in Wellington on the grounds that its declaration about British sovereignty was misleading, if not untrue.

More recently, two of the Coalition leaders, Winston Peters and David Seymour were heckled vigorously by some Maori when they spoke at the annual Waitangi Day observance in February this year. Equally notably, Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, on his first visit there, had a quieter, more respected reception. But he knows that he has a particularly tricky hand to play on this subject.

These policies are only part of a raft of new measures the present Government needs to implement to demonstrate that they are effective and engaged. The state of the economy, housing, education all require action. Does Christopher Luxon with his two coalition partners have the agility and commitment to make progress on all of these, particularly in the face of vigorous and noisy opposition? Only time will tell. ■



The logo for the New Zealand Transport Agency in both languages

PHOTO: AYOKANMI OYEYEMI/CC BY-SA 4.0. KAIZENIFY

The late entrepreneur and philanthropist Herbert Wigwe



If you think the grass is greener on the other side, remember one thing...  
**The grass is greener where you water it**

The death of a great African entrepreneur and philanthropist prompted **Janet Rogan** to reflect on how, with access to finance and training, innovation flourishes in Africa

  
**HERBET WIGWE'S VISION AND PASSION FOR EQUITY AND TRANSPARENCY MADE HIS BANK THE GLOBAL FORCE THAT IT NOW IS, BREAKING THE MOULD AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW MILLIONS**

was disappointed (in dip speak) to see the headline affixed to my last piece on Africa before it was published. It really demonstrated the extent to which it is necessary to update the narrative and people's mental pre-sets.

**A man above others**

So this time, I chose my own headline, and it is a quote from an extraordinary man who was killed a few days before time of writing in a tragic helicopter crash in California, with his wife and son. All those in the helicopter lost their lives and we must pause to remember the sorrow of all their families.

That extraordinary man touched the lives and livelihoods of many millions in countless ways. He transformed a static and exclusionary sector through his mission to open up banking to all those who need it, large or small, businesses, private customers, investors.

His positive purpose was to enable people, to give them the power of agency and control over their lives and their aspirations, to open the door. He wanted his bank to nurture entrepreneurship, at all levels. Quite the opposite of the strange phenomenon of 'de-banking' that has recently emerged in the UK.

His humanity shone through in the style of the organisations he helped create. Yet he made no apology for demanding excellence. His desire to see people grow through education was reflected in his challenge to them all to be fearless – that was the clarion call of the University he had just founded but sadly did not live to see open.

**Herbert Wigwe**

The man is Herbert Wigwe and Wigwe University is due to be inaugurated in September 2024 as the African gateway to the world of entrepreneurship, technology, innovation, and impact. Go Google and you will find something beautiful that will make you wish you had had the opportunity and luck to study there.

Truly a man for all seasons, alongside his focus on excellence, nurturing entrepreneurship and personal agency, Herbert was a passionate philanthropist. He was one of the greatest patrons of art and artists of this age. His impact on the arts community cannot be overstated and his legacy lives on in the collection he was building, the many artists whose careers he supported, and in the arts ecosystem in Nigeria and beyond of which he and his bank have always been at the very centre.

His vision and passion for equity and transparency made his bank the global force that it now is, breaking the mould and creating opportunities for new millions. By 2050, Nigeria is predicted to be the third largest country by population after India and China.

Across Africa an estimated 350 million people are 'un-banked' meaning that they cannot access banking services. But new disruptor banks are now challenging traditional methods with the simple aim of getting funds flowing.

Female farmers  
among their coffee  
trees in Rwanda



PHOTO CREDIT: UN WOMEN/ANA LUKATELA

SEEING THE PASSION WITH WHICH THE WOMEN FARMED AND MANAGED THEIR BUSINESS REMINDED ME OF THE PASSION AND DRIVE TO SUCCEED I'VE SEEN IN SO MANY WOMEN ONCE THEY GOT ACCESS TO THE FUNDING, LAND AND KNOW-HOW FROM WHICH TRADITION HAS OFTEN EXCLUDED US IN EVERY SOCIETY

Innovations flourish in these conditions. The most successful money transfer by phone system – M-Pesa – was introduced 17 years ago in Kenya in 2007 and is now the model for most global mobile money apps, not just in East Africa where it started.

### And Rwanda

Nearby Rwanda, the land of a thousand hills, and fellow member of the East African Community, is another regional innovator in green development and finance. It was one of the first countries in the world to ban the use or import of plastic bags, signalling a clear direction and it is renowned as one of the cleanest countries you can visit.

As a small land-locked country Rwanda is vulnerable like the rest of the EAC countries to the impact of climate change, as well as to global and regional conflict and instability, particularly in trade routes. But the economy is holding up well, with 8.2% GDP growth in 2022 and projected 6% for 2023 and 2024. And, to continue our theme of accessibility, Rwanda's last financial inclusion survey, published in 2021, showed that while around 36% of adult Rwandans have a traditional bank account (up from 14% in 2008) as many as 93% are financially included, choosing to use non-traditional mobile money and similar digital services (up from 48% in 2008).

Last time I visited Kigali in November 2023, I bought several bottles of fiercely hot akabanga chilli oil, some excellent Rwandan tea, and some single estate coffee beans from an award-winning women's cooperative, all from the supermarket round the corner from my hotel and painlessly paid for with my UK debit card. I still can't do that with a debit card closer to home across the Channel!

### Women's economic empowerment


I spent my birthday in 2017 on that coffee cooperative seeing the passion with which the women farmed and managed their business, getting more than my usual daily caffeine fix from the expert coffee tasting session they organised. It reminded me of the passion and drive to succeed I've seen in so many women once they got access to the funding, land and know-how from which tradition has often excluded us in every society.

Rwanda has done much better than the UK and indeed every other country in the world in parliament too, with women elected to over 61% of the seats and, at last count, holding over half of Ministerial positions. Rwanda's sovereign wealth fund (Agaciro Development Fund) is now headed by a brilliant 33-year-old woman, and RwandAir's experienced CEO last year became the first female Chair of the Board of Governors of IATA.

### Remembrance and reconciliation

I've visited the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre twice and wept both times. Like Oradour-sur-Glane in France, site of a massacre in June 1944, sombly preserved as the burnt ruins left by the murderers, visitors from around the world are called on to Remember. And not to



  
**IF YOU WANT TO FLY, YOU  
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THE GREATNESS WITHIN  
YOU. SOAR!  
- HERBET WIGWE -**

repeat. April 2024 marks 30 years since the genocide. In case you are interested but unable to visit, you can sign up free for a guided virtual tour via the Memorial Centre's website (please leave a voluntary donation).

One exhibit remains fixed in my mind: a plain glass slab with words of a proverb etched into it in Kinyarwanda, French and English: "A tree can only be straightened when it is young."

Rwanda's extraordinary recovery since 1994 is perhaps rooted at least in part in that thought. Video exhibits in the Memorial Centre witness processes of reconciliation and reintegration based in traditional methods of restorative justice, enabling communities ruined in 1994 to find ways to heal. Now over half of Rwandans are under the age of 20. Their eyes are firmly fixed on their future.

Extraordinary circumstances, extra-ordinary people. To end with another thing Herbert Wigwe said:

*"If you want to fly, you have to give up the negativity that weighs you down. Give wings to the greatness within you. Soar!"* ■

## FCDOA NEWS

# Transferable skills

Back by popular demand, the FCDOA's Jobs Seminar put a lens on opportunities outside the FCDO. **Paula Fudakowska** reports

On 22 February 2024 the FCDOA, with the support of the KCS HR Directorate, hosted an interactive online workshop for FCDO staff curious about job opportunities in the private sector. The event was organised in response to the positive feedback received from participants who attended a similar hybrid in-person and online workshop hosted by FCDOA last year.

The event was facilitated by Jacquie O'Dea of Claire Career Consulting, with over 20 years in the executive recruitment industry, assisted by Paola Fudakowska, a FCDOA board director and previously a FCDO legal adviser; and by FCDOA's executive secretary, Lucie Portman. FCDOA's Chair, Edward Glover, closed the event with some reflections on creating a strong impression with a tightly worded CV and covering letter and pitching at an interview.

The workshop attracted interest from 30 staff in a wide spread of grades, including country-based staff, an Ambassador and High Commissioner. On the day, there were 15 online participants with a relatively equal gender split. Overseas staff attended from Kenya, the Maldives and Libya.

Participants enjoyed the interactive nature of the workshop, including:

- Working together in smaller break-out groups to explore questions about today's job market and to critique sample CVs; and
- A closing Q&A session to address individual queries and reflections.

Jacquie also provided pertinent and up-to-date feedback from her head-hunter network on the merits of civil servants and FCDO alumni as potential candidates for private sector jobs.

The event's success reflects the FCDOA's long-term objective to offer our skills and experience within King Charles Street, should the FCDO wish to draw on them, and to bridge the gap and build more connections between current staff and those who have left to pursue careers in other sectors.

## REQUIEM

**Mr David Aylett,**  
in August 2023

**Mr David Ward,**  
in September 2023

**Miss Rita Wisker,**  
December 2023

**Mr Barrie Charles Gane CMG OBE,**  
on 10 December 2023

**Mr Oliver Everett CVO,**  
a former First Secretary, on 22 December  
2023

**Mr Patrick Eyers CMG LVO,**  
on 22 December 2023 & Mrs Heidi Eyers,  
on 3 January 2024

**Ms (Sheila) Mary Ellis,**  
on Wednesday 10 January 2024

**Sir Patrick Moberly KCMG,**  
on 13 January 2024

**Ms Margaret Mary Brennan,**  
on 17 January 2024

**Sir Adrian Beamish KCMG,**  
on 20 January 2024

## IMPRESSIONS

The bright lights of Oxford Street conceal the darker problem of rough sleeping in the capital.

Below: A rough sleeper and passers-by at Waterloo Station



PHOTOS: CANVA/CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 DEED/JESSICA MULLLEY



# Seeing life from both sides

**Edward Glover** spends some time with the rough sleepers of Oxford Street and gains an insight into their lives on the street and the lives they've left behind

THOSE WE MET ALONG OXFORD STREET LEFT A DEEP IMPRESSION ON US. WE HAD SEEN HOMELESSNESS UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL, GIVING US A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT MORE SHOULD BE DONE FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER THE MISFORTUNE OF NO HOME

People become homeless for different reasons, such as the lack of affordable housing, no longer able to pay rent, poverty, unemployment, and life-changing events – a relationship breaking down, losing a job, mental or health problems or substance misuse. Some are forced into homelessness when they leave prison, care, or the army. Many women become homeless to escape a violent or abusive relationship.

Rough sleeping – which apart from sleeping on the street includes people living in sheds, garages, and other such buildings, as well as sofa surfing, hostels, and unsuitable temporary accommodation – is the most visible and dangerous form of homelessness. The longer someone is sleeping on the streets the more likely they are to face the challenges of hunger, winter cold, trauma, mental health, and drug misuse. According to *Shelter*, more than one in three people sleeping rough have been deliberately hit, kicked, or experienced some other form of violence.

My wife, Audrey, and I had an opportunity one Monday evening in February to catch a glimpse of what those on the streets face every night. She and I joined a *St Vincent de Paul* group – led by Yasko Kurahachi, an FCDOA member – from Farm Street Church in Mayfair. It goes out each Monday after 7.30pm delivering tea, hot soup, clothes such as socks, wipes and sandwiches and *Mars Bars* donated by *Prêt à Manger*. We joined the Grosvenor Square/Oxford Street team, walking along the right-hand side of Oxford Street, crossing Oxford Circus and then along New Oxford Street as far as Tottenham Court Road and then back towards Marble Arch on the other side.

We met John and Richard who have been on the streets for several years. Richard, with his strong opinions, gave me a copy of *The Pavement*, a pocket-sized free magazine for homeless people. After providing them with tea and sandwiches, we moved on to Oxford Street – pushing the trolleys of what we had to offer – where we met several rough sleepers, amongst them Philip, a homeless ex-soldier, and afterwards a young man recently released from prison with nowhere to go upon completion of his sentence.

We listened to stories, experiences, and opinions, while providing a warm drink, something to eat, fresh socks and other items to see them through the night. As we did so, we were surrounded by shoppers and visitors – passers-by. A week later the *SVP* team were able to provide Philip with a new sleeping bag. He was delighted.

We left the team full of profound admiration for what the *SVP* seeks to achieve each week. Those we met along Oxford Street left a deep impression on us. We had seen homelessness up close and personal, giving us a greater understanding of what more should be done for those who suffer the misfortune of no home.

It was a remarkable experience – seeing life from both sides to coin the lyrics of Joni Mitchell's well-known song, first recorded in the 1970s. Her later husky voiced versions of the song reflect her own long and sometimes troubled life. Those we met on the street earlier this month had certainly seen life from both sides. ■

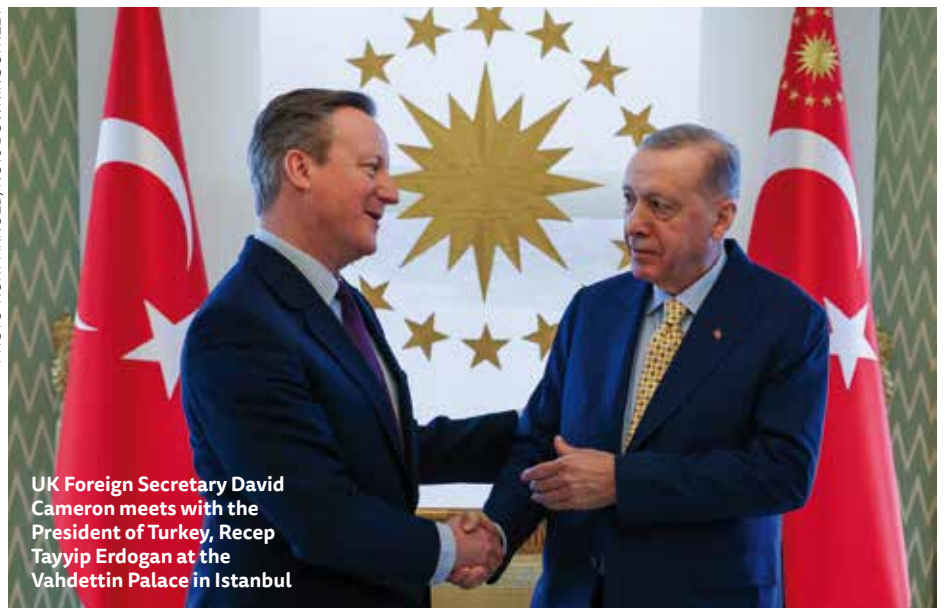
  
 THE ONSET OF THE ARAB  
 SPRING WAS A TURNING  
 POINT, TRANSFORMING  
 TURKEY'S 'ZERO  
 PROBLEMS WITH  
 NEIGHBOURS' POLICY  
 INTO A SITUATION WHERE  
 IT HAD ALMOST NO  
 FRIENDS LEFT

# Turkey's Strategic Pivot

## Navigating Tensions and Partnerships with the West

Careful rebuilding of a complex relationship is needed to steer Turkey away from rival powers, writes **Emre Caliskan**

PHOTO: RORY ARNOLD/NOTO DOWNING STREET



UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron meets with the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the Vahdettin Palace in Istanbul

### The past years

In late January, the US government approved a US\$23 billion (£18bn) sale of 40 new F-16 fighter jets to Turkey, along with modernisation kits for 79 existing Turkish F-16s. This long-delayed move, which followed Turkey's eventual ratification of Sweden's NATO membership, marks a significant step towards mending strained relations between Turkey and the West. Enhanced military cooperation with Western allies is seen as a strategic move to prevent Turkey from tilting further towards China and Russia.

Since the Justice and Development Party, led by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, assumed power in 2002, Turkey's relationship with the West has seen gradual improvements. The official start of Turkey's accession negotiations with the European Union (EU) in 2005 underscored this positive trajectory. During this period, Turkey emerged as a key ally to the West, contributing significantly to global issues and serving as a model for other Muslim countries in the region. However, this era of goodwill lasted only a decade, giving way to a challenging second decade under Erdogan's leadership, when relations with Western countries took a dramatic turn for the worse.

The onset of the Arab Spring was a turning point, transforming Turkey's 'zero problems with neighbours' policy into a situation where it had almost no friends left. Geopolitical shifts in the region have positioned Turkey in opposition to the United States and the West. The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and its Syrian branch, the People's Protection Units (YPG), represent Turkey's most significant security threats. Paradoxically, these groups have found an ally in the United States, Turkey's foremost strategic partner. This unexpected collaboration has further complicated the already intricate relations between Turkey and the Western alliance. Consequently, Turkey's interests began to diverge significantly from those of the West across various fronts, from Iraq to Egypt and from Syria to Libya.

The domestic scene in Turkey also witnessed significant upheaval, with individual rights and freedoms starting to erode following the Gezi Park protests against Erdogan in 2013, a trend that worsened after the failed coup attempt in 2016. Turkey, once hailed as a beacon of harmony





PHOTO: NATO

**At the Vilnius Summit President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan shakes hands with the Prime Minister of Sweden, Ulf Kristersson, in the presence of the NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg**

between Islam and democracy in the Middle East, slid towards competitive authoritarianism.

The aftermath of the 2016 attempted coup further strained Turkey's relations with Western countries. Accusations from Turkey of insufficient support from the West were met with Western concerns over Turkey's deteriorating human rights record. This complex dynamic led to a freeze in Turkey's EU accession negotiations, highlighting the deepening rift between Turkey and the West.

### **Turkey under Erdogan's rule**

Under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey is seeking to assert a more active and independent stance in its foreign policy. Erdogan aims to leverage NATO's capabilities to counter threats from nations like Russia and Syria, while also challenging other NATO members over disputes such as Greece's oil exploration activities in the Eastern Mediterranean.

A cornerstone of this assertive foreign policy is the development of a robust national defence industry. Turkey's powers in this area were notably demonstrated through the deployment of Bayraktar unmanned aerial vehicles in conflicts in Libya and between Ukraine and Russia, showcasing its military technological advancements.

The aftermath of the 2016 coup attempt marked a significant shift in Turkey's military alliances, notably pushing it closer to Russia. The acquisition of S-400 defence systems from Russia in September 2017 significantly strained Turkey's security relationships with Western nations. In response, the United States imposed sanctions on Turkey under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) and removed Turkey from the F-35 fighter jet programme.

This exclusion from the F-35 program has tilted the strategic military balance in the Eastern Mediterranean, notably in favour of Greece, which has enhanced its air force capabilities with French Rafale jets and F-35s. The advanced air forces of France and the UAE, with whom Turkey has had confrontations in the Eastern Mediterranean, pose additional strategic concerns for Turkish decision-makers.

### **Turkey: A Critical Ally of the West**

Despite these military and strategic challenges, Turkey maintains a vital role within the Western economic and political frameworks. As a member of the EU's Customs Union and a key trading partner for the EU, Turkey is integral to Europe's supply chain, with over 40 percent of its goods exports destined for EU countries. Turkey's strategic geographical position also cements its role as a crucial energy transit hub, enhancing Western energy security.

Turkey is also a significant part of the Western political system, playing a key role in various aspects, including preventing irregular migration to the West and sharing intelligence in the



## THE FRAYING OF TURKEY'S POLITICAL TIES WITH WESTERN COUNTRIES RISKS PUSHING IT TOWARDS CLOSER MILITARY COLLABORATION WITH CHINA AND RUSSIA

global fight against terrorism. Turkey's crucial role is underscored by its membership in NATO, which was reaffirmed during the process of Sweden's accession to the alliance.

Like other emerging economies such as Brazil and South Africa, Turkey is seeking a transactional relationship with the West, tailored to its unique circumstances. However, Turkey hasn't fully integrated into the Western-centric global order. Its foreign policy, spanning issues in Libya, Nagorno-Karabakh, Syria, and relations with Russia, often stands in contrast to Western priorities. The combination of these policy divergences and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's distinctive blend of ruthlessness and astuteness complicates Western efforts to engage with Turkey.

Despite these challenges, Turkey's strategic value to the West is undeniable. Its pivotal roles, from brokering the grain deal between Russia and Ukraine to facilitating prisoner exchanges, underscores Turkey's critical importance in regional and global security contexts. Turkey has thus emerged as a crucial player, highlighting the necessity for the West to maintain a relationship with it, despite occasional disagreements and the complexities of Erdogan's leadership style.

### Defence Cooperation: A Pathway to Partnership

Turkey is on the brink of achieving a significant milestone in its defence capabilities with the inaugural flight of its own fifth-generation national jet, the Kaan, in February. This progress could elevate Turkey to the same level as its rivals in the Eastern Mediterranean. However, the journey to mass production faces hurdles, particularly with engine technology. The F110 engine was used in the initial flight, and Turkey is engaging in discussions with the UK's Rolls Royce for the transfer of engine technology for its inaugural national jets. Ambitiously, Turkey aims to produce its own engine by 2028, though the path to this goal remains undefined.

The growth of Turkey's domestic defence industry is closely tied to its relations with the West. Canada's restrictions on defence industry sales have impacted the production of Bayraktar drones. Additionally, the fraying of Turkey's political ties with Western countries risks pushing it towards closer military collaboration with China and Russia.

Turkey's military interventions in Syria and its Mediterranean energy exploration have led several Western countries to suspend defence contracts. Yet, Turkey's recent F-16 deal and its participation in the Germany-led European Sky Shield Initiative (ESSI) signal important steps towards renewing defence cooperation with the West.

This cooperation faces threats from the potential decline of the Kaan project and deteriorating political relations with Western nations. Continuous defence industry collaboration is pivotal for Western countries to improve relations with Turkey and maintain its alignment with the West. Rolls Royce's engine partnership with the Kaan project and Germany's reconsideration of its stance on the purchase of the Eurofighters that Turkey wishes to acquire, would significantly aid in strengthening these relations.

If Turkey fails to develop its military defence industry and compete with regional allies, especially Greece and France, it may turn to Russia and China to fill the strategic void. Such a shift towards military cooperation with Russia and China could profoundly impact Turkey's relations with the West. A continued drift towards these countries would pose a significant challenge to the Western political and security framework. ■

**Emre Caliskan is a political risk analyst focusing on Turkey and the Middle East issues. He is completing his doctorate studies in International Relations at St Antony's College, University of Oxford. He is the co-author of the *The New Turkey and Its Discontents* (Hurst, 2017). Caliskan is also a research fellow at the Foreign Policy Centre.**

PHOTO: CC BY-SA 2.0 DEED DAN LUNDBERG

An aerial view of the Essequibo River  
Inset: A map of the disputed area along the Essequibo River

# Venezuela's territorial claim to part of Guyana

The build-up of tensions between Venezuela and Guyana over the Essequibo region has raised alarm bells. FCDO Research Analyst **Martin Garrett** puts the territorial dispute in historical context



THIS LATEST EPISODE IS ONE OF A SERIES OF AGGRESSIVE MOVES BY VENEZUELA OVER THE STATUS OF THE ESSEQUIBO, THAT DATE BACK TO GUYANA'S INDEPENDENCE. BUT THE HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF THIS PROBLEM ARE COMPLICATED

## Venezuela pot stirring and international reactions

In a referendum on 3 December 2023, inspired by de facto President Maduro, a majority of those Venezuelan voters who bothered to turn out, gave their approval for the annexation by Venezuela of most of Guyana's land area. Early indications of possible aggression had already caused some Guyanese to leave areas close to the Venezuelan border.

Venezuela's renewal of its claim to Guyana's Essequibo region – 74% of Guyana's total area – has attracted much recent international media attention. This is uncharacteristic of a region which usually receives scant coverage in the UK. Some of the more lurid headlines suggested that an invasion of Guyana by Venezuela was imminent. A concerned President Lula da Silva of Brazil commented "We do not want, and we do not need war in South America". Other statements were issued by countries as remote to the region as India and Ukraine.

The UK was among those that showed support for Guyana. Mr David Rutley, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, made a timely visit to consult with senior Guyanese, and *HMS Trent* spent three days in Georgetown on a well-publicised break from its Caribbean patrol duty – hunting drug smugglers. The US also showed support. White House spokesman John Kirby said, "the United States will absolutely stand by our unwavering support for Guyana's sovereignty".

Does this issue, hitherto kept in check by diplomacy, really threaten the peace of this part of Latin America? This latest episode is one of a series of aggressive moves by Venezuela over the status of the Essequibo, that date back to Guyana's independence. But the historical origins of this problem are complicated and can be traced to the 1800s.

## The history

As a result of the London Convention of 1814, the Dutch ceded the three adjacent territories of Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice to Britain. The three were consolidated into one UK colony – British Guiana – in 1831. The British then commissioned the Prussian born explorer, and subsequently British consular officer, Robert Schomburgk, to survey British Guiana's territory. His work, including a map showing the extension of British Guiana's territory to the mouth of the Orinoco River, was published in 1840.

Meanwhile Venezuela, taking advantage of Napoleon's invasion of Spain, had declared independence in 1811. It became part of Gran Colombia until it achieved full independence in 1830. Soon afterwards it began to show an interest in the territory of the neighbouring British colony. From roughly 1840 Venezuela expressed claims to all land west of the river Essequibo. This eventually resulted in breaking diplomatic relations with Britain in 1887.

In response to Venezuelan lobbying, the US pressured Britain into agreeing to arbitration. This took place in 1899 in Paris. Venezuela chose to be represented by two prominent US lawyers, David Brewer, an associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and the US Chief Justice Melville Fuller. Britain was represented by the Chief Justice Lord Charles Russell, an Irishman and the first Roman Catholic to be Chief Justice since the Reformation. The second British representative was Sir Richard Collins, a distinguished judge. These four then chose a fifth member to be President of the Arbitration Committee. They agreed on Friedrich de



  
DURING 1901 TO 1905 THE  
BOUNDARY WAS AGREED  
AND MARKED ON THE  
GROUND BY A JOINT  
VENEZUELAN AND BRITISH  
BOUNDARY COMMISSION.  
THE COMMISSION'S WORK  
WAS AGREED BY BOTH  
GOVERNMENTS



PHOTO VIA @HMSTRENT

**Gunboat diplomacy – Royal Navy patrol ship HMS Trent is deployed to Guyana following Venezuela's renewed claim on the Essequibo region**

Martens, the distinguished and respected Estonian-born Russian jurist, who among other things represented Russia at the ground-breaking 1899 Hague Convention that helped to define the laws of war.

Consistent with their desire for US support, the Venezuelans also chose a strong team of US lawyers to present their case to the Arbitration Committee. It included former President Benjamin Harrison, and ex-Secretary for War Benjamin Tracy. A certain Mr Severo Mallet-Prevost was a more junior, younger member of the team of four.

### **The outcome**

The result of the award was an agreed border – with most of the land awarded to Britain. But certain areas claimed by the British, including the strategic river mouths and lower reaches of the Amakura and Barima and the upper reaches of the Cuyuni river, were allocated to Venezuela. During 1901 to 1905 the boundary was agreed and marked on the ground by a joint Venezuelan and British Boundary Commission. The Commission's work was agreed by both governments.

### **New controversy**

Venezuela accepted the agreement until 1962. But in the run-up to Guyana's independence, a posthumous memorandum, dictated years before by Severo Mallet-Prevost emerged.

It alleged that the two US Arbitration Committee members had been presented with a choice

PHOTO VIA @HMSTRENT

**Chief of Defence Staff for Guyana, Brigadier Omar Khan, is welcomed on board the HMS Trent**



**RR**  
THE BRITISH POSITION HAS ALWAYS BEEN THAT THE 1899 ARBITRATION SETTLED THE BORDER AND THAT THE CHANGE IN VENEZUELAN POSITION, SO LONG AFTER AGREEING THE BORDER IN 1899, IS A 'CONTROVERSY'

by de Martens – either give their consent to what has since become the current boundary or face a three to two majority decision on a less favourable outcome for Venezuela. The implication being that de Martens, as President of the Arbitration Committee, unfairly favoured the British position. Mallet-Prevost alleged that the US lawyers consulted former President Harrison before agreeing to de Marten's proposal and with it the border. By the time the memorandum containing Mallet-Prevost's posthumous allegations was revealed, all the key participants of the arbitration process had passed away, making verification of his claims impossible. Suspiciously, his memorandum was dictated shortly after the Venezuelan government had awarded him the Order of the Liberator, in recognition of his services.

### **The British position**

The British position has always been that the 1899 Arbitration settled the border and that the change in Venezuelan position, so long after agreeing the border in 1899, is a 'controversy'. But since Guyanese independence, this has ceased to be an issue between Venezuela and the UK.

### **The Geneva Agreement 1966**

To ease the path to Guyanese independence in the early 1960s, and with the background of the 'controversy,' and Cold War anxiety that an independent Guyana might become a communist state, the UK and Venezuela made the 1966 Geneva Agreement. Signed only three months before Guyana became independent, it set out a path for this to be resolved. Ultimately, the Agreement gave the UN Secretary General the choice of a means of settlement consistent with Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations, but only if there was no prospect of bilateral agreement through other means. It was this provision that ultimately led to deciding on the International Court of Justice at the Hague as the final arbiter.

### **The long road to the Hague**

When the Mixed Commission of Venezuelan and Guyanese officials, as agreed at Geneva, failed over four years to find a solution, the two countries agreed a 12-year moratorium through the 1970 Port of Spain Protocol. It expired in 1982, bringing the Geneva Agreement back into force,



  
**MOST EXPERTS BELIEVE GUYANA HAS A STRONG CASE AND THAT VENEZUELAN SABRE RATTLING IS AIMED AT DIVERTING ATTENTION FROM THE COUNTRY'S VERY CONSIDERABLE DOMESTIC PROBLEMS**

**Guyana President Mohamed Irfaan Ali with UK Minister for the Americas David Rutley MP**

and triggering a series of unsuccessful attempts at settlement under Article 33 of the UN Charter.

The United Nations Secretary General's 'good offices' process was launched in 1989. This took the form of flexible, open discussions between the two countries facilitated by a personal representative of the UNSG. But it yielded no solution, and ended when the then UNSG's last personal representative, the greatly respected Jamaican Professor Norman Girvan, died following an accident in 2014. Various permutations of bilateral process to resolve the 'controversy' had run their course and failed, and Guyanese patience was wearing thin. Writing in 2016, Sir Shridath Ramphal, former Commonwealth Secretary General and former Guyanese Foreign Minister, put it this way: "In the year of the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Agreement, and of Guyana's Independence which it heralded, it is palpably time to bring this unworthy controversy to an end."

In September 2015, Guyana's new president, David Granger called upon the United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, to have Venezuela's contention that the Arbitration award of 1899 is "null and void," finally settled by judicial process under the Geneva Agreement. In March 2020 after much preparation, Guyana instituted proceedings against Venezuela to settle the controversy.

Venezuela contended that the court didn't have jurisdiction to consider the case, but the Court rejected this notion in April 2023. Most experts believe Guyana has a strong case and that Venezuelan sabre rattling is aimed at diverting attention from the country's very considerable domestic problems.

So, is there really a chance of conflict in this generally peaceful if troubled part of Latin America? This seems unlikely as any Venezuelan aggression would likely draw criticism from a whole host of international opinion. The UK, US, CARICOM, the Commonwealth, the International Court of Justice, and the UN could all be expected to speak out.

However, it is likely to be several years before the International Court at the Hague reaches a verdict and so the border 'controversy' is likely to keep diplomats busy for some time to come. ■



PHOTO: VIA @DAVIDRUTLEY





Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation and Kleptocracy (SLAPPs) are designed to keep the dirty dealings of the corrupt elite in the shadows. The first of a two-part feature by **Susan Coughtrie**, Director of the Foreign Policy Centre, in association with the editors of *Inside Out* explains why the UK has been the preferred jurisdiction for oligarchs and what is now being done to aid those shining a light on their illicit behaviour

# Rebalancing the scales

For the uninitiated, strategic lawsuits (or SLAPPs) are pursued with the purpose of shutting down public scrutiny of matters in the public interest – frequently directed against individuals and organisations, including journalists, media outlets, whistleblowers, activists, academics and NGOs. The Foreign Policy Centre (FPC) has been at the forefront of evidencing and addressing this issue, particularly highlighting the UK as a key nexus for SLAPPs and kleptocracy.

## A hidden problem steps into the spotlight

Journalists are often at the forefront of exposing transnational corruption yet are frequently the first in line to face repercussions for doing so. In Europe, efforts to address SLAPPs started after the 2017 assassination of the Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, who at the time of her death had 47 legal cases open against her.

FPC began our research in 2020 by conducting a global survey with 63 investigative journalists reporting on financial crime and corruption in 41 countries. Respondents pinpointed legal threats as the greatest challenge to their reporting and identified the UK as the leading international source of such threats, almost as frequent as those from European Union countries and the United States combined.

However, it was not until 2021 that this issue started to receive greater public attention here, with the high profile legal actions brought against the journalists Catherine Belton, author of *Putin's People*, and Tom Burgis, author of *Kleptopia: How Dirty Money is Conquering the World*. By July 2022, in light of Russia's full scale invasion of Ukraine and renewed concerns about the level of Russian dirty money and malign influence in our country, the Government committed to "decisively... stamp out SLAPPs."

## What makes the UK such an attractive jurisdiction?

The Government's pledge to legislate came after a consultation, which found that journalists, media and other publishers will "no longer publish information on certain individuals or topics – such as exposing serious wrong-doing or corruption – because of potential legal costs."



SLAPPS WORK BY DRAWING OUT THE PROCESS TO EXERT AS MUCH PRESSURE AS POSSIBLE; MANY CASES NEVER REACH TRIAL, BUT CAN STILL TAKE MONTHS IF NOT YEARS TO RESOLVE

Defending a libel case to trial in the UK costs at least £500,000, with most starting at £1 million. Even preliminary hearings can run anywhere from £50-£100,000. HarperCollins, the publisher of Belton and Burgis' books, spent £1.5 million and £233,000 respectively to defend them, despite concluding at relatively early stages.

SLAPPs work by drawing out the process to exert as much pressure as possible; many cases never reach trial, but can still take months if not years to resolve. Even if they want to defend their reporting some journalists and media outlets feel they have no option but to settle, apologise and amend or remove articles due to the cost both to their financial and other resources. If successful, it can create a vacuum of information about what was being reported and even that a legal challenge took place.

### **The link with financial crime and corruption**

The National Crime Agency estimates that over £100 billion pounds is laundered annually through the UK or through UK corporate structures. The extent to which our country is a facilitator of financial crime, a destination for illicit money and the source of a wide range of enablers to support corrupt individuals is alarming. Unsurprisingly those with deep pockets, enriched with illicit funds, are inevitably strongly motivated to shut down any scrutiny of potential wrongdoing.

Over 70% of the cases referenced in FPC's 2022 report, *'London Calling: The issue of legal intimidation and SLAPPs against media emanating from the UK'*, published with ARTICLE 19, were linked to economic crime. Our findings were cited by the Government when they introduced anti-SLAPP provisions into Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act (ECCTA), which became law last November.

### **Addressing SLAPPs in the UK**

Legislation, regulation and cultural change are the three key areas in which the UK Anti-SLAPP Coalition has been actively seeking solutions to address SLAPPs, since its establishment in January 2021. Three years later, there has been tangible progress in all aspects: with anti-SLAPP measures in law for the first time; regulators taking action to investigate SLAPPs, review the behaviour of those that enable them and provide additional guidance; and policies regarding sanctioned individuals being able to pursue SLAPPs in the UK amended.


The Government has also established a SLAPPs Taskforce to look at non-legislative measures to tackle this issue, and support those affected by it, and included SLAPPs in the country's National Action Plan on the Safety of Journalists. Although the topic is not without its detractors, this is evidence of an important cultural shift. Something that was happening largely out of sight, which often thrived exactly because of that, has been put it squarely in the spotlight.

There is still much more to be done. The ECCTA provisions have yet to be implemented, there is a standalone anti-SLAPP Bill before Parliament that has the potential to provide universal protections for those speaking out on any matters of public interest, but not without needed amendments; and we are still awaiting the findings of regulatory action.

More broadly there is also much more the UK can, and must, do to prevent itself, through the misuse of its financial or legal systems, from becoming complicit in creating opportunities for corruption or the silencing of those trying to expose it. ■

**In Part two of the summer 2024 edition of *Inside Out* and against the backdrop of World Press Freedom Day on 3 May 2024, we will examine in more detail the extent of the problem, the progress of further legislation required in the UK and more precisely what more can be done to strengthen British foreign policy to enable the UK to become a stronger global campaigner on a crucial issue of media freedom.**

**Susan Coughtrie is Director of the Foreign Policy Centre, co-founder of the UK Anti-SLAPP Coalition, and a member of the UK Government's SLAPPs Taskforce.**

  
MOST INCREASES IN SERVICES – SUCH AS MOBILE PHONE BILLS, RAIL FARES AND SO ON – TAKE RPI AS A STARTING POINT. OUR OFFICE PENSIONS ARE THEREFORE LIKELY TO FALL FURTHER BEHIND THE RPI FIGURE YEAR ON YEAR

# Pensions Increases

**Pat Ashworth** outlines the boost to your pensions this April and what this is based on  
**Public Service Pensions**

Public service pensions which have been in payment for a year will be increased by 6.7% from 8 April 2024 in line with the September-to-September increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Any pension which has been in payment for less than a year will be increased by a proportionate amount depending on the number of months it has been in payment. Public Service Pensions are not covered by the 'Triple Lock' (see below).

## State Pensions

Your State Pension will rise by 8.5% in April. As most of our members will know, State Pensions are subject to the Triple Lock – that is they are increased by either (a) CPI inflation, or (b) wage increases, or (c) 2.5% - whichever one of these is the highest. The State Pension in the coming year is being increased by the rate of wages between May and July in the previous year (8.5%) because this is higher than the September 2023 CPI figure.

## RPI/CPI/CPIH

For those confused by the alphabet spaghetti of official inflation figures, RPI includes mortgage interest repayments and is therefore affected by house prices and interest rates. CPI takes no account of house prices, but factors in other goods and services. CPIH includes housing costs but uses 'Rental Equivalence' – how much you would pay to rent an equivalent property rather than mortgage costs.

This is important for our pensions and the government's policy is to move from CPI to CPIH in 2030. Research by public service colleagues shows that in January, RPI inflation was 4.9%, with both CPI and CPIH coming in at around 4.0%. Most increases in services – such as mobile phone bills, rail fares and so on – take RPI as a starting point. Our office pensions are therefore likely to fall further behind the RPI figure year on year.

It is something the Public Service Pensioners Council – to which we are affiliated – will direct its lobbying efforts in the coming years. The fairest outcome for all would be to have just one official index. RPI is considered by the Royal Statistical Society to be a more valid measure of the increase in the cost of living for the average household. However the government uses the lower CPI to uplift pensions and benefits – only a cynic would suggest why...!

## Capita to Take Over Pensions Administration

The Cabinet Office Pensions team has confirmed that Capita has been awarded the contract to administer the Civil Service Pension Scheme, from December 2025. The current service provider, MyCSP, will continue to administer the scheme during the transitional period to December 2025.

The new contract will run for seven years to 2032, with the option to extend the contract by a further period of up to three years.

Capita will be responsible for delivering employer and member services; pensions payroll; as well as administrative support for the Civil Service Injury Benefit Scheme; other compensation schemes; and related finance and accounting services. ■

## Inside Out Summer 2024 Deadline

If you would like to contribute to the Summer 2024 edition of *Inside Out* kindly send submissions by 13 May to:

Character Publishing, 9 Chartwell Court, 151 Brook Road, NW2 7DW

Alternatively email:

[editor@characterpublishing.co.uk](mailto:editor@characterpublishing.co.uk) or [edward.glover@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:edward.glover@fcdo.gov.uk)

Kindly limit contributions to 1000 words and please note that submissions may be shortened due to space constraints.



# Regaining Lost Ground

The latest Joint DFID and FCDO Associations Panel focused on Climate Change and International Development. **Gillian Dare** reports

The UK risks losing the leadership it had on climate change at COP26, according to former COP26 President, Sir Alok Sharma



## Backdrop to the discussion

The third Joint FCDOA/DFID Alumni webinar focused on how the UK could regain its leadership on climate change, demonstrated in 2021 at the 26th United Nations climate summit in Glasgow (COP26), where as president it had campaigned in support of an agreement under which high-income countries would double climate adaptation finance to around US\$40 billion by 2025. However, since then the UK's position has slid backwards, driven by budget constraints, domestic politics, and a general election, likely to take place in this year.

The Climate Change Committee had warned that the UK had lost its leadership on climate issues. The former International Development Minister and President of the COP26 summit, Alok Sharma, agreed that the UK was at risk of losing its “international reputation and influence on climate”. In June 2023, the then FCDO Minister Lord Zac Goldsmith wrote a scathing resignation letter, saying he had been “horrified” at the government abandoning its environmental commitments.

In contrast, the government's new White Paper on international development had provided an opportunity to reboot the UK's climate efforts. The FCDO Minister of State, Andrew Mitchell, had highlighted the paper's focus on climate finance and getting the UN Sustainable Development Goals back on track to meet their 2030 deadline. Against this background, the Panel explored practical ways in which the UK government could actively support efforts to tackle the global climate crisis through its international development work.

## The panellists

**Dr Andrew Steer**, President and CEO of the Bezos Earth Fund.

**Professor Stefan Dercon**, Professor of Economic Policy at the Blavatnik School of Government, Oxford.

**Sir Myles Wickstead**, Visiting Professor (International Relations) at the Department of International Development, Kings College London

The session was moderated by **Pauline Hayes**, Chair of the DFID Alumni Association.

WHAT IS NEEDED IS A NEW DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. DO WE HAVE THE LEADERS TO DO THAT? JEFF BEZOS HAS TAKEN A LEAD IN ESTABLISHING THE US\$10 BILLION EARTH FUND TOWARDS OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS. WILL OTHERS FOLLOW HIS LEAD?



Last year FCDO Minister for International Development Andrew Mitchell launched the White Paper on International Development (below) at the Global Food Security Summit in London



### Is the multilateral system capable of delivering?

**Dr Andrew Steer** opened the session by stating that the picture was mixed: there were grounds for both optimism and pessimism. An amazing amount of progress had been made on renewables and technological developments, leading to our being ahead of predictions in many areas and in alliances between governments and the corporate sector.

But was that enough? We urgently needed to improve targets and ambitions, monitoring and accountability in delivery. Copenhagen and Paris had mainly been voluntary targets. But since Glasgow, the commitments were real and, if implemented, would result in positive progress. If targets

were more ambitious, we could achieve even more. But was that likely?

Multilateral negotiations had resulted in 2023 in many more countries signing up to the Convention on Biodiversity. Moreover, COP28 had addressed fossil fuels for the first time and agreed to double the commitment to reducing use of fossil fuels. But Government-only led policies would not result in the comprehensive measures to save the planet. We had to take a different approach.

Where international and pluralistic groupings had been formed including governments, agencies, the corporate sector and scientific establishments this had resulted in key agreements on oil and gas, food and agriculture and other sectors at Dubai. Moreover, these groupings were committed to self-monitoring.

But the world was still a long way from achieving the changes and reduced targets required. And the question of economic and social inequalities and lack of justice between the advanced rich countries and the poorer countries remained a key concern.

Although 18 countries had put in some US\$359 billion to compensate those countries suffering most from climate change, the richest countries were still undermining the poorest through their trade, monetary and economic policies and were unlikely to make the radical changes necessary.

What was needed was a new dynamic leadership in international development. Did we have the leaders to do that? Jeff Bezos had taken a lead in establishing the US\$10 billion Earth Fund towards overcoming the barriers. Would others follow his lead?



### How will climate change impact inter-national development and international relations and how can international development be adjusted to help combat the effects of climate change?

The next panellist, **Prof-essor Stefan Dercon**, warned that we were facing an existential crisis and the future of the world was at stake. Rich countries could do much better but he questioned whether they were willing to bear the costs of reducing climate change. The UK and other advanced Western countries pursued inconsistent policies and were ultimately hypocritical about addressing climate change. Two critical factors were at play:

PHOTO: FCDO



WHAT SHOULD WE IN THE UK DO? FIRSTLY, STOP SENDING NEGATIVE AND INCONSISTENT SIGNALS, SUCH AS BACK-TRACKING ON PREVIOUS COMMITMENTS AND STOP SUBSIDISING FOSSIL FUELS AND ISSUING NEW COAL AND GAS LICENCES. INSTEAD, WE SHOULD SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW AND DIFFERENT TECHNOLOGIES

- To what extent would the fast-growing economies avoid exterminating the world
- To what extent would the rest of the world stand by, ending up doing far less than required?

We needed to pay more attention towards the fastest-growing economies such as China, India and East Asia where construction and energy demands were growing faster and from where the biggest emerging threats would come. There had been massive advances in technology and some development in financial flows, but the pace was too slow. The transaction cost would be huge.

The World Bank had to some extent become a Climate Bank, but more was needed. In all countries, citizens and their governments wanted to protect their way of life, but that would inevitably be at the expense of others. Inequality and injustice between nations would continue to grow unless we addressed this issue. Were we willing to accept a slightly lower standard of life in the richer countries and bear the costs of global net zero?

Many countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Uganda and others in Africa and Latin America, were stuck in low growth and stagnation. Their carbon footprint was low but if we did not support them and give them the space to grow, they would deteriorate further. There were always trade-offs. We focused our efforts on countries which most affected our own energy security (e.g. protecting the Congo Basin) not those others where, without growth, their citizens had limited access to education, healthcare, water and food security. Some countries had managed to make economic progress based on a more inclusive and greener approach such as India which had increased its commitments. We had to help all the stagnant, low growth countries to develop such approaches.

Did we have the right institutions in place to deliver this? Traditional development approaches did not generally generate effective partnerships between external rich countries and the country concerned. By establishing a development bank, as many other countries had done, the UK could help to leverage in other investment and buy-in from other governments.



**Sir Myles Wickstead** reminded us of the vivid image of planet Earth as a pale blue dot as seen from Voyager 1 in 1990 from the edge of the solar system. A fragile dot in the vast universe with complex ecosystems capable of sustaining life, that could also easily be destroyed. He highlighted how vital it was that we cared for the planet.

Climate change and international development had pursued for decades parallel tracks. The MDGs barely mentioned climate change or the environment. The pivotal change had been the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Summit, intertwining for the first time, based on the four key principles: people, prosperity, peace

and partnerships.

The scientific evidence pointed to the destruction caused by catastrophic climate change if not addressed comprehensively, radically and immediately. Were there any grounds for optimism? The COP Summits could be better. Effectively monitored tighter targets, and a mechanism to enforce them, would achieve the slowing down of the process of destruction, by scaling down the use of fossil fuels and developing alternatives.

But the Trump Administration had stalled the process since 2015, claiming there was no evidence of climate change and accusing the scientists of exaggerating the threat. This mis-information had been seized on by some governments to pursue national agendas with profound implications for global survival and sustainability.

What should we in the UK do? Firstly, stop sending negative and inconsistent signals, such as back-tracking on previous commitments and stop subsidising fossil fuels and issuing new coal and gas licences. Instead, we should support the development of new and different technologies. Rather than cutting taxes, we needed to invest more in sustainable alternatives. The private sector was already ahead of governments.

Secondly, we had to recognise that the SDGs provided the best framework for domestic policies as well as international development – a fact already recognised by many local governments in their brilliant work on making their localities greener. Their example needed to be taken on board by central government in their national and international policies.

Thirdly, we had to restore the UK's 0.7% allocation for international development but taking greater account of how to utilise it to invest in sustainable greener development through new and different mechanisms.

Fourthly, the UK had to develop and work in real partnerships to effect greater synergy between central and local government, the corporate sector and civil society engaging the whole community.

The UK also had to play a stronger and more forward role in the Summit of the Future and the high-level reviews of the SDGs this Autumn, especially around increased climate finance targets and more ambitious targets in all areas threatening sustainability. Several of the SDGs focused on the complementary roles of all the players to achieve this.



# THE UK AND THE GLOBAL CLIMATE CRISIS

WITH ELECTIONS DUE  
HERE AND IN MANY  
COUNTRIES IN 2024, THE  
DANGER IS THAT  
GOVERNMENTS WILL TRY  
TO WEAKEN  
COMMITMENTS FOR FEAR  
OF ALIENATING THEIR  
CITIZENS

This would require a much stronger political will and commitment. With elections due here and in many countries in 2024, the danger was that governments would try to weaken commitments for fear of alienating their citizens. But throughout the world the younger generation had already recognised the urgency for radical change and new policies and approaches. Governments had to be prepared to take more policy risks and our own leaders needed to provide more inspired leadership at home and globally to encourage all countries to meet their commitments.

In the questions which followed, participants asked how to inspire a wider commitment amongst people globally; to fight misinformation and attempts by elites to undermine the scientific evidence; and to reform the use of outdated economic and growth models by demonstrating that smart climate targets and mechanisms could generate real growth and benefits for everyone.

Professor Dercon argued for different approaches to development assistance – based on investment, loans, market leverage, and innovation, moving away from traditional approaches. More innovative means could make a real difference in many of the more difficult and poorer countries, leading to domestic investment in health and education. But success would only come if they could resolve their governance, cultural and related traditional challenges. As with the richer countries, it was dependent on political will and inspired leadership.

## The summing up

Pauline Hayes highlighted several take-ways from the discussion:

- There were grounds for both pessimism and optimism. Progress was being made; more people around the world were seeking ways to mitigate the negative effects of climate change; technological advances were already making a difference. But in most countries, there remained a lack of political will and visionary leaders not afraid to challenge traditional thinking on climate change and development
- Engagement by all sectors – governments, corporate entities, international agencies, and financial institutions, scientific establishments and the public – had increased. We needed to harness and expand it through building strong partnerships and holding to account those who had backtracked or failed to deliver. Misinformation promulgated by individuals and politicians should be countered.
- We had to assist the poorer countries to grow their economies so that their citizens could also enjoy the fundamental necessities to live, and to find ways to assist and strengthen them so they were not dependent on richer countries.
- The UK urgently needed to explore establishing a development bank and on the international front participate in and provide leadership in the global summits later this year to reform the international instruments, economic models and accountability.
- Above all, our planet was running out of time. We could no longer delay or prevaricate. ■

**Building strong partnerships:  
Minister for International  
Development Andrew Mitchell  
meets with the Commonwealth  
Secretary General Baroness  
Scotland at COP28**

PHOTO: COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT





PHOTO: WILTON PARK

# A history of Wilton Park

An appeal by **Nick Hopkinson**, Chair, the Sir Heinz Koeppler Trust, and former Director, Wilton Park, for contributions from FCDOA members

## Background

Founded by Sir Heinz Koeppler as part of Sir Winston Churchill's vision to help build a new post-war Germany, Wilton Park in partnership with the (then) Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) established a unique approach to democracy building.

Decades later, the political scientist Joseph Nye referred to such projects as being part of a country's 'soft power' which he defined as *"The ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment. A country's soft power rests on its resources of culture, values, and policies... smart public diplomacy requires an understanding of the roles of credibility, self-criticism, and civil society in generating soft power."*

Wilton Park's important role in helping build a democratic post-war Germany was recognised in June 1971 when the then German Federal Minister of Defence, Helmut Schmidt, remarked that its *"rural seclusion of the South Downs gave birth to many ideas which became a political reality in Germany in the years to come. Almost a whole generation of German politicians defined their concept of and attitude towards Britain and the British, based on the impressions they received at Wilton Park."*

## Evolution

Wilton Park has since evolved into a recognised first-class international policy forum and soft power asset. In many ways, it is remarkable such a small convening institution not only survived, but evolved successfully, against the odds, especially financial. Like many institutions, Wilton Park's output cannot be judged by private sector metrics, given its purpose to educate and to advance and influence policy objectives and processes.

For example, series such as the late 1980s conferences on South Africa were widely recognised as helping facilitate a relatively smooth transition from apartheid. Conferences on NATO and arms control since the 1960s contributed to Western security policy making. The EU enlargement series between 1993 and 2013 helped advance the accession of Central and Southern European states.

Between 1946 and 1957, 84 largely Anglo-German meetings were organised by Sir Heinz. Since 1958, the 'new' Wilton Park saw the broadening of Wilton Park's subject coverage and range of nationalities participating under an independent Academic Council and Advisory Council of OECD ambassadors and High Commissioners. In 1991 Wilton Park became an executive agency overseen by a FCO Departmental Board. In recent years, Wilton Park has increasingly focused on development issues and advancing UK bilateral relationships.



THE VOLUME AIMS TO HIGHLIGHT SOME OF THE KEY DISCUSSIONS WHICH WILTON PARK HAS CONVENED AND EXAMINE WHAT IT CONTRIBUTED TO INTERNATIONAL DEBATES AND POLICY MAKING, AND HOW AND WHY THIS MATTERED FOR UK, MULTILATERAL AND GLOBAL FOREIGN POLICY MAKING

Before the mid-1980s, it was understandable that policy makers and opinion formers from around the world came to its home at Wiston House in West Sussex (pictured above). Beyond Westminster, national capitals, and the glare of publicity, it contributed to the candour and value of the discussions. Wiston House's Elizabethan grandeur set a standard which became synonymous with the Wilton Park brand.

However, as new global power centres emerged, and as travel and international communications became easier, it became increasingly evident Wilton Park could and should also go to the world.

With EU accession conferences taking place regularly throughout Central and Southern Europe in the 1990s, Wilton Park gained a reputation as a valued international *Track II* policy forum which could partner successfully with a range of governments and other stakeholders around the world. In 2003, the first conferences outside Europe were convened in Japan and Brazil. Today, Wilton Park has convened conferences in more than 50 countries, a remarkable evolution from the small temporary re-education camp of 1946.

## A volume of history

The Sir Heinz Koeppler Trust, <https://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/about-us/sir-heinz-koeppler-trust/>, a registered charity created from a gift in the will of Wilton Park's founder to benefit the 'Wilton Park purpose' of enhancing international understanding, has committed considerable resources to produce a comprehensive overview of Wilton Park's 77 years and its discussions. In the past two years, the Trust and a team of 12-chapter authors have been researching, writing and liaising closely with key stakeholders on the volume provisionally titled: *The policies and power of public diplomacy - Wilton Park's world*.

The volume aims to highlight some of the key discussions which Wilton Park has convened and examine what it contributed to international debates and policy making, and how and why this mattered for UK, multilateral and global foreign policy making.

## Progress

The project has now completed the first stage of its work with the production of initial draft chapters based on more than 1,000 conference reports and archival research. Chapters inter alia cover:

- Wilton Park's early history as a 're-education' camp for German officers.
- Its evolving purpose, method, and place.
- The eminent individuals who spoke and participated in Wilton Park's conferences.
- The involvement of the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO); and
- The management and the challenges they faced.

The major focus of the volume is on key themes which Wilton Park addressed over the years including:

- Democracy promotion
- The (first) Cold War
- NATO and transatlantic security after 1991
- Controlling arms proliferation
- The UK and Europe
- EU Enlargement, Russia and their 'neighbourhoods'
- Africa (including ending apartheid)
- The emergence of China
- The Middle East
- The media, digitisation, and good governance
- The United Nations
- Conflict, and humanitarian intervention and
- Trade policy, as well as major international challenges such as promoting sustainable development, curbing climate change and international health.

## Seeking your input

With the second stage of the project now underway, one of the key components is building on the considerable progress to date with input from former and serving officers, FCDOA members and others who may wish to share memories, reflections, outcomes and/or any anecdotes concerning any aspect of Wilton Park's work.

Some endorsements and quotes have already been received from former senior diplomats, and it is hoped readers may also consider contributing. In order to facilitate this, relevant draft chapters can be shared. Chapter authors should be pleased to receive brief submissions of up to a page and/or brief quotes (which can be on or off the record). Alternatively, chapter authors could conduct brief oral interviews. I hope FCDOA members will consider taking up this invitation. ■

If you, and/or one of your contacts, are interested in contributing, you are warmly invited to contact Nick Hopkinson for further information on [nickhopkinson151@aol.co.uk](mailto:nickhopkinson151@aol.co.uk)



ACCORDING TO A SURVEY BY THE BRITISH COUNCIL, 86% OF PUPILS DID NOT THINK THEY WERE LIKELY TO USE LANGUAGES IN THEIR FUTURE CAREERS, AND 41% THOUGHT LANGUAGES WERE NOT USEFUL. WE URGENTLY NEED A CHANGE OF MINDSET

# Why German language learning matters

Miguel Berger, German Ambassador to the United Kingdom, explains why reversing the decline in the number of German speakers in Britain is vital for bilateral relations

One of my great privileges as German Ambassador to the UK is to meet and engage with people all over the country who have a special connection to Germany thanks to their knowledge of the German language – school pupils, students, teachers, lecturers and, of course, civil servants and diplomats. Unfortunately this group is shrinking.

## A worrying decline

Since 2004, the number of students sitting GCSE exams in German has fallen by over 70% to under 35,000 in 2023. The decline in German A-levels has been similar, with fewer than 2,400 pupils taking German A-level in 2023. You don't have to be the German Ambassador to be deeply troubled by this trend. In the framework of our bilateral partnership, I believe it is important to push back against this development, which has resulted from various factors.

## Bucking the trend

Amid this downward trend there are outstanding examples of teachers who inspire pupils to take up and continue learning German. In my many conversations with German language teachers and lecturers, I hear uplifting stories of those who – through sheer tenacity and courage – have succeeded in putting German back on the map, despite the many challenges they face. They have managed to reintroduce German at schools where head teachers had abandoned language teaching altogether as too expensive and, shockingly, as irrelevant. I stand in awe of any teacher who manages to reverse the trend towards dropping German (or any other language) from the curriculum. These inspiring teachers are a credit to their profession.

## The challenges

These may sometimes seem insurmountable: modern foreign languages are no longer obligatory at GCSE – and never have been at A-level; there is a (false) image of German being too difficult a subject, in which it is hard to get good grades; there is a lack of teachers of German; the curriculum doesn't allow sufficient contact hours for language teaching. If pupils take up German, they need to be sure that they will be able to continue with it all the way to A-level and beyond, if they so wish. The 'supply chain' for German between the primary, secondary and tertiary sector needs to work. It currently does not.

Worst of all, pupils do not believe that foreign languages are useful for their careers. According to a survey by the British Council, 86% of pupils did not think they were likely to use languages in their future careers, and 41% thought languages were not useful. We urgently need a change of mindset.

## Don't underestimate the value of the German language

While I recognise the importance and global role of English, the fact is that knowledge of German is a huge asset, particularly with Germany being the largest economy in Europe and German the mother tongue of more people in Europe than any other language. When I visit British and German companies in the UK, one thing that business leaders consistently tell me is that they are actively searching for employees with German language skills. Studies of job vacancies regularly list German as the most sought-after language among employers. Although translation programmes are becoming ever more sophisticated, they will never replace proficient communicators in today's highly interconnected world.





AS CAREER DIPLOMATS,  
YOU AND I KNOW THAT  
LANGUAGE LEARNING IS  
FIRST AND FOREMOST A  
GATEWAY TO ANOTHER  
CULTURE, ENCOURAGING  
FRIENDSHIP, TRUST AND  
UNDERSTANDING ACROSS  
BORDERS. THESE ARE  
EXACTLY THE QUALITIES  
THAT WE WANT TO SEE  
EMBEDDED AT THE HEART  
OF THE FUTURE  
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN  
THE UK AND ITS  
EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURS

### Initiatives

While more needs to be done, last year saw a milestone in improving language learning in the UK. In 2023, the Department for Education (England) launched the Language Hub Programme and tasked the National Consortium for Languages Education with its implementation. This will hopefully raise interest in studying languages across primary and secondary schools.

We at the German Embassy are keen to support the initiatives by the Department for Education. That is why I initiated a special forum on Making the Case for German in November last year to form an alliance for German that will join the dots between all the different offerings, making a strong and comprehensive case for German for students, teachers and head teachers as well as parents and businesses.

This is in addition to the various projects and initiatives organised by the Embassy and its partners over the past decades, including the annual German Teacher Award and the German Career Roadshow, to name but a few. I would add that the FCDO, and the Civil Service German Network with its impressive network of German speakers across Whitehall, which has collaborated with the Embassy for years, both have the potential to play an important role in making the case for German.

### The value of language learning

As career diplomats, you and I know that language learning is first and foremost a gateway to another culture, encouraging friendship, trust and understanding across borders. These are exactly the qualities that we want to see embedded at the heart of the future relationships between the UK and its European neighbours.

In this spirit, the learning of languages is a far-sighted and wise investment in our joint destiny as countries, not only on an economic, but also an intercultural and interpersonal level. If we are to value and further develop our relationship with each other, we will again have to learn, in every sense, to speak each other's language. ■

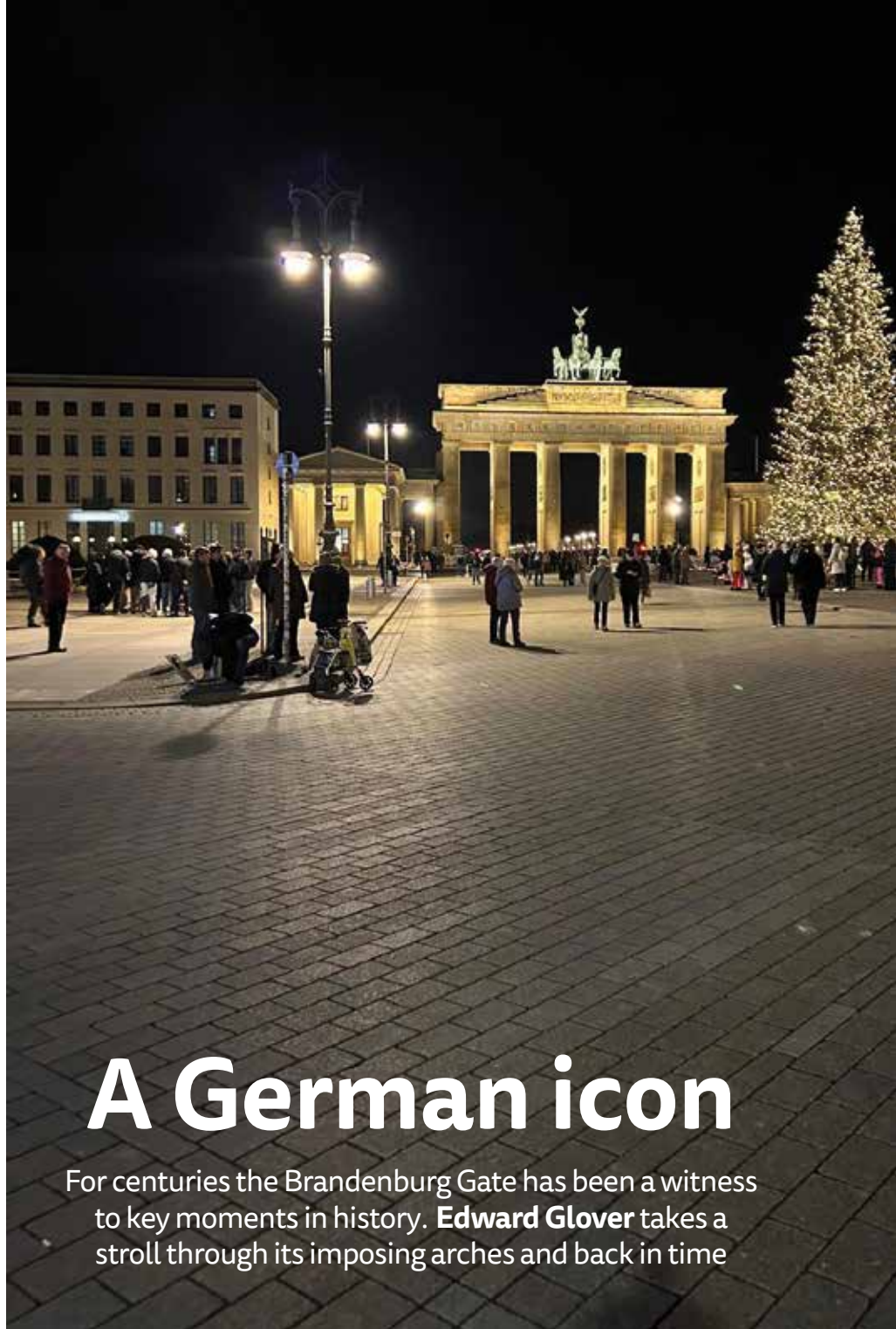
## ENCOUNTERS



FOLLOWING GERMANY'S SURRENDER IN 1945, THE GATE, WHICH HAD LARGELY SURVIVED BOMBING, FOUND ITSELF ON THE EDGE OF THE SOVIET OCCUPATION ZONE, DIRECTLY NEXT TO THE BOUNDARY OF THE BRITISH ZONE AND LATER BECOMING PART OF THE BORDER BETWEEN EAST AND WEST BERLIN

Pariser Platz December 2023 – where once it divided Berlin, now the Brandenburg Gate is a place for people to come together

PARISER PLATZ DECEMBER 2023



# A German icon

For centuries the Brandenburg Gate has been a witness to key moments in history. **Edward Glover** takes a stroll through its imposing arches and back in time

**A** high point of any visit to Berlin (my most recent was last December) is the Brandenburg Gate – the imposing 18th century neoclassical structure built on the orders of the Prussian monarch Friedrich Wilhelm II to help establish the city as a cultural centre following the military triumphs of his uncle, Frederick the Great.

Perhaps the best-known landmark in Germany, it was built on the site of a former city gate marking the start of the road from Berlin to the town of Brandenburg on the Havel River which once upon a time used to be the capital of the Margraviate of Brandenburg.

For those less familiar with the German capital, the imposing archway is at the western end of the city centre district known as *Mitte*. It's the monumental entry to the *Unter den Linden*, a broad boulevard leading directly to the partially rebuilt royal palace of the Prussian monarchs – now known as the Berlin Forum – and beyond to the famous museum island (home of the *Pergamon Museum*) and the Berlin Cathedral. One block to the north of the gate stands the *Reichstag* Building, housing the German parliament (the *Bundestag*).

Close to the gate are the US, British, French, and Russian embassies, as well as the distinctive *Holocaust Memorial*. Directly opposite is the famous *Adlon Hotel*, opened in 1907 by Lorenz Adlon a wealthy wine merchant as Berlin's answer to the *Ritz* in Paris. Afternoon tea – with a slice of *Adlon* chocolate cake – in the hotel lobby is a delight if you have the time to spare. In the summer months you can indulge in the *Adlon* pavement café.





THE ARCH REMAINED CLOSED UNTIL THE 22ND OF DECEMBER 1989 WHEN, FOLLOWING THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL ON 9 NOVEMBER, HELMUT KOHL, THE WEST GERMAN CHANCELLOR, WALKED THROUGH THE GATE TO BE GREETED BY HANS MODROW, THE EAST GERMAN PRIME MINISTER

### Main architectural features

The gate's central portion epitomises the tradition of the Roman triumphal arch, although in style it's more an early example of Greek revival architecture in Germany. The monumental structure is supported by twelve fluted Doric columns, six to each side forming five passageways. There are also walls between the pairs of columns at front and back decorated with reliefs of the labours of Hercules.

The gate's central portion is flanked by L-shaped wings on each side at a lower height using the same Doric order. Adjacent are buildings or custom houses set back from the columns serving as gatehouses for the collection of tolls in force until 1860.

On top of the arch is a bronze sculpture by Johann Gottfried Schadow of a quadriga – a chariot drawn by four horses – driven by a goddess figure, originally intended to represent *Eirene*, the Greek goddess of peace but after the Napoleonic Wars re-named *Victoria*, the Roman goddess of victory, and given an Iron Cross with a crowned imperial eagle perched on top. The quadriga faces towards the city centre.

The gate was designed by Carl Gotthard Langhans, appointed head court architect in 1788. Though he had designed many neo-classical buildings, this was his first significant work in the Greek style and his last major one. A plaque in a street near to the Gendarmenmark records where Langhans lived in an earlier building on the site until shortly before his death.

### History headlines

Napoleon was the first to use the gate for a triumphal procession after which he removed the quadriga to Paris. After his final defeat the sculpture was restored to the arch. From 1814-1918 only the Kaiser and the royal family were allowed to pass through the central archway.

Once the 1st World War ended with the Kaiser's abdication, traffic was allowed through the gate. Lorenz Adlon was a traffic fatality in 1921, hit by a car as he crossed in front of the arch. From 1913-1926 the gate was extensively renovated and, after Hitler's rise to power in 1933, was used as a party symbol.

Following Germany's surrender in 1945, the gate, which had largely survived bombing, found itself on the edge of the Soviet occupation zone, directly next to the boundary of the British zone and later becoming part of the border between East and West Berlin.

The damaged gate was restored in 1956/57 but with the quadriga's Iron Cross replaced by a wreath as Langhans had originally intended. Vehicles and pedestrians could travel freely through the gate until the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, erected directly in front of the gate's western side.

The arch remained closed until the 22nd of December 1989 when, following the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November, Helmut Kohl, the West German chancellor, walked through the gate to be greeted by Hans Modrow, the East German prime minister. The gate was subsequently refurbished in time for the 12th anniversary of German unification.

The Brandenburg Gate – a German icon – is permanently closed to vehicle traffic and much of Pariser Platz has become a cobblestone pedestrian zone – the focal point of many public events. ■

# On Obedience to Mount Athos

Following a pilgrimage to the Holy Mountain in Greece, the sacred centre of the Orthodox Church, **Richard Cashman** reflects on how conflict in the temporal world affects the spiritual



**The Zograf monastery rises out of the pine forests on Mount Athos**

**O**n a hot July morning in Ouranoupoli, I stood sheepishly before the Greek immigration official as he leafed through my British passport, incongruous amongst the many Romanian, Bulgarian and Serbian ones I had seen flash through his hands.

“Are you Orthodox?” he asked. “No, I was baptised Anglican.” “Well, at least you’re not Catholic,” he chuckled, and handed me my *diamonitirion*, the visa to the autonomous monastic peninsular of Mount Athos, secluded for a thousand years in north-eastern Greece. “But there’s a mistake, it’s valid for only three days and I arranged to stay for three weeks.” “So stay for three weeks,” he chuckled again, and waived me out the room.

## Plans delayed

I decided to visit Athos when my deployment by the FCDO to the OSCE mission in Ukraine was delayed indefinitely after an OSCE patrol car hit a landmine in April 2017. I had already left my lawyering job and was at a loose end, but remembered about Athos, the Holy Mountain, from the travel books of Patrick Leigh Fermor, who in turn knew of it from Robert Byron’s *The Station*. Looking at the FCDO email, slowly a plan crystallised to make a trip I had hitherto never had the time for. But first I had to get in.

## Entering the celestial realm

The information online described the *diamonitirion* as giving pilgrims just three days, indeed, which seemed little time to explore many of Athos’ 20 monasteries. And so I emailed directly to the monastery of Saint Panteleimon, populated mostly by Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian monks, explaining that I had taken an interest in Orthodoxy while living first in Sarajevo and later in Moscow, and would like to come for more than three days.

“Come for as long as you like, *na poslushanii* (on obedience),” appeared the rapid, unexpected reply. “Bring some working clothes and we will prepare your *diamonitirion*.”


## Terrestrial tensions

Panteleimon is known as Russikon in Greek, which should be understood less as a reference to Tsar Peter I’s imperial ‘Rossiya’ and more in the context of the competing claims modern-day Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians have to medieval Rus. Along with Vatopedi it is one of

# ENCOUNTERS

Walking through the  
vinyards of Chilandar



  
IN SEVERAL TREATIES  
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CHILANDAR (SERBIAN),  
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OF THE ECUMENICAL  
PATRIARCH IN  
CONSTANTINOPLE  
(ISTANBUL), AND TO GIVE  
ALL MONKS GREEK  
CITIZENSHIP

the largest monasteries, with around 120 monks.

Yet before the 1917 Russian Revolution, Panteleimon had been overflowing with more than 1500 monks and was then directly under the Russian Orthodox Church. The Greek government complained of an invasion and in several treaties following the First World War it was agreed to place all 20 monasteries, including Panteleimon, Zograf (Bulgarian) and Chilandar (Serbian), under the authority of the Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople (Istanbul), and to give all monks Greek citizenship.

A century later, Panteleimon continued to excite controversy on the peninsula, as Ukraine lobbied the Ecumenical Patriarch to restore the independence the Kyivan church had enjoyed from Moscow up until 1686: a status known as autocephaly.

## New friends

Disembarking at Panteleimon from a large blue and white ferry I was pointed to the pilgrims' guesthouse (the *archontariki*) by Sergey, a businessman from Minsk. Amid hectic scenes, beds in dormitory rooms were assigned to pilgrims staying a night or two, while sweet locum, fiery tsipouro and strong coffee were handed around.

After an hour I was plucked by a Father Ilya and taken to the *ekonom* quarters for those on obedience, where I had my own cell overlooking an embankment full of vines and solar panels. On my corridor I met Viktor, in his 60s and from Moscow, who came on obedience for a fortnight each year. We discussed the Russian film *Leviathan* about corruption in the Russian church and he told me a similar story about the Karelian monastery of Valaam which, after the Soviet



AT VATOPEDI, FAVOURITE OF KING CHARLES, I WATCHED THE ARCHBISHOP OF YAKUTIA ARRIVE AND FOLD LINEN IN THE LAUNDRY WITH A ROMANIAN PROFESSOR OF BYZANTINE STUDIES



The cupolas of St Panteleimon

dissolution, had evicted the residents of the island on which it sits. Nikita, in his 20s, was also from Moscow, and was slowly recovering his speech after a life-changing road accident. Levan, from Georgia, was a master stone mason. And Spiridon, half Greek, worked on the reception. From the *ekonom's* veranda we looked across the green Gulf of Sithonia and down to the cloisters, with fruit trees full of bumblebees during the day and bats flickering about at night.

### On obedience

Athos operates on Byzantine time, three hours ahead of Athens. Though I stayed for almost a month I never became accustomed to waking in the dark of the Greek summer for morning prayer at what was really 04:30, then going to bed strangely early. After morning prayer was the divine liturgy (mass).

From the church the congregation then proceeded in chant to the refectory and the huge doors were locked for *trapeza*, the first of the day's two meals. Monks and pilgrims ate in silence at long tables, with the local wine and excellent, mostly vegetarian, dishes being cleared after just 15 minutes.

Another short service followed. Next was rest in one's cell, during which I read about the English Orthodox archbishop Kallistos (Thomas) Ware, Rowan Williams' Oxford debate with Richard Dawkins, and Williams' doctoral work on the theologian Vladimir Lossky.

Then came work. In the courtyard of the *ekonom* those on obedience gathered beside a small, shiny John Deere tractor. Father Nikita radioed ahead to different parts of the estate, blessed us and the tractor with holy water flecked from a paint brush and assigned us our tasks. I worked variously on a large scrap metal heap, in the forest with a wood chipping machine, in the olive groves, in the kitchen garden and in the monastery itself. After four or five hours of work, I would slip off to a rock pool before evening prayers and *trapeza*: swimming being neither blessed nor condemned as a sin.

### The pilgrim's progress

After a fortnight at Panteleimon – the etiquette for obedience being a week minimum – I left to visit the other monasteries. For the next ten days I trekked the stony forest paths, occasionally catching a glimpse of a begowned figure, or checking directions with other pilgrims, but often completely alone, supposing the wolves I could hear at night must be about somewhere.

At the Megisti Lavra, the oldest of the monasteries, I attended an all-night vigil to celebrate its feast day. Pantokrator I visited with Nikita and an American friend he had acquired somewhere. To Zograf I walked with an overbearing Ukrainian judge, probably much in need of being lustrated. At Chilandar, famous for its concentrated retsina, I was shown around by two Serbian teenagers. And at Vatopedi, favourite of King Charles, I was given a room instead of a dormitory bed, watched the Archbishop of Yakutia arrive and fold linen in the laundry with a Romanian professor of Byzantine studies.

### Ukraine's holy mountain

The remarkable experience of Athos proved valuable when I was deployed to eastern Ukraine shortly afterwards and the OSCE became increasingly interested in monitoring the move towards

The Church of the Megisti Lavra



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autocephaly for the Ukrainian church. There we kept a close eye on the debates of the mostly Russian-affiliated parishes about what to do should the Ecumenical Patriarch recognise Ukraine's national church.

Even in Sviatohirsk (meaning Holy Mountain), the eastern of Ukraine's three great *lavras* (monasteries), it was increasingly understood that Russia's objection to Ukraine's autocephaly was not a matter of spirituality, but one of power and a reaction to its ongoing imperial decline, just as the establishment of Ukraine's Greek Catholic Church in 1596 had resulted from Poland-Lithuania's imperial ascendance. In 2019 Ukraine's autocephaly was finally granted.

### Full-scale invasion

In mid-February 2022 the FCDO withdrew the British contingent to the OSCE. Over the coming weeks, as agonising videos reached me from Ukrainian friends, one came from a monk at Sviatohirsk showing a cupola destroyed by Russian shelling. Sergey in Minsk messaged in support of Ukraine and with hearsay information that Belarusian army commanders were refusing to take part in the aggression.

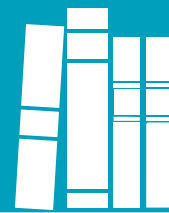
Fast forward almost two years and hundreds of Russian-affiliated parishes have moved to the restored Ukrainian church, while the Ukrainian government is close to winking out the last of Russia's representatives from the central Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. From Athos, Spiridon tells me that the monks of Panteleimon have largely maintained good relations and that a first service in Ukrainian has been held there. The course of the war remains uncertain. At the least, however, it has exposed Russia's long-standing chauvinism within the Orthodox world. ■

Richard Cashman (pictured right in borrowed pilgrim clothes) was seconded by the FCDO to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine from 2017-2022.



# Browsing Books


Good reads taken from the bookshelves of fellow FCDOA members



## Playing Britannia

By Juliet Campbell  
Published by Holywell Press  
RRP £25 on Amazon.com  
ISBN-13:978-1916929005



  
 SHE MADE A HESITANT  
 START IN ADAPTING TO A  
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 INTELLECT NOR THE  
 RESILIENCE REQUIRED IN  
 DIPLOMACY

Juliet Collings – later Campbell – was a trailblazer. She joined the Diplomatic Service in 1957 only ten years after the admission of women. That I and other early female recruits have much to thank her for is clear from her memoir *Playing Britannia* in which she describes an eventful life with empathy and humour.

### Growing up

Juliet's childhood and youthful experiences now stand as social history. Those of us who remember World War Two will recognise the upheavals overseen by a generation of redoubtable mothers undaunted by potential hazards. How on earth did Mrs Collings organise the shipment of her car – not to mention her children – from Palestine to Durban in the middle of the War?

Juliet was fortunate to spend so many of her early years and disrupted school days in exotic countries, especially in the Middle East. In the late 1940s Beirut was a cosmopolitan city where young people could enjoy pursuits unimaginable in post-war Britain and Juliet took full advantage of this. But there was also a serious side to life. It was here that her father's job with UNRWA working with Palestinian refugees served to stimulate her interest in international affairs.

### The Experience of Travel

A love of travel, especially to distant and isolated places, runs through the narrative. Sleeping in primitive conditions in rural Thailand, enjoying dances with Carnival officials in Maastricht, suffering temperamental plumbing in Paris (a fate I later shared), visiting the imperial palaces of Beijing, viewing with awe the volcanoes of Indonesia, travelling the length of Java by car – these are among the many experiences she brings to life, often in extracts from letters home. For Juliet was an assiduous correspondent, conjuring up a kaleidoscope of images from the colourful east with its lush vegetation, crowded towns, and magnificent temples.

### Her Diplomatic Service Career

The main historical value of this memoir lies in Juliet's account of her years in the Diplomatic Service. She made a hesitant start in adapting to a world dominated by men, not a straightforward task. Female new entrants could not ignore the pressure to disprove the prejudice of earlier times when conventional wisdom held that women possessed neither the intellect nor the resilience required in diplomacy. And there were practical obstacles, notably the Marriage Bar requiring women diplomats to resign on marriage, lifted eventually in 1973, a development from which both Juliet and I subsequently benefitted.

It would be misleading to make too much of the difficulties, for the welcome from most male colleagues was warm and supportive. There were exceptions, and Juliet was unfortunate to encounter one in Paris. But as her career demonstrates, a determined, capable, and adventurous woman in command of her brief could thrive in the Service.

Juliet met her challenges with vigour, dispelling any notion of female inadequacy. In the isolated conditions of Vientiane she nudged forward frustrating and ultimately unsuccessful international negotiations on the future of Laos; in London as the first female Foreign Office spokesman in News Department her mastery of detail and quick thinking enabled her to establish good relations with the press; both in London and overseas she demonstrated similar characteristics in navigating the intricacies of European Community affairs, even if being in the eye of the storm (as she puts it) sometimes left her exhausted; her ability to handle the unexpected was evident on tour in the Far East with military colleagues; and she confidently



FOREIGN SECRETARY DOUGLAS HURD WAS SO IMPRESSED THAT HE DESCRIBED HER TENURE AS AMBASSADOR TO LUXEMBOURG AS THE "JEWEL IN THE CROWN"

operated as a senior woman diplomat in the Muslim world of Indonesia.

In her final posting as Ambassador in Luxembourg both her hospitality and her understanding of European affairs were valued by the many senior people she encountered, whether from Luxembourg or Britain. Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd was so impressed that he described her tenure as the "jewel in the crown". Throughout the memoir policy analysis is leavened with anecdotes and personality sketches, not least an endearing vignette about Mrs Thatcher fretting as to whether she should be wearing a hat.

**And then Cambridge**

Retirement can disappoint, but not for Juliet. She became Mistress of Girton, the first college for women in Cambridge University, where she successfully steered fellows and students through difficult times. She also played a full part in university activities as a member of Council, spearheading the organisation of a series of celebrations to mark 50 years since the award of degrees to women, a privilege shamefully denied until 1947. At her instigation a special Senate House ceremony enabled some 900 such women to have their degrees formally conferred, one at least describing it as the best day of her life.

*Playing Britannia*, as the title suggests, combines serious intent with a light touch. It is an important record of diplomatic life in the late twentieth century. Do read it.

**Veronica Sutherland**



Juliet Campbell at a book signing at Girton College



FOR OVER 45 YEARS, WE  
HAVE BEEN THE ONLY  
UK-BASED HUMAN RIGHTS  
AND WELFARE CHARITY  
PROVIDING  
HUMANITARIAN AID,  
ADVICE AND EMOTIONAL  
SUPPORT TO PEOPLE  
AFFECTED BY OVERSEAS  
IMPRISONMENT

# Help on the inside

*Prisoners Abroad* is a lifeline for British citizens incarcerated overseas. Chief executive, **Christopher Stacey**, describes the vital humanitarian support the charity offers, both to those in jail and their families back home

**B**ritish people who are detained in prison overseas should be treated with dignity. I'm sure that's something that all FCDOA members believe – and it's at the core of what *Prisoners Abroad* believes too. Dignity means not being subjected to filthy, insanitary conditions. It means not going hungry, not having to use contaminated water to drink, and not living in constant fear of violence.

## Seeking the bare necessities

Access to a regular supply of clean water, food and medicine cannot be taken for granted in many prisons around the world. The UN adopted basic principles for the treatment of prisoners in 1990 and these were further expanded in the UN standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners known as the *Nelson Mandela Rules*. Despite these international declarations, inhumane and degrading treatment continues to be prevalent.

A person in the Philippines recently told us that the weekly prison food ration is not even enough for a day. A raw chicken leg, a third of a pumpkin and half a kilo of rice – that's for a week, and they must have the means to cook it. He said: "I can't do it. I've lost 41 kilos." Moreover, they must pay for water, soap, toothpaste, toothbrush – everything hygiene related. He wrote: "I smell because I can't buy deodorant." I suspect that, like me, you have never had to worry about having enough to eat or being able to afford to be clean.

## Providing a vital link

We look beyond guilt or innocence to uphold people's basic human rights even in the remotest corners of the world where no-one speaks English, or in the anonymity of a vast 'super-max' prison.

Being non-judgemental is at the core of how *Prisoners Abroad* has operated since we were formed as a charity in 1978. For over 45 years, we have been the only UK-based human rights and welfare charity providing humanitarian aid, advice and emotional support to people affected by overseas imprisonment. We assist British citizens during their incarceration, when they return to the UK and need access to resettlement services, and we also support their family and friends throughout the trauma.

*Prisoners Abroad* translates human rights law into practical life-saving actions by providing prisoners access to vitamins and essential food, emergency medical care, freepost envelopes to keep in touch with home as well as books and magazines to help sustain mental health.

Imagine being in a country where you don't understand the language so struggle to communicate or comprehend the legal system. We make sure people know they are not forgotten, and we support people for as long as it takes – from the point of arrest, through the sentence to release and resettlement.

Last year we supported over 1,100 British people overseas in 96 countries. Around a third of those detained are still on remand and are yet to be sentenced for any crime. Challenges and conditions vary hugely, whether it is the delays within the mail system affecting the regularity of contact with family at home, or not having access to feminine hygiene products to maintain a sense of dignity or having to navigate a prison wing run by gangs.

## And the family

Then there are the people who are left behind. We know that families also suffer a level of isolation, exclusion, stigma, and pressure that is unimaginable for those of us who haven't experienced it. The shock of hearing about the arrest of a loved one, the trauma of the sentence, worrying about the conditions in which their relative is being held, as well as the physical distance without contact, and the language barriers – all have a massive impact on families' lives. They are the hidden victims.

We offer a listening ear, giving advice on prison systems and regulations as well as how to visit relatives when circumstances allow. Our regular family support groups help to reduce the isolation and stigma family members can feel.

## Coping with eventual freedom

Towards the end of the sentence, the feeling of uncertainty and dread is huge for people facing deportation to the UK, many of whom haven't lived there for decades. This was what the 306

  
WORKING CLOSELY WITH  
THE CONSULAR SERVICE  
ENSURES OUR LIFE-  
SAVING HUMANITARIAN  
SUPPORT REACHES THOSE  
IN NEED AROUND THE  
WORLD



Christopher Stacey, Chief  
Executive of Prisoners Abroad

people who used our resettlement service last year endured as they prepared to be released from prison. Boarding a flight, being handcuffed for hours, and arriving in London jet-lagged and with nowhere to go is traumatic. For others, returning after a short period of imprisonment can be a huge adjustment too, and many of the people we work with have multiple and complex needs.

Our work gives people the opportunity for a fresh start and a positive future. We work intensively with people on arrival in the UK, finding secure accommodation to ensure no one must sleep on the streets, accessing immediate medical treatment, registering with a doctor, and in time, offering our work preparation programme to learn the skills needed to gain employment, such as interview skills and writing a CV. With the right support and encouragement, we hope that people will thrive in their new surroundings.

### **The importance of fundraising**

It takes an enormous effort to raise the funds to enable the charity to do what it currently does. We are proud of the strong relationship and effective partnership between *Prisoners Abroad* and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Together we make our collective experience and professionalism count.

Working closely with the Consular Service ensures our life-saving humanitarian support reaches those in need around the world. Funding we secure from trusts and foundations enables us to develop and maintain specific projects and services, but with increasing competition for decreasing amounts, the third part of our income is crucial.

We are grateful to our individual donors who give generously to support our work. We know they appreciate the humanitarian focus of our work. Support from individuals provides much-needed unrestricted funding which enables us to provide responsive and tailored life-saving services.

A key focus for the year ahead will be developing our plans. I am ambitious for the charity and ultimately for the people we support. This is more important now because not only do we need to continue to safeguard the vital support that we provide, but we also need to build on our strengths, broaden our reach and deepen our services to support and advocate for the people we exist for.

Our vision is of a world where there is an end to the inhumane and degrading treatment of British people detained in prisons overseas. Through our work, we are in a unique position to understand the needs and challenges of people imprisoned overseas and to support the work of government, policy makers and others in achieving long-term change. ■

If you would like to find out how you can support our work, please visit our website [www.prisonersabroad.org.uk](http://www.prisonersabroad.org.uk)



IT WAS HARD TO FATHOM THAT THIS SLIGHT, GRACIOUS, ELDERLY WOMAN - WHOM WE'D MET A NUMBER OF TIMES THE PREVIOUS YEAR DURING CHOGM AND THE LATE QUEEN ELIZABETH'S STATE VISIT - COULD HAVE MET SUCH A DREADFUL END

# The death of the Iron Lady of India

Forty years on, the memory of the shocking assassination of Indira Gandhi remains vivid for **Andrew Hall**



Newspaper reports of the assassination of Indira Gandhi

31 October 1984 dawned warm and sunny, with clear blue skies in New Delhi. HRH Princess Anne was expected imminently, the England cricket team for a Test series and the renowned actor, filmmaker and writer Peter Ustinov was waiting in Indira Gandhi's office to record an interview for a documentary. Mrs Gandhi set off at 9am to cross the garden from her residence to her office for the interview.



## Mrs Gandhi's Last Battle

By mid-morning reports began to filter in to the High Commission that Indira Gandhi, India's Prime Minister since 1966 (except from 1977-80), had been injured and rushed to hospital. She had been shot multiple times by her two bodyguards at the gate to her residence. Her daughter-in-law Sonia and her private secretary had bundled her into her official car in the absence of an ambulance on standby.

There was no official statement, nothing on All India Radio, so far nothing on the BBC. Contradictory snippets of information came in: she'd been shot; she was still alive; no, she was dead; she'd been killed by Sikhs, in revenge over the Indian Army operation in June which she had ordered to clear the Golden Temple in Amritsar, taken over by Sikh extremists; no, she'd been shot by her own bodyguards (who, it turned out, were both Sikhs).

As the First Secretary (Political) it was up to me to try and find out more. I drove down to the hospital which was swarming with security staff and officials. It seemed unlikely they would let me anywhere near the building.

Then I spotted Mark Tully, the BBC South Asia correspondent, moving confidently through the crowds. Mark was (and is) a legendary figure in India and, I thought, had a good chance of getting through. So I fell in behind him, unobtrusively I hoped, as though I were part of his production team.

Mark (and I) got as far as the lobby outside the operating theatre around midday, where he was able to talk to medical staff emerging from the theatre. They confirmed that Mrs Gandhi, riddled with bullets, was clinically dead when she arrived. Although she was being given multiple blood transfusions, realistically there was no hope of saving her.

THE FUNERAL, A TRADITIONAL HINDU CREMATION, WAS HELD ON 3 NOVEMBER. MARGARET THATCHER FLEW IN – IT WAS LESS THAN THREE WEEKS SINCE SHE HERSELF HAD SURVIVED AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT BY THE IRA IN BRIGHTON BUT SHE WAS DETERMINED TO ATTEND



PHOTO: NEIL COOPER/CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

It was hard to fathom that this slight, gracious, elderly woman – whom we’d met a number of times the previous year during CHOGM and the late Queen Elizabeth’s State Visit – could have met such a dreadful end.

### An Ominous Silence

I returned to the High Commission to relay the news to London. Mrs Gandhi was pronounced dead at 2.20pm local time. There was still no official Indian statement, and would not be until after 6pm. There was now a political vacuum in New Delhi. The Deputy Prime Minister, a Bengali, was accompanying Mrs Gandhi’s son Rajiv on a visit to Calcutta (now Kolkata), nearly a thousand miles away. It was not clear who would take over. Until they got back to New Delhi, the authorities merely kept quiet.

The wheels were quickly set in motion in Protocol Department to plan the UK’s official response to this unexpected tragedy. But this was not to be a conventional state funeral. As I’d emerged from the hospital and driven away I’d been troubled by the huge crowd which had already gathered outside. They were silent, but there was an ugly air of menace.

As the India research analyst for several years I was aware how quickly communal violence could break out. The threatening mood rang alarm bells. And indeed it was here that the first violence broke out later that evening, after the death was confirmed.

On the morning of 1 November columns of smoke were visible across the city. There was hardly any traffic, markets and shops were closed, few people were about. For two days hooligans, often led by Congress Party thugs, roamed the streets, killing, burning and looting at will. All Sikhs were targets: politicians, civil servants, journalists, shopkeepers and Sikhs among our own High Commission staff. Bus, lorry and taxi drivers, predominantly Sikhs, were attacked and their vehicles torched, sometimes with them inside. Over 2000 people were killed in Delhi, several hundred more elsewhere. The police, meanwhile seemed invisible as the security situation deteriorated.

### Feelings Running High

The funeral, a traditional Hindu cremation, was held on 3 November. Princess Anne, her visit repurposed, represented the Queen. Margaret Thatcher flew in – it was less than three weeks since she herself had survived an assassination attempt by the IRA in Brighton but she was determined to attend. With protocol kept to a minimum her motorcade sped through largely empty streets past burning vehicles. So different from the colour and ceremony of CHOGM the previous year!

Indo-British relations were also in a much more fragile state, as a result of the Sikh issue. Public statements by a vocal minority of UK-based Sikhs supporting extremist demands for an independent Punjab, Khalistan, had caused huge disquiet in India, and incomprehension that the UK could not suppress them. Mrs Gandhi had written to Mrs Thatcher expressing concern.

Although Mrs Thatcher had insisted that the law officers explore all avenues to prosecute for incitement they could not build a substantive case. As she arrived in New Delhi Sir Robert Wade-Gery, the High Commissioner, was warning that “feeling is running very high against Britain in the light of [...] Sikh rejoicing in London. There is even talk of a trade boycott...”

Mrs Thatcher worked hard, both in a private meeting with Rajiv Gandhi, and at her press conference after the funeral to convey the British sense of loss, across all communities, the sincerity of Britain’s mourning for Indira Gandhi (and disgust at the few who had celebrated), and our willingness to stand with India no matter what.

The immediate crisis passed quickly, with Rajiv Gandhi stepping into his mother’s shoes as Prime Minister, and the Army restoring order on the streets. But the shadow cast over our relations with India took longer to lift. ■



CREDIT: HENRY A. KISSINGER PAPERS, PART II (MS 1981), MANUSCRIPTS AND ARCHIVES, YALE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY



Kissinger In the Oval Office with Richard Nixon

## Memories of Kissinger

News of the death of Henry Kissinger – a colossus of 20th century diplomacy (and sometime practitioner of ruthless realpolitik) – sparked reminiscences for some FCDOA members. Here are two from Washington and Saigon

### The Day I Met Henry Kissinger

**Edward Glover** recalls the deep impression Henry Kissinger made on him as a young diplomat in Washington

Henry Kissinger is credited as the inventor of 'shuttle diplomacy', pictured here on the tarmac in Lebanon on a tour of the Middle East, with several stopovers including Israel, where he met Golda Meir (below)



It was 1974. I had been in the Washington chancery – my second posting directly after my first – for less than a year. My colleagues in the corridor included Pauline Neville-Jones, Christopher Makins, Tony Reeve, and Richard Samuel. The head of chancery was Johnny Graham. My 2nd secretary responsibilities included liaison with the State Department on the forthcoming UN Law of the Sea Conference, organising Royal visits, and deputising as the ambassador's private secretary in the absence of Jeremy Greenstock on leave.

#### A Saturday I will never forget

On duty, I had gone to the private office early that morning to sort telegrams for the ambassador, Sir Peter Ramsbotham, relaxing in the residence. It was all very quiet until he rang to say Henry Kissinger had just phoned to invite him to the State Department to receive a private briefing about his latest round of Middle East shuttle diplomacy which if I recall focused on the intensive negotiations between the Israelis and the Syrians concerning the Golan Heights.

#### The conversation

Kissinger had with him Joe Sisco, under-secretary for political affairs, and a couple of note-takers, who he insisted would record verbatim what he was about to say. In his unique, gravelly German accent, he warned his side the information he would disclose privately to his friend the British ambassador should not be revealed to anyone else in the State Department. He would decide what



I SUMMARISED  
KISSINGER'S FASCINATING,  
PITHY - AND FREQUENTLY  
HUMOROUS - ACCOUNTS  
OF MEETINGS WITH  
LEADERS



President Anwar  
Sadat of Egypt in  
conversation with  
Henry Kissinger

to disclose, when and to whom. He asked Sir Peter to ensure there was no leakage in London.

For over an hour, I summarised Kissinger's fascinating, pithy and frequently humorous accounts of his conversations with the Israeli, Syrian and Egyptian leaders. His description of Hafez al-Assad was particularly riveting. As I noted each disclosure – underlining specific ear-catching expressions Kissinger used – I could hardly believe what I was doing.

### Afterwards

On our return to Massachusetts Avenue, HMA went to the residence, while I got to work in the private office drafting – from pages of notes in my almost indecipherable shorthand – a series of highly classified telegrams which the ambassador's PA, Bunny Shiels, typed up. Sir Peter made a few corrections, after which the final versions were despatched to London. I went home exhausted.

### A lasting recollection

Though I had been private secretary to the British High Commissioner, Lord Morrice James, in my first posting in Canberra, my experience of such high-level record taking had been non-existent. That day in the State Department, recording Kissinger, left an indelible impression and provided an invaluable experience in the art of record taking.

In schools, lecture theatres and meetings today, the clacking of laptop keys is increasingly replacing the rustle of paper. Both writing and typing have their drawbacks – handwriting can be difficult to decipher later, while devices have their own distractions. But that day in 1974 has never diminished my preference for handwritten record taking – after all better to observe the interlocutor and write rather than focus on a screen and miss the body language. ■

Henry Kissinger in  
Jordan meeting King  
Hussein



## RECOLLECTIONS

Kissinger meeting the  
President of South Vietnam  
Nguyen Van Thieu



## Kissinger in Saigon

**Gerry McCrudden** didn't quite meet the great man while posted to Vietnam during the War, but he did have a white-knuckle car chase to the airport

**H**earing the news today (30 November 2023) of the death at 100 years old of Henry Kissinger, the former US Secretary of State and National Security Adviser under Presidents Nixon and Ford, reminded me of an incident in the early 70s in Saigon.

Kissinger was highly influential in the construct of policies informing the war in Vietnam and Cambodia. I think he invented the concept of shuttle diplomacy. In any event he was in Saigon for meetings with President Nguyen Van Thieu and other senior Vietnamese officials and the American Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker. Those meetings had ended, and Kissinger's convoy was proceeding to Tan Son Nhut Airport to return him to Washington DC.

Sadly, some weeks earlier there had been a civil air crash over the South Vietnamese Highlands. I cannot recall all the details but there was a Hong Kong dimension to it. Some urgent and critical information was being provided by the then British Hong Kong authorities to their Vietnamese counterparts. I was tasked to take this to the Vietnamese Civil Aviation Authority whose offices were near the airport.

### Instant decision

All the Embassy cars were busy, so I was exceptionally allowed to use the 'Flag Car' that is the Ambassador's car which flies the British Ambassadorial flag. It was a Jaguar and well known around Saigon. As we were proceeding along the road to the airport, Kissinger's motorcade hove into view. The aggressive Vietnamese police (known locally as White Mice because of their white uniforms) were clearing the road. Vietnamese in their vans, cars and motorbikes were being unceremoniously scattered into ditches and kerbs.

The Ambassador's driver was about to comply. I told him to drive on and proceed to our destination. He was quite nervous, but I was adamant. The Saigonnais knew this was the car of Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador and I was not going to be party to it being shooed into a ditch. They would not know that the Ambassador was not in it – just little me.

So, a strange sight emerged – the Kissinger convoy with the US Ambassador, outriders and security vehicles proceeding speedily to the airport with our Jaguar following along in its wake. I could see beads of sweat on the driver's forehead. But I remained determined – British honour would not be impugned. The Ambassador's Jaguar and ditch do not mix.

### Covering my back

When I returned to the Embassy, I thought that on reflection I had better tell the Ambassador just in case he got any complaints. Sir Brooks Richards smiled benignly at me. While he could not condone my actions, I got the impression that he was not entirely displeased. ■


  
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BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S  
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A DITCH

PHOTO: POLISH NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF REMEMBRANCE



**A Solidarity banner unfurled during Prime Minister Thatcher's visit in Warsaw, warning her against the 'red spider'**

## The visit that almost didn't happen



**Nigel Thorpe** recalls Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's bold visit to Poland in November 1988 when the Communist regime blinked first

**T**he autumn of 1988 in communist Poland was a strange but exciting time. We in the British Embassy enjoyed wide contact with the various illegal opposition groups but especially Solidarity. We knew that opposition to the Communist regime was deep seated and widespread. Moreover, Gorbachev was in power in Moscow and changes were taking place there which were unsettling all the East European communist regimes. Not that anybody thought the system was about to collapse, not even our best informed and most intelligent contacts. But there were stories that the authorities wanted to hold talks (so-called Round Table talks) with various non-communist social groups about the future of Poland. We were very interested in these.

### News from London

That autumn there was a change of Ambassadors. As DHM I found myself in charge for a few weeks until Stephen Barrett, the incoming Head of Mission, arrived. It was at this time that we received a message from No 10 Downing Street: Prime Minister Thatcher would like to visit Poland. There was a condition though. In addition to the normal content of such a visit – talks with General Wojciech Jaruzelski, President and First Secretary of the Polish United Workers (communist) Party, formal meals and so on – she also wanted to travel to Gdansk and meet Lech Wałesa, the Solidarity leader.

It fell to me to take this message to the Polish Foreign Ministry. They were pleased, rather flattered I think, but nonplussed. A few days later I was asked to call, and they told me that General Jaruzelski would be delighted to host Mrs Thatcher, but it was out of the question that she should meet Wałesa or go to Gdansk. I said this would be disappointing to London but did not argue as there seemed no point. I duly reported this response. I was told firmly that in those circumstances the Prime Minister would not come. I told this to the Poles.

### Polish second thoughts

Silence for a few weeks. I thought it was all dead. Then, as if by chance at a diplomatic reception, I ran into Colonel Wiesław Górnicki, once a distinguished journalist but now a discredited adviser to Jaruzelski (he wore a scruffy military uniform that did not fit). He breezed up to me and greeted me like a long-lost brother. In truth I had not seen him for many years.

He said straightaway how much the authorities were looking forward to greeting Mrs Thatcher in Warsaw. And, he added, of course she could pursue a private programme in Gdansk although it would be necessary to perform one or two official engagements while she was there. Amazed, I really didn't know what to say. I reported this to London. The Poles had caved in. We were on the way to one of the most exciting events of my career.

### The preparations

We had to plan a difficult visit by a British Prime Minister to a country with which we did not have the closest relationship. We had to ensure that she had the chance to meet a range of opinion in addition to her official contacts with the Polish regime, which principally would be with Jaruzelski and Prime Minister Rakowski. It all needed meticulous planning, the more so since we all knew that Mrs Thatcher did not have the greatest affection or respect for the Foreign Office.

Our opposition contacts were very helpful, and we did much of the groundwork for the visit to Gdansk in Warsaw. The Polish authorities pushed the boat out and were incredibly cooperative and efficient. When the Embassy team went to Gdansk to prepare the final details for the meeting with Wałesa, the MFA Protocol team (there for the official part of the programme) flew us home to Warsaw in their Polish Air Force plane.

### Arrival

Mrs Thatcher arrived in Warsaw in an RAF VC10 on the evening of Wednesday 2 November 1988. She was to spend two days in Poland, and we started with a briefing dinner for her in





  
**MRS THATCHER RETURNED BY POLISH NAVAL DESTROYER TO GDANSK HARBOUR WHERE A HUGE CROWD HAD GATHERED TO GREET HER. SHE DRESSED FOR THE OCCASION, IN A VIVID GREEN SUIT. SHE STOOD OUT PERFECTLY AND LOVED THE ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE SHE ENCOUNTERED**

PHOTO: POLISH NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF REMEMBRANCE



Prime Minister Thatcher (right) with Solidarity leader Lech Wałęsa (centre) and Father Jankowski (left)

the Ambassador's Residence. We did not know that she had already had an excellent briefing from Tim Garton-Ash and Roger Scruton in No 10! She was good to talk to and of course asked intelligent questions.

The next day was taken up largely by a meeting with President General Jaruzelski, who spoke for a very long time without stopping, more a lecture than a dialogue, something that I think Mrs Thatcher had never encountered before. There was also a lunch with Prime Minister Rakowski, who told her, as I recall, that she was the most extraordinary woman he had ever met. I am not sure she was impressed. There was also a meeting with a group of opposition activists including farmers. It was here that she discovered the way that Polish private farmers were denied the tools and materials to farm effectively.

### The culmination

The big day was the final one, 4 November. We flew to Gdansk in the VC10. Mrs Thatcher then went to Westerplatte to lay a wreath at the scene of the first shots of the Second World War. She returned by Polish naval destroyer to Gdansk harbour where a huge crowd had gathered to greet her. She dressed for the occasion, in a vivid green suit. She stood out perfectly and loved the enthusiastic response she encountered.

From there she went to the Heweliusz Hotel, to meet Wałęsa in a private room. They shook hands for the press and then went to lay wreaths at the big Solidarity memorial to the workers who had died in 1970 in protests outside the Gdansk shipyard gates. From there the Prime Minister went with Wałęsa to the house of Father Jankowski, Wałęsa's priest, for lunch with other members of the Solidarity leadership.

### A pivotal lunch

This was a momentous occasion. The tables were arranged in a big circle. The main dialogue was between Wałęsa and the Prime Minister. He had one thing on his mind. He had been asked to take part in the proposed Round Table talks as a member of the lay Catholics' delegation. He was unsure whether to take part. Was it all a trick to discredit him and shore up the Communist regime?

Mrs Thatcher advised him to accept the invitation. She describes this in her memoirs, though without, I think, realising how important this advice was. To me it was a decisive moment in the end of communism in Poland. The advice was given against a background of sound, which I realised had been orchestrated by Jankowski. He had assembled a large crowd outside his house, singing patriotic hymns and songs throughout lunch. After the lunch he took Mrs Thatcher into his church, St Brygida's, next door, where the congregation waited for her, again singing. The atmosphere was electric. It was all very moving.

We returned to Warsaw by the VC10, so that the Prime Minister could give an interview for Polish television. I had wanted her to say something in public about her meeting with Wałęsa. But she was very careful not to say anything about it or the heady day in Gdansk. She had no need to, of course, because Solidarity had ensured that everyone in Poland knew of it, from the BBC, Radio Free Europe and other Western stations beaming the story into the country.

An unexpected finale to the visit was still to come, for when Mrs Thatcher arrived at the airport to board her aircraft home, General Jaruzelski quite unexpectedly arrived too. His car came to the steps of the plane, and he leapt out bearing a huge bouquet. It was quite a moment, Polish gallantry at its best.

The Round Table duly took place with Wałęsa's participation. In August 1989, Jaruzelski appointed Wałęsa's close adviser Tadeusz Mazowiecki as Prime Minister. He had been present at the lunch with Mrs Thatcher. This was two months before the fall of the Berlin Wall. He was the first non-communist leader in Central Europe since 1948. The Communist era was drawing to its close. ■

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# A tale of a (not-quite-yet) Ancient Mariner

Tom Macan tells how he came to spend his retirement sailing the seven seas as a lecturer on cruise liners

**B**oats and ships, lakes and the sea have always been part of my life. In all but one of my overseas postings, I either owned a small boat or had ready access to some sort of craft. The one exception being India where, despite trying, I never quite managed to get a sail with the classic small yachts of the Royal (sic) Bombay Yacht Club. That my retirement should have something to do with ships and the sea might therefore have been foreseen. But I didn't expect to spend a couple of months or so a year as an 'Enrichment Speaker' cruising the Seven Seas.

## How it all began

It all goes back to MAED – Maritime, Aviation & Environment Dept, as it appeared in the FCO phone directory, but "Morland Acquires Everything Dept" as it was known to its denizens, for Martin Morland had a reputation for seizing interesting and high-profile topics.

One of my responsibilities was the processing of requests for Marine Scientific Research (MSR), both by foreign vessels in UK waters, and *vice versa*. A key concern was the protection of the UK position on maritime limits at the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), a policy managed by the current Chair of the FCDOA. We were also tasked with heading off preliminary MSR requests with potential to embarrass (or worse) HMG. One was from a Cambridge Professor of Geomorphology for seismic research involving the discharge of explosives along the continental shelf of Pakistan and Iran – shortly after the fall of the Shah. I suggested the mullahs may not take kindly to this and that put an end to the matter.

## Fast forward to retirement

In early 2013, my wife and I decided to revisit Brazilian and Caribbean haunts with a cruise on Fred. Olsen Line's *MS Boudicca*. The on-board Enrichment Team included Dr Tony Rice, a retired oceanographer from the UK Institute of Oceanographic Studies, who had been one of the UK scientists with whom my MAED team had regular contact.

We got to know Tony and his wife and, part way through the cruise, he said "Tom, you should be doing this sort of thing too." He gave me the contact details for the P & R Agency to whom I duly wrote, setting out my stall. Peter Rushton, the eponymous 'P' in 'P&R', telephoned a few days later. This turned out to be my appointment interview, and we talked generally about the places I had served and what I might say about them. At the end of our discussion, he said something like, "You've obviously been around a bit, and as a diplomat you must be a competent public speaker. I'll let you know when I have an opening for you."

A couple of weeks later, he phoned again: *MS Boudicca* would be Baltic bound in six weeks' time out of Liverpool, six lectures were required, and would I like the job?

## A new career begins

This turned out to be the first of many assignments in Nordic and Baltic waters with Fred. Olsen, Saga, and Viking, invariably with two full days in St Petersburg (an option which seems

GUESTS ARE OFTEN INTERESTED IN WHAT DIPLOMATS DO IN THESE PLACES: THE CONCEPT OF A UK-APPOINTED GOVERNOR IN BRITISH OVERSEAS TERRITORIES IS PARTICULARLY PICARESQUE FROM A US PERSPECTIVE. AND THERE'S ALWAYS DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE DISCOVERY THAT (AT LEAST IN MY CASE) NO PLUMED HAT, SWORD AND WHITE DRESS UNIFORM CAME WITH THE JOB





PHOTO: TOM MACAN

Rounding Cape Horn

unlikely to return to cruise lines' schedules for a while). I've ranged over the history, politics, and economics of the region, focusing on the countries we visit.

I've sometimes been asked to deliver a 'scenic commentary' as the ship passes a notable landmark. My favourite must be Kronstadt, Tsar Peter the Great's naval dockyard and fortress in the middle of the Gulf of Leningrad (yes, it's still called that). The shot fired from the cruiser *Aurora* was a trigger for the October 1917 Revolution where the Bolsheviks regarded the rebel sailors as "the purest of the pure".

By 1921 they had rebelled against the Bolshevik government itself as insufficiently "pure". Trotsky led a 30,000-strong Red Army contingent across the ice and ordained that the rebels be "shot like partridges" (which tells one something about Trotsky's social background). Many of them were.

Other assignments have taken me to Brazil, including up the Amazon, to the Caribbean and to India and the East Asia. Guests are often interested in what diplomats do in these places: the concept of a UK-appointed Governor in British Overseas Territories is particularly picaresque from a US perspective. And there's always disappointment at the discovery that (at least in my case) no plumed hat, sword and white dress uniform came with the job.

In 2015, I was taken on by newly established Viking Ocean Cruises which aims to target the 'intellectually curious' cruise guest seeking a smaller ship (930 guests), maximum time in port, and a relaxed environment (no casinos, no children under 18). As the company's founder put it: "thinking not drinking".

In 2017, I joined their Resident Historian cadre whose remit is to deliver a range of lectures and lead discussion groups and smaller, informal sessions for guests who want to delve deeper into the history of where we're going. The requirement is not to offer encyclopaedic knowledge but rather relate the subject to what guests may already know. Not that different from explaining British policy to a possibly sceptical foreign listener as most of us will have done many times.

The cruiser *Aurora*, which fired the first shot in the Russian Revolution in 1917

## The nuts and bolts

So, just how does it all work on board? The Cruise Director (CD) and Assistant (ACD) are the key figures in one's life. They must juggle the routines of the paid entertainment staff (singers, dancers, musicians) on long-term contracts and the unpaid short-term folk such as enrichment speakers and the gentlemen dance hosts (great opportunity out there for single, male *Inside Out* readers with skills on the dance floor).



PHOTO: CANVA

The daily programme is a complex jigsaw and being on time for one's slot, not over-running one's time (usually 45 minutes) and making oneself generally available to guests are the key. CDs vary in their approach to the enrichment team. Some give us their full attention: for others we are a necessary distraction. On one ship, the daily programme revealed that my noontime thoughts on *The Caribbean: Uncle Sam's Backyard* had been displaced by the Line Dancing Class. The only compensation to my bruised ego was that, while my lectures would usually attract an audience of 70 or 80, the line-dance event was of interest to only 12 guests.

At the start of the cruise, many CDs like to parade their enrichment teams at the Captain's Welcome Reception. I usually start by explaining that I was once a diplomat and paraphrase the unidentified humorist



# RETIREMENT

I USUALLY START BY EXPLAINING THAT I WAS ONCE A DIPLOMAT AND PARAPHRASE THE UNIDENTIFIED HUMORIST WHO DESCRIBED A DIPLOMAT AS "SOMEONE WHO CAN TELL YOU TO GO TO HELL, AND MAKE YOU THINK YOU'LL REALLY ENJOY THE TRIP"

who described a diplomat as "Someone who can tell you to go to hell, and make you think you'll really enjoy the trip".

On one occasion, the speaker immediately after me observed, "I am the retired Anglican Bishop of Leicester, and if any of you are unhappy about Tom's travel advice, you may like to have a word with me, preferably over a drink." It set both of us up for the duration of the cruise.

## How to get a job such as mine

There are two UK-based agencies who provide a range of contract personnel to the cruise ship industry and will put one on their books for a modest annual subscription. The Skipton-based Peel Talent [www.peeltalent.com](http://www.peeltalent.com) (who bought out the P&R Agency) operate pro-actively to match speakers with individual cruises either by inviting those with an interest in a particular cruise to bid for a slot or by contacting one directly. When Cunard wanted someone specifically with Portugal and Caribbean cruise for a transatlantic crossing via Madeira, I was apparently the only speaker on their books who met these criteria.

The other agency is the web-based <http://cruiseshipenrichment.net>. Each speaker gets his/her own webpage where one can list one's experience and the lectures one can offer, possibly with a video clip. The site also has a list of forthcoming voyages showing what slots are available, and one can bid accordingly. Individual cruise line enrichment managers make their selection based on information one posts on the site.

Many slots are filled a year in advance, but short-term opportunities also emerge. As I write this in late January, Crystal Cruises have a requirement for a regional expert to join a trans-Pacific cruise in mid-February!

My next assignment comes in the autumn with a series of voyages along the Eastern Seaboard. One of my topics is *The American Revolution* (from a British perspective). I shall follow this with a discussion asking the question "Was the American Revolution necessary?" to which the answer is surely "No, had diplomacy been more effective." I'll also do my best defend the much-maligned George III against the character assassination to which he is subjected in the musical *Hamilton*. A monarch's reputation is at stake! ■

Tom in his days as the (un-uniformed) Governor of the British Virgin Islands



PHOTO: TOM MACAN



Tom Macan joined the FCO in 1969. He served in Bonn and Brasilia, returning to the FCO in 1978 to the environment desk in MAED. After five years in Bonn, he returned to the FCO as Head, successively, of CCD and then Training Department. In 1990, he was appointed DHM at Lisbon followed by Ambassador at Vilnius in 1995. Following a secondment to BOC (European Gases Division), in 1999

he became Minister and DHC in New Delhi. His final posting (2002-06) was Governor of the British Virgin Islands. He retired to his native Lake District, where he qualified as a Blue Badge Guide, and now lives in Kendal, Cumbria

A photograph of a savanna landscape. In the foreground, two rhinos are walking on a dirt path. In the background, a herd of zebras is grazing. The trees have a warm, golden-brown hue, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The sky is a soft, hazy blue.

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