

INSIDEOUT

The magazine of the FCDO Association

Issue 68 • Summer 2024

Entente Cordiale at 120

Two ambassadors reflect on UK-French amity

Out of this world

Why space diplomacy matters

Capturing History

From the frontlines of the Yemen War



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Cover: HM King Charles III and French President Emmanuel Macron at commemorations to mark the 80th Anniversary of D-Day
PHOTOS: 10 DOWNING STREET/SIMON DAWSON

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HE Hélène Duchêne

Ambassador Duchêne was appointed French Ambassador to the UK in 2022. Prior to that she was Director-General of Administration and Modernization at the French Foreign Ministry (2019-22) and Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Council (2016-19). She has also served abroad at the Permanent Representation of France to the EU in Brussels and at the UN in Geneva.



HE Dame Menna Rawlings

Dame Menna Rawlings was appointed HM Ambassador to France in August 2021. Previously she was the Director-General Economic and Global Issues at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), now FCDO. She was also Board-level Diversity and Inclusion champion for the FCDO. Dame Menna joined the FCDO in 1989 and has served abroad as British High Commissioner to Australia (2015-19).



Prof Garry Hunt

Garry Hunt is a renowned space scientist, broadcaster and businessman. He was awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal for his work in local community and an OBE from King Charles III for services to Space Science and Business (2023).

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

From the Editor

In this edition

This edition offers another wide selection of features and articles. Some of those I had planned to include were not in the end possible because of the UK election announcement in May. I hope at least some of them may appear in the next edition.

Our 25th anniversary

Founded in 1999, the Association is 25 years old, still strong and retaining a physical office firmly fixed and accepted within King Charles Street. In addition, we have a part-time virtual office in Bucharest, where our executive secretary, Lucie Portman, is based.

The FCDOA remains an invaluable organisation. With over 1600 members, it continues to be a lifestore of skills and experience. We

- Bring together past and present members of staff in enjoyable ways;
- Enable our members, once they have left KCS, to keep abreast of the FCDO's continuing evolution in the conduct of British foreign policy; and we
- Offer to the FCDO access to the wisdom and skills of members. It's there for the asking.

Against that backdrop, I thank you for being members and for your invaluable support.

Boundless

We constantly endeavour to do new things.

In this edition, we're delighted to take yet another new step – the inauguration of the FCDOA's relationship with *Boundless*, the UK's leading membership club for people working in or retired from the Civil Service or public sector. They've been helping members make the most of their free time for over 100 years by providing member savings, events and a variety of free benefits all included in the annual membership fee. Do read the advert and the *Boundless* article inside. And what's more we now have a *Boundless* page on the FCDOA website plus a direct link the *Boundless* website.

To mark our new arrangement, *Boundless* have agreed to contribute £10 to the FCDOA whenever an Association member joins them. To be eligible you must join *Boundless* via www.boundless.co.uk/FCDOA or by calling *Boundless* membership services on 0800 669944, and quoting 'FCDOA'. Phone lines are open Mon-Sat, 9am-5pm. A new *Boundless* member is someone who hasn't previously been a *Boundless* member.

Challenges ahead

As I said in my report to last month's AGM, though the Association continues to flourish, two important challenges lie ahead.

The first is finding new board directors before the 2025 AGM. Since succession planning is essential in any entity, this search will be a regular and persistent theme of mine in the months ahead – in the magazine, the newsletters and on our website. The most immediate priority is filling the post of editor of *The Writers' Corner* – an invaluable asset. Please don't be shy – apply.

The second challenge, now the UK election is over, is for the board of directors to work even harder to achieve a closer and more productive interface with the FCDO, emphasising the skills and experience we can offer – informally and discreetly – to assist where appropriate in improving the FCDO's diplomatic footprint through enhancement of the art of diplomacy in a new age of unstable geopolitics. We offer access to an invaluable asset.

Feedback

The editorial panel always welcome your opinions and comments on each magazine edition. Do let us have them by writing to the fcdo.association@fcdo.gov.uk.

Holiday time

Following the General Election we can look forward to a break from politics and some welcome respite. Make the most of it, as William Shakespeare reminds us:

Summer's lease has all too short a date

On behalf of the editorial and production team, I wish you all an enjoyable and rewarding summer whatever the seasonal weather may offer.

Edward Glover,
FCDOA Chairman



The successful State Visit of King Edward VII in 1903 was a precursor to the signing of the *Entente Cordiale*



PICTURE: NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

From foe to friend

On the 120th Anniversary of the *Entente Cordiale*, Principal Historian at the FCDO **Richard Smith** examines the history and legacy of the agreement

The *Entente Cordiale*, signed at the Foreign Office on 8 April 1904 by the French Ambassador, Paul Cambon, and the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Lansdowne, was a complex series of agreements which had been painstakingly negotiated over several years. These agreements resolved longstanding colonial disputes and also created a sense of mutual trust which allowed both countries to stand together against common threats in the decades to come.

The background

Throughout the 19th century, Britain and France were often at odds over colonial competition in Africa and Asia where both powers sought to expand their empires. As recently as 1898 the scramble for influence in Africa had brought both countries close to war at Fashoda in Sudan.

By the early 20th century changing political and strategic circumstances necessitated a re-evaluation of their relationship. The rise of Germany as a formidable military and industrial power under Kaiser Wilhelm II posed a new threat to European stability. Both Britain and France recognised the need to counterbalance Germany's growing influence. Théophile Delcassé, France's foreign minister from 1898, believed that a Franco-British understanding could give France some security against Germany. Meanwhile, Britain sought to move away from its self-imposed position of 'splendid isolation' following the country's poor military showing against the Boers in the South African War of 1899-1902.

Discreet diplomacy

The *Entente Cordiale* may be perceived as something that came about quite naturally. In fact, public opinion in France around that time had been markedly anti-British because of the Fashoda incident. So much so, that it was deemed advisable to conduct negotiations undercover, through the discreet channel of the French Embassy in London, in order not to arouse undue attention in France. When Paul Cambon arrived in London as the new French Ambassador in December 1898, he had instructions to seek a settlement of existing points at issue between both countries. However, progress was slow.

Negotiations were aided by the successful exchange of visits in 1903 between Edward VII and French President Loubet. The visit to France by the Francophile King did much to change French public opinion in favour of closer relations. He was booed when he arrived in Paris but

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THE FRANCOPHILE KING
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IN FAVOUR OF CLOSER
RELATIONS

UK-FRANCE RELATIONS



A cartoon in *Punch* depicting Britain (as 'John Bull') turning his back on Germany (Kaiser Wilhelm) in favour of an alliance with France

was remarkably successful in turning an anti-British mood in the city around. The popular response to the King's visit reassured British Ministers who still had doubts about European 'entanglements'.

Three agreements in one

The *Entente Cordiale* was not a single agreement, but a catch-all title given to three documents delineating colonial frontiers and spheres of influence. The first and most prominent agreement dealt with Egypt and Morocco, giving Britain control in the former and France freedom of action in the latter. In a second agreement, France surrendered its exclusive fishing rights in Newfoundland in return for territorial compensation on the west coast of Africa. The third accord concerned spheres of influence in Thailand, Madagascar and the New Hebrides.

The term *Entente Cordiale* is generally attributed to the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Aberdeen, who coined it in 1843, describing 'a cordial, good understanding' between the two nations.

The legacy

The agreements signalled a realignment of European powers, at the expense of Germany. By clearly defining spheres of influence, they reduced the likelihood of conflict between Britain and France and instead paved the way for closer cooperation, in particular military coordination. This would have profound implications for Britain in the run up to the outbreak of the First World War a decade later. Nevertheless, the legacy of the *Entente Cordiale* is evident in the enduring alliance between the two nations, which has continued to influence international relations well into the 21st century. ■

French and British boy scouts with their respective national flags



PHOTO: BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE

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Do you have any comments about this article? If you would like to share these with the editor, kindly email edward.glover@fcdo.gov.uk

Entente Cordiale 120 – An Entente Renewed

To mark the 120th anniversary of the *Entente Cordiale*, we invited the Ambassador of France to the UK, **HE Hélène Duchêne**, and the Ambassador of Britain to France **HE Dame Menna Rawlings** to share their perspectives of what the historic agreement means in today's context

A Renewal of Vows

Ambassador Duchêne hosts a reception at her Residence to commemorate the 120th anniversary of the *Entente Cordiale*



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THE LEGACY OF THE
ENTENTE CORDIALE HAS
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PEOPLES CLOSER
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AND TRADE EXCHANGES,
IN ORDER TO CONSOLIDATE
WHAT IS A GENUINE
FRIENDSHIP

It is not often that diplomats can enjoy a success they can be assured will still be celebrated 120 years later. Few can boast such a proud achievement, but they include British Foreign Secretary Lord Lansdowne, French Foreign Minister Théophile Delcassé and French Ambassador in London Paul Cambon. On 8 April 1904, these three men managed to conclude the Anglo-French agreement, which was not officially called the *Entente Cordiale*, but the history books would nonetheless continue to describe it as such.

High stakes

Negotiated in secret for months, the agreement settled the last colonial disputes between France and Britain, which were fuelling a rivalry so deep-rooted that the French politician André Tardieu considered it a European political axiom. This “marriage of earth and water” was to change the balance in Europe forever.

UK-FRANCE RELATIONS

The much earlier dream of an alliance fostered by Abbé Dubois, Philippe II Duke of Orléans, Talleyrand and Guizot was finally taking shape. The consequences of the agreement across the whole 20th century would be considerable: a brotherhood in arms during the First World War, solidarity at the beginning of the Second World War, followed by British support for the French Resistance to help liberate the continent.

The stakes back then were colossal. There were other, more unexpected but symbolically significant demonstrations of the *Entente Cordiale*: in 1910, France joined the Four Nations tournament, which thus became the Five Nations!

Now, 120 years on, our two countries have built a strong bilateral relationship and close cooperation in the multilateral forums – be it in military terms within NATO or diplomatic terms within the United Nations Security Council.

A legacy of cooperation

The legacy of the *Entente Cordiale* has also brought our two peoples closer together by creating the conditions for cultural, educational and trade exchanges, in order to consolidate what is a genuine friendship. Today we have exchanges in every field and are working together to tackle the challenges of the future. Amid the resurgence of conflicts in Europe, we can draw on the Lancaster House treaties. In the face of climate change, we are working together to resolve the energy crisis and more effectively protect the environment and biodiversity. In the field of new technology, we are working closely on the opportunities that artificial intelligence offers us, but also on the risks it may create.

In 2024 we celebrate both the 120th anniversary of the *Entente Cordiale* and the 80th anniversary of the Landings that enabled France to be liberated in 1944: two of the most significant moments in our relationship. Finally, we also have an opportunity to celebrate our shared love of sport this year, at the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

After 120 years of history, the *Entente Cordiale* remains more topical than ever. Let us work together to ensure it continues adapting to the challenges of new times. ■

Hélène Duchêne
French Ambassador, London

Ambassador Duchêne and the Duke of Edinburgh inspect the French Garde Républicaine at Buckingham Palace



Ambassador Rawlings welcomes guests to a soirée at the British Embassy in Paris to celebrate the 120th anniversary of the *Entente Cordiale*



PHOTO: BRITISH EMBASSY IN FRANCE

Looking Outwards Together

On 8 April 2024, we celebrated the 120th anniversary of the *Entente Cordiale* between the UK and France, with historic ceremonies in London and Paris.

In London, the French Garde Républicaine participated in the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace, an honour afforded previously only to British Armed Forces and Commonwealth countries. In parallel in Paris, 16 soldiers from the Coldstream Guards joined French troops on the forecourt of the Elysée Palace – the first ever instance of soldiers of a foreign state guarding the Presidential Residence.

As current British Ambassador to France, I was honoured to participate in the Elysée ceremony alongside President Emmanuel Macron. It was a day of joy and of celebration, against a background of a fresh renewal in the relations between our two countries after some difficult times. 2023 saw the first bilateral Summit for five years, with a new joint declaration advancing our cooperation against the full suite of our shared interests. Then in September we saw the wonderful visit to France by Their Majesties the King and Queen, which celebrated and strengthened our familiar attachments and connections in both Paris and Bordeaux.

Looking Back

This latest, positive chapter in the *Entente Cordiale* reflects its enduring nature, in ways that were not fully foreseen when it was signed in London on 8 April 1904.

True, it immediately paved the way for diplomatic cooperation between the UK and France after centuries of mutual antagonism and recurrent conflict. *The Times* realised its potential, declaring the *Entente* “An event of high historic importance”, while *Le Figaro* judged it “Un résultat considerable”.

Seen through today’s 21st century lens, however, some of the specific texts feel obscure and unsavoury, with the intrinsic assumption that it was up to our two countries to design colonial boundaries and to determine spheres of influence.

And not everyone was a fan, taking a sceptical view of its likely impact. Sir Eyre Crowe, a senior British diplomat who later became the Permanent Under Secretary (PUS) of the Foreign Office, wrote:

“*The Entente is not an alliance. For purposes of ultimate emergencies, it may be found to have no substance at all. For the Entente is nothing more than a frame of mind...which may be, or become, so vague as to lose all content.*”

Hindsight is a wonderful thing, but I would humbly suggest that Sir Eyre got it wrong, underestimating the resilience and value of the *Entente* over the decades to come. For while almost everything has moved far beyond the politics and international structures of that time, the need for the UK and France to cooperate in a similar way remains just as desirable as it was. In many ways, that “vagueness” has in fact served us well, allowing the *Entente* to shift shape and to adapt to a fast-changing world, turned on its head multiple times since 1904.

A Positive Legacy

The *Entente* has thus guided us through the darkest of days – this 120th anniversary coincides with the 80th anniversary of the D-Day and Provence landings. Commemorating shared French-British sacrifice on the beaches of Normandy on 6 June was a sobering and compelling reminder of the price we were prepared to pay for each other’s freedom.

BUT THE ENTENTE HAS NOT JUST BEEN ABOUT THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP: THE UK AND FRANCE ALSO WORK TOGETHER TO TRY TO FORGE A BETTER WORLD. SOMETIMES, WE ARE MORE AT EASE IN EACH OTHER’S COMPANY WHEN WE ARE LOOKING OUTWARDS, NOT INWARDS

UK-FRANCE RELATIONS

It has also brought us together to deliver transformational changes – 2024 also marks 30 years since the opening of the Channel Tunnel, a brilliant feat of engineering enabling a constant stream of travel between our countries.

And over time we have used the *Entente Cordiale* as the foundation stone for a deeper and enduring defence and migration partnership – through the Treaties of Le Touquet (2003), Lancaster House (2010) and Sandhurst (2018), creating new frameworks to co-operate on security and defence.

But the *Entente* has not just been about the bilateral relationship: the UK and France also work together to try to forge a better world. Sometimes, we are more at ease in each other's company when we are looking outwards, not inwards.

For as Antoine de St. Exupéry wrote:

Aimer, ce n'est pas regarder l'un l'autre, mais regarder ensemble dans la même direction.

Which translates roughly as: "Love, does not consist of gazing at each other, but in looking outwards together in the same direction."

By that measure, I do think it's love, actually, between our two countries.

Together, the UK and France are working side by side to support Ukraine for as long as it takes, in the face of Russia's unjustified aggression.

Together, we are working hand in hand to address 21st century global challenges –from tackling climate change to countering terrorism; from ending poverty to challenging the scourge of human trafficking and illegal migration.

It is not for France and Britain alone to solve these challenges. But together we can rally others to join us in overcoming them. In so doing, we continue the tradition of putting aside our differences to establish the long-lasting friendship we celebrate now, reflecting our *Entente* renewed.

A story of friendship

Our two countries' story of friendship should make us optimistic about the future. Like all friendships, it has had its ups and downs. We are rivals as well as partners, competitors as well as collaborators. Some say we are the best of enemies. I prefer to say we are at our best when we are friends.

Vive l'Entente Cordiale, for the next 120 years and beyond. ■

Dame Menna Rawlings
HM Ambassador, Paris

Below: Ambassador Rawlings with French President Emmanuel Macron and soldiers from the Coldstream Guards and La Garde Républicaine on the forecourt of the Elysée Palace



PHOTO: BRITISH EMBASSY IN FRANCE

The charming port city of Mukalla avoided being destroyed when UAE-led forces rooted out Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)

PHOTO: DMITRY CHULOV VIA CANVA

Capturing history

From the frontlines of the Yemen war

As an embed with the UAE-led coalition forces in Yemen, **Dr Michael Knights** explains how his unique access enabled him to write an important early draft of the history of this conflict in the words of those involved

For most of the last ten years I have been researching the civil war in Yemen, with a particular focus on the UAE's involvement in the conflict. I had travelled in Yemen prior to the current war, which began in March 2015, and had spent some of the best times of my life visiting the country. It's a cliché but I fell in love with Yemen: from the picture-book charm of mid-2000s Sanaa, to the crumbling post-imperial monument of Aden, the sleepy eastern wadis and almost everything between.

A framework for military history

After the current war began, I started to embed with the Gulf-backed coalition, including the patchwork quilt of Republic of Yemen Government (ROYG) forces plus the UAE, Saudi, Bahraini and Sudanese contingents inside Yemen. Using this up-close look at one side of the conflict, including copious time talking with coalition commanders and troops, I began to build a framework for a military history of the war. As someone who grew up consuming labour of love book projects on obscure conflicts in the region – think Edgar O'Ballance's *Civil War in Lebanon* – I wanted to give this conflict the same blow-by-blow accounting.

The project that emerged was a trilogy which aims to cast a unique spotlight on how non-Western militaries use advanced technologies and a blend of Western and non-Western tactics to achieve their objectives in the absence of the US and other NATO partners – who were busy undertaking the war against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria at the time. To say this has been a fascinating journey would be an understatement, but it is an important story too: as Western states become more focused on great power competition, regional players 'doing it for themselves' could be a more common phenomenon.

In April, the middle book in the series – *The Race for Mukalla* – was launched in Arabic at the Abu Dhabi book fair, followed by an English-language edition in June 2024. This was the follow-up to my 2023 release, *25 Days to Aden*, which covered the Gulf coalition's opening effort to prevent a Houthi overrun of southern Yemen in the spring and summer of 2015. After stopping the Houthis from taking Aden – a real nail-biter of an urban battle with the coalition fighting with its back to the sea – the next challenge was to stop the Houthis expanding into oil and gas-rich eastern Yemen – Marib and the Hadramaut. *The Race for Mukalla* looks at this eastern campaign in 2015-2016.

A war within a war

Military operations in eastern Yemen can be thought of as 'a war within a war'. Just as the UAE-led task force began to reinforce the tattered remains of Yemeni military forces to enable them

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IT WAS A RACE, AS FAR AS THE COALITION WAS CONCERNED, FOR THE SOUL OF MUKALLA, A WHITEWASHED PORT CITY THAT WAS KNOWN AS THE PEARL OF THE INDIAN OCEAN



Michael Knights with UAE-led forces on the ground in Yemen

CREDIT: MICHAEL KNIGHTS

to resist a Houthi offensive, the Emirati leaders and planners were faced with a new and urgent challenge: Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), took over the largest eastern city, Mukalla, in April 2015. Sensing the rise of a peer competitor – the Islamic State – intent on controlling territory, AQAP struck while the Yemeni government was at its weakest, emptying the banks and taxing the ports and roads at Mukalla.

The UAE pushed all their coalition partners to fight simultaneously a parallel war in the east against both the Houthis in Marib and against AQAP in Mukalla. That was not an easy diplomatic lift, as it would have been convenient to simply leave Al-Qaeda alone until the war against the Houthis had been concluded. Looking at Raqqa and Mosul, then under Islamic State control, the UAE instead saw it as a priority to shake AQAP's emirate to pieces before it consolidated and poisoned the minds of a generation of Yemenis.

It was thus a race, as far as the coalition was concerned, for the soul of Mukalla, a whitewashed port city that was known as the Pearl of the Indian Ocean. The book chronicles the thinking that guided Emirati planners as they culled the target lists and developed the scheme that allowed Mukalla to be liberated without either civilian casualties or the wholesale destruction that attended the 'liberation' of cities in Iraq and Syria in the same period.

Recovering from catastrophe

The war in the east came at extraordinary cost to the Emirates. In a single shocking attack, the main coalition base at Safer, in Marib, was struck by an old but highly accurate Russian Tochka missile in the hours before the UAE-led counteroffensive was about to begin. In a single moment, the coalition suffered more battlefield fatalities than it would in the rest of the Yemen war combined: 52 Emiratis killed alongside 12 Saudis, three Bahrainis and a still undocumented number of Yemenis, plus 209 injured, including 162 from the Emirates alone.

One of the most challenging parts of the research on the war in eastern Yemen was talking to Emiratis, from the most senior leaders down to the troops at ground zero in Safer, about their experience of the missile strike and the weeks afterwards. This required them to dwell uncommonly on what could (and could not) have been done differently.

It is an extraordinary tale of national cohesion and trust in leadership after the UAE's first ever recorded mass casualty event – a blow that caused the demographic equivalent of 2,392 deaths in a population the size of the UK, or nine times the UK fatalities suffered in the Falklands Wars – *but in a single day.*


THIS IS AN IMPORTANT
STORY: AS WESTERN
STATES BECOME MORE
FOCUSED ON GREAT
POWER COMPETITION,
REGIONAL PLAYERS 'DOING
IT FOR THEMSELVES'
COULD BE A MORE
COMMON PHENOMENON

YEMEN CONFLICT

The national rallying around the UAE forces in Yemen and a continuation of their mission was partially a reflection of how authority and loyalty function in a ruling monarchy, but there was also an undeniable groundswell of organic nationalism, which soldiers returning from the UAE to the frontlines likened to the powerful wave of feelings around the UAE's surprise triumph in the 2007 Gulf Cup soccer tournament.

The importance of contemporary history

As any diplomat knows, these personal insights – when you briefly get under the skin of a country – are what makes contemporary history so exciting to write. Indeed, the cable-writers of the Foreign Office arguably *are* contemporary historians.

There are arguments against writing history almost before the ink of events has dried: official documents have usually not been declassified, people have not written their memoirs, and politics hangs heavy around the events. But I see just the opposite: memories begin to dim from the moment they are formed, so I am glad I interviewed so many soldiers in the immediate years after they completed their operations. For history to come alive and reflect the reality that people *are* policy, you must gather their accounts before time and politics have corrupted them.

To understand a war, you must get access to the records for the details almost no one can remember, but you must also gather the human voices who relay the things that never get written down. In places like the UAE and Yemen, where there is almost no tradition of modern history-writing, or indeed of veterans counselling, it is vital to capture history now – for it will disappear remarkably quickly otherwise, leaving only pale reflections of the real events, as witnessed by real people.

Access to the commanders, soldiers, and electronic records, plus walking the battlefields, have allowed me to make two solid histories of the Yemen war, with a third instalment on the climactic Red Sea campaign of 2016-2018 still to come. These are rare and detailed military histories of a kind you don't see anymore: each with more than 20 custom-made tactical maps, plus more than 60 colour photographs of the battles, many declassified.

The question I get asked the most is what price was levied for this special level of access. In my career, I've embedded with troops in a number of conflicts, but I've never been on both sides of a war. That simply wouldn't be possible with the Islamic State, Al-Qaeda, the Shiite militias in Iraq,

Elite Arabian coalition forces fought a nail-biting urban campaign with their backs to the sea to stop the Houthis from taking the city of Aden



YEMEN CONFLICT



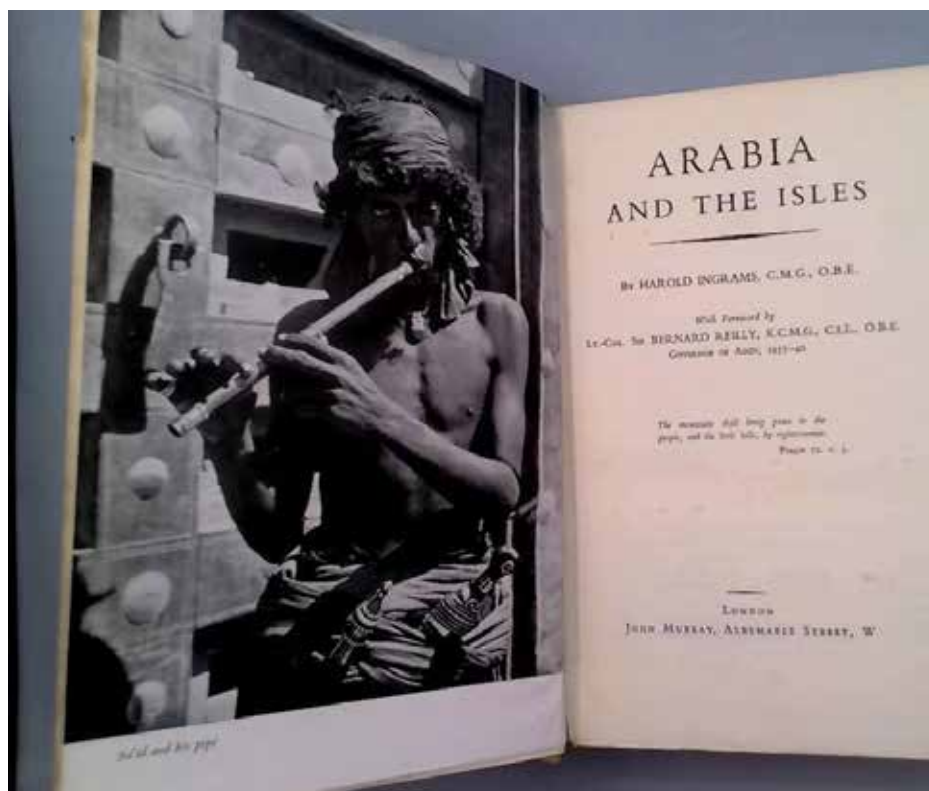
Michael on manoeuvres

or the Houthis – and facing modern airpower, it would be a death sentence even if those hosts did not turn on you. But as importantly, I recognise that I was never impartial in the conflicts against those foes. This is true in Yemen: from day one, I've welcomed as a strategic necessity the Gulf coalition's efforts to prevent either a Houthi or AQAP takeover of parts of Yemen.

However, I am even more passionate about the importance of history and have made it a *sine qua non* of these book-writing projects that everything in these books is true, even if not everything can make it into the books. I'm surprised at the extraordinary amount of detail and commentary that was shared with me, and how I was able to push my interviewees to think harder about what happened in the war. Diplomats can get a look deep inside the mindset of UAE, Yemeni and other coalition members by reading unique research projects like *25 Days to Aden* and *The Race for Mukalla*, upon which they can layer their other sources of insight and analysis.

One revelation that stuck in my mind was when I asked the most talented UAE tribal engagement officer how he learned to handle the tribes of the Hadramaut. Easy, he said: in his long nights at the desert training base, he read a book called *Arabia and the Isles*, by British political officer Harold Ingrams, which was about Hadramaut in the 1930s and the negotiation of a tribal compact that became known as 'Ingrams's Peace'. Without getting to know him, that gem would have been lost to history. ■

***Arabia and the Isles* by Harold Ingrams was a useful guide for UAE engagement officers in handling the tribes of Hadramaut**



Shortly after 9/11, Michael Knights received his PhD as a military historian from the Department of War Studies, King's College London, and subsequently spent the following 20 years taking a close-up look at 21st Century wars in Iraq, Yemen, Turkey, Syria and Lebanon. He is a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. The first two books in Dr Knights' trilogy, *25 Days to Aden* and *The Race for Mukalla* are published by Profile Editions and are available on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



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PHOTO: KREMLIN.RU

The Russian Challenge: The Next Five Years

In the fourth Trans-Atlantic Panel with our US and Canadian counterparts, the discussion embraced the forthcoming UK and US electoral cycles and brought into play the question of the Russian succession and what should be done now to prepare for that



The UK panellist

Sir Laurence Bristow, who served as UK Ambassador to Moscow from 2016-20. Subsequently, he was ambassador in Afghanistan between June to November 2021, so present during the fall of Kabul.



The US panellist

Ambassador William Courtney: former US Ambassador to Georgia and Kazakhstan. He also served in Moscow and was senior director for Russia in the NSC during the Clinton presidency. He led several arms control negotiations and is currently active in the American Academy of Diplomacy.



The Canadian panellist

Leigh Sarty joined the Canadian Foreign Service in 1993, serving in the Canadian Embassy in Moscow from 1996-99 and then again as Deputy Head of Mission from 2012-16. He also headed the Political Section at the Embassy in Beijing from 2003-07. In Ottawa he was Director for Russia and East Europe from 2007-12, Director General for Europe from 2016-18 and Global Affairs Canada Scholar in Residence until his retirement in 2021.

THE US HAS NOT YET
DECIDED WHETHER
RUSSIA'S INVASION – AND
ITS SUCCESS IF THAT
ULTIMATELY HAPPENED –
WOULD BE A THREAT TO
US SECURITY OR
PRINCIPALLY A THREAT TO
EUROPEAN SECURITY

After introducing the panel and before initiating a wider discussion, **Edward Glover**, acting as moderator, asked each panellist for their assessment of the likely key challenges facing the Western Powers over the next five years and how the West should respond.

Identifying the challenges

Sir Laurie Bristow (LB) said that, before identifying the challenges over the next five years, it was necessary to assess the challenge during the remainder of this year. The stark fact was that there would be no military break-through or satisfactory resolution of the war between Russia and Ukraine and therefore no path to a negotiated settlement any time soon. Putin's ambition remained imperial expansion and domination. His recent terms for a settlement amounted to a call for Ukraine's abject surrender.

The US had not yet decided whether Russia's invasion – and its success if that ultimately happened – would be a threat to US security or principally a threat to European security. Despite having finally voted in favour of additional military support and resources to Ukraine, the US position currently remained unclear, pending the US presidential election in November.

That aside, the forthcoming NATO summit was shaping up to be a strategic turning point in NATO's policies and strategy. For their part, Europe and the UK had greatly increased their support to Ukraine but it had been against the backdrop of the rise of hard right parties across Europe, posing the question whether in government they would be willing to sustain the required level of intensive and consistent support Ukraine required.

In summary, he made the following six key points:

- Given Russia's violently imperialistic posture, it was essential to sustain support for Ukraine in the long-term. As there was no prospect of Putin changing his approach, it would be necessary to wait for his eventual demise. When that happened, while there was no prospect of the establishment of a liberal democracy in Russia, there could conceivably be a replacement regime willing to de-escalate.
- It was desirable to work hard to disincentivise China from leaning further towards Russia, persuading the former it was not in her wider term interests to pursue too close a relationship.
- Against the backdrop of the Ukraine crisis, we had seen at the recent Ukraine conference in Switzerland how the BRICs and other formerly non-aligned countries were no longer adhering to the international rules-based international order because they had concluded that doing so was not compatible with their interests.



The recent visit of President Putin to North Korea is the latest evidence of authoritarian regimes aligning with each other

PHOTO: KREMLIN.RU



The Global South is courting Russia to pressure the West into delivering on their interests

PHOTO: GCIS

- Nonetheless, maintaining the rules-based international order remained important. We should accordingly learn to recalibrate our diplomacy, negotiating around shared interests rather than shared values.
- Seeking common international ground in addressing climate change should not be side-lined as it was in the common interest of all to seek and apply solutions.
- Lastly, renewal of support at home for Ukraine, including defence assistance, would be necessary after the election.

William Courtney (WC) argued it was essential to understand the direct link between internal repression inside Russia and its external aggression and the dismantling of the nuclear arms treaty network, resulting in only one treaty left in place. A succession of internal repressive measures – such as prohibiting external organisations from monitoring programmes and providing external expertise plus the elimination of long-term domestic rights-based organisations and the denial of access to wider sources of communication and information – had limited all internal independence of thought, thus helping to reinforce Putin's narrative.

Coupled with previous invasions or threatened invasions of neighbouring countries and violations of Russia's treaty obligations, his regime had demonstrated a clear trajectory to achieve his imperialist aims. In the face of previous such threats, NATO had deployed missiles which had led to Moscow backing off. It was essential that NATO increased its capabilities and put its arms manufacturing economies on a more war-like footing to combat the threats.

Leigh Sarty (LS) said the holding of roundtables was a relic from the past when the global framework was bi-polar and the West's strategy had been containment of Russia seen as the principal enemy.

But we were no longer in the same world. Although we had to stand up to Russian threats and challenges, containment was not enough in a multi-polar and fundamentally changed world.

Russia had spent decades facing up to an unequal challenge from a superior military power. Now it was seeking to redress the imbalance through the use of different tools, mechanisms and alliances. The fact was that Russia was proving better at navigating and manipulating the new re-configured global order than the West. One priority for managing Russia was to get our relationship with China right. Ultimately their interests were not the same as Russia's. That being the case, the West's approach needed to be based on widening that gap.


**RUSSIA IS PROVING BETTER
AT NAVIGATING AND
MANIPULATING THE NEW
RE-CONFIGURED GLOBAL
ORDER THAN THE WEST**

Generational change

In the discussion that followed, the following points were made by the panellists.

LB said that, as we had a younger generation who had not lived under the high level of fear

of nuclear war, it was desirable to consider whether long range strategic nuclear weapons were as important as before. The previous decades of co-operation with Russia were based on that shared threat and all recognised the need to eliminate them. But with changed types of weapons (eg handheld nuclear missiles and drones), security threats had changed and the mechanisms to eliminate them had also changed with less scope for structured co-operation.

LS expressed the view that in the 1990s there had been too much optimism following the end of the Cold War – a conviction that Russia would change, move towards adopting liberal democratic values. We had over-estimated the degree of support for this approach and under-estimated how ingrained attitudes and ideas had become. Putin's narrative cleverly implicated the West – that it had been behind the hardships that the Russian people were suffering and thus responsible for people becoming more resistant to Western ideas and even hostile.

All three panellists considered it would take at least a generation for substantial change to happen and then only if the West was able to adopt and promote effective alternative narratives.

LB reminded everyone that the 2020s were profoundly different from the 1980/90s and that Russia's actions indicated a different trajectory in its relationship with the West. Russia was likely to become more turbulent domestically and dysfunctional even after Putin's eventual departure. Those surrounding Putin (the *Siloviki*) had become hardened and aggressive. As he had already remarked, Putin was unlikely to be followed by anyone who shared our values, although, if fortunate, there might be some who would want to achieve a settlement with the West. In the face of this, we need to re-think our goals and values and how these could best be achieved.

LS argued that the Russian and Western Empires had originated around the same time, both driven to achieve and exercise power. But over the centuries, Russia had lost out to the West. It was now determined to redress that position by making a bid to become a world power again – including entering into alliances with autocratic even tyrannous governments to help achieve its aims. He recommended everyone to read books and papers by the Russian historian, Sergey Radchenko, to gain a better understanding of Russia and its objectives.

Although the UK and Europe have stepped up support for Ukraine, much depends on the outcome of the US election



PHOTO: NATO

WC took the view that Russia did not see why its invasion of Ukraine was considered a threat to the security of Europe and the West. In Putin's mind, he was merely regaining – in his invasion of Ukraine – what was once part of the Russian/Soviet empire and the Russian right to govern it was legitimate. They had invaded Afghanistan on the same basis, aided at least with the consent of the US. When the invasion failed and they were forced to withdraw, they were for a while demoralised. They are determined this time round that the invasion of Ukraine would not fail. But economic difficulties might undermine them.

False narrative

LS said that Putin had promoted in the Global South a false narrative of anti-colonialism to secure their ongoing support. In reality, the Global South were pursuing their own nationalist agendas – feeling they had been let down by Western allies who they perceived were not delivering what they wanted. They would use their relationships with Russia and China to put pressure on the West to help achieve their respective aims and interests, especially regarding economic development and moreover to shift responsibility for economic hardships suffered by their populations to the West.

They specifically wanted the West to do more to counter climate change and to assist them in dealing with the consequences and to that end would use both Russia and China as levers. We needed to read the Global South better and to adapt our own policies and alliances to get them on side. The strength and robustness of Western institutions would be vital.

Responses to questions

LB refuted a question on whether diplomacy could deliver peace. It was all about interests, who was strongest, who could manage violence and deliver military force most effectively. But this was only a partial answer – force by itself would not resolve differences. The Global South were not working with us at the moment because they did not see their interests being met or delivered by the West. We had to change both our narrative and our policies if we wanted to secure their support in the wider global fight.

In response to the question about how we would know when Ukraine had won, **WC** said there was no clear target. For Ukraine, victory would be when the last Russian troops had left their land. For the West, it might be when Ukraine was accepted into NATO and member states saw Article 5 in operation. **LB** said in his view victory would be when Ukraine was able to flourish as a separate sovereign country.

LS said that in his opinion we should keep in mind the new reality of alliances between authoritarian states such as China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea – all of whom were willing to partner with terrorist organisations and organised crime and thus derive considerable revenue from illicit finances. We had to manage this situation and our policy should be to avoid doing anything that divided NATO.

LB highlighted the deeply transactional nature of all these alliances and co-operation based on a changing pattern of interests, not values, around weapons supply and levers to put pressure on the West. We should bear in mind that Russia no longer saw its interests served in working with us over the control of nuclear weapons.

In response to a question as to how the West should gain the support of its citizens, **LB** advocated clear principled statements and aims and re-iterating them – highlighting the challenges of deciding how to prioritise our resources and the consequences of not investing in the areas which underpin our security. It was necessary to have similar discussions with the Global South.

LS reminded the audience that China had very big challenges of its own but had excellent well thought-out long-term strategies and a narrative which had impact globally. Democracies with changing governments were not matching that. We needed to work out a narrative, based on the principle of democratic government – that had conviction, was compellingly value-based and which could influence.

Conclusions

LB said we had to understand what was currently at stake; to stay the course consistently; to remember that Russia-Ukraine was not the only challenge in our relationship with Russia; to invest in strengthening our capabilities; and to try to understand Russia. We had not been good at reading Russia and therein lay our weakness.

WC reminded us that, contrary to recent reporting, there was no support for Ukraine fatigue in the US. Russia remained a strategic challenge. The debate was in how best to deliver the desired outcome.

LS said we needed to find ways to convince Russia that it could pursue and promote its national interests without resorting to violent conflict. That was the fundamental challenge. ■



THE GLOBAL SOUTH IS NOT WORKING WITH US AT THE MOMENT BECAUSE THEY DO NOT SEE THEIR INTERESTS BEING MET OR DELIVERED BY THE WEST. WE HAVE TO CHANGE BOTH OUR NARRATIVE AND OUR POLICIES IF WE WANTED TO SECURE THEIR SUPPORT IN THE WIDER GLOBAL FIGHT

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PHOTO: RICHIE CHAN VIA CANVA

Calling time on SLAPPS

The incoming government must introduce stronger measures to protect those exposing public interest matters against Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation (SLAPPs) and Kleptocracy, writes **Susan Coughtrie**

In the Spring 2024 edition of *Inside Out*, Susan Coughtrie, Director of the Foreign Policy Centre and co-chair of the UK Anti-SLAPP Coalition, explained what SLAPPs are and how they can be used to stop scrutiny of public interest matters. This follow-up explores the impact that SLAPPs can have in delaying redress for wrongdoing and provides an update on anti-SLAPP measures.

IT IS UNSURPRISING THAT COUNTRIES WITH HIGHER RATES OF CORRUPTION, ALSO TEND TO HAVE THE FEWEST PROTECTIONS FOR JOURNALISTS AND THE MEDIA

How SLAPPs can delay redress

While SLAPPs can be brought on any subject matter in the public interest – when used with the aim of shutting down inquiry into potential financial crime and corruption – they can pose an existential danger, not only to those subject to them, but to the democratic health of our societies.

One such example is the legal action brought in London against the Romanian journalist Paul Radu, co-founder of the *Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)*. It concerned OCCRP's 2017 investigation into 'The Azerbaijan Laundromat', a complex money-laundering operation that, over 2012-14, funnelled £1.7 billion out of the country through four shell companies registered in the UK. OCCRP reported that members of the political elite used these funds to "pay off European politicians, buy luxury goods, launder money and otherwise benefit themselves," at a time of severe crackdown inside the country.

After two years, during which Radu was subject to costly legal proceedings and tough

disclosure rules, requiring him to hand over his laptop and personal devices, the legal action was dropped on the eve of the trial. A settlement meant the articles stayed online, but with a qualifying statement that the claimant “categorically denies involvement in money laundering or any unlawful activity.” There has since been several National Crime Agency investigations and assets seizures relating to the ‘Azerbaijan Laundromat’, including from the person that sued Radu and his family members.

It begs the questions – what would have happened had OCCRP not been in a financial position to defend its reporting or forced to take it down? And can the outcome of this legal case be seen only as a pyrrhic victory? As Radu pointed out: “Even if you win, you lose. You lose money, time, and energy you can never get back.”

In May 2024, Andrew Mitchell, then deputy Foreign Secretary, stated that “According to some estimates, 40% of money laundering around the world – this is money often stolen from Africa and Africans by corrupt businessmen, bent politicians and war lords and so on – 40% of that money comes through London and overseas territories and crown dependencies.” It is unsurprising that countries with higher rates of corruption, also tend to have the fewest protections for journalists and the media. This becomes clear when cross referencing countries in Transparency International’s *Corruption Perceptions Index* and Reporters without Borders *World Press Freedom Index*.

To crack down on kleptocracy and corruption, we need investigative journalists, whistleblowers and others who are willing to expose it. There are many challenges facing those doing so in the origin countries of dirty money – from surveillance, smear campaigns, physical attack, imprisonment and sadly even murder. Efforts to shut down money laundering through the UK, and its overseas territories, must also therefore also recognise the crucial role that public interest reporting plays. The introduction of a standalone SLAPP law would be a vital step towards protecting the public interest ecosystem that can expose wrongdoing and create the basis for redress.

Regulatory measures

In May, the Solicitors’ Regulation Authority (SRA) announced that it had opened 71 investigations into possible SLAPPs, with 48 live and 23 already closed (either because they were not SLAPPs or because of insufficient proof); and that two cases had been referred to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal. Shortly afterwards, it became public that Osborne Clarke was one of the firms referred, regarding action it took on behalf of former chancellor Nadhim Zahawi over an investigation into his tax affairs by Dan Neidle, a tax lawyer. Osborne Clarke has denied any wrongdoing and said it will contest the allegation.


This case highlights that SLAPPs don’t only relate to kleptocrats and foreign oligarchs. It’s not surprising that media outlets which tried to highlight the Post Office Horizon scandal years previously, had faced legal threats. Encouragingly, the SRA recently published an updated version of its SLAPPs warning notice, providing additional guidance to solicitors, and requiring them to “identify proposed courses of action (including pre-action) that could be defined as SLAPPs, or are otherwise abusive, and decline to act in this way”.

Legislative measures stalled for now

The SLAPPs Bill sadly did not make it through the legislative process before Parliament was dissolved for the General Election. The Bill was proposed as a Private Members Bill by Labour MP Wayne David but was being backed by the UK Government as part of its commitment to “stamp out SLAPPs”. The Bill had reached Committee Stage where several vital deficiencies were addressed, but it still needed further amendments to be workable.

In April 2024, the EU adopted an Anti-SLAPP Directive and the Council of Europe, to which the UK is still party, approved a recommendation on SLAPPs. This means more countries will be bringing forward national legislation across the region. If the UK wants to remain a global leader on addressing SLAPPs, legislative action must be implemented quickly by the incoming government.

Before the election David Lammy stated a ban on SLAPPs would form part of Labour’s strategy to shut down the ‘London laundromat’ in the UK. As Foreign Secretary he should now call time on those who wish to abuse our courts to cover up kleptocracy, or other matters in the public interest. ■


IF THE UK WANTS TO
REMAIN A GLOBAL LEADER
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BE IMPLEMENTED QUICKLY
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Read more about Radu’s case, and many others, in FPC’s 2022 report *London Calling: The issue of legal intimidation and SLAPPs against media emanating from the United Kingdom*. Over 70% of the 35 cases referenced in the report relate to economic crime and corruption.

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A groundswell of civil society action ahead of elections in Poland in 2023 led to huge pro-democracy marches and a high voter turnout



Defending democracy

Dr Beata Martin-Rozumilowicz explains the key role of Civil Society for electoral integrity and why long-term financial support for these organisations is critical

Defining the problem

Many people understand the critical role that civil society plays in the democratic progress. However, a number of recent elections, including pivotal ones in Europe, have underscored the need for more regular and long-term support to this sector as a key element of electoral integrity and democratic resilience. This is particularly the case in the area of new technologies in elections.

As well, key civil society actors note the sporadic and piecemeal support that they receive from the international community, especially in situations where an election has gone relatively well, and attention turns to other quarters. This article argues for a more consistent policy of systematic support of civil society organisations (CSOs). Their role as a key foundation of democratic accountability throughout the electoral cycle and especially between elections serves to be highlighted.

Job Done

Quite often, as an international election observer, one hears from CSOs that once an election finishes, financial support dwindles as donor priorities shift. Also, there is a tendency for international support providers to think that once democratic elections have taken place, there is no longer a need to provide support to CSOs for such activities. This is nowhere more stark than in the recent elections in Poland (October 2023) and the recent European Parliament elections (June 2024).

Given Poland's democratic transition in the 1990s, by the early 2000s most democracy support ended, and the country was seen as a success story, especially after its accession to the EU in 2004. Yet, democratic atrophy set in and by the mid-2010s, a number of bad practices had developed and culminated in various anti-democratic measures introduced later in the decade.

One key facet of this was a lack of citizen oversight, which was also allowed to deteriorate



AFTER ONE 'SUCCESSFUL' ELECTION, FUNDING IS OFTEN CUT BY DONORS AND PRIORITIES SHIFT... THIS APPROACH IS BOTH SHORT-SIGHTED AND UNDERMINES LONG-TERM PROGRESS

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS REQUIRE LONG-TERM SUPPORT IN THE USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN ELECTIONS

due to a lack of international attention and support. Of course, one can argue that countries need eventually to stand on their own, but the trajectory of democratic consolidation globally has shown that it's rarely a question of five to 10 years, but more likely 20-30 years before one can determine democracy to have taken true root.

Following various high-profile cases of backsliding, a number of civil society activists, including ones with experience in international election support, came together to re-establish a citizen effort to observe the 2023 parliamentary elections. Yet, it was an uphill struggle. Interviews with key figures in the effort note having to re-establish regional and national networks from scratch, developing the skills of those taking part, undertaking voter education efforts to re-introduce voters to the concept of citizen oversight, legal obstacles created by a backsliding system not overly interested in transparency, and a vital need to remain independent of any political force to retain integrity.

This effort yielded clear results in an election that had the highest voter turnout (74.4%) since the foundational 1989 elections. It also led to a peaceful and democratic transition in government. Yet, it was a result that could potentially have been achieved easier and earlier had support to CSOs not been cut.

Similarly, in the June 2024 European Parliament (EP) elections, citizen observers from across EU countries came together to launch Election-Watch.EU, a cross-national effort aimed at bringing greater information, transparency and accountability to the EP elections. These individuals, like those in Poland, had also played key roles in international election observation and assistance. The results were impressive and raised both the interest and knowledge of the process across the 27 EU member states.

Yet, the problems that they faced were similar to those organisations in Poland. Since the 1990s, CSO structures in many EU countries had atrophied due to lack of attention and funding, focus had shifted to the Brussels forum, yet the EU had no internal mechanisms to hold its members to account for anti-democratic behaviour. Thus, to achieve this oversight and accountability, supreme efforts had to be made for CSOs to build things again from the ground up.

Not Alone

These two CSO efforts underscore the impact that CSOs can have on electoral integrity and democratic accountability. Yet they are not alone. From the author's experience, key CSO organisations from Kenya to Kyrgyzstan have suffered similar fates. After one 'successful' election, funding is often cut by donors and priorities shift. In one case, after an election, a key CSO noted that they only had funding for another six months before they had to cease operations. In another, a major international donor agency told the author: "Elections are over, we now have other priorities."

This approach is both short-sighted and undermines long-term progress. After elections, such CSOs are often the only organisations that continue to follow up on and document long-term issues from an electoral cycle approach (as in the Kenyan case). Their work promotes the implementation of observer recommendations, a key element of both international and citizen

A delegation from Lesotho visits Kenya's Election Technology Centre to learn about deploying technology in the electoral process





Voter education ahead of elections in Kenya in 2019

election observation methodologies. This is so that improvements are made over the election cycle and that the benefits of observation yield concrete results.

They also continue to monitor long-term issues such as boundary delimitation, voter roll management, political finance reporting (often linked to anti-corruption measures), media freedoms (including mis/disinformation campaigns), and the state's respect of basic human rights principles (key, for instance, in the recent Zimbabwe elections). These are all elements that international observers can only lightly touch upon and need a foundation of credible, non-partisan and principle-based reporting.

New Technologies

Another area where CSOs require long-term and systematic support is in the use of new technologies in elections. These are increasingly prevalent not only on election day, but in various ancillary systems used in election processes (for example, electronic voter registration, results management systems). While aware that these aspects present certain vulnerabilities, these are often highly technical areas that require increasingly specialised knowledge. One need only look at the last two Kenyan elections to understand that fundamental impact that technology can have.

The same is true of social media platforms, disinformation monitoring, and their potential impact on elections. CSOs also often experience difficulties in dealing with platforms on an equal footing and having access to key data for their observations. These are all areas that require more consistent and systematic donor support as part of a comprehensive, long-term strategic approach.

Conclusions

From the above, it becomes clear that civil society oversight of elections is a key component of electoral integrity. Clear and consistent support to the CSOs undertaking this work is necessary and on a long-term, election cycle basis. This is all the more crucial with the understanding gleaned from the past two decades of democracy assistance, namely that democratic consolidation is not a matter of years, but of decades. Only with a more strategic and focused approach, with CSOs at the core, can this long-term goal of democratic sustainability be fully achieved. ■



Dr Beata Martin-Rozumiłowicz is an Electoral Expert with more than two decades of election observation experience. She's been Deputy Chief Observer on EU EOMs to Zimbabwe (2023), Kenya (2022), and The Gambia (2021/2022). Previously, she was Director for Europe and Eurasia at IFES and also headed OSCE/ODHIR's Election Department (2011-16). Beata has co-authored OSCE/ODHIR's new ICT Handbook and a special edition on new political party assistance strategies with the University of Nottingham.

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Watch this Space

As humanity's relationship with outer space evolves from exploration to exploitation, **Professor Garry E Hunt** says the need for appropriate galactic governance is now urgent

The space world is an essential part of our technological age. According to the World Economic Forum, it is booming, with the global space economy estimated to increase from US\$630 billion in 2023 to US\$1.8 trillion in 2035.

Once space was mainly exploring the solar system, searching for clues to understand the origin of life, the Earth and whether there are any other signs of life now or in the past in our solar system.

Space activities now are becoming dominated by commercial enterprises driven by imaginative business ventures through a constant stream of new companies. In 2023 there were 233 space launches and more than 90% involved commercial companies in some form. The number of space launches this year is likely to be even more.

In the 1950s, only the US and Russia were involved. Now there are 74 government space agencies; 16 with launch capabilities and seven able to launch extraterrestrial probes; while three, the US, Russia and China, can send humans into space.

The UK has a dynamic Space Agency, worth over £16.4 billion per year to the economy, employing over 45,000 people and building on decades of space science mission experience of many university groups and industry.

The increasing economic challenges facing every country demand the Space Sector creates cost effective missions able to deliver results and the financial benefits quickly, not in years or even decades, but in months.

Missions to Mars, Venus, Mercury and the Moon with flight times of a few months are quicker than to the distant planets of Jupiter and beyond.

Funding for space science missions needs careful thought. A public / private partnership is a more sensible way forward than always depending on Government support. Politically funded budgets are quickly influenced by economic issues, elections, and events anywhere in the world. Stable funding for space is essential.



CREDIT: NASA/GSFC/USGS.

The iconic image of Earth Rising as viewed by Bill Anders of the crew of Apollo 8 on Christmas Eve 1968

A New 'Gold Rush': Exploiting the Solar System Riches

The solar system holds unbounded mineral wealth. Manufacturing for the modern technological age requires access to the Earth's mineral resources. But their depletion is a concern, raising the urgency to search elsewhere. The Apollo programme created interest in the moon and interest in exploiting resources beyond the Earth's orbit.

The moon contains many common minerals, such as basalt, iron, quartz, and silicon also rare earth elements and precious metals including platinum, palladium and rhodium, vital for emerging technologies, as well as smartphones, computers, car batteries and medical equipment. Titanium ore, ten times richer than found on Earth, has also been discovered.

An abundance of water ice found at the moon's south pole would help sustain a human base and provide hydration, oxygen, and ingredients for rocket fuel. Helium-3, rare on Earth, exists on the lunar surface unprotected from the solar wind. This isotope is not radioactive and could provide nuclear energy in a fusion reactor.

The moon is appearing like an Aladdin's cave of mineral riches with the potential to boost any national economy. No wonder an armada of spacecraft are being directed there with recent successful landings by China, India, Japan, and the US, their first return since 1972. A Russian spacecraft was the only one to fail but they will soon try again. China's recent lunar mission is the first to the moon's dark side and is returning to the Earth with samples to unlock even more mineral treasures.

Interest in space mining is spreading further out into the solar system. Two space missions from Japan and one from the US have already landed safely on asteroids with the US returning some rocks to the Earth.

Controlling the Wild West 'Gold Rush'

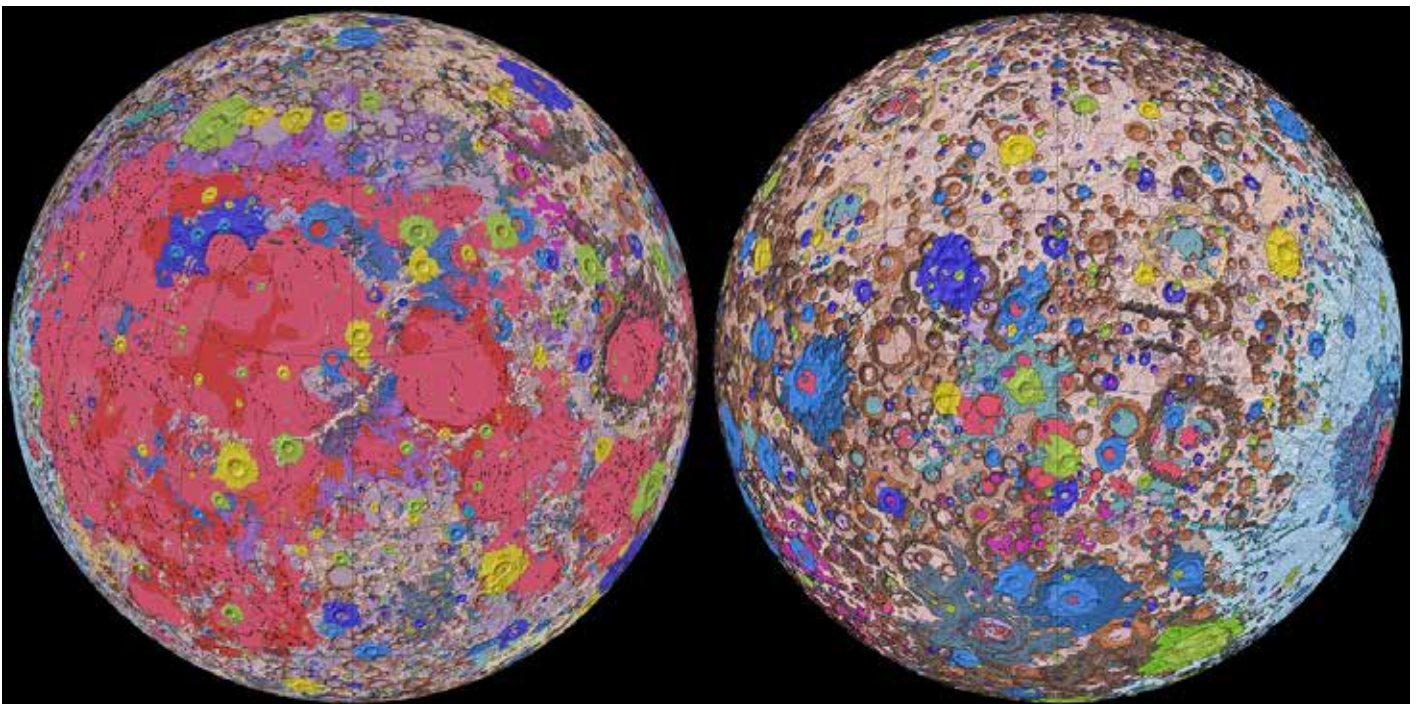
The challenges are extracting these minerals and returning them to the Earth. But there is no proper Galactic Governance so we must not allow a Wild West approach of the first successful nation claiming the land and minerals. History has shown the dangers of this approach.


The 1967 Outer Space Treaty was the first attempt at space diplomacy which asserts that nobody can claim territory or sovereignty in space, nor can they put nuclear weapons in space, and limits the use of the Moon to peaceful purposes. This is hopelessly inadequate for the modern age, offering no more than "promises" of control for objects near to the Earth. We urgently need better regulations extending for objects throughout the solar system.

In 2020 NASA introduced a fresh approach for the new lunar exploration era and the expanding space exploration of Mars, asteroids, and comets and beyond. These Artemis Accords, a set of non-binding bilateral agreements, have been signed by 40 countries so far, but not Russia nor China. They require future missions to avoid dumping material on these planetary bodies and in their orbits.

Our Moon is already rather cluttered with the debris of at least 50 crashes, at least 200 tonnes of rubbish, 100 bags of human waste while space itself is full of debris which is a huge hazard for all space missions. Space mining will generate vast amounts of waste, involve countless items of machinery, space vehicles and the spacecraft from the participating nations. We must keep all these planetary bodies pristine.

Orthographic projections of the Unified Geologic Map of the Moon showing the geology of the Moon's near side (left) and far side (right). The colours show the different geological and topographic features, and illustrate the differences of the hemispheres





THE ERA OF SPACE COMMERCIALISATION THREATENS EXPLOITATION WHICH, IF UNCHECKED AND UNGUARDED, MAY LEAD TO THE DEMISE OF OUR ONCE PRISTINE SOLAR WORLD

Space exploitation is a risky business

The possible commercial rewards from space exploitation are exciting investors everywhere, but they come with a price. Space is risky and the dangers can be unexpected and terminal.

The Earth is surrounded by millions of fragments, from items of spacecraft to specks of paint, travelling at a speed of ~ 17,000 mph. These pieces of all sizes could cause massive damage or even destroy satellites. A dramatic increase in satellite launches over the past five years, together with rising volumes of space debris, means the chance of collisions is rising fast, risking damage to many of our current basic satellite services.

There are constant near misses in space which have also inspired a Hollywood movie. In February 2024, NASA was terrified to discover that two un-maneuvrable spacecraft – a US and a Russian – had passed within 10 metres of each other. Now China has just revealed that the solar panels of their space station had been damaged by debris resulting in a partial loss of power. Destroying satellites in space as both China and Russia have done increases even more debris and this is not helpful.

Cleaning up space and removing the debris around the Earth is an urgent major priority and it is not just an opportunity for space engineering. It is a huge business market for the London financial industry too.

Future space missions need to be insured against possible damage and malfunction. London is already a global leader in space insurance underwriting and brokering with over 25% of global space insurance capacity located here which can capitalise on the opportunities of the future. This is an important step in London becoming a global finance centre for the space world.

The Exciting Future

A new international space race is underway with the emergence of a dynamic, global commercial sector which underpins our modern technological lives and is crucial for our defence systems too. We are witnessing the emergence of novel capabilities in space such as actively removing debris, generating solar energy, mining, and manufacturing, data storage and creating new defence capabilities, in addition to the many current applications in communications, navigation, weather forecasting and climate monitoring, and finance. Perhaps soon, humans could reside on the Moon, Mars or even a spacecraft.

The US and China are now the leaders in a new space race, a competition for resources. The US has ambitious plans to build a lunar gateway, a space station providing astronauts with a staging post for routine trips to the moon which could allow astronauts to fly to and from the moon. China is also planning a moon base initiative which has attracted nine other countries, including Russia, to join this initiative.

Mars is a key focus for the US, determined to identify any evidence of past life on Mars, so the early return to Earth of the carefully collected rocks is of critical importance. Humans visiting and living on Mars could happen soon.

Space exploration in the past has been to gain knowledge of our surroundings for the benefit of all mankind. Countries and Governments are no longer content to commit huge sums without personal gain. The era of space commercialisation threatens exploitation which, if unchecked and unguarded, may lead to the demise of our once pristine solar world.

Remember, space belongs to *all* of us. ■



Garry Hunt is a renowned space scientist, broadcaster and CEO/ Executive Director of several major companies, a Non-Executive Director and advisor to FTSE & Fortune 500 companies and governments. He was awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal and an OBE from King Charles III for services to Space Science and Business.

Do you have any comments about this article? If you would like to share these with the editor, kindly email edward.glover@fcdo.gov.uk

The Ambassadors by Holbein was painted in 1533. Despite fraught relations between England and Rome at the time the envoys pictured would have been able to convey unwelcome diplomatic messages without fear of reprisals from King Henry VIII



Considering Diplomatic Immunity

History shows that the convention of allowing envoys to conduct their duties unhindered – even in hostile foreign lands – should always be protected or risk dire consequences, writes

FCDO Research Analyst Martin Garrett

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THE CONCEPT OF
DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY
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POTENTIALLY HOSTILE
FOREIGN TERRITORY

Diplomats tend to take their diplomatic immunity for granted. Many diplomatic careers pass without the need actively to invoke diplomatic immunity, although the knowledge it is there if required – like an insurance policy – has reassured many, especially when carrying out duties that could be regarded unsympathetically by a host state.

But for some it has proved vital. Diplomatic immunity has enabled generations of diplomats to carry out their functions free from the pressures that might otherwise arise in countries with different processes, institutions, languages, cultures and policies. Even in difficult times and difficult places, diplomatic immunity is likely to be respected.

Recent challenges to diplomatic immunity

The question of state adherence to diplomatic immunity was given a sharp jolt by two grave events earlier this year. Firstly, on 1 April, Israel bombed an Iranian Embassy complex in Damascus, destroying the building that housed the consular section. Sixteen people were reported killed, including officers of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard and Syrian civilians. There was a significant risk that a conflict could develop as a result but so far, serious hostilities have been avoided.



Above: A memorial to WPC Yvonne Fletcher where she was murdered by agents in the Libyan People's Bureau in 1984

Below: US diplomats are welcomed home after being held hostage for 444 days in Iran

On 5 April, Ecuadorian armed police forced their way into the Mexican Embassy in Quito and captured Jorge Glas, the controversial former Vice-President of Ecuador. Glas had been accused of corruption by the Ecuadorian government but had sought sanctuary in the Mexican Embassy and was granted diplomatic asylum by the Mexicans. The Mexican Foreign Minister Alicia Bárcena said several Mexican diplomats were injured in the raid.

The reaction to this was predictable—especially in Latin America where the concept of offering diplomatic asylum is well entrenched. There was widespread international condemnation of Ecuador. Mexico suspended relations with Ecuador and announced it would take the issue to the International Court of Justice at the Hague. It has since done so, and it is likely to take years before a judgement is reached, further complicating any bilateral relationship between the two countries for some time to come. Latin American countries, including Colombia, Brazil, Chile and others condemned the Ecuadorian action. Nicaragua, like Mexico, suspended diplomatic relations.

These events were serious challenges to the norm of internationally agreed inviolability of diplomatic premises, persons and communications. However, there have been challenges to diplomatic immunity for as long as the concept has existed.

The Vienna Conventions

The internationally agreed terms of diplomatic immunity are set out in the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, and the rather more complicated Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963. These are accepted by the vast majority of nation states, although the acceptance of some countries is qualified by reservations, especially in relation to the inviolability of communications. These two conventions have codified diplomatic immunity in international law.

Diplomatic immunity has ancient origins

The concept of diplomatic immunity predates both Conventions and is as old as diplomacy itself. It stems from the historic necessity of messengers or envoys being able to travel unhindered across potentially hostile foreign territory. Even during war or other crises it was necessary in ancient times to guarantee the security of messages, and therefore the safety of those who carried them. Without this, the chances of ever negotiating an improvement in relations between two states was much reduced. Guaranteeing the safety of representatives of states enabled peaceful, mutually productive relations to be developed.



PHOTO: NARA



A memorial to Swedish Diplomat Malcolm Sinclair (inset) in Nowogród Borbranski, Poland, on the site of his murder by Russian agents in 1739 which led to Sweden's war with Russia in 1741

The first ever known peace treaty, between the Hittites and the Egyptians, was signed in 1259 BC, ending 200 years of conflict between those two peoples. But this must have been preceded by some – possibly many – journeys by envoys or messengers into potentially hostile territory.

Reciprocity

Diplomatic immunity evolved with the development of diplomacy and the emergence of the specialist diplomat. With the first permanent diplomatic missions in the 16th and 17th centuries, European diplomats realised that protection from prosecution was essential for them to do their jobs in countries with different languages, laws, cultures, customs and possibly antipathy to foreigners. Also host countries began to understand the notion of reciprocity. Protecting foreign diplomats from domestic pressures made it more likely that their own diplomats would enjoy the same courtesies. So, a set of informal rules evolved guaranteeing the rights of diplomats.

In England in 1709 the Diplomatic Privileges Act gave diplomats immunity against civil proceedings. This followed the detention by bailiffs of Count Andrey Artamonovich Matveyev, the Russian resident envoy for non-payment of bills. This incident caused protests from the diplomatic corps, and the Diplomatic Privileges Act was partly to mollify the displeasure of Peter the Great.

States would usually respect visiting officials on the basis of reciprocity and consent, but this didn't stop occasional interference from third parties. Travelling on diplomatic business was not without risk.

In 1739, a Swedish courier called Malcolm Sinclair – the son of Scottish immigrants – was murdered by Russian agents. They wanted to ascertain the nature of negotiations between a potentially hostile Sweden and the Ottoman Empire, which was then at war with Russia. In Sweden, Sinclair's murder caused such hatred of Russia that it contributed to the outbreak of war in 1741 between the two countries.

The French Revolution disrupted the developing diplomatic system as revolutionary France turned against diplomats – including their own – some of whom were accused of working against France as the revolution became more extreme. Edmond Charles Genêt is a case in point. He served as French Minister to the United States during 1793/1794. But his activities caused a diplomatic crisis with the US, who were trying to remain neutral between the UK and France.

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However, as the French Revolution developed, his French masters also became dissatisfied with him, and he was recalled to Paris. Realising his return would probably result in his execution, the enlightened Americans permitted him to stay in the US, where he remained until his death in 1834.

Codifying immunity

Over time the concept of diplomatic immunity became more respected. During the Second World War, although there were exceptions, diplomatic immunity was generally upheld. At the outbreak of war, the embassies of the belligerents were closed in an orderly fashion and their staff evacuated through neutral countries.

After the war the massive expansion in the number of nation states, mainly due to decolonisation, made codifying diplomatic immunity more desirable, hence the work that led to the two conventions. But there have been some notorious abuses, sometimes linked to a country's domestic turmoil.

Recent times – major incidents

For example, the seizure of the US Embassy in Tehran, in November 1979 by supporters of the Islamic Revolution and the holding of a total of 53 US diplomatic personnel and US citizens as hostages for 444 days was one of the most serious breaches of diplomatic immunity in modern times. Diplomatic relations were broken off in 1980 and have yet to be resumed.

As far as the UK is concerned, probably the most serious abuse of diplomatic status occurred in 1984. On 17 April a British policewoman, WPC Yvonne Fletcher, was killed by a gunman firing shots from the Libyan People's Bureau, (Libyan Embassy), in St James's Square. She was part of a Metropolitan Police contingent, whose role was to keep protestors from obstructing the Bureau. The protestors were fired on by two gunmen shooting from the Libyan People's Bureau. WPC Fletcher was the only fatality. Even if the Libyan authorities had surrendered the guilty person or persons, given the serious nature of the offence, it was very doubtful that the UK government would have considered maintaining diplomatic relations.

As the Police were unable to enter the Libyan Mission without impinging on diplomatic immunity, they remained outside. The Libyan staff took no chances and remained inside.

The Libyan authorities in Tripoli prevented British Embassy staff from leaving our Embassy. As a young Vice-Consul, I was in the Embassy at the time. It was agreed that UK staff could leave the Embassy temporarily, but only in relays of up to three at a time. When three returned to the Embassy, another three were allowed to leave.

The fact that we were not able to disperse and go home was not reassuring. However, if whatever happened in Tripoli mirrored what happened in London, even if the Libyan interpretation of events in London was not the same as ours, it was likely to be beneficial to our welfare. And it seemed unlikely that British authorities would enter diplomatic premises in violation of international law, despite the extreme provocation of the murder of a London policewoman.

After several days in the Embassy, it became obvious that the only way out of this impasse was for both diplomatic missions to close and for the staff to return to their respective countries and for bilateral relations to be severed. This meant the Metropolitan Police had to forfeit an opportunity to establish who was responsible for the murder of WPC Fletcher and bring that person to justice.

Despite this, channels were left open for some business to be carried on. Two of my colleagues remained in Tripoli as part of a UK Interests section in the Italian Embassy and the Saudi Arabian Embassy acted for the Libyans in London. UK Diplomatic relations with Libya were not re-established until 1999.

Diplomatic immunity was born of necessity and developed into an internationally agreed concept that will be required for the conduct of international relations for the foreseeable future. It is probable there will be future occasions when individual states fail to respect this fundamental concept, with tragic and far-reaching consequences.

But many diplomats – myself included – have good reason to be grateful for the protection diplomatic immunity offers. ■


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Pia Sinha, CEO
of the Prison
Reform Trust



Seeing Life from Both Sides

Edward Glover draws attention to a recent speech by the CEO of the Prison Reform Trust **Pia Sinha** on empowering prisoners to prepare for their release into society

In the spring edition of this magazine I wrote about one evening spent with rough sleepers on Oxford Street, gaining an insight into their present lives and the lives left behind. As we provided tea and sandwiches, we met several rough sleepers including a young man recently released from prison with nowhere to go upon completion of his sentence and not in receipt of his discharge payment. More recently, the media reported extensively the condemnation of the appalling conditions at Wandsworth Prison. Against this backdrop, we were struck by a recent speech by Pia Sinha, CEO of the Prison Reform Trust, at Brixton Prison highlighting the need for urgent reform of the prison system. Here are her remarks:

Good morning everyone!

Thank you to all our guests for coming to this event, and for those who live and work here – thank you for your generosity and for agreeing to host this event. In this room, we have brought together valued Prison Reform Trust partners and supporters, our colleagues across the criminal justice system, and newer friends. Not only to celebrate our past achievements that you have been integral to, but to also explore how together, we can use our passion, insights, connections, and power to create a more just, humane and effective prison system. What unites this room together is a deep commitment to improving conditions for individuals within the criminal justice system. Thank you for joining us today.

Imprisonment for Public Protection

Yesterday, I read a devastating story about Scott Rider in *The Guardian*. Scott took his own life at HMP Woodhill in June 2022. He had been serving an imprisonment for public protection (IPP) sentence after being convicted for a violent crime in 2005. The sentence initially had a minimum term of 23 months but no end date.

IPP sentencing was introduced in 2003, and despite its abolishing over 10 years ago, it was not retrospective, and just under 3000 people are being held in prison many years beyond their minimum term. Over half have already spent an additional 10 years in prison, which included Scott who had been in prison for 15 years longer than his minimum term. Days before Scott died, he had told a prison worker that he had lost hope he would ever be freed.



THE PRISON REFORM TRUST STANDS AS A BEACON OF HOPE IN THE TURBULENT LANDSCAPE OF OUR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM. OUR MISSION IS CLEAR, TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR THOSE IN PRISON AND RESHAPE POLICIES TOWARDS A MORE JUST AND HUMANE SOCIETY

The aims of The Prison Reform Trust

At Prison Reform Trust, we stand as a beacon of hope in the turbulent landscape of our criminal justice system. Our mission is clear, to improve conditions for those in prison and reshape policies towards a more just and humane society.

The urgency of our cause cannot be overstated. Too often, individuals in prison are subjected to dehumanising rhetoric and marginalisation. At PRT, we ensure the voices of those directly impacted by the system are heard and acted on.

Through our programmes, we bring current and former prisoners together with peer organisations to challenge misconceptions and advocate for empathy in justice. By empowering prisoners to shape policies, we aim to break the cycle of reoffending. At both local and national levels, PRT is a driving force for change. Our reputation, built on four decades of knowledgeable, reliable analysis and presentation of the facts, gives us influence that few organisations can match.

A severe prison crisis

However, the challenges we face are daunting. Our prison system is in crisis. We already have the highest incarceration rate in Europe, and even though two-thirds of our prisons are already overcrowded, the government's projection remains that there will be nearly 100,000 adults in prison by 2026. Of those people being sent to prison, it has disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups:

- A third of prisoners were taken into care as a child
- Half of women, and a third of men imprisoned, experienced abuse as a child
- Black and Asian people are more likely to be serving long sentences than other groups.

The consequences are stark. Too many prisoners and too few staff led to a surge in deaths, self-harm and violence in prisons in the last decade. A third of prisoners that died in prisons last year were self-inflicted. 59% of men and 82% of women say they have a mental health problem. There can be no excuse for not understanding the consequences of doing the same again.

What to do

Prisons require hope. The impact of what we do might not be immediate, but it will and does save lives. We couldn't change it for Scott, but in May this year, PRT influenced a major amendment in the Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) policy that would make it easier to release people on IPP sentences. We are not afraid to speak truth to power but also willing to

Recruiting and training
dedicated prison officers is
key to prison reform



Brixton Prison achieved a first by offering a debt advice service for its prisoners



work alongside ministers and officials to achieve reform. A key strength of PRT is our ability to react quickly to opportunities to shift policy and priorities within government. More remains to be done but PRT is leading the charge.

Changing the system

Whilst crisis and scandal can trigger defensiveness, they can also act as a catalyst for bold reform. We must move beyond survival mode and envision a justice system that truly serves its purpose. This requires not just a reset in one prison—transferring the burden onto another overstretched governor and their staff. This requires a reset of the system, with a positive vision for what our criminal justice system should look like. By strengthening our core functions, PRT can better respond to the urgent needs of those in prison and drive meaningful change at the policy level.

Without the work that PRT does to inform the sector or their work to advocate for the rights of people in prison, would the criminal justice sector and those that support or fund it know where to get the greatest impact for their investment? Yet getting funding for this work is unsexy because it goes largely unnoticed. Without this work there is a risk that the sector continues to focus on the wrong things, that myths don't get dispelled and the efforts that are required to change the system become mis-directed.

Which is why our priorities over the next few years will focus on, first, to ensure prisons are used fairly and proportionately as the punishment of last resort. Second, to improve life in prison. Third, to challenge prejudice against people in prison, and lastly, to promote equality across the justice system.

Brixton: an example of what can be done

With your continued support, we can make a difference to the day-to-day lives of people in prison. My deep gratitude to Mia Wheeler and her team for giving PRT the platform to talk about our work. Whether it was known by people in this room, I hope it is evident after today that what Brixton is trying to achieve from the inside in giving purpose, meaning, opportunities and hope to the men here is backed to the hilt by the work PRT are doing on the outside. It is two sides of the same coin and when we tackle this together we are an absolute force to be reckoned with.

Mia, Brixton's Prison Governor, invited PRT to facilitate an Active Citizen's Workshop here over the last month. In these sessions, we provide current prison residents with the opportunity to share their views on topics of importance to them and the prison establishment. One key theme that came up was the impact of low wages. This is a theme that has come up consistently throughout these workshops we have facilitated across the country, and as a result, PRT has strategically decided to elevate this issue to the policy level.

This morning, you will have the opportunity to hear from Mia, our staff, and members of



Wandsworth Prison was condemned for its appalling conditions

Do you have any comments about this article? If you would like to share these with the editor, kindly email edward.glover@fcdo.gov.uk

the Prisoner Policy Network to share their experiences and challenges related to low wages, and how PRT’s programmes are devised to mobilise change for issues that are most important and urgent for prisoners. Following that, we’ll have the opportunity to take a walk through the prison and discuss some of these challenges with current prison residents. We hope you leave feeling challenged, inspired and energised. ■
Thank you.

Pia Sinha joined the Prison Service in 1999. After joining HMP Wandsworth as a Senior Psychologist, she took up the post of Head of Safer Prisons, followed by Head of Reducing Re-offending at HMP Wormwood Scrubs. She then took up her first Deputy Governor role at HMP Send, followed by Downview and Liverpool.
In 2013 Pia was appointed to her first Governing role at HMP and Young Offender Institution Thorn Cross, going on to govern at both Risley and Liverpool. In 2020 she became Acting Deputy Director of the Probation Reform Programme, then the Workforce Programme, before becoming Director of Women in November 2021. Pia’s vision for the Women’s Directorate was to enable safe, compassionate and individualised care for women. In April 2023 Pia became the CEO of the Prison Reform Trust.

REQUIEM

- Mr Brian Robertson, on 15 January 2024
- Mrs Sylvie Rayden, February 2024
- Mr James Radcliffe MVO,
on 12 February 2024
- Sir James Hennessy KBE CMG, Governor of Belize 1980/81,
on 25 February aged 100
- Mrs Gillian Cummins,
on 28 February 2024
- Mrs Pamela Morgan, on 2 March 2024
- Mr Gordon Meldrum Baker,
on 9 March 2024
- Mr Alan Featherstone, a former Second Secretary, on 26 March 2024
- Mr David Broad, on 3 April 2024
- Mrs Sally Larner (nee Dewhurst),
on 14 April 2024
- Mrs I Jean Simpson, on 11 May 2024
- Mr Peter Maxwell Innes, Consul General in Melbourne, on 15 May 2024
- Miss Belinda Lindeck MBE,
a founding member of the Association, on 30 May 2024
- Mr Simon Malpas, on 30 May 2024



IN MEMORIAM

Michael Hamilton lived and worked in the Middle East for 25 years, for most of that time in Saudi Arabia. He gained a great deal of knowledge and respect for the country and its people. He was brutally murdered by members of Al Qaeda on the 29th of May 2004. We will remember him with all love forever.
Penny, Matt and the whole family
For life and death are one even as the river and the sea are one
Khalil Gibran The Prophet

I Was There...

The FCDOA membership is rich in recollections and anecdotes. *I Was There* tells the story of world events through the eyes of colleagues who witnessed them first-hand

Revisiting the Rose Revolution

Recent protests in Georgia took **Jo Seaman** back to Tbilisi in 2003 where she witnessed soft power in action as Georgians rose up against a corrupt regime



Crowds of Georgians gather on Freedom Square at the start of the Rose Revolution in November 2003

OUR EVENT WAS INTERRUPTED BY THE VENUE SECURITY GUARDS, WHO SHOUTED TO US WATCHING THEIR BACK-ROOM TV, AS THEY COULD SEE THAT SAKASHVILI AND HIS SUPPORTERS, SOME CARRYING FLOWERS, WERE STORMING THE PARLIAMENT BUILDING

Georgia was beset by challenges in 2003. While it had achieved independence in 1991, a series of brutal civil wars and separatist conflicts, fuelled by powerful players in neighbouring Russia, had left Georgia in a parlous state.

I took up my post in 2001 when political life was complex and far from transparent. There were uncertainties about governance and the rule of law – there was a dysfunctional police force, an underfunded and under-educated army, a rampantly corrupt public sector and an ineffectual tax system – and hence no funding for public services. Foreigners could be the targets of kidnapping and robbery.

General infrastructure was fragile. We had electricity, gas and water cuts almost every day. Roads and telecommunications were decrepit. There were archaic business methods and it was a cash economy. People didn't like to use contracts, which was quite a shock to me. Relationships seemed to matter more than rules and deals would be done, at night, over a bottle or three of good Georgian wine...

Change in the wind

In 2003 there was an opportunity for change in the form of the presidential elections in November that year. The President, Eduard Shevardnadze, was ageing. By then he was 75 years old, having been



**Mikhyil Saakashvili
engulfed by protestors
on Freedom Square**

in politics since the 1940s. He had initially been elected President of Georgia in 1995 after the civil war, and again in 2000. This latter election was marred with widespread claims of vote-rigging. He was a very influential statesman and many in Georgia and the West applauded his pro-West leanings.

However, it seemed Shevardnadze had lost touch with the reality that most Georgians faced. He appeared to be surrounded by family and supporters who were themselves notoriously corrupt, or conspicuously self-serving and wealthy. The Georgia he presided over was not working – it felt it was deteriorating into a failed state.

There were anti-corruption opposition parties – but these were fragmented. The main leaders (all pro-West, in their mid to late 30s and all formerly in Shevardnadze's government), were Zurab Zhvania, Nino Burjanadze and the firebrand Mikhyil Saakashvili, who was then in the influential position of Mayor of Tbilisi. Saakashvili had a strong anti-corruption ticket and had studied in the USA on a scholarship.

Civil society

Georgia also had an unusually strong Civil Society sector. Many organisations were pro-actively mobilising in the summer of 2003, speaking out against corruption and encouraging people to vote. There was a lot of political apathy – given widespread vote-rigging, many people apparently thought 'What is the point in voting if the vote will be ignored?'. A very high-profile organisation was *Kmara* – Enough! This was a student-led movement of activists and they were busy protesting and plastering their logo all over Tbilisi for months before the November election.

Kakha Lomaia, the head of the Georgian office of the Open Society organisation, was very active. He approached us, and asked if the British Council could co-fund Exit Polls. This had never been done in Georgia before. The Open Society needed a huge amount of money to train Georgians in how to do this. Initially I said no, as we had tiny budgets. He said he had tried all the other foreign organisations and was getting desperate... I reconsidered and pledged a modest amount.

With this pledge he brought on board the Eurasia Foundation (funded by the US Aid programme) and Rustavi 2, an independent TV network. This would be the first time Georgians would be asked for which party they had voted, to check against voting fraud. The British Council was also able to support the training of Georgians to do Parallel Vote Tabulation, working with the International Foundation of Electoral Systems – IFES (the Embassy provided T-shirts for the Georgian monitors). This meant that actual votes were double counted. It was hoped this would further triangulate against electoral fraud.

And the others

It wasn't just lawyers and activists who got involved. Georgian intelligentsia, filmmakers, artists and many others were speaking out, some supported by non-Georgian organisations. As for us, we developed a campaign – *Make Your Voice Heard!* We were a foreign, and an apolitical organisation, but we wanted to encourage young people to participate in the political process. This was part of our then objective to support the reform of key institutions.

**Protesters march down
Rustaveli Avenue towards
Freedom Square with flags
carrying the familiar clenched
fist emblem of the *Kmara*
movement**



Inter alia, we asked one of our visiting jazz bands if they would support us and they agreed. We designed T-Shirts and gave away hundreds to students, and to the mostly young people who came to our jazz event in one of the biggest nightclubs in the city. With DfID colleagues we supported *Theatre for Change*. This was participative theatre, where the audience could shout out alternative endings to seemingly intractable problems which are presented in a play, especially written for this audience. The play we supported was about 'political corruption' – and people participated, passionately.

Election day

There was much excitement and anticipation in Georgia before the elections, but also anxiety and uncertainty; there was little rule of law and a lot of men with guns, who felt passionately about the stasis in their country. International election observers began arriving in plane loads in October 2003.

The scene was set for the November 2 elections. The elections were woefully disorganised. Voters' lists were inaccurate – they were out of date, and in some cases the names of the dead were on the lists, some of the living left off. There were violent incidents – fighting in and around polling stations. Ballot irregularities occurred with gun-toting men brazenly stuffing ballots – tipping out votes hidden in their clothes or stealing ballot boxes. Voters were intimidated. The international election monitors, the OSCE, noted numerous examples of transgressions.

Then came the results

With my colleagues, I watched the results of the Exit Polls which were broadcast on Georgian TV. It appeared that one of the opposition parties, Saakashvili's National Movement party, had won! These results, of course, were unofficial. However, not long afterwards the official results (according to the Central Election Commission) declared that President Shevardnadze's ruling party had been successful and furthermore they stated that there was "no evidence of wrongdoing". Few people believed the official results.

The Parallel Vote Tabulation (double counting of actual votes) results were then announced. Saakashvili apparently had an even more pronounced win over Shevardnadze than shown in the Exit Polls. This was explosive stuff and we were unsure what would happen next.

Followed by protests

Within minutes, the streets filled with protestors, at this point mostly men. Saakashvili and the other opposition party leaders demanded that the real votes were recognised, or that fresh, free and fair elections should be held. My office was located opposite the Central Election Commission, about 200 metres from the Parliament building and about 300 metres from the centrally located Freedom Square, where most of the demonstrators were massing. My colleagues and I had a ring-side seat.

Shevardnadze initially ignored these protests, believing they were engineered by "silly young people" and he refused to concede that there had been electoral fraud. He did, however, mobilise large numbers of security personnel and the streets filled with soldiers and military vehicles. As the days rolled by, we could see the numbers of demonstrators swelling. There were a lot of men with guns, a lot of intransigence and a lot of uncertainty.

Opposition party leaders kept the pressure on, but they were initially not joined up strategically. The *Kmara* activists were out in large numbers with their flags. Older people started to join the protests, also more women and children. It was tense, as still fresh in the memory was when people – in similar family groups – had been killed by Soviet troops in 1989 (protesting Soviet rule). There was a real risk of civil war.

The three main opposition party leaders started talking more collaboratively of forming a coalition – and they bussed in supporters from the regions to join the demonstrations. It is notable that these were peaceful protests and many people carried red roses to demonstrate this.

Meanwhile, we in the British Council were hosting a video arts event; the gallery was just off Freedom Square, the focus of the demonstrations. To my amazement, young demonstrators came to our cultural event, some carrying protest flags. Our event was interrupted by the venue security guards, who shouted to us watching their back-room TV, as they could see that Saakashvili and his supporters, some carrying flowers, were storming the parliament building – Saakashvili was now demanding that Shevardnadze should resign. We saw Shevardnadze inelegantly bundled out of parliament by his gun-wielding bodyguards.

The endgame

That evening, Igor Ivanov, the Russian Foreign Minister, hastily flew in to try to mediate between Shevardnadze and the opposition leaders. There followed hours and hours of behind-the-scenes discussions. On the streets, women put roses down gun barrels. Shevardnadze appeared on TV. He made the bombshell announcement that he would step down. He said, "If I use the rights I have it would lead to bloodshed. But I have never betrayed my people."

The city – the country – we all went wild with delight that violence had been avoided. The streets of Tbilisi filled with revellers within seconds of this announcement, accompanied by fireworks and celebratory machine-gun fire!



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FIREWORKS AND
CELEBRATORY MACHINE-
GUN FIRE!

The aftermath

Unlike other deposed leaders, Shevardnadze did not flee, but retired from public life. Apparently, the only bit of collateral damage in this velvet revolution was that Shevardnadze's presidential chair was hacked to pieces by a mob. There were fresh elections in January 2004 and these were deemed to be clean. Saakashvili, Burjanadze and Zhvania's coalition was overwhelmingly successful.

The reforms they brought in started immediately – to the police, taxation, judiciary, public sector, a merit-based education system, amongst other reforms. The new government (pro-EU, pro-NATO) needed and got considerable foreign support. Very notable was how many of the new government were foreign-educated – the alumni of scholarships from the USA, France, Germany and indeed the UK.

To me, the Rose Revolution demonstrated the power of education, of partnership, of soft diplomacy and of respect for the institutions of democracy – and of President Shevardnadze's personal integrity in not turning his troops against his own people. The horrors of the civil wars of the 1990s would still have been fresh in his memory.

My time in Georgia was dramatic on several levels, as I also met my husband, Mike, who was Senior Political Officer at the British Embassy at the time of the Rose Revolution. My experiences made such an impact on me that I wrote *Roses Down the Barrel of a Gun, Georgia: Love and Revolution*, (Grosvenor House Publishing 2019). Paperback and e-books can be ordered through good online bookshops. ■

Editor's Note

Once more Georgia is engulfed by protest. In May this year NATO warned the government that the recent parliamentary approval of new contentious legislation branding overseas-funded NGOs as “foreign agents” was a “step in the wrong direction”. The United States warned that the “Kremlin-style” law would force it to re-assess its ties with the country. For thousands of Georgians the legislation represents a move away from European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

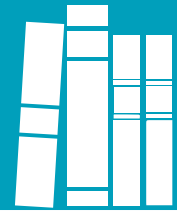
After working for the British Council from 1985 to 2007, during which time she was Director of the British Council in Georgia from 2001 – 2005 a period spanning the Rose Revolution of 2003, Jo Seaman joined the British High Commission in Jamaica in 2008 – 2010.



If you witnessed a historic event during your diplomatic career for possible inclusion in the *I Was There* section of a future edition of *InsideOut*, please contact the editor by emailing edward.glover@fcdo.gov.uk

Browsing Books

Good reads authored by fellow FCDO Association members



Kabul: Final Call

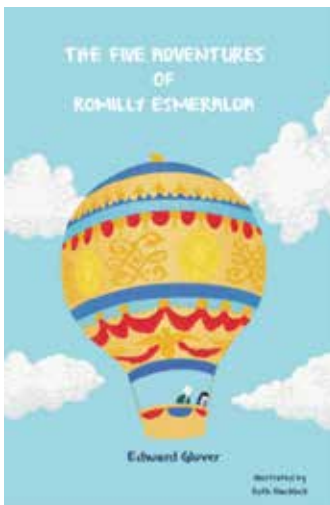
Laurie Bristow – Whittles Publishing
£18.99 (hardback), ISBN 978-184995-581-2

As the world emerged from the Covid pandemic in the summer of 2021, it watched in horror as Kabul fell to the Taliban, almost exactly 20 years after Western-backed Afghan forces overthrew the Taliban government in the aftermath of 9/11.

Written by the last British Ambassador to Afghanistan, this book is a pulsating day-by-day account of his last days in Kabul. It catalogues the disturbing inside story of a corrupt and imperfect democracy that Western powers had expended blood and treasure to build, yet treated with collective indifference as the country began to slide back to an authoritarian regime as the deadline approached when the US military presence was scheduled to end.

Sir Laurie gives a harrowing first-hand account of the chaotic evacuation from Kabul, paying tribute to the heroism of the British soldiers and civilians on the ground, who brought over 15,000 vulnerable Afghans to safety, against impossible odds, in under two weeks. It does not shrink from the price of that failure, particularly to women and girls in Afghanistan and to the soldiers and their families broken by this war.

A gruelling read that will resonate with those diplomats who have been in the frontline of world crises and required reading for those starting out in their diplomatic career.



The Five Adventures of Romilly Esmeralda

Edward Glover – Blue Falcon Publishing
(£6.99), ISBN 9781912765782

Edward Glover's third children's book encourages youngsters to confront their fears. For nine-year-old Romilly Esmeralda, the fear of her feet leaving the ground makes her anxious and prevents her from enjoying many activities with her friends in the playground, from swings to zipwires.

Until, that is, she meets a magical friend who takes her on five life-altering adventures where she travels through time and space, meeting historical characters in fascinating places. Each situation presents Romilly with a challenge to help her overcome her fears.

A charming story to coax apprehensive children to step out of their comfort zone, while at the same time, spark a sense of adventure and an interest in history.

READERS WRITE

Henry Kissinger: An Alternative View

Following the publication of the spring 2024 edition of *Inside Out* containing two reminiscences by FCDOA members of Henry Kissinger, William Mallinson wrote to challenge the sub-title description of Kissinger 'as a colossus of 20th diplomacy and sometime practitioner of ruthless realpolitik'.

In the concluding paragraph of his letter, Prof Mallinson, lecturer in British history at the Ionian University, Corfu, wrote:

The overall impression I have gained from juxtaposing Kissinger's numerous books with various state archives is one betraying an express lack of specificity, tactical omission, tactical and strategic procrastination, contradictoriness of argumentation, studied vagueness, occasional contrived humour, semantic sliding, and a personal attitude towards those who disagreed with him... His handling of the Cyprus crisis betrayed his overall approach to the world. ■

If you have recently published a book or have read a book authored by a fellow FCDOA member for possible inclusion in the Browsing Books section, kindly contact the editor by emailing edward.glover@fcdo.gov.uk

John Lloyd



A Unique Connection

On the 80th anniversary of the D-Day Landings **David Lloyd** tells the extraordinary life of his father, John, who after surviving internment by the Japanese and several perilous ocean crossings during the Second World War, went on to provide intelligence vital to Operation Overlord

My father, John Lloyd was, I believe, the only member of the Foreign Office to be seconded to Bletchley Park.

His early career

He joined the Far East Consular Service in 1937 and was posted to Tokyo as a Japanese language student after a six-month foundation course at SOAS. On passing advanced Japanese three years later, he was posted as HBM Vice Consul to the Consulate-General, Hankow in February 1940, succeeding Peter Dalton. He was accompanied by his newly married wife Ellen. Their son, David, was born the following December. Hankow, (now a small part of Wuhan) was under Japanese occupation and his primary function was to liaise between the Japanese military authorities and the British community.

At the British Embassy in Tokyo

He was recalled to the Embassy in Tokyo in April 1941 where, following Pearl Harbour, all diplomatic staff were interned for six months. On his return to Tokyo from Hankow, John had rented a house in Yokohama within easy commuting distance. On the morning following Japan's entry into the war, he was arrested at Yokohama station with our Assistant Military Attaché, as they waited to board the Tokyo train. They were released three days later with no apology.

The Tokyo Embassy had a staff of 60 and the British Ambassador was Sir Robert Craigie. Among John Lloyd's colleagues were Paul Gore-Booth, who later became Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office (1965-69); Henry Hainworth; Oscar Moreland; Arthur de la Mare (who went on to hold several senior Foreign Office posts); Henry Norman Brain and Dudley Cheke. For the six months of internment, it was a pretty crowded place.

RR
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The SS Tatsuta Maru, one of the 'hell ships' which carried Allied prisoners of war

His job, with the other Japanese linguists, was to monitor Japanese radio broadcasts and any other sources of information. In April 1942, the US bombed Tokyo, the so-called Doolittle raid, undertaken to warn the Japanese that they were within reach of American attack at home.

Back to Blighty

In July 1942, all Western diplomats in Japan were put on board the SS *Tatsuta Maru** following negotiation with and under the protection of the International Red Cross. It left for Lourenço Marques, Portuguese East Africa, picking up other Western diplomats en route from Shanghai, Vietnam and Singapore, arriving on 27 August. Docking simultaneously, were two ships from Western Europe carrying Japanese diplomats and other repatriates, and a head-for-head exchange took place.

In October, John Lloyd was seconded to Australian Army Intelligence (AAI) and instructed to leave for Melbourne. The Lloyd family crossed the Indian Ocean on the Blue Funnel SS *Nestor*, unescorted, arriving on 15 November. He joined Special D Section of AAI, operating autonomously within General MacArthur's Central Bureau where he worked for three months, before being instructed to return to the UK, on loan from the Foreign Office to Government Code & Cypher School at Bletchley Park. The route home was on the SS *New Amsterdam*, unescorted, across the Pacific to San Francisco; a seven-day rail journey to Halifax, Nova Scotia; and then a five-day journey by SS *Pasteur*, carrying US troops, unescorted, across the Atlantic, docking at Liverpool on Easter Sunday, April 1943.

And so to Bletchley

In May, John started work in the Naval Section at Bletchley and was selected to head the Japanese language school, known as NS XII, established in August 1943 and comprising the six-month long course and the one-month short course.

In his report on the history of the school, available in the National Archives, he acknowledges the excellence of its predecessor under Captain Tuck RN, based in Bedford, but tells of the acute lack of Japanese language experts to read the growing amount of Japanese Naval and Naval/Air codes and cyphers. He also records the paucity of good and appropriate teaching material initially available for the students.

The Japanese section at Bletchley scored some notable successes, not least of which was the interception of communications between the Japanese Ambassador in Berlin who faithfully reported everything that Hitler had to say. One such was of crucial importance. After months of uncertainty on the Allied side, it revealed that Hitler was certain that the invasion of Europe would take place in the Calais area. ■

Footnote

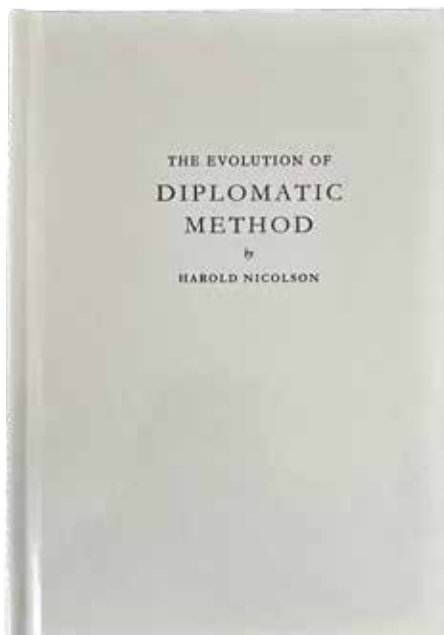
*After leaving Lourenço Marques, the *Tatsuta Maru* reverted to its role of troop ship; and in January 1943 joined the list of Japanese 'hell' ships, carrying 1180 Allied prisoners of war from Hong Kong to Nagasaki in the most appalling conditions, which many did not survive. On 8 February 1943, with 1200 Japanese troops on board, *Tatsuta Maru* was torpedoed and sunk leaving Tokyo Bay by the US submarine *Tarpon*. There were no survivors.



THE JAPANESE SECTION AT BLETCHLEY SCORED SOME NOTABLE SUCCESSES, NOT LEAST OF WHICH WAS THE INTERCEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE JAPANESE AMBASSADOR IN BERLIN WHO FAITHFULLY REPORTED EVERYTHING THAT HITLER HAD TO SAY

Peter Kornizky, former Professor of Japanese at Cambridge, has written a book *Eavesdropping on the Emperor* in which there is more detail of my father's reporting. He, with all others who worked at Bletchley Park, is listed in the Role of Honour.

If you found this article interesting and it has inspired you to submit an article for possible inclusion in the *Readers Write* section, please contact the editor by emailing edward.glover@fcd.gov.uk



Harold Nicolson's seminal work: *The Evolution of Diplomatic Method*



A portrait of Harold Nicolson at his writing desk on 6 June 1939, by Bassano Ltd

CREDIT: NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

The Constant Gardener – and a diplomat to boot!

A memorial plaque to Sir Harold Nicolson in a hidden corner of Belgravia describes him as a gardener and a writer. But he was much more than that, writes **Edward Glover**

There are two memorial plaques on Mozart Terrace at the foot of Ebury Street. The one at 180 records Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, aged eight, and his family staying there briefly in the summer of 1764 during which time he wrote his first symphony. Next door – at 182 – lived Sir Harold Nicolson (1886-1968), politician, diplomat, historian, biographer, novelist, journalist, broadcaster and gardener, together with his wife, Vita Sackville-West, the writer and gardener.


A brief synopsis of his life

Nicolson was born in Tehran, the youngest son of diplomat Arthur Nicolson, 1st Baron Carnock. After graduating in 1909 from Balliol College, Oxford, with a third class degree, he joined the Diplomatic Service. He served as attaché at Madrid in 1911 and as Third Secretary at Constantinople from 1912-14. In 1913, he married the novelist Vita Sackville-West. He and his wife had an open marriage – both having affairs with others of the same sex.

During the First World War, he served at the Foreign Office in London during which time he was promoted to Second Secretary. As the FO's most junior employee in this rank, it fell to him to hand Britain's declaration of war to Prince Max von Lichnowsky, the German Ambassador to London. Subsequently promoted to First Secretary in 1920, he was appointed Private Secretary to Sir Eric Drummond, the first Secretary-General of the League of Nations but was recalled to London months later – his wife having become involved in an intense relationship with Violet Trefusis.

In 1925 he was promoted to Counsellor and posted to Tehran as Chargé d'Affaires. In the summer of 1927, he was recalled to London and demoted to First Secretary for criticising the Minister Sir Percy Loraine in a despatch. However, he was soon on his way again – posted to Berlin as Chargé d'Affaires in 1928 with promotion to Counsellor. He resigned from the Diplomatic Service in 1929.

RR
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SIR HAROLD NICOLSON
HAD A PROLIFIC CAREER AS
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ARE CONSIDERED A
NOTEWORTHY SOURCE
FOR BRITISH POLITICAL
HISTORY FROM THE 1930S
TO THE 1950S

He began his political career in 1931, becoming a MP in 1935 for National Labour in the West Leicester seat. He opposed the Munich Agreement. After a brief spell in 1940 as a Parliamentary Secretary and Official Censor at the Ministry of Information, he became a backbencher. After losing his seat in the 1945 general election, he joined the Labour Party and sought to represent Croydon North in a 1948 by-election but lost.

He had a prolific career as a writer and his diaries are considered a noteworthy source for British political history from the 1930s to the 1950s, given his knowledge and experience of the workings of the circles of power and the daily unfolding of great events. His seminal work was *The Evolution of Diplomatic Method*, published in 1954.

In 1930 Nicolson and Sackville-West purchased an Elizabethan property in Sissinghurst and in later life he helped his wife create the beautiful gardens of Sissinghurst, which became a National Trust property in 1962 after her death.

Nicolson died in 1968.

Nicolson on the evolution of Diplomacy

In the winter 2020 edition of *Inside Out*, I wrote about *The Art and Purposes of Diplomacy* covering the themes of etiquette, statecraft and trust. I began by highlighting a 1919 facsimile of a 1716 book entitled *On the Manner of Negotiating with Princes; on the Uses of Diplomacy; the Choice of Ministers and Envoys; and the Personal Qualities Necessary for Success in Missions Abroad*. The book was written by Francois de Callières, born in 1645, who served first as a secret agent and then as an envoy of Louis XIV in the Netherlands, Germany and Poland. As Minister Plenipotentiary he represented France in the negotiations that led to the Treaty of Ryswick, which ended the Nine Years War between France and the Grand Alliance comprising England, Spain, the Emperor Leopold and the Dutch Republic.

He disagreed fundamentally with the theory that the purpose of diplomacy was to deceive. He contended that sound diplomacy was based on the creation of confidence which could only be inspired by good faith. To him, good diplomatic method was akin to good banking founded upon the establishment of credit. The secret of effective negotiation was to seek to harmonise the real interests of the parties concerned – no menaces or bullying and no deception. He commented that:

The art of negotiating with princes is so important that the fate of the greatest states often depends upon the good or bad conduct of negotiations and upon the degree of capacity in the negotiators deployed.

Later, he wrote that:

There are few princes to whom it is easy to speak the truth... While it is not the business of the negotiator except on rare occasions to speak home truths at a foreign court, he will never give empty praise nor applaud a reprehensible act... It is the higher art of the subtle courtier to know how to deliver a well-turned compliment to a King ... but never to praise him for qualities he does not possess.

The art of diplomacy evolved fundamentally after the end of the First World War and more so post-1945. In his 1954 book Harold Nicolson wrote that two important changes occurred in diplomatic method after 1918.

- The first was the refusal of the US Congress to ratify a treaty negotiated and signed by the nation's chief executive, Woodrow Wilson in person – an innovation in diplomatic affairs of the most significance and one that dealt a heavy blow to the sanctity and reliability of contact.
- The second was the beginning of the indulgence in conference diplomacy, by which he meant the ill-founded League of Nations and later the United Nations.



CC BY 2.0: TONY HISGETT



THE MISFORTUNE OF THE AMERICAN SYSTEM IS THAT NO FOREIGNER, AND FEW AMERICANS, CAN BE QUITE POSITIVE AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT WHO IT IS WHO POSSESSES THE FIRST WORD AND THE LAST. ALTHOUGH THE AMERICANS HAVE BEEN IN THE PROCESS OF CREATING AND ADMIRABLE SERVICE OF PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMATISTS, THESE EXPERTS DO NOT YET POSSESS THE NECESSARY INFLUENCE WITH THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT OR PUBLIC

SIR HAROLD NICOLSON - 1952

For him these changes led after two world wars to two unhealthy outcomes:

- the development of lobbies, replacing the notion that all countries were equal
- the broadcast and televised process of negotiation, resulting in interminable propaganda not so much aimed at the negotiator's counterpart but at the delegate's domestic audience.

The result was that solutions were no longer to be found at the UN. As I commented in my earlier article, what he didn't mention was that the other major change – the emergence of the United States as a global power with significant implications for the relationship between London and Washington.

I drew attention in the same issue of *Inside Out* to a despatch of 9 August 1945 from John Balfour, Minister at our embassy in Washington, to the then Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin. In it, Balfour wrote the following:

Now that the full strength of their country has become manifest to them, Americans hold that they are bound to take a leading part in the readjustment of international relationships. Faith in the magic of large words; an enthusiastic belief that the mere enunciation of an abstract principle is equivalent to its concrete fulfilment; a tendency to overlook the practical difficulties that obstruct the easy solution of current problems; above all a constant disposition to prefer the emotional to the rational approach – these are amongst the salient traits that are likely in the future, no less than in the past, to provoke Americans to impatience with the more stolid, disillusioned and pragmatic British, and to give rise to misunderstandings between our two governments.

Balfour concluded:

In inter-governmental negotiations, our case to the Americans should be presented not so much on grounds of sentiment as upon lucidly argued appeals to reason and the logic of hard fact.

In his book, Nicolson made the following observations:

The chief fault of democratic diplomacy practised by the Greek city states was its uncertainty. The final decision rested with an Assembly whose members were ignorant, volatile and impulsive – swayed by emotions of fear, vanity and suspicion.

In the Renaissance, the fault of diplomatic method practiced and perfected by the Italians was that it lacked continuity of purpose and represented a kaleidoscope of shifting combinations. The later French system, advocated by de Callières, possessed the great merit of centralised authority for the formation of foreign policy and a professional service of experts through whom that policy could be carried out.

The misfortune of the American system is that no foreigner, and few Americans, can be quite positive at any given moment who it is who possesses the first word and the last. Although the Americans have been in the process of creating and admirable service of professional diplomatists, these experts do not yet possess the necessary influence with their own government or public. I know that the Americans possess more virtue than any giant Power has yet possessed. Although they pretend to deride the lessons of history, they are astonishingly quick at digesting the experience of others.

I still believe that the principles of sound diplomacy, which are immutable, will in the end prevail and thus calm the chaos with which the transition between the old diplomacy and the new has for the moment bewildered the world.

Today diplomacy faces an immense challenge in the shadow of war in Europe, wider unstable geopolitics and the onset of climate change. The international diplomatic marketplace has become tougher than ever. ■

Harold Nicolson, Vita
Sackville-West, Rosamund
Grosvenor, Lionel Sackville-
West, taken in 1913



If you found this article interesting and it has inspired you to submit an article for possible inclusion in the *Readers Write* section, please contact the editor by emailing edward.glover@fcdo.gov.uk

The Pimpernel Pages

News and information from the Pimpernel Trust,
especially on health and welfare issues

The Pimpernel Trust provides advice and information to former members of the FCDO and the elderly dependants of serving members – especially in relation to housing, healthcare and maintenance needs. We now share an office with the FCDO Association. As the two organisations have such congruent objectives, it makes sense that we should work more closely together. One manifestation of that is the introduction of this new section in *InsideOut*. We had thought of calling them ‘Health and Welfare’ pages, but considered that too limiting as it might rule out other useful topics such as travel issues (insurance, passport renewal problems), Powers of Attorney, smart meter problems and other such issues that we have addressed in the past.

Pimpernel’s work has evolved over the 30 years of its existence. We have volunteers who can offer a sympathetic ear to those who are lonely or isolated (and please speak up if you would be interested in joining them, or in becoming a Pimpernel Trustee). But these days our primary focus is on the provision of small grants to qualifying applicants – and these pages, curated by Margaret Hay-Campbell who edits our newsletter – will offer a regular reminder that we hold funds for that purpose.

Anthony Cary, Chair, Pimpernel Trust



THE PIMPERNEL TRUST PROVIDES ADVICE AND INFORMATION TO FORMER MEMBERS OF THE FCDO AND THE ELDERLY DEPENDANTS OF SERVING MEMBERS – ESPECIALLY IN RELATION TO HOUSING, HEALTHCARE AND MAINTENANCE NEEDS

PIMPERNEL GRANTS

The Pimpernel Trust is able to offer grants of up to £2,000 to serving and retired members of the FCDO, FCO and DfID and their elderly relatives for respite care or equipment to make life easier for you.

The grant could be applied to help in several different ways, for example:

- **Respite Care** – Average cost around £1,500 per week
- **Mobility Scooter** – Cost around £1,500 for a mid-range scooter that does 4 mph.
- **Electric Wheelchair** – For indoor use £1,500 - £2,000
- **Riser Recliner Chair** – £1,000 - £2,000
- **Adjustable bed** – From £800 depending on size
- **Stairlift** – £3,000 - £5,000 (a grant of £2,000 from Pimpernel would perhaps make this an option for you)
- **Wet Room** – Help towards the cost of converting a bathroom to a wet room

If you think such a grant could be of help to you or your elderly parents please email us at Pimpernel.Trust@fcdowebmail.fcd.gov.uk outlining your situation or call to discuss the application with someone in the office on 020 7008 1040. Do leave a message on the answerphone if there is no one on duty when you call and we will ring you back.

Unfortunately, grants cannot be used for ongoing expenses such as help with the cost of home care or care/nursing home fees.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

Eating strawberries to keep dementia at bay

Research carried out at the University of Cincinnati's Academy Health Centre has found that eating eight strawberries a day for 12 weeks improved the scores of participants undertaking a list-learning task used to identify cognitive decline. The researchers used a double-blind test in which half the group were asked to eat a powder made from freeze dried strawberries while the second group were given an identical-looking and tasting strawberry coloured control powder. The higher scores of the strawberry-eating group can be put down to the anti-inflammatory actions of the anthocyanins (a group of antioxidants) found in strawberries. Not only do anthocyanins help with brain health but also protect against type-2 diabetes, heart disease and cancer. Other berries such as raspberries, blueberries, blackcurrants and blackberries are also a good source of anthocyanins and work in the same way as strawberries.

Puzzle test to help identify early signs of dementia

A trial is being carried out to monitor NHS patients for early signs of dementia by tracking how well they can solve puzzles on their mobile phones. They will be tested every six months using the games on the app and if a person's performance declines more rapidly than expected their GP will be alerted. GPs could then make their own assessment which might lead to referral to a memory clinic where support can be given. Lifestyle changes can also help – simple things like taking more exercise, losing weight and being socially active can cut the risk of dementia by a third.

Early assessment of memory loss is really important especially as it is clear that early intervention can make a big difference in slowing down and reducing the risk of developing dementia. There are already two Alzheimer's treatments on the horizon which work best in the earliest stages of the disease. About 1000 people are taking part in the trial which started at the end of last year and will run for three years. If the results are positive, then the app could be used across the NHS.

Gut health

We are often reminded that there are certain foods which are good for the gut. For example, you have probably read about the advantages of eating fermented products such as kimchi, kefir and kombucha. It is not necessary to change our diets massively, however, as there are some more basic products which research has shown help to keep the gut healthy. Here is a list of seven of them from the *Saga Magazine*, first published in September 2022:

- 330ml of beer
- Cheese especially feta and other aged cheeses (not processed cheese)
- Dark chocolate
- Sourdough bread
- Potato
- An avocado a day
- Red wine

You can read in detail about these products and the research carried out to back up the claims by googling 'gut healing + Saga Magazine'.

THE CINNAMON TRUST

Many of us use the opportunity of retiring to acquire a pet. Perhaps you always wanted to have a dog but felt that your mobile lifestyle wouldn't work well with caring for an animal. Perhaps you'd like to have a cat – retirement could allow you to fulfil your dream. Now getting a pet is suddenly possible.

But having a pet comes with responsibilities and as you age (as does your dog or cat) you may find yourself worrying about what will happen in the event of becoming housebound or ending up in a care home or hospital.

The Cinnamon Trust is a national charity which was set up to address just such issues. It focuses on the needs of elderly and terminally ill people faced with having to find a home for their pets. It offers practical support for those who find that they are unable to manage the physical tasks relating to pet care for example dog walking, cat grooming, vet transporting, and they will also organise fostering for your pet if you are in hospital.

The Trust doesn't use kennels or catteries but has a network of volunteers ready to look after your pet in their homes. If you have several pets they will ensure that the pets stay together as



RR
STRAWBERRIES HELP WITH
BRAIN HEALTH AND ALSO
PROTECT AGAINST TYPE-2
DIABETES, HEART DISEASE
AND CANCER

keeping pet families united is one of their core principles.

When you register your pet you complete a Pet Profile which is a detailed questionnaire listing everything about your pet: its preferred sleeping patterns, its play requirements, its diet and eating habits, its nature and personality etc. This then enables the charity to match your pet with an ideal fosterer. The Trust undertakes to meet vet bills and to keep in touch with the foster family, providing help and support if there are issues. They will also keep you updated with how your pet is getting on while you are unable to care for it.

You may also be interested in being a volunteer for the Trust. There is no upper age limit to being a dog-walker or providing a foster home. If you are interested in what the Cinnamon Trust offers they have a website: www.cinnamon.org.uk or you can ring them on 01736 757900.

They rely on volunteers and have a nominal membership fee of £5 a year if you wish to register your pet so that you can call on their services in an emergency. ■

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Email: Pimpernel.Trust@fcdowebmail.fcdo.gov.uk

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The promises made by political party leaders to protect pensions will need closer inspection



Courting the grey vote

Whatever the main political parties have promised pensioners to get their vote, the devil will be in the detail, writes **Pat Ashworth**

State Pension

I was going to begin this with “It has been a quiet time on the pensions front” ...and then a General Election was called. By the time this *Speedbrief* hits your PC or doormat, the results will be known and we will either have a Labour or a Conservative government. I will hazard a guess that it is more likely to be the former than the latter.

So I thought it worth looking at what the two main parties (sorry LibDems, Greens, Scot Nats, Plaid, Reform etc) are promising on state pensions. Disclaimer: no manifestos had been published at the time of writing.

The offer for pensioners

The Conservatives were first out of the block with their proposal for a Triple Lock Plus, or as some call it a Quadruple Lock. This would mean the Triple Lock staying as it is now, under which state pensions rise annually by whichever figure is highest – inflation, the rise in wages or 2.5 per cent. The ‘Plus’ part is a proposal to introduce a new age-related tax-free allowance whereby pensioners’ personal tax allowance would always be higher than the level of the new



WE’LL NEED TO SEE THE SMALL PRINT AFTER THE ELECTION, BUT FOR MOST OF US WITH OUR PENSION FROM THE OFFICE, IT WILL PROBABLY MAKE LITTLE DIFFERENCE



I THINK WE CAN ARGUE
ABOUT LOTS OF THINGS,
BUT NO-ONE CAN ARGUE
THAT THE UK STATE
PENSION IS "GENEROUS"

state pension. We'll need to see the small print after the election, but for most of us with our pension from the office, it will probably make little difference.

Labour's policy at the moment is a guarantee to preserve the triple lock. I've tried to get anything more substantive, but there is nothing yet. No doubt further proposals will emerge before 4 July.

The background to all this is that the share of those aged 65 and over who pay income tax has risen dramatically over time, **from 36% in 1990–91 to 44% in 2000–01, 49% in 2010–11 and 62% in 2022–23**. Pensioners used to enjoy a higher tax-free allowance than the rest of the population. This ended under the coalition government, resulting in the current personal allowance for pensioners being about 10% lower than the one they enjoyed then, whereas the allowance for people working is 30% higher. That has resulted in more being dragged into income tax – the so-called fiscal drag.

The Resolution Foundation issued a report in March which pointed out that between 2010–11, and 2023–24 the State Pension has grown by 60% while the cumulative change in both prices and earnings has risen by 46%. However, as colleagues will know, simple comparisons between percentages, when they are based on different baselines, is potentially misleading. Their press release referred to "increases to the generosity of the state pension". Now I think we can argue about lots of things, but no-one can argue that the UK state pension is "generous". It is well behind those of Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Denmark Germany and France, for example. Nor should we forget that the pension age, currently 66, is due to rise to 67 in 2026/28 and to 68 in 2044/46.

The report can be found here: <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/pensioner-progress/>

Public Service Pensioners Council

I attended the AGM of the PSPC in May. For those who are not aware, the organisation has campaigned to protect public service pensions for almost 70 years. However, it had become too costly and too administratively difficult to run. The Executive Committee therefore concluded that we should disband whilst we were in good order and continue to liaise in a more ad hoc manner without any administrative structure. A motion to that effect was passed unanimously.

The Council was a good opportunity for networking and I have met and discussed pension matters with delegates from organisations as diverse as the Prisons, Fire officers, Police, Armed Forces, Teachers, FE, HE, Northern Ireland public service, Trades Unions and so on. It is these overlapping structures which will take up the slack. It was a shame, but times change. We already have a useful informal email network between us established, and who knows where this may lead in the future.

Inside Out Winter 2024 Deadline

If you would like to contribute to the Winter 2024 edition of
Inside Out kindly send submissions by 30 September to

Character Publishing,
9 Chartwell Court,

151 Brook Road, NW2 7DW

Alternatively email

editor@characterpublishing.co.uk

or

edward.glover@fcdo.gov.uk

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

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