

THE HOUSE

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No.10

Guide to The Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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The word in Whitehall is that the Foreign Office is back in business. After years when much of bilateral diplomacy was conducted

directly by No. 10, the impressive building next to the Treasury has regained much of its previous influence and reputation. Our relationship with the European Union is going through a difficult phase, and the FCO will be a key player. We hope this guide helps to unravel some of the complex relationships, identifies the decision makers and highlights the significant areas of activity.

GISELA STUART MP EDITOR

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PoliticsHome



Power
returns to
the
Foreign
Office



William Hague's arrival in 2010 saw the Foreign Office wrest power back from Number 10. **Anthony Seldon** explores an often fraught relationship

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is back in business. Once the most powerful department in Whitehall – or equal most powerful together with the Treasury – its power slipped in the 1980s when Mrs Thatcher was Prime Minister. She lacked an innate respect for civil servants at large, and had little time for silky smooth, Foreign Office diplomats. In her first years, when Peter Carrington was Foreign Secretary (1979-82), she was content to concentrate on domestic policy and leave the Foreign Office largely on its own. But with the confidence gained from victory in the Falklands War in 1982, and her distaste for the new Foreign Secretary, Francis Pym (1982-83), she began to draw power increasingly into Downing Street itself.

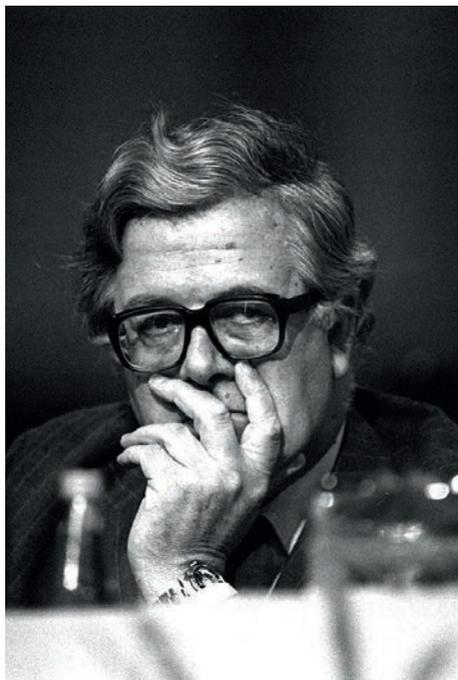
The process was accelerated when Geoffrey Howe was Foreign Secretary (1983-89), whom she found increasingly irksome, especially for his pro-European predisposition. With new found confidence gained in her defeat of Labour in the 1983 General Election, she found an increasing taste for developing bilateral relations, above all with President Reagan (1981-89), and saw little need to involve the Foreign Office in her high level conversations with the USA and USSR during the crucial period from the mid-1980s onwards, which culminated in the ending of the Iron Curtain from 1989. In 1984 a key figure ►



Top: Margaret Thatcher
and Ronald Reagan
Bottom: John Major
and Douglas Hurd
Right: Geoffrey Howe

joined her team, the diplomat Charles Powell, who remained at her right hand advising her on foreign, defence and security policy until she left Downing Street in November 1990. Powell was a man who knew his own mind, and that mind chimed with that of Mrs Thatcher. Together they developed a foreign policy substantially on their own. The FCO hated what was going on, above all Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe, though there was little they could do to resist the leaching of power out of the FCO across the street into Number 10.

John Major's arrival as Prime Minister saw an arrest of the transfer of decision-making on foreign policy and even the beginnings of a return to the FCO. Major had appointed his leadership contender, Douglas Hurd, Foreign Secretary, and he remained in situ for his first five years in power. An ex-diplomat, and



“ With the confidence gained from victory in the Falklands War, Thatcher began to draw power increasingly into Downing Street itself ”

Political Secretary to Ted Heath when Prime Minister (1970-74), Hurd was no stranger to power at the top level. Crucially, he had the total confidence of the Prime Minister, who had little interest in or knowledge of foreign affairs himself, despite having briefly been Foreign Secretary himself in mid-1989. Major never developed a close relationship with the American Presidents, George Bush (1989-1993) or his successor, Bill Clinton (1993-2001) on a par with Mrs Thatcher, or Tony Blair after her. He was more than happy to let Hurd make the running.

In 1997, Tony Blair came to power with Jonathan Powell, an assured former diplomat and younger brother of Charles, at his side as Chief of Staff. Blair had little use for what he saw as old-fashioned advice from senior mandarins, and preferred to talk to those directly responsible for policy regardless of rank. Blair's difficult relationship with his Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook (1997-2001), and his closeness to President Clinton, meant again major foreign policy decisions increasingly being taken in Downing Street itself and not the Foreign Office, which found itself marginalised in many of the key decisions. Blair developed a confidence, and taste, for foreign and defence policy in driving personally British interventions in Kosovo in 1999 and Sierra Leone in 2000. He did not look back. ➤

From his second term onwards (2001-05), Blair and his team would have regular video conferences from the bowels of Number 10 with President Bush and his team in the White House, records of which would be made and be received in the British Embassy in Washington and in the Foreign Office. The trend for the Ambassador on the ground being the sole forum of communication between an overseas government and London had been eroded for many years, not the least by the use of telephone diplomacy, by the penchant of Prime Ministers to travel abroad, enhanced by the arrival of the jet plane from the 1950s, and engage in direct personal diplomacy, and by the growth of international bodies, notably the G20 and its earlier manifestations.

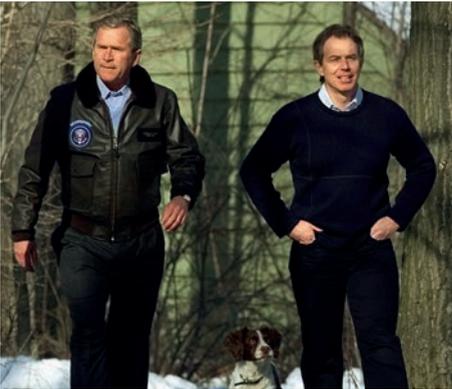
“ 9/11 saw a huge accumulation of power over foreign policy in Number 10, with Blair giving himself the leading role ”

The 9/11 attacks saw again a huge accumulation of power over the conduct of foreign policy in Downing Street, with Blair giving himself the role of leading the international response to the terrorism in America. The build-up and execution of the Iraq War in 2003 saw Blair himself driving the diplomacy that year. In mid-2003, the senior and strong-minded diplomat, Nigel Sheinwald, who had been Permanent Representative to the EU, became Blair's Foreign Policy and Defence Adviser, and head of the Cabinet Offices, Defence and Overseas Secretariat. Blair's style was to take the major decision with his closest team in his 'den' in Number 10, giving rise to the expression 'sofa government'!



When Gordon Brown became Prime Minister in 2007, his foreign policy preoccupations were primarily economic, rather than grand policy, though he became swept up in the run up to and aftermath of the G20 in London in the spring of 2008. He appointed David Miliband as Foreign Secretary (2007-10), who had a cool relationship with him, and who was not going to let his boss intrude into foreign policy more than he could help. Miliband had firm ideas of his own.

The decisive point in the wresting back of influence into the FCO was the arrival of David Cameron as Prime Minister in 2010. He appointed William Hague as Foreign Secretary, a big-hitter intellectually and politically, who himself had been leader of the Conservative Party from 1997-2001. Hague arrived stating that Foreign Secretary would be his last job in government, the pinnacle of his career. Several factors assisted the reassertion of the traditional foreign policy role. A powerful new Foreign Secretary with the full confidence of a Prime Minister who had little experience or prior interest himself in the conduct of foreign policy was key. So too was the establishment of the National Security Council (NSC), which grew out



Clockwise from top: David Miliband and Gordon Brown; Jonathan Powell; Tony Blair meeting troops engaged in the Kosovo conflict; George W. Bush and Tony Blair at Camp David



Foreign Secretary William Hague and Prime Minister David Cameron arrive at Tripoli Airport in 2011

“ Hague arrived stating that Foreign Secretary would be his final job in government – the pinnacle of his career ”



of the Cabinet Office secretariat, which met with strong intent on the new government's first day in office and formalised foreign policy-making across Whitehall, with the Foreign Secretary in a dominant position, and with systematic inputs from the Ministry of Defence, the Department for International Development, the Security Services and other key players. The first year of the NSC saw one of the most challenging and unstable periods

in recent foreign affairs, with the Arab Spring sweeping across North Africa and the Middle East. Hague has seen himself very much in the traditional Foreign Secretary mould. He does not pursue complex strategies like Miliband, but sees himself as a leader of a team. The Diplomatic Service rapidly warmed to his style, to having their views taken seriously, their telegrams read, and the expectation that ambassadors should be allowed to do their jobs. This was in spite of an early communique expressing his disappointment at standards of spelling and grammar that he encountered in his first weeks.

The annual leadership conference, held in the early summer each year, is a key forum for the Foreign Secretary to establish his overall authority. All heads of post come to this event held in Westminster, which he addresses, together with the Prime Minister, Cabinet ministers and others, and where he sets out his vision for the coming year and beyond.

The restoration of the traditional Foreign Office model has been underpinned by a strong current Foreign Secretary with a particularly good ministerial team. Simon Fraser as Permanent Under-Secretary (see interview on page 24) has established a strong team in the office itself, and an equally formidable team of diplomats in the principal posts abroad, as shown in the diagrams.

It raises the question of what will happen after the General Election in 2015. If a Tony Blair or even William Hague-like figure becomes Prime Minister at any point in the future, with a strong foreign policy agenda of their own, will they be content to let the FCO maintain the independent voice that it has held since 2010? 🇬🇧

Anthony Seldon is Master of Wellington College. His next book is on the British Embassy in Washington

FCO in focus



The FCO's shuttle diplomacy will be vital if the UK is to secure the EU reforms it needs, argues **Stephen Booth**

William Hague, pledged to rebuild the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as one of the great departments of State. Arguably the greatest foreign policy challenge facing the UK is its future relationship with the European Union in the wake of the eurozone crisis.

It is fair to say the Government made a slow start. To the great annoyance of Berlin, the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer developed a fondness for calling on the eurozone to move towards fiscal union, including debt mutualisation, and for the European Central Bank to fire up the printing press. All of this is anathema to Germany, which, it is increasingly obvious, holds the balance of power in Europe. The failure to recognise these sensitivities suggests the input of the FCO – which would advise against such diplomatic faux pas – in developing these early positions was limited.

However, since an unpromising start, the Government has invested a lot of effort in strengthening Anglo-German relations, largely due to FCO pressure. It cannot be overstated how important this relationship will be to Britain as it seeks to reconcile its place outside of a single currency in deep flux, but within the EU's Single Market,

which the UK cannot allow to be subjugated to a 'eurozone core'.

This new approach has already yielded significant results. The UK secured important voting safeguards to protect its financial services sector in the face of the eurozone's burgeoning banking union.

The other noteworthy success was in negotiations on the long-term EU budget, where the UK marshalled an alliance of Northern countries, including Sweden and the Netherlands, to achieve a historic cut. This allowed Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, to position herself as the lynchpin or broker between two camps of EU countries, a role in which she and all German leaders feel most comfortable.

“ Diplomatic success can be enjoyed if the Treasury and the FCO work in tandem, rather than competing ”

Both are examples of the diplomatic success that can be enjoyed if the Treasury and the FCO work in tandem, rather than competing (or, at least, not communicating properly). The FCO also appears to have learnt that if the UK can win support for its arguments among like-minded states, Germany will play ball.

In addition, Europe Minister David Lidington, in particular, has toured European capitals making the case for EU reform. This type of shuttle diplomacy has long been effectively employed by other EU countries.



This will be vital if the UK is to secure the significant reform of the EU architecture that is needed to ensure its continued membership. There remains a sense that the Government could do more to present a coherent message to the EU across all departments, yet this is not the fault of the FCO alone.

Finally, the value of the FCO's wider strategy of boosting the UK's presence across the globe both in terms of diplomacy and trade

is often overlooked, particularly when it comes to the UK's position in Europe. The stronger the UK's position in the world, and the less reliant the UK is on Europe and the eurozone for its export markets, the stronger its hand will be in any future EU negotiations. 🇬🇧

Stephen Booth is Research Director at Open Europe, a think tank with offices in London and Brussels. www.openeurope.org.uk and @OpenEurope



The FCO's outlook is being shaped by competing tensions within domestic politics, writes **Adam Hug**

The FCO originally seemed destined to be a relative backwater for the Coalition – despite the presence of a Conservative Big Beast in William Hague – with Government priorities clearly focused on the economy and the domestic agenda. To that end, greater impetus has been given to the FCO's role in supporting British trade promotion efforts. While never far from the minds of any British government, initial scruples around repeating the old 'batting for Britain' approach were soon put on the back burner with the Africa Minister turning up early on in Sudan with a trade delegation despite ICC indictments and the similar slightly awkward appearance of David Cameron in post-Arab Spring Cairo with business people in tow. The BRICS and the Gulf states have been at the centre of FCO efforts, with concerns on human rights sometimes dialled back to promote business engagement and strategic collaboration, while in a number of embassies staff roles were switched to help deliver the UK's prosperity agenda.

Very clearly domestic political considerations are now shaping FCO relations with the EU, despite the first 18 months of coalition when the FCO managed to keep a lid on some of the main divisions on Europe, with the 'referendum lock' the sole bone thrown to the backbenches. Beneath the current political rhetoric and referendum debate, over the last year FCO officials have been working across government to coordinate the politically and diplomatically perilous



“ The Foreign Office has managed to make its way through a challenging period of cutbacks with its capability intact and its status increased ”



William Hague with his Dutch, Cypriot and Spanish counterparts. Domestic tensions are shaping FCO relations with the EU, says Adam Hug

Balance of Competences Review. The FCO is trying to balance a series of competing tensions. It needs to deliver something that can be used by the Conservatives as part of the intellectual basis for a shopping list of post-2015 renegotiation demands, while not actually delivering such a list in order to maintain Coalition unity. It must placate the governments of other member states who are concerned about the purpose of the review while dodging flack from the centre-right commentariat about perceived institutional pro-European bias. Despite being placed in an unenviable position, early signs are that civil servants are delivering as thoughtful and measured a process as possible that will leave it to the politicians to divine and define the political significance of its findings.

Effectively using the still impressive diplomatic arsenal at the FCO's disposal can make the difference between success and failure. One of the defining differences between Cameron's relative success in the 2013 EU budget negotiations and his attempted veto in December 2011 (a short-term political success but not a diplomatic one) was that rather than turning up with a negotiating strategy formed at the last minute without a chance to find potential allies, the FCO was able to do its job properly, working with EU partners (most notably the Germans) to forge a common position.

A further manifestation of the Europe debate can be seen in attempts to boost the FCO's international reach through a tie-up with Canada over co-locating new embassies. This was poorly received by European partners as it was seen to be rejecting the opportunity to work more closely on the diplomatic front with the EU's European External Action Service (EEAS), which has a presence in 59 more non-EU countries than the Canadians, and other member states on consular activity. Similarly the UK has been very wary about expanding the remit of EEAS into new areas, committed as it is to preventing perceived competence creep.

So far the FCO is managing to make its way through a challenging period of cutbacks, including the damaging changes to the World Service, with its capability mostly intact and perhaps its status vis-à-vis DfID increased under the Coalition. But while Europe and the economy dominate the domestic political debate, these demands will shape the actions of the FCO and the practice of UK foreign policy. 🇬🇧

Adam Hug is Policy Director at the Foreign Policy Centre



Team Hague



From his team of spads to some of Whitehall's best civil servants, William Hague is well served by his officials. **Paul Waugh** goes behind the scenes

Not a day goes by these days without David Cameron talking about either an overseas conflict or Britain winning the economic 'global race'.

Three years into his premiership, the PM has come to rely increasingly on the Foreign Office's expertise and reach to help promote the UK's interests overseas. Like many of his predecessors who get bogged down in domestic matters, he's become more involved in foreign policy. But unlike some of his predecessors, he has an inherent trust in his Foreign Secretary to get on with the job and guide Number 10 in the right direction.

Under William Hague's leadership, the FCO has sought to embed its traditional values and institutions firmly in the modern world. From Hague's own pioneering use of Twitter to its wider digital diplomacy drive, the department is these days a fascinating mash-up of what insiders call "the National Trust meets Google HQ". At the same time, the Foreign Secretary has also managed to restore the department's Language School abolished by Labour.

Yet as much as the Secretary of State has put his stamp on King Charles Street, he couldn't do his job without the support of a tight-knit group of advisers, ministers and civil servants who work round the clock to make Coalition policy a reality. The FCO is often called the 'Rolls Royce' of Whitehall departments, but just who are the people who keep the engine purring and the silver lady shining?

At the heart of the Foreign Office, on the first floor up a magnificent colonial staircase, sits the Secretary of State's suite of offices. Hague is often abroad of course, but even when he's away, his presence pervades the building.

Heading up his private office is Tom Drew, his Principal Private Secretary since January this year. Having taken over from Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby (now ambassador to Colombia), Drew impressed in his previous post of Director, National Security. Among the variety of jobs held, he had a senior secondment to the Home Office, part of the modern trend in Whitehall to gain expertise in other departments.

Under Drew are the other Private Secretaries, Charlie Morgan, Katherine Dixon and Sean Winnett. With one eye on the rise of China and the East, all have experience in places like Beijing and Jakarta.

But one of the principal reasons Hague's operation works so well politically, as well as diplomatically, is that he has surrounded himself with a strong team of special advisers and ministerial aides.

Ever since he was appointed as Shadow Foreign Secretary by Cameron in 2005, the same trio of spads has been at his side: Arminka Helic, Denzil Davidson and Chloe Dalton. Davidson is in charge of Europe policy, while Helic and Dalton share 'the rest of the world'.

One, two or all three of them are with the Foreign Secretary virtually all day, at home and on overseas trips. With an intimate knowledge of their boss that can only come from spending eight years at his side, they are crucial in liaising with ministers, MPs and wider Whitehall. ➤

From left to right: Chloe Dalton, Arminka Helic, William Hague and Denzil Davidson



“ The ‘tag team’ of Helic, Davidson and Dalton are seen as more like siblings than colleagues, often using the same phrases and finishing each other’s sentences ”

And because of their longevity in post, despite their youth, they carry the authority of the Foreign Secretary in their everyday dealings. Referred to as ‘omnipresent’ by insiders, one of them attends every single meeting Hague has in his packed diary, accompanied by a staffer from the Private Office. Around 95% of decisions go across their desks.

The spads and the Private Office are described by one official as ‘two regiments in the same army’. “It’s a real team effort.” They



meet at 8.30am every weekday to assess any news overnight and prep for the day ahead.

Helic, a blonde, blue-eyed Bosnian Muslim, is routinely described as 'formidable', but is well-liked and trusted for her no-nonsense advice. Having arrived in the UK at the age of 22, in the midst of the former Yugoslavia's bloody breakup, she has direct personal experience of what it means to be a refugee. Whenever Hague ponders intervention or talks of a refugee crisis, he has someone at his side who knows the plight of those with

'no country, no property and no security', a colleague says.

Helic, who shuns the limelight, has extensive contacts among the Tory party's defence and foreign affairs experts. As young refugees to London, she and her sister were lodgers with former Defence Secretary John Nott and his wife Miloshka, herself a Slovenian refugee from Communist Yugoslavia. She got her big break while working part-time in the House of Commons library's International Relations section, when former shadow minister Robert Key asked her to write a paper for him. He was so impressed that word spread quickly in Tory circles and after 1997 she was hired to work for successive shadow defence ministers including John Maples, Iain Duncan Smith, Liam Fox and Nicholas Soames (Soames once declared 'I love you, Minky!'). Her fierce loyalty, sharp eye and capacity for hard work ensured that she was taken on when Hague was asked by Cameron to return from the backbenches in 2005.

Although no one uses the title, Helic is effectively Hague's chief of staff, and when civil servants speak to her they are aware that she knows his mind better than almost anybody. She always wanted to work for the Foreign Office and loves her job – which is possibly why she and the others survive punishing hours (the spads joke that they see more of each other than their own friends and family) and schedule of visits needed to keep up with the ever-energetic Secretary of State.

Davidson, who worked at the Conservative Research Department as the head of its international section before joining Hague, is the EU expert in the team. Given the huge importance the issue now has, from the state of the eurozone to the PM's big strategic shift to an In-Out referendum, Davidson's role is more indispensable than ever. Issues like the 'double majority' on the European Banking >

Authority (not headline news but crucial for the UK's and City's interests) fell into his in-tray. As addicted to policy as to his cigarettes, he knows Brussels inside out.

Dalton, a fluent Italian speaker and another former aide to the late John Maples, has long had foreign affairs in her blood. The daughter of Sir Richard Dalton, former UK ambassador to Libya and Iran, she grew up in the Middle East and retains an affinity for and insight into the region.

Dalton writes all of Hague's speeches, answers to Urgent Questions and Oral Statements. If a policy needs expanding, she will 'Hague it' through her computer keyboard. She has not only her boss's ear, she has an ear for his phrasing. Hague used to rewrite parts of his speeches but these days he does that less as Dalton has captured his voice.

The 'tag team' of Helic, Davidson and Dalton are seen as more like siblings than colleagues, often using the same phrases and finishing each other's sentences. But they each bring a different perspective and aren't afraid of providing the 'challenge' that Hague wants from his team. Often, one will question if policy can be done differently or if a fresh idea will work. "The Foreign Secretary doesn't want a rubber-stamp from his team, he relishes challenge. He has firm views of his own but is not blinkered and if you have a strongly argued case, he will listen." But Hague is also decisive and, after testing policy, will then set a clear direction and stick by it, insiders say. Some suggest this is a welcome contrast to the David Miliband era when deliberation on policy bordered on dithering.

And unlike Miliband, Hague benefits from a very close relationship with his Prime Minister. Whereas Gordon Brown was distant from his Foreign Secretary, his successor implicitly trusts his. For the FCO this

improved contact has been liberating, as they don't have to 'double check' decisions with Number 10.

Helic and colleagues are in frequent contact with Ed Llewellyn, the PM's chief of staff, who himself has strong experience in foreign affairs, and often the PM himself.

They also watch over the Foreign Secretary to ensure that what he has to say is properly understood by other Whitehall departments such as the MoD, DfID, UKTI, BIS and the Home Office. Smoothing inter-departmental problems, often informally, while injecting a political insight where civil servants cannot, is central to their duties.

“ The age-old rivalry with the Treasury has taken on a new intensity as the ‘tentacles’ of the Foreign Office spread almost as pervasively ”

Unlike almost all other departments, Hague's special advisers do not deal with the media on a regular basis (which may be why you'll never see a story of the FCO briefing against other departments). The Foreign Secretary's media operation relies instead on his Press Secretary and Head of Press and Digital, Carl Newns.

Located in a suite of offices on the ground floor of the FCO, the press office has to deal with everything from stranded Britons overseas to major diplomatic events. Having lost strategic functions as part of the cuts since 2010, the streamlined team is a symbol of the new way of working in Whitehall. All of its staff have to be fluent in digital communications as well as dealing with more traditional press and broadcast media. Like many FCO 'lifers', Newns has worked overseas



and in a variety of roles that most departments can't offer. In post since 2008, he has the trust not just of diplomatic correspondents but also the Parliamentary Lobby. A former deputy head of Counter-Terrorism, he also spent five years in Washington during the key Blair-Bush years of 2000-2005. News' deputy is Michael Hall, while his Digital Transition Leader is Adam Bye.

Overall responsibility for the media and digital team rests with Hugh Elliott, Director of Engagement and Communications. Elliott arrived in April from Anglo-American, the global mining company, where he was International Government Relations Manager. But before that he was a long-serving FCO man, spending 17 years in posts ranging

from climate change to counter-narcotics and serving in Paris, Madrid and Buenos Aires.

Leading the department is Sir Simon Fraser, the Permanent Under-Secretary (the FCO being the FCO, its chief doesn't labour under an ordinary Permanent Secretary title). Another long-term Foreign Office staffer, he served in Iraq and Syria before working on secondment as Peter Mandelson's chef de cabinet when he was Trade Commissioner in Brussels from 2004 to 2008. Mandelson liked Fraser so much he was appointed Permanent Secretary at BIS from 2009-10 when his former boss made his return as Secretary of State. Given his strong links to Mandelson and service under new Labour, there was surprise among some Conservatives when



Unlike many of his predecessors, Hague benefits from a close personal relationship with his Prime Minister

Fraser was appointed to the top FCO post by David Cameron in 2010. Matthew Rycroft, the Chief Operating Officer, is seen by many as the Fraser's number two. Rycroft is another high flyer, having served as Tony Blair's Private Secretary from 2002 to 2005. Rycroft achieved a global profile when he was revealed as the author of the 'Downing Street memo' in the run up to the Iraq war. Written in July 2002, it included the infamous line that "the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy" of preparing to remove Saddam.

Memories and lessons of Iraq still hang over the department, which has overall responsibility for SIS and GCHQ. But the FCO has moved on, not least because many

“ Backbenchers with concerns are regularly treated to tea with the Foreign Secretary in his enormous and palatial room behind the Speaker's chair ”

of its brightest stars are younger than previous generations of civil servants.

Its atmosphere is much less formal than even 10 or 15 years ago, there are more women and more people who have worked outside Whitehall.

Although the FCO's graduate trainee places are as highly prized as ever, many more diplomats now spend time in other departments and in business before returning to senior posts.

Indeed, the age-old rivalry with the Treasury has taken on a new intensity as the 'tentacles' of the FCO are now spreading almost as pervasively. Foreign Office high flyers now occupy the Permanent Secretary posts in BIS (Martin Donnelly) and in the Home Office (Mark Sedwill, another Iraq veteran, having been Private Secretary to both Robin Cook and Jack Straw). UKTI is headed by ex-FCO man Nick Baird and the PM's National Security Adviser is former Brussels chief Sir Kim Darroch.

With poor domestic demand and a eurozone in the doldrums, the increased need to export our way to growth means the FCO has a much greater role in trade and the economy.

In line with his philosophy of drawing on as much expertise and experience as possible, Hague decided to create the Locarno Group, an advisory body of former Foreign Office talent who have moved on to business and other areas of public life. This diaspora includes Matthew Kirk, Group External Affairs Director at Vodafone, and Ann Grant, at Standard Chartered. It's a recognition of the way former diplomats these days aren't content just to head up an Oxbridge college or think tank: they get stuck into commerce and industry. Other former diplomats also have key business posts, with Sherard Cowper-Coles at BAE and Sir Roger Bone at Boeing.

Crafting and implementing policy is a major job of the FCO team around Hague, but he also has to watch out increasingly for what Westminster thinks. And the final bits of the advice jigsaw are filled by Hague's ministerial team and aides (see Ministerial Profiles). At his weekly ministerial meeting, he encourages everyone from PPSs to Ministers of State to contribute.

As it rarely has any legislation to steer, the FCO has over the years tended not to see the need for its Foreign Secretary or ministers to be in the House. But Hague is a Commons man and enjoys time at the despatch box, and makes an effort to be seen around the chamber and to catch up with gossip in the Tea Room.

On both the EU referendum and Syria, the messages from backbenchers have to be handled with care. Hague's PPS Keith Simpson plays a crucial role as his eyes and ears in the Commons and has been around the block long enough to offering frank but friendly advice on the Parliamentary mood. Backbenchers with concerns are regularly treated to tea with the Foreign Secretary in his enormous and palatial room behind the Speaker's chair. Earlier in the Parliament, such meetings tended to be held in the FCO itself but the convenience of being next to the division lobbies led to the Commons office being used instead. Individual MPs are still called over to the FCO itself for chats with Hague and the foreign affairs sub committee of the backbench 1922 Committee has also held meetings there.

From civil servants to his close-knit group of special advisers, from diplomats-turned-businessmen to backbench MPs, Team Hague turns out to be a rather large family. The ultimate decisions are taken by the Foreign Secretary and his Prime Minister. But at least William Hague can count on the highest quality of advice. 🌿

Simon says

FCO Permanent Under-Secretary Simon Fraser talks to **Anthony Seldon** about the evolving job of an overseas diplomat, departmental relations with Number 10, and foreign policy's role in boosting the UK's economic recovery

THEHOUSE What exactly does the Permanent Under-Secretary do nowadays?

I am the Civil Service Head of the FCO. There are two main strands of the job. The more onerous is to run the office and the network of posts throughout the world. It's very much about being the executive head of the organisation, being responsible at the official level for the key personnel decisions, financial management, and the relationships of the Foreign Office in Whitehall. The other part to the role is to supervise the policy work strategically and to advise the Foreign Secretary on the most important policy matters, in particular, those which cut across the office as a whole. This also involves ensuring that the department is built up to provide the best service to the political leadership.

THEHOUSE How does one run such a large group of some 4,800 diplomats across the world?

The Foreign Office is far flung. We try to ensure that we have a strong collective leadership culture in the organisation. Within the FCO in London, we have an established structure with directors general responsible for different areas of policy. The management board, which I chair, meets every month >





and makes key decisions on organisational, operational and other matters, and the supervisory board meets every quarter, chaired by the Foreign Secretary. This brings ministers, senior officials and non-executives together to take strategic views on big questions about the future of the office.

THEHOUSE How many outposts does the Foreign Office now have?

We have a large global network of 267 posts in 152 countries and 12 overseas territories. We are all on the same secure email system, so we have instant contact and constantly communicate with our global network 24/7.

THEHOUSE Do they all submit a weekly report to their relevant head of desk in the Foreign Office?

They report as they see fit. The Diplomatic Telegram Service, which we call DipTels, is actually an email based system now. So our posts either report on major developments in their areas, or on matters they want to raise. It's a very fluid and continual process of reporting which reflects the fact that we live in a 24-hour media cycle now. We couldn't wait for weekly reports; it has to be absolutely in real time.

THEHOUSE In this era of instant communication, has the requirement for people to be posted abroad changed, or declined?

I certainly don't think it has declined, but it has evolved and changed. True, you don't need ambassadors or diplomats overseas to be reporting the raw news now. What you do need is very rapid analysis and interpretation of the news and their advice on what that means for our national interest, and the opportunities and risks that developments pose for us. So there is a very important

role for diplomats to be drawing the strands together and giving their advice based on their professional appreciation and local knowledge.

THEHOUSE How much of their time is taken up advancing Britain's commercial interests, and how much on traditional political and other advice?

It varies from post to post. One of our current priorities at the moment is that foreign policy should make its contribution to the overriding national priority which is economic recovery. That doesn't mean that we are doing pure trade promotion, which UK Trade and Investment do; it means making sure that our whole network is economically conscious and very actively supporting that area of national interest through support to business.

“ When William Hague came here he was determined to build up the strength of the FCO as an institution, and as an influential and powerful department in Whitehall ”

THEHOUSE How often in a typical week do you see the Foreign Secretary?

The Foreign Secretary is the political head of the department and he sets the policy course and makes the policy decisions. I have a formal bilateral with the Foreign Secretary each week, depending on travel. At these bilateral meetings, we touch base on key issues about staffing, personnel, policy and other concerns. I will also see him on a number of other occasions during the week when there is a meeting on a particular policy issue. ➤



THEHOUSE Where is power now in the conduct of Britain's overseas relations? Has it tilted back to the Foreign Office from Number 10?

Many people think that over a period of time the centre at Number 10 became more powerful in foreign policy, under Lady Thatcher and under Tony Blair. But I think that when William Hague came here he was determined to build up the strength of the Foreign Office as an institution and as a very influential and powerful department in Whitehall, and we've been working on that. The relationship with No 10 is very good now. The political relationship at the top is strong, and the Foreign Secretary is a very influential member of this Government. That is important for us. The working relationships are also very good. We now have the new National Security Adviser in Kim Darroch. I work very closely with him so there is a new senior official relationship and that is also reflected in the new formal structure of the National Security Council on which the Foreign Secretary sits and I also attend. The Foreign Office uses this new structure to advise the centre and influence policy making across government on international affairs.

THEHOUSE So are we back to the state of pride in the Foreign Office and stature that it had before?

We have recently been running a very organised and systematic campaign called 'Diplomatic Excellence', which is focused on making sure that we have all the right skills, the right expertise, the right language skills, to be a truly excellent diplomatic service and to be very high quality providers of policy advice in London and diplomatic delivery



“ Foreign policy should make its contribution to the overriding national priority – which is economic recovery ”

overseas. There is a sense in the office that, with the strong support of William Hague, we have been doing pretty well. In recent years we have recorded what we consider to be a number of successes. But we still have more to do. We intend to keep on doing everything we can to reinforce the reputation. 🏰

Anthony Seldon is Master of Wellington College. His next book is on the British Embassy in Washington.

That speech at the 1977 Conservative party conference, which earned a floppy-haired, northern-voweled William Hague 15 seconds of teenage fame, feels like a world away from the ‘elder statesman’ who is currently in charge of the FCO.

Not surprisingly given his early start, Hague’s political rise was rapid. After leaving his state school (a former grammar) in South Yorkshire, William Jefferson Hague embarked down that well-trodden path of many Parliamentarians before him: a PPE degree at Oxford and the double feat of presidency of both the Oxford Union and the Oxford University Conservative Association. An MBA and a stint as a McKinsey management consultant followed, before, in 1989, Hague won the Richmond (Yorks) by-election and became the Conservatives’ youngest MP. He swiftly became Norman Lamont’s PPS, working alongside a callow young special adviser called David Cameron, before moving through the DWP ranks until winning the Cabinet post of Welsh Secretary at the age of just 34.

After the Tories’ humiliating 1997 general election pummelling – their worst defeat in the twentieth century – Hague was anointed as his party’s new leader, charged with modernising the Conservatives’ image and reconnecting with the public. Despite winning plaudits for several memorable performances at Prime Minister’s Questions, Hague’s time as leader is generally regarded as a PR and political disaster, with its nadir the 2001 second landslide for Tony Blair.

After quitting the leadership, he spent time on the backbenches penning successful biographies of other political Williams – Pitt the Younger and Wilberforce – and taking on non-executive director and advisory roles at a number of companies, including AES Engineering and JCB.

Hague turned down an offer from Michael Howard to come back to the frontbench as Shadow Chancellor. But after David Cameron’s election as leader, he was persuaded to return as Shadow Foreign Secretary.

Having held that brief for five years, he arrived at King Charles Street in 2010 with a clear mission to restore its traditions and prestige (such as the Language School and Library) while adding a modern focus (on trade, consulate work and digital diplomacy) to reinvent its role. One of his first acts was to slash New Labour’s 20 ‘objectives’ for the FCO to just three. He also decided to boost bilateral relations rather than just multi-lateral links.

“ Hague arrived at the FCO with a clear mission to restore its traditions and prestige, while adding a modern focus ”

His staff point to Hague’s razor-sharp intellect but also his ability to grasp everything from big policy calls to individual MPs’ worries over consular issues. “He can see the wood and the trees,” one aide says.

In 2010 he was also appointed to the honorary position of First Secretary of State and one insider says that he’s in many ways Cameron’s own, smarter version of Willie Whitelaw. Crucially, Hague has no desire to ever again lead the Tory party or become Prime Minister and has none of the usual tensions that his predecessors had with their PM and Chancellor. And while previous Prime Ministers have sought to draw foreign policy power into Downing Street itself (see Anthony Seldon, page 4), Cameron retains an inherent trust in Hague, who, despite his statesmanlike qualities, is still only 52. 卍

William Hague

Foreign Secretary,
First Secretary of State

Words: Jess Bowie and Daniel Bond



Alistair Burt

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs speaks to **Paul Waugh**

Alistair Burt has one of the busiest sofas in Whitehall. And the Foreign Office minister, who has responsibility for 27 different nations from the US to South Asia to the Middle East, couldn't be happier.

"The great thing is so many people pass through London. A week will not go by without a significant visit by either a foreign minister or a deputy foreign minister," he says with a smile.

Sitting on a cream coloured couch in his enormous office at the heart of the FCO, Burt knows that his role is not just to meet and greet, but also to transmit as well as receive messages on some of HMG's thorniest foreign policy issues.

As well as foreign ministers and officials, UK and foreign ambassadors and backbench MPs are all treated with the same unaffected





courteousness. For Burt, the office is more important than the man.

“All ministers here are very conscious of the fact that you are part of the curve of history,” he says. “The collective memory of the Foreign Office is pretty good and we all know we are guardians of both the past and the future. It’s not a sharply party political post either, because British interests are British interests and you are very conscious you are carrying something on from a previous government and you are handing things on at some stage in the future. I like to feel a sense of a continuity.”

“All ministers here are very conscious of the fact that you are part of the curve of history”

Despite, or perhaps because of, his natural modesty, Burt has proved an invaluable part of William Hague’s ministerial team. “William is an excellent team leader,” he says, pointing out that there is no hierarchy among the ministers beyond the Foreign Secretary being in charge.

With a Middle East portfolio that means keeping an eye on Syria, Egypt, Libya and Iran (“I’ve got all the goodies haven’t I?” he jokes), he knows that Hague and the Prime Minister will often want to show a lead, yet delegate the detail. “I look to see how I can add value so I’m not duplicating,” he says. Hague “has supervision but does not micro manage”. “I think that works very well because he’s very easy to work with. We know he’s there to take all the major decisions, but there’s no sense of everything having to be passed through him.”

Burt also acts as a conduit between backbench MPs and the PM and Foreign **>**

Secretary, listening to and engaging with the mood of the Commons, often holding meetings in ministerial briefing rooms in Parliament.

“I try and see colleagues on a regular basis. I also made it a point to be available to all. I’ve done briefings for all members, regardless of party and including researchers and others because, provided I’m dealing with stuff from open sources and it’s not secret intelligence, I think it’s really important that MPs and their staff have the clearest view of what we are about, why we think what we do and what we are trying to do.

“ The world is at our doorstep – there’s no excuse for not knowing about it ”

“During all the Arab spring changes, for example, you just keep colleagues topped up. Where is Egypt today? Algeria? What’s happening in Libya, Yemen? I like to say ‘this is where we are, these are the possible outcomes, but this is all changing and next week it might be different’. Which is the fascination of it.”

One of Burt’s key assets is his long Parliamentary experience. First elected in 1983, he is one of the few ministers who has served in the Thatcher, Major and Cameron Governments. A PPS to Kenneth Baker during the time of the Great Education Reform Bill, he was later the Social Security Minister who oversaw the launch of the Child Support Agency. He lost his Bury North seat in the 1997 election but bounced back in 2001 in the safe seat of North East Bedfordshire. Later, he was PPS to Iain Duncan Smith when he was Leader of the Opposition, and, tellingly, retained in the same post when

Michael Howard then took over.

“If you look at the record, I think it’s been team-playing over a lengthy period of time. I’ve been the bridge between MPs and senior colleagues for most of the 20 years that I’ve held any sort of position. Most of the jobs I’ve done have required me to be engaged with colleagues.”

His steady patience is perhaps borne out by his love of running marathons (he’s completed nine London races). “I haven’t been able to do once since I came here. I run up and down the aisles now and again,” he says, pointing to the FCO’s long, carpeted corridors.

A devout Christian, he has been particularly interested in engaging with other faiths. On a recent trip to Israel, he met an ultra-Orthodox rabbi to receive a blessing on his attempts to help restart the peace process with Palestinians.

Burt stresses Hague’s emphasis on new ways of using traditional institutions to help effect change. And he’s certain that Britain can still play a key role in world affairs.

Rejecting Chamberlain’s infamous phrase about Sudetenland, he says: “No country now can be described as a far off country. I think the world has changed and I would say there is no excuse for not knowing about it. The world is at our doorstep and we have an engagement and interest. Not always, of course, but because the world is smaller there are perhaps even greater responsibilities on a permanent member of the Security Council with the clout that we have. And it is clout.

“I see people saying ‘oh well, are we not still trying to assume a role from the past?’ I’ve been very impressed in all the areas I cover how our embassies and our ambassadors are seen and their engagement on some things behind the scenes which people never know about, but which have a real impact on those

countries. In many places we are the first port of call by politicians, whether it is government or opposition, for a view.”

And Burt believes that while the FCO may have lost an Empire, it certainly has found a role. “We are not the biggest,

we are not the most powerful, we are not the richest. But often people say that you understand us better than anyone else. In some cases it’s absolutely true. In some cases it may be a little bit of flattery. But it’s a nice thing to be told.” 🏠



SAYEEDA WARSI

Senior Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Words: Sam Macrory

Female, Asian-born, Muslim, the product of a working class home... and a Conservative. Through the mire of grey-haired, be-suited white men, it's not hard to see why Sayeeda Warsi caught the eye of successive Tory leaders.

But Warsi did more than tick the right demographic boxes. Personable, bright and engaging, she won friends easily through star-turns on the constituency circuit and on the conference fringe circuit.

And while she proved less able to win votes, her failure to get elected in her home seat of Dewsbury in 2005 didn't deter Michael Howard's determination to bring Warsi into the national fold. The then Tory leader made Warsi a vice-chairman of the party, and asked her to advise him on community relations. David Cameron went further still in 2007, handing Warsi a peerage and throwing her straight into his shadow cabinet.

The baroness' new found status was evident when she was chosen to represent the party during BNP leader Nick Griffin's controversial appearance on Question Time – and was applauded for her strong performance.

Not surprisingly, her rise continued after the 2010 General Election. Warsi was appointed as a co-chairman of the party, and handed the role of Minister-without-

Portfolio. She became the first Muslim woman to attend Cabinet, with the sight of a salwaar khameez among the pinstripes an iconic image for a Tory party determined to represent 21st century Britain.

And then the career trajectory began to falter. Tory MPs grumbled that Warsi was ill-equipped for the chairman's unofficial role of Minister for the Today programme, appearing infrequently and struggling to make an impact when she did. The party hierarchy seemed to agree, with Michael Fallon – then a

“ I'm a woman, I'm not white, I'm from the north, I'm working class – I fit the bill ”

vice-chairman – more often than not trusted take on TV or radio firefighting duty.

There was also a growing feeling that the chairman was a job for an MP, not a peer, despite Warsi's insistence that she could speak up for backbench concerns.

The influential Tory website *ConservativeHome* argued for her removal from the chairman's job, and when a series of embarrassing expenses headlines over her accommodation arrangements – the Commissioner for Standards cleared her of wrongdoing – was followed by an official ticking off for failing to declare that her business partner Abid Hussain accompanied



her on an official trip to Pakistan, Warsi's demotion looked inevitable.

Despite refuting any suggestions that tokenism had played a part in her fast-tracked career, Warsi responded to rumours of her imminent sacking by arguing: "I'm a woman, I'm not white, I'm from an urban area, I'm from the north, I'm working class – I kind of fit the bill. All the groups that we're aiming for are groups that I'm familiar with."

But the plea wasn't enough, and Warsi lost her job. She didn't go down without a fight, however, and became the only minister – Warsi's twin remit includes Foreign and Commonwealth affairs and Faith and

Communities – allowed to put the word 'Senior' before her title and attend Cabinets. Some suspected she wanted to be known as 'Deputy Foreign Minister' but that idea was swiftly killed off. Despite the reshuffle tension, Downing Street still values her work combining her faith and FCO roles, such as trips to visit senior leaders in Pakistan and elsewhere.

She insists that her new job is a perfect fit for "a round peg in a round hole", but questions remain. Under-used or under-qualified? Mis-understood or a mistaken appointment? There are still hard yards to put in, both in the Lords and overseas. 卍

David Lidington

Minister of State for Europe

Words: Daniel Bond

Moderate and pragmatic, but also progressive and committed to a radical programme of reform, David Lidington is in many ways the archetypal Coalition minister – a man whom backbenchers on both sides can rally round. In 2010 he was handed one of the trickiest briefs in British politics – a Tory Minister for Europe – and has often found himself at the centre of a struggle over the direction, and soul, of his party.

The ‘Europragmatist’, as he’s been described, was given the job on the formation of the Coalition in a bid to placate Europhile Lib Dems and secure their support for the deal. (The presumptive Europe Minister, the more sceptical Mark Francois, was diplomatically sent off to the Whip’s Office). But Lidington soon became a lightning-rod for Eurosceptic anger. And as Tory divisions over Europe grew throughout 2012, so did calls for his removal.

The wave of opposition reached its peak after Lidington told French newspaper *Le Monde* that there was “no question” of Britain leaving the union. Several newspapers quoted senior Tory figures warning David Cameron he must remove the moderate and replace him with a hardliner. But Lidington survived, and, at three years in the hot seat, he’s now lasted longer than his four Labour predecessors put together. In many ways, allies point out that his troubles over an EU

referendum have not been of his own making. The backbench rebellion of 2011, when 81 MPs voted for a referendum, was down to the PM’s own stance and that of the whips.

Hague has been fiercely loyal in protecting the Minister of State from his critics, and the pair have close links that stretch back to Lidington’s time as PPS to the former Leader of the Opposition. Number 10 also rate him highly for his technical mastery of such a difficult brief.

The minister has been tasked with much of the diplomatic legwork since the PM’s pledge to reform the UK’s relationship with Brussels, and over the past 18 months has embarked on a charm offensive across the continent to

“ Nobody’s happy with the status quo. The EU is a constant process of renegotiation ”

make the case for a new settlement. While Lidington is able to trumpet some real achievements – particularly with the Common Fisheries Policy – there remains plenty to do. “Nobody’s happy with the status quo”, he said last month. “The EU is a constant process of renegotiation.”

Born in Lambeth in 1956, Lidington studied history at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. He twice captained the college to victory in the BBC’s *University Challenge*,

first in 1978 and again in 2002 when the team became the 'champion of champions' in a special *Reunited* series.

He was appointed as special advisor to then-Home Secretary Douglas Hurd, and was given his first taste of life in the FCO two years later when his boss became Foreign Secretary (and given Hurd's pro-Europeanism that's a link seized on by some Eurosceptics). In April 1992 he entered Parliament as MP for the safe Tory seat of Aylesbury. Lidington impressed as PPS to Home Secretary Michael Howard in the dying days of the Tory government, and was

brought into William Hague's new team after the 1997 Labour landslide.

He was no stranger to reshuffles over the Tories' 13 years in opposition, with brief stints on the Shadow Treasury, Home Affairs, Agriculture, Environment, Northern Ireland and Foreign Affairs teams, before entering government as Europe Minister.

But after fighting off his Eurosceptic detractors last summer, and with the party's position on a 2017 EU referendum appearing more settled (for now at least), few expect Lidington to move on from the FCO anytime soon. 🇬🇧



Lord Green

Minister of State for Trade and Investment (until December 2013)

Words: Richard Welbirg

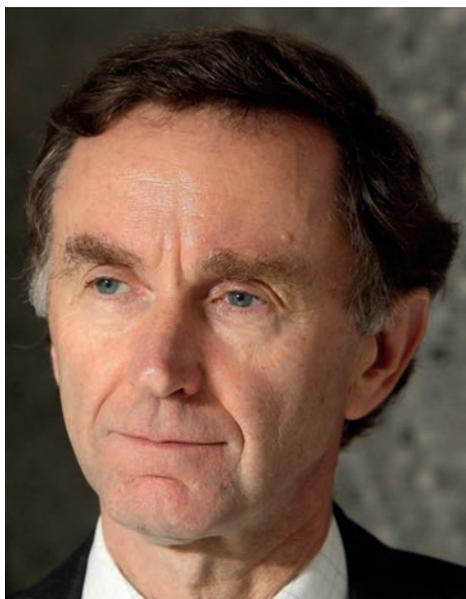
Born in Brighton 1948, the then just Stephen Green had a first class education: PPE at Exeter College, Oxford and an MSc at MIT. He joined the Ministry of Overseas Development in 1971, but his career really took off with international management consultancy McKinsey from 1977. Then in 1982, he joined what was still known as the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation.

At HSBC he was groomed for the top, becoming CEO after 21 years at the firm and then chairman in 2006, but his tenure was fraught with difficulty. One of the first tasks he inherited in 2003 was to oversee the bank's US expansion through the purchase of consumer-finance group Household International. The acquisition went smoothly, but Household's policy of buying up risky subprime mortgages unravelled ahead of the financial crisis, and in 2007 its struggles caused HSBC to issue its first profit warning. By 2009 the purchase had destroyed around £7.1bn of shareholder value, and Green admitted: "With the benefit of hindsight, this is an acquisition we wish we had not undertaken."

But Green was thought of as a moderniser and an intellectual, and his 2010 resignation was seen as a huge loss to the bank he had steered through the financial crisis without recourse to government aid.

He was created Baron Green of Hurstpierpoint in the County of West Sussex in November that year, and in 2011 completed a career full circle by returning to Westminster as Minister for Trade and Investment (reporting to both BIS and the FCO) where his role is primarily increasing exports and using that peerless contacts book to attract investment.

His first taste of gloves-off politics came in 2012, when HSBC admitted to failing to root out drug dealers and sponsors of terrorism during his tenure, and was fined £1.2bn. When Bloomberg Markets first made the allegation in 2007 Green protested: "This was a singular



“Green’s resignation from HSBC was seen as a huge loss to the bank he’d steered through the financial crisis”

and wholly irresponsible attack on the bank’s international compliance procedures”, but he admitted sharing the bank’s “regret” in a letter to Shadow Treasury minister Chris Leslie. Labour took to this ‘scandal’ like a dog to a bone, and Green’s refusal to come to the chamber and make a statement kept him in the papers for a few weeks.

The son of churchgoing parents, Green is also an ordained priest in the Church of England. His 1996 book, *Serving God? Serving Mammon?*, considers how Christians can reconcile their beliefs with the venal culture of the City, and he has regularly spoken of the importance of morality and integrity in business, telling the Guardian in 2003: “I happen to believe it is the only basis of sustainable success over the long term.”

Last month Green announced his intention to retire from the Government in December, describing his two-and-a-half year stint as “one of the most rewarding roles” of his career. Announcing his replacement – BT CEO Ian Livingston – David Cameron praised the “superb job” done by Green, and thanked him for leading the “reform and rejuvenation” of UK trade. 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁥󠁮󠁧󠁿

Ian Livingston

Minister of State for Trade and Investment
(from December 2013)

Words: Daniel Bond

Ian Livingston, who will take over the job of Trade and Investment Minister from December, has made no secret of his admiration for the current Government. The BT chief executive was one of the first key business figures to back the Coalition’s deficit reduction programme, and in the summer of 2010 signed a letter to the *Telegraph* urging George Osborne to stand firm on austerity.

Announcing the appointment in the House of Commons last month, David Cameron praised the “huge talent” Livingston would bring to the role. The Glaswegian certainly appears to have a natural talent for business and finance, winning an RBS-sponsored ‘fantasy share-investment’ competition while still at school after turning an initial ‘£10,000 investment’ into £30,000 in less than one year.

The BT CEO has won plaudits for turning around the firm’s fortunes since 2008, successfully steering them back into profit and tackling a huge debt burden.

But nevertheless his appointment to UKTI came as a surprise to many, including the man himself.

Taking a job in Government was “the furthest thing from my mind”, Livingston admitted after the announcement. “My initial reaction when I was approached was ‘I’ve got lots still to do at BT’ . I thought about it and I went to see the Prime Minister and he said the country needs you. When the Prime Minister says that it’s quite difficult to say no.” 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁥󠁮󠁧󠁿

Hugo Swire

Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Words: Jess Bowie

One of only a handful of Conservative MPs to have been in David Cameron's campaign team from the earliest days of his leadership bid, Hugo Swire has many of the hallmarks of an 'old school Tory'. He was educated at Eton (although a few years before the PM) and, after attending Sandhurst and serving in the Grenadier Guards, went on to work in communications and finance.

But Swire is more rock-n-roll than his CV lets on: not only has he (briefly) dated Jerry Hall, his brother in law was the late Joe

Strummer – frontman of The Clash. He also has an artistic bent: in the early 80s he co-founded an independent production company and, following a stint as a financial consultant, Swire became the National Gallery's first head of development.

He then embarked on a nine year stint at Sotheby's, serving as director of the auction house from 1997-2003. It was perhaps his familiarity with the art world that led Swire to suggest, while he was the Shadow Culture, Media and Sport Secretary, that the Tories might abandon free museum entry – although the idea was also in the party's 2005 manifesto. The backlash was huge and Swire was promptly sacked as Culture spokesman and replaced with Jeremy Hunt.

The East Devon MP's redemption came after the 2010 election, however, when his old friend Cameron made him Minister of State for Northern Ireland. After two years in post Swire was shuffled to the FCO, where his responsibilities include South East Asia, India and Nepal, Latin America, the Falklands and the Commonwealth.

In many ways Swire was a natural choice for this FCO job: his family – by way of the Swire Hong Kong shipping dynasty – have strong business links in East Asia, which could come in handy. He also has a personal connection with another country involved in his brief: Swire is the son-in-law of John Nott, Defence Secretary during the Falklands War. 卍



Mark Simmonds

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Words: Jess Bowie

His rise through the Conservative ranks may not have taken place at breakneck speed, but Mark Simmonds held a number of shadow ministerial roles in opposition, two of which – Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and Shadow Minister for International Development – will have been good preparation for his current brief.

The son of two teachers, Simmonds graduated with a degree in Urban Estate Surveying from Trent Polytechnic in 1986. He went on to forge a successful career as a chartered surveyor, eventually becoming chairman of his own firm, Mortlock Simmonds (the Gothic-sounding ‘Mortlock’ is Simmonds’ middle name).

After unsuccessfully contesting Ashfield in 1997, he became MP for Lincolnshire’s Boston and Skegness constituency in 2001. Like his predecessor Sir Richard Body, Simmonds is deeply Eurosceptic, and used his maiden speech in the Chamber to oppose the Treaty of Nice.

He may have backed the wrong horse – David Davis – in 2005’s Conservative leadership contest, but David Cameron still allowed Simmonds to remain on the Opposition front bench, and for three years (2007-10) the Worksop-born MP was the Tories’ Shadow Health Minister.

A hard worker with a dry sense of humour, Simmonds’ main strengths are in the FCO’s new emphasis on trade and jobs. His next

ministerial post is seen by some as being to the Treasury or BIS.

In Simmonds’ Boston constituency (which has been nicknamed ‘Little Poland’ on account of its high numbers of Eastern European migrants) immigration is a big issue. Following Nigel Farage’s recent announcement that he will stand in the 2015 election, many believe the UKIP leader will go for Simmonds’ seat. “I would be delighted if Nigel chose to fight Boston and Skegness,” was Simmonds’ response to the speculation. “It would be a real opportunity for some of the challenges we face here to be put into the national domain.”



The PPS team

Words: Paul Waugh

Keith Simpson, PPS to William Hague

Simpson jokes that his job is to “push the drinks trolley around the FCO”, but the military historian and veteran of the Whips’ Office is much more important than that.

A former Shadow Foreign Office minister, he was one of those who lost out in the musical chairs that followed the 2010 election. But Hague hugely values his Commons nous. Works closely with Sam Gyimah, the PM’s PPS, and departmental whip Greg Knight. Often arranges for MPs to meet Hague directly in regular ‘afternoon tea’ sessions in his Parliamentary office behind the Speaker’s chair. His job is to pick up on concerns of backbenchers who don’t shout the loudest but who express private worries on policy.

Tobias Ellwood, PPS to David Lidington

One of the handful of MPs who were in David Cameron’s original leadership bid team in 2005, the former Royal Green Jackets Captain has the trust of the Prime Minister and Hague.

Richard Graham, PPS to Hugo Swire

An ex-FCO man, Graham puts the Mandarin into the word ‘mandarin’. (He’s the only Parliamentarian who speaks Mandarin and Cantonese). Since November 2012, also the Prime Minister’s Trade Envoy to Indonesia.

Eric Ollerenshaw, PPS to Sayeeda Warsi

The former history teacher is a veteran of London’s political scene, having navigated the tricky waters of Hackney Council and the London Assembly. Returned to his Lancashire roots as MP for Lancaster and Fleetwood in 2010. Supremely loyal and invaluable link for Warsi into the Commons.

William Wallace, Lib Dem Whip for FCO

Although not a PPS, Lord Wallace of Saltair helps ensure that the Lib Dems are kept in the loop, especially since the party gave up its FCO ministerial post in the reshuffle of 2012. Well locked into Nick Clegg’s thinking but key part of FCO team. Helps hugely with crossbench opinion in the Lords 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁥󠁮󠁧󠁿



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Digital Diplomacy

The growth of social media has transformed the work of the FCO. **Daniel Bond** examines the department's online revolution

Among all the incredible moments from those turbulent few months in the spring of 2011, one iconic image perfectly illustrated the new world taking shape: as demonstrations raged across Cairo, protesters young and old huddled around overloaded power points in Tahrir Square, desperately trying to charge their smartphones.

The uprisings provided the starkest example yet of the political power of the internet,

allowing individuals to share information immediately, to organise demonstrations in minutes and to reach out beyond their borders in defiance of authoritarian regimes. Having seen their democratic dream turn sour after the election of Mohammed Morsi, it was Twitter and Facebook that again fuelled this year's protests that ultimately led to his removal by the military.

But while the growth of social media presents challenges to undemocratic states,



it also presents opportunities for democratic governments to change the way they engage with citizens around the world.

William Hague identified this trend immediately upon entering office in 2010. Just weeks after the general election, the new Secretary of State set out his vision in a speech titled *British Foreign Policy in a Networked World*. “Relations between states are no longer monopolised by Foreign Secretaries or Prime Ministers,” he explained. “There is now a mass of connections between individuals, civil society, businesses, and pressure groups which are also part of the relations between nations and which are being rapidly accelerated by the internet.”

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has always had a special allure as the grandest of Government institutions. But under Hague’s leadership, the department has sought to embed its traditions and values in the modern, networked, world. As Paul Waugh writes on page 16, insiders at the FCO now refer to the

department’s King Charles Street offices as “the National Trust meets Google HQ”.

As well as operating web pages in more than 40 languages, the FCO boasts over 200 Twitter feeds, 130 Facebook pages, its own YouTube channel, and a presence on Google+, Flickr, Tumblr and the Chinese social media site Sina Weibo. Six of the FCO’s seven ministers tweet (with a follower count ranging from Hague’s impressive 150,000 to Mark Simmonds’ more modest 2,600). And there are now over 50 UK ambassadors using Twitter, up from just three when the Coalition came to power in 2010. Much of this vast operation is run out of four main digital hubs: in Washington, supporting diplomatic missions in North America, Latin America and the Caribbean; in Madrid, supporting missions in Europe; in Singapore, supporting Asia-Pacific missions; and in New Delhi, supporting missions in Africa, South and Central Asia, Russia and the Middle East. ➤



Demonstrators in Cairo's Tahrir Square recharge their mobile phones during mass protests against Hosni Mubarak's regime in February 2011

Staffed by locals, but managed centrally from London, these hubs offer technical support and advice on the use of digital tools and campaigns. Running four hubs in different time zones also ensures that at least one location is operating at any given time – each hub is able to access all of the FCO’s official websites and social media channels, allowing staff to respond to breaking events around the world 24 hours a day.

By far the most visible example of the transformation taking place is seen in the FCO’s communication with British nationals overseas – the department’s travel advice website received almost nine million visits in 2011/12, and consular teams now directly answer queries from British nationals on Facebook and on the @FCOtravel Twitter channel. This use of social media has become increasingly vital in the event of major crises. In May this year, the FCO scrapped its tailored LOCATE system – an online database designed to help Britons abroad in the event of an emergency – in favour of greater engagement through Twitter and Facebook. LOCATE asked all British nationals living or travelling overseas to register their details

“ We no longer have to focus solely on the elites to make our case, or to influence policy ”

with the database – but less than 1% signed up. Extra resources have instead been ploughed into online crisis and response teams, nationals are encouraged to follow the FCO on social media for region-specific advice updates, and in some countries travellers now receive automated SMS messages providing advice and contact details on arrival.

Tweeting ministers

@WilliamJHague – 156,195 followers

@SayeedaWarsi – 20,242 followers

@AlistairBurtFCO – 4,468 followers

@DLidington – 4,476 followers

@HugoSwire – 3,651 followers

@MarkJSimmonds – 2,557 followers

But this vast social media operation has not just modernised the way the FCO communicates with UK nationals abroad – it has also transformed the way the department follows and predicts developing events, and even how officials formulate and implement British foreign policy.

As protests swept across North Africa and the Middle East in early 2011, the FCO was able to use social media to identify key voices in the movement and draw up detailed lists of which channels and hashtags to monitor. Arabic speakers were mobilised to help analyse public sentiment, with daily reports produced and sent out to major stakeholders across Whitehall.

Such detailed and regular monitoring of social media gives the FCO early warning of developments on the ground, and allows officials to identify previously unknown ‘influencers’. The social media team is able to review how people are reacting to their

Top five ambassadors

Jon Benjamin (@JonBenjamin19)
Ambassador to Chile –
16,350 followers

Tom Fletcher (@HMA TomFletcher)
Ambassador to Lebanon –
15,903 followers

Mark Kent (@KentBKK)
Ambassador to Thailand –
4,418 followers

Peter Millett (@PeterMillett1)
Ambassador to Jordan –
3,713 followers

Tim Hitchens (@UKAmbTim)
Ambassador to Japan –
3,140 followers

Twitter and Facebook messages, and increase UK credibility by both responding to positive comments and rebutting inaccuracies.

Ambassadors are also encouraged to engage with and often get to know influencers in their regions, and some even organise regular ‘tweetups’ with key figures. Our man in Beirut, Tom Fletcher, has been a trailblazer, but the most striking fact is that he’s no longer an anomaly. And Fletcher correctly identifies the need for digital diplomacy: “We no longer have to focus solely on the elites to make our case, or to influence policy. This is exciting, challenging and subversive. But you always have to remember the bottom line – we’re on it to promote the UK interest, not to be popular.”

Social media also allows the FCO to reach out to populations where the UK lacks any

physical diplomatic presence. Following the closure of the British embassy in Tehran in 2011, the department developed a ‘UK for Iranians’ website providing regular updates. But with the site almost immediately blocked by Iranian authorities, the team switched their attention to social media instead, and now run ‘UK for Iranians’ Twitter, Facebook and Google+ channels, posting in both English and Farsi. The department uses the channels to get round media censorship, allowing it to outline its concerns about Iranian nuclear policy and human rights abuses, publicise details of EU sanctions against the Tehran regime and challenge myths about UK intentions towards the country and its people.

In just a few years the landscape of foreign policy has been utterly transformed – where being a UK diplomat previously meant relying almost entirely on relations with ministers and elites, FCO officials can now engage directly with non-state actors and ordinary people around the world 24 hours a day. And the pace of change will not abate anytime soon. In December last year the department published its ‘Digital Diplomacy’ strategy, a manifesto pledging to embed the use of online tools “in every element of foreign policy work” in the coming years.

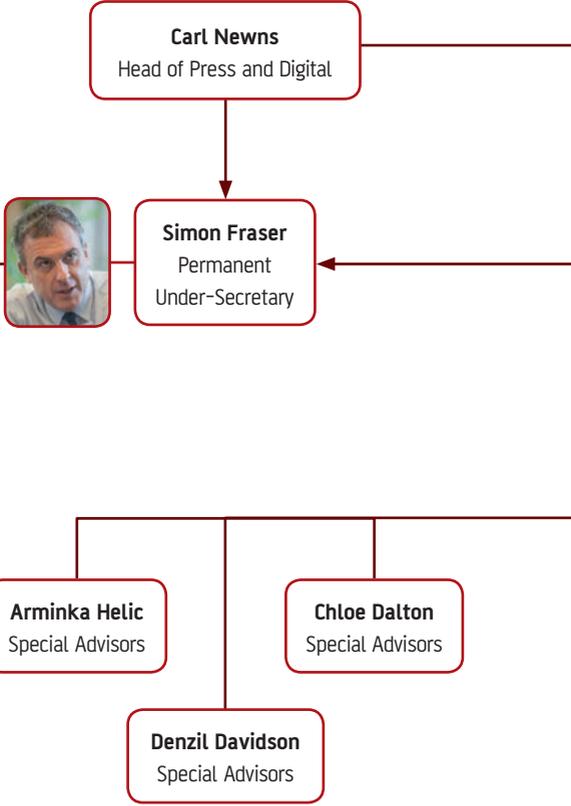
The aim is create a Foreign Office where it’s second nature to use social media to deliver the best services for British nationals, to develop the fullest possible picture of breaking events, to communicate Government policy effectively and to advance UK objectives around the world.

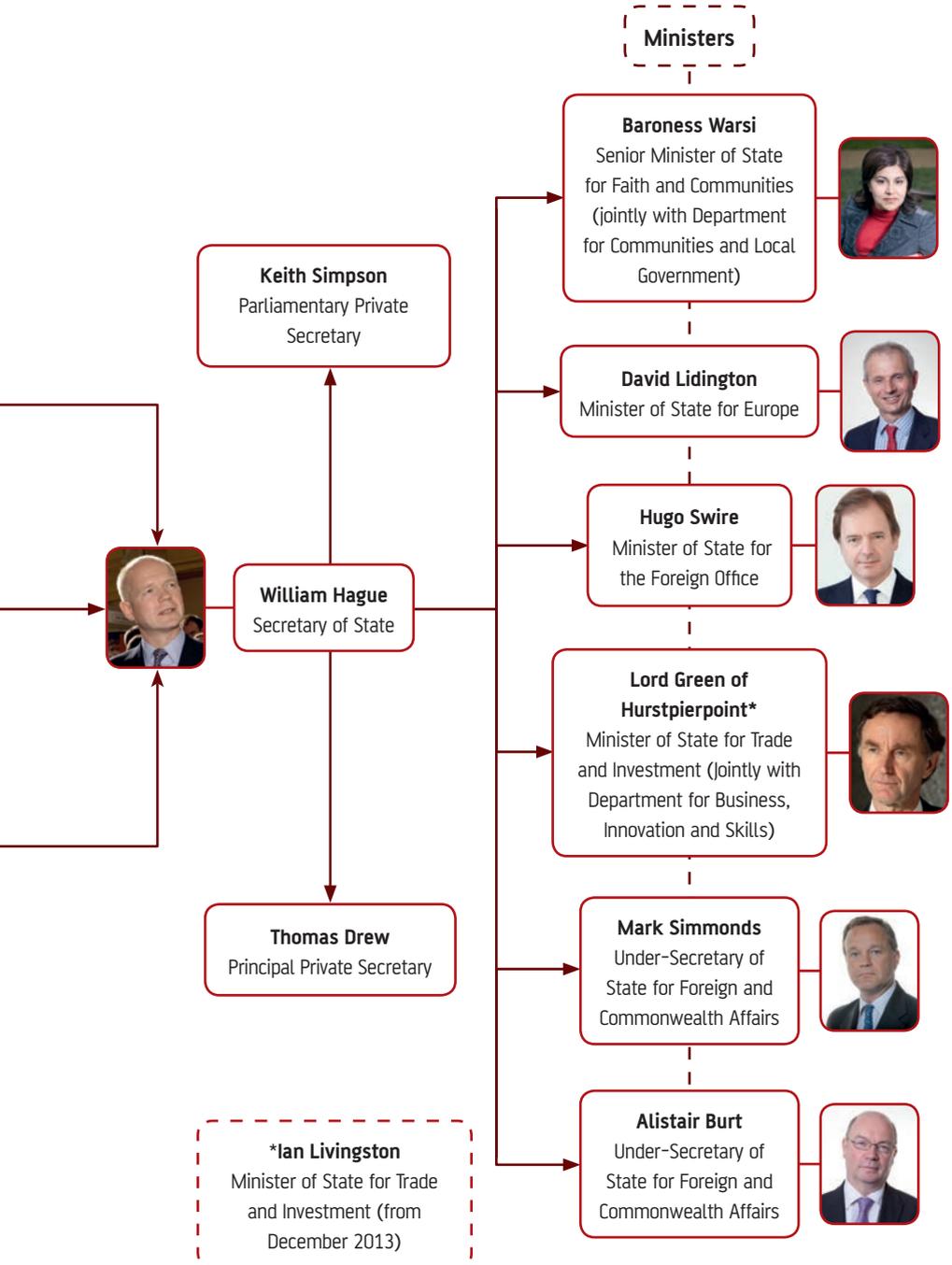
How times have changed since the days of former Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister Lord Salisbury, who in 1877 claimed the policy of English ambassadors was simply to “float lazily downstream, occasionally putting out a diplomatic boat hook to avoid collisions”. 🚢

Civil Servants



FCO ORGANOGRAM





Behind the wheel

Two former special advisers explain why the department known as the 'Rolls Royce' of Whitehall is still a driving force in Government



Communication is crucial to the success of any Foreign Secretary, writes **Mark Davies**

My inaugural twenty-four hours as a special adviser in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in June 2005 provided two insights which have stayed with me ever since.

The first was about the power of the place. Forget the lazy view which dismisses its importance and puts all power in foreign affairs at the door of the PM. Of course Tony Blair was deeply involved in foreign affairs – any PM should be, and two years after Iraq it would have been odd had he not been. But to suggest that the FCO and its people – some of the finest I have ever worked with – were not extremely influential across a range of

demanding policy briefs is fanciful.

This was demonstrated during my first meeting in the Foreign Secretary's glorious wood-panelled office. The issue was the EU constitution in the aftermath of votes by the French and the Dutch to reject it. The question was what the Foreign Secretary would say about the issue later that day in Parliament. It was tricky, and at times intense. The statement would define the UK Government's position on the constitution. What the meeting and its outcome underlined was the importance of the FCO at the heart of the debate, in part due to the status of the office through its posts across the world.

The second was about leadership. As soon as he emerged from what had been a tense and sometimes difficult meeting, the then-Foreign Secretary marched purposefully to the annex where the admin team sat, in order to welcome a newcomer to the team. High office requires high standards in all things.



My 11 hectic months in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office ran from June 2005, until Tony Blair's reshuffle of May 2006 moved Jack Straw to become Leader of the House of Commons (a decision which the former Prime Minister later admitted was one of his worst).

I had not long been a special adviser when I joined Jack's team (I previously worked for Baroness Amos when she was the, excellent, Leader of the House of Lords). At a briefing for relative newcomers to the strange and ill-defined world of the 'spad', we were advised by an old hand "to get our tackles in early" when it came to the civil service.

But my judgement was that this would have been disastrous, and would have nigh on guaranteed life in splendid isolation, particularly in the FCO, where the surroundings were indeed splendid and the isolation would have been assured. ➤

“ We were advised by an old hand to ‘get our tackles in early’ when it came to the civil service ”

So I decided to take exactly the opposite approach – to work with officials, not against them. I am not naïve – I’m certain that on many occasions it suited them to choose not to get a view from the spad – but such was the nature of my boss that if a view was needed (and that is the point), he would seek it out, while my good relations with his private office meant they would do the same. The alternative approach – where every submission to the Secretary of State goes through the special advisers – forces the machine to a halt. It’s not hard to work out which approach is most in the interests of good public policy making. This is true of all government departments: it would have been particularly hard going, both for good practice in policy making and for the individuals involved, if one took the view that the spads had to see everything in the FCO (and it would have been a very unconfident Secretary of State who insisted on this).

The approach we took therefore was to decide between the two special advisers who would lead on which issue. We divided the world up into manageable chunks. I took the EU (we held the presidency at the time), Africa (particularly Zimbabwe) and relations with the US. My colleague focused on the Middle East, though we shared Iraq. In truth we worked closely together: it would have been impossible had we been in competition.

My background in journalism inevitably meant that I was called upon across a wider range of issues. The Foreign Secretary was blessed with a brilliant communications team and, for all the scorn about spin, it was a crucial part of the office with whom I worked closely.

So much of the FCO’s role is about visibility – whether in talks with key figures in the Iraqi government or on the scene at the site of a terrorist outrage at a UK embassy overseas – that this function must be central to the work of

any successful Foreign Secretary.

It is even more important, though, for the FCO to act as a counter-balance in the chemistry of Government: to be able to interact effectively, and with clarity of purpose, with the other key departments whose interests intertwine such as the MoD, DfID and, of course, No. 10 (which my boss repeatedly reminded me was “only a building”). During the time I was there, albeit short, and across a range of challenging briefs from Zimbabwe to Turkey’s ambition to join the EU to Iran and much more in between, the FCO demonstrated its importance over and over again. 🇬🇧

Mark Davies was a special adviser to Jack Straw MP from 2005 until 2010 and for Baroness Amos from 2004 to 2005. He is now Communications Director for Post Office Ltd.





The UK is exceptionally well served by the Foreign Office and its staff, says former special adviser **David Clark**

The Foreign Office is one of the most misunderstood and undervalued institutions in modern Britain. Prejudices against it span the ideological divide. For nationalists of the right it is a nest of appeasers too busy agreeing with Johnny Foreigner to stand up for Britain. To class conscious lefties it is a bastion of old school tie elitism that needs to be dragged into the modern era.

I admit to sharing a little of these prejudices when I joined the Foreign Office as a special adviser in May 1997. One cause was a strange

encounter that happened a few months before Labour took office, when I was approached by the UK ambassador to Serbia. He wanted me to know that Slobodan Milosevic was really a good egg and not the war criminal we all thought he was. Serbia's responsibility for the war in Bosnia had been greatly exaggerated compared to that of Croatia. Would we consider allowing Serbia's ruling Socialist Party to join the Socialist International? The suggestion was both absurd and wholly inappropriate.

Matters didn't improve when I subsequently met his colleague, the UK ambassador to Croatia. He gave a similar PR puff on behalf of the Croatian President, Franjo Tudjman, a thug who only avoided joining Milosevic at The Hague by having the good sense to die. Tudjman, I was assured, was a mainstream European democrat and the problems of the region were all down to those ghastly Serbs. Here, surely, was confirmation of our senior diplomats' tendency to go native, working for the interests of their host government instead of the British taxpayer.

As it happens, I discovered some time later that the two men had been nicknamed "Slobbo" and "Franjo" by colleagues who regarded their misplaced loyalties with derision. Far from being normal, their attitudes were considered aberrant and their professional reputations suffered as a result. It is certainly the case that diplomats sometimes over-identify with the countries to which they are posted – I saw one or two other examples during my time as a special adviser. But the Foreign Office is much more aware of this risk than many suppose. In my experience, the system is effective at filtering out any bias that results.

The real grievance of the nationalist right is against the nature of the modern international community and Britain's place in it rather ➤



than the Foreign Office as such. It recoils from the truth that we can only get what we want in the world by building alliances and securing the agreement of foreign governments. To maximise our negotiating power we need to understand the politics and cultures of other countries and learn to see ourselves, to some extent, as others see us. Having these skills is a strength, not a weakness, and we should be grateful that our diplomats excel at them. For those who wish the sun had never set on the British Empire, it is something for which they cannot be forgiven.

I found the charge of elitism to be similarly misplaced, or at least outdated. There were still a few toffs who thought the diplomatic service a family business when I was there, but they were a dying breed, confined to the less important parts of the Foreign Office. The most important posts, covering areas like security policy, transatlantic relations and Europe, were staffed by the most able officials, including many younger diplomats from state schools and redbrick universities. I saw no evidence that social hierarchy played a role.

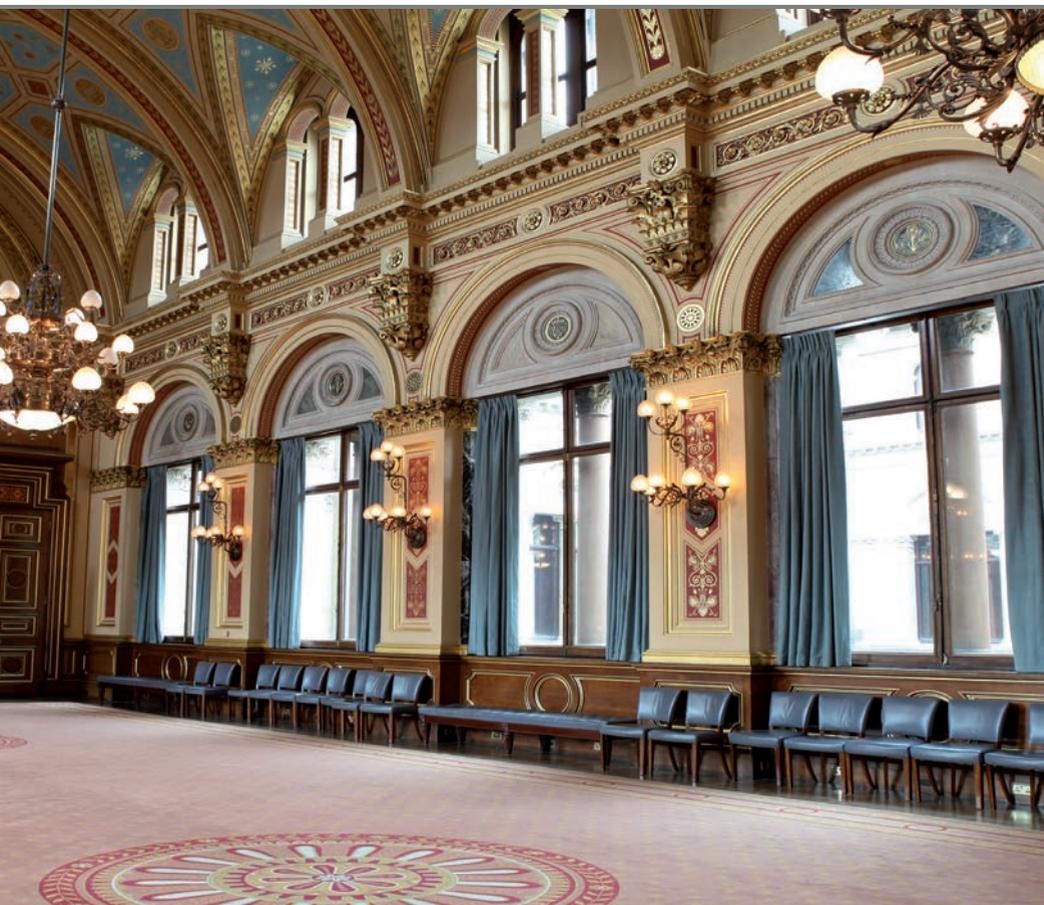
What probably impressed me most was the judgement of foreign diplomats who often told me that their British counterparts were the best in the world. Usually this was expressed in words of admiration, like the Hungarian official who told me that the British embassy staff were rare in bothering to learn Hungarian, a language with limited geographical reach. Small gestures like this can buy a lot of good will. At other times it was expressed negatively, like the regular French complaint that the UK did too well in securing EU appointments.

Frequently there was praise for the skill and preparation British officials showed in international negotiations, something that I think owes a lot to the culture and



structure of the Foreign Office. Unlike the foreign ministries of other countries, where information and knowledge is often hoarded at the top, the Foreign Office operates with a high degree of internal openness which allows even relatively junior officials to see the full picture. It requires a high degree of trust, but the advantage it gives the UK in handling complex negotiations is very real.

The Foreign Office is certainly not perfect and there are things about it I would change. It still needs to do better at recruiting and promoting women and people from ethnic



“ To maximise our negotiating power we need to understand the politics and cultures of other countries and learn to see ourselves as others see us ”

minority backgrounds. There should be more of a two-way flow with academia and think tanks, like there is in the United States. Both changes would help to reduce the risk of institutional conservatism that exists in any organisation. Having said that, we are exceptionally well served by the Foreign Office and its staff – more so than we appear to realise. 🇬🇧

David Clark was a special adviser to Robin Cook between 1997 and 2001. He now runs the *Shifting Grounds* blog.



Engaging with the FCO can be a daunting experience. **Richard Royal** explains how to get off on the right foot

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is one of the great Offices of State, once presided over by great historical figures like Balfour, Eden and Bevin, responsible for a £1.5bn budget, employing over 14,000 people across the World, and housed in one of the most impressive Italianate buildings on Whitehall. Engaging with it can be daunting.

But like all government departments it struggles with internal and external pressures, funding shortages, and the lack of hours in the day. Contrary to what is often reported in the media, public affairs professionals (“lobbyists” if you want to use the dirty word) are vital to the provision of information required for effective decision making and for alerting ministers to oversights and errors. By their nature many politicians are forced to be a jack of all trades and can often rely on the public affairs community to fill in the gaps and express what those outside the Westminster bubble are thinking.

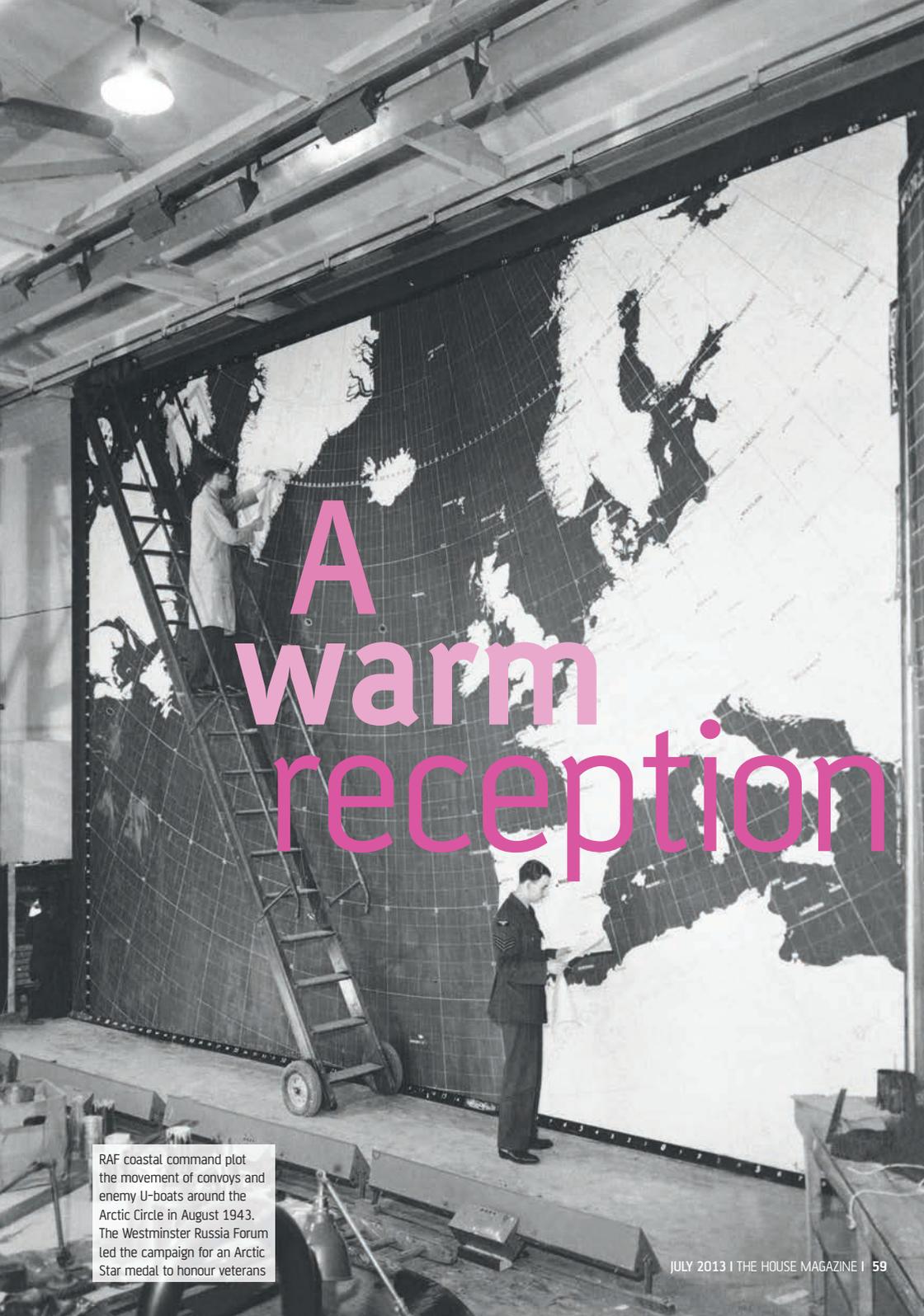
One of the most frustrating things for anybody in public affairs is spending years cultivating relationships with particular Secretaries of State and Ministers, only to have to start again when they get reshuffled elsewhere and a new face comes in. Thankfully, with the respected William Hague at the helm, the Foreign Office has remained relatively stable compared to other departments, with both David Lidington and Alastair Burt working alongside him since the 2010 election. There have been some changes, with Hugo Swire moving from the Northern

Ireland Office, Mark Simmonds joining Burt as a fellow Parliamentary Under-Secretary, and Baroness Warsi shoehorned in as the Minister for the fluffier side of foreign policy.

Nevertheless, the problems of the never-ending ministerial merry-go-round reinforce the importance of devoting time to the more static civil service. The Permanent Under-Secretary at the FCO is Sir Simon Fraser, an experienced career diplomat who presides over a Management Board and several sub-committees as well as a host of experienced and knowledgeable civil servants that concentrate on specific issues and are usually grateful for updates and information from the outside world.

Of course the problem with foreign affairs is that everybody has an opinion on them. They gain a great deal of media coverage and there’s never a shortage of protesters challenging the department, most of whom fail to get their point across effectively and are often considered to be nothing more than a nuisance. It is vital that those who want to make a genuine difference don’t fall into that trap.

Central to productive public affairs is knowing how best to play the cards you’ve been given. But unlike poker the best result is when there is more than one winner. Taking into consideration what the department’s current aims are and assessing how your interests can fit within them is essential. With all departments under increasing budget pressures, the easier you can make their lives, the better. Often they are genuinely grateful for the provision of good research (particularly if it is independent) and accurate information. But it is also important to be realistic about what can be achieved. Unfortunately, you’re never going to stop a war (nor start one, hopefully), but aims below this threshold still need to appear to be in line with general



A warm reception

RAF coastal command plot the movement of convoys and enemy U-boats around the Arctic Circle in August 1943. The Westminster Russia Forum led the campaign for an Arctic Star medal to honour veterans

policy direction and in an ideal world also save money. David Miliband attempted to pull together the department's strategic objectives in the last Parliament and much of it remains the same, but in the fast paced world of foreign affairs, and given the ever-present risk of terrorism and the change of government, priorities can shift, so it is important to keep an eye on policy announcements for an indication of direction.

“ The ministerial merry-go-round reinforces the importance of devoting time to the more static civil service ”

One of the most important things in any campaign is motivating third-party advocates – those who are independent but support the same goals, although not necessarily for the same reasons. There is an obvious reason why a lobbyist argues the case that he or she does, usually because they're paid to do so. But if others can be encouraged to argue the case too, not only can energies be diverted elsewhere but additional credibility is lent to the campaign.

Other MPs are an obvious starting point for this. The FCO is shadowed by the Foreign Affairs Select Committee which contains eleven MPs with experience and an interest in this policy area, and who scrutinise the department, run consultations and often offer advice. There are also committees for the Department for International Development and the Ministry of Defence, which inevitably have some crossover. Then of course there are All Party Parliamentary Groups, which represent and promote particular areas of interest. Foreign affairs is awash with them. Not only is there one for most countries



Former merchant navy seaman David Craig examines a pair of Arctic goggles as part of the Arctic Convoys exhibition at the National War Museum in Edinburgh

(not including Fiji), but there are APPGs dedicated to Conflict Issues; Global Security; Human Rights; International Relations; United Nations; and so on. Each of these contain MPs who can take up a cause with the Foreign Office directly.

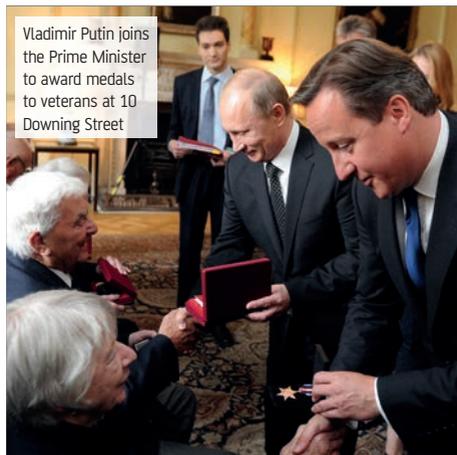
Of course politicians, whether they are the Foreign Secretary or a backbencher, are also motivated by winning their next election, so voters are great potential third-party advocates. When Westminster Russia Forum was campaigning for the British World War Two Arctic Veterans to receive the medal



Arctic convoy veteran Eddie Grenfell, 93, with his friends and family after receiving his medal from Chief of the Defence Staff Sir David Richards (left)



David Cameron presents the Arctic Star to World War II veteran Michael Alston



Vladimir Putin joins the Prime Minister to award medals to veterans at 10 Downing Street

they rightly deserved, we first identified which constituencies surviving Veterans lived within, and then wrote to their MPs suggesting that they take up the cause on behalf of their constituent. This makes the case far more powerful and also gets the attention of local media, who love a good story and visual about a local campaigning against the Government. We also organised a letter signed by supportive MPs to be sent to the Foreign Secretary, an act which gained national media coverage and cranked up the pressure on the decision makers.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, gigantic and daunting as it is, is still motivated by many of the same problems as other departments – trying to balance the budget, remaining abreast of an overwhelming number of issues, and its political masters trying to keep enough people happy to remain in their job. If you can help them to resolve some or all of these problems, you'll get off on the right foot. 🇷🇺

Richard Royal is Chairman of the Westminster Russia Forum and Public Affairs Manager at Ladbrokes.

Current Consultations

Open consultation

Review of UK and EU balance of competences: call for evidence on trade and investment

Organisations:

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills and Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Published:

16 May 2013

Policies:

Making the single market more effective, Reducing barriers to international free trade and Increasing the UK's exports and attracting inward investment

This consultation closes on 6 August 2013

Detail

The Foreign Secretary launched the Balance of Competence Review in Parliament on 12 July 2012. This follows the Coalition's commitment to examine the balance of competences between the UK and the European Union. The review will provide an analysis of what the UK's membership of the EU means for the UK national interest.

See the Review of the balance of competences for full details of the review programme.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) is leading the review of competence in the area of trade and investment. Responses to this call for evidence, along with other sources of evidence, will be used to inform the report.

We are looking for input from anyone with relevant knowledge, expertise or experience. We welcome contributions from individuals, companies, civil society organisations including think-tanks, and governments and governmental bodies, from within the UK or beyond our borders.

Open consultation
Review of UK and EU balance of
competences: call for evidence on research
and development

Organisations:
**Department for Business, Innovation
& Skills and Foreign & Commonwealth
Office**

Published:
16 May 2013

Policies:
**Making the single market more effective
and Investing in research, development
and innovation**

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The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) is leading the review of competence in the area of 'research and development' which also covers aspects of space and innovation. Responses to this call for evidence, along with other sources of evidence, will be used to inform the report.

We are looking for input from anyone with relevant knowledge, expertise or experience in the fields of:

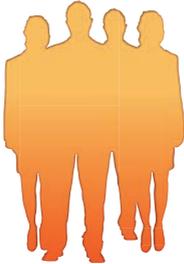
- research
- technological development
- space
- innovation

We welcome contributions from individuals, companies, civil society organisations, think-tanks, governments and governmental bodies, from within the UK or beyond our borders.



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