



Second Report
from the

Foreign Affairs Committee

Foreign Policy Aspects of the
War Against Terrorism

Session 2002-2003

Response of the Secretary of State for
Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

*Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
by Command of Her Majesty
February 2003*

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SECOND REPORT OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

FOREIGN POLICY ASPECTS OF THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM

SESSION 2002-2003

RESPONSE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

1. The Government welcomes this important Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee and has taken careful note of it.
2. The Government welcomes the Committee's endorsement of the FCO's role in the Campaign.
3. The situation concerning Iraq is subject to change. This response is up to date at the time of printing.

Recommendations

Multilateral Developments since June 2002

- (a) **We commend the high level of commitment the Government has shown towards the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee in the past year. We recommend that the Government consider carefully how to ensure that the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee is effective in the long run, and continues to foster international co-operation and goodwill (paragraph 17).**

We appreciate the FAC's comments and share their wish that the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee retains long-term effectiveness. We therefore welcomed the initiative of the French Presidency to hold a Security Council Ministerial meeting on 20 January to focus on international activity in the area of counter-terrorism. Key outcomes of this meeting, attended by the Secretary of State and 12 other Ministers included:

endorsement of the work of the CTC in encouraging full implementation by all member states of UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) and submitting timely reports as required;

an appeal for greater international co-operation and mutual practical assistance among states in building counter-terrorist capacity;

a call for International, Regional and Sub-regional Organisations to evaluate ways in which they could enhance the effectiveness of their action against terrorism;

recognition of the dangers inherent in a world where WMD and terrorism co-exist.

Under UK Chairmanship, the CTC's agreed work programme for the 6th 90-day period of work (1 January-31 March) looks to States to achieve marked advances in their overall counter-terrorism capacity (especially with regard to legislation and countering the financing of terrorism). In addition the CTC will be pressing the 12 countries who have not yet submitted the initial reports required by Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) to do so. It will continue to co-operate with all UN member states offering advice and guidance on further action required to facilitate the implementation of Resolution 1373 (2001). The UK's own third report to the CTC will be submitted shortly (in time for the deadline of 15 February).

The Chairmanship of the CTC will pass from Sir Jeremy Greenstock to the Spanish Permanent Representative to the UN in April 2003. We shall continue to offer the Committee every possible support and assistance.

- (b) We recommend that, in its response to this Report, the Government set out what further measures it will take to encourage and assist governments, particularly in the Middle East and Gulf region, to stem the flow of terrorist financing (paragraph 22).**

We raise the issue of terrorist financing with all countries whenever the opportunity arises. We continue to urge all states to implement their international obligation in UNSCR 1373 to prevent and suppress terrorist financing, and to implement UNSCR 1390 by freezing the assets of Usama Bin Laden, Al Qa'ida and its associates. The UK is looking to deliver a range of technical assistance programmes to help states with implementing their international obligations. Specifically, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Charity Commission, on behalf of the FCO, intend to run seminars on legislative and administrative measures to combat the financing of terrorism (including the regulation of charities). These will be delivered to a range of regions including the Gulf.

- (c) We conclude that, despite the emergence of significant differences of opinion between European Union leaders over the conduct of the war against terrorism, the EU has taken some constructive steps forward in co-operation against terrorist activities, both within Europe and in forging agreements with third countries (paragraph 33).**

We agree. We will continue to work with EU Partners to further develop this capacity in the JHA and CFSP fields, including through delivering assistance to third countries and to making counter-terrorism a key priority in all political dialogues.

- (d) We conclude that Britain can work constructively with European Union partners on some areas of foreign policy—such as development, the ICC and Iran—while aligning itself more closely to the United States on policy towards Iraq. We recommend that, in the war against terrorism and elsewhere, the Government continue to judge each of its major partners' policies on their own merits: the experience of the past year has demonstrated the extent to which Britain can work with both the EU and the US, without damaging its relationship with either (paragraph 36).**

We agree.

- (e) We recommend that the Government set out, in its response to this report, how NATO's new military concept for defence against terrorism will now be implemented, and how its adoption at the Prague summit will affect NATO's future role in the war against terrorism (paragraph 43).**

Allies agreed at Prague to substantial changes in the Alliance's ability to respond to new threats. This included a new military concept for defence against terrorism, which covers a range of possible NATO operational options to deter, disrupt and defend against terrorist attacks directed from abroad against NATO populations, territory and forces. Under some of these options NATO itself would be in the lead; others are aimed primarily at supporting and co-ordinating efforts by Allies, reflecting the primary responsibilities of nations in anti-terrorist and consequence management operations. Detailed plans based on the concept are now being drawn up.

Prague also agreed a transformation in the military forces and capabilities available to NATO: a decisive shift away from the structures and capabilities of its Cold War legacy and towards flexible Alliance forces able to deploy wherever needed. NATO further agreed to enhance its civil emergency planning and NBC defence against terrorist attacks.

The key elements to making a reality of NATO's new role are:

the NATO Response Force (NRF), a mix of effective land, sea and air forces, available at very short notice and giving the Alliance the credible ability to respond to existing and emerging threats. We are now working with Allies to ensure that the NRF will reach initial operational capability by 2004, building on NATO's existing development of High Readiness Force HQs;

Revised, re-focussed NATO Command Structures, based on a Supreme Commander for operations in Europe supported by three second level HQs able to command deployed operations. A Supreme Commander for Transformation will be based in the US with an Alliance-wide remit to ensure integration and interoperability. Details of the new structure will be agreed by Defence Ministers in June 2003.

Specific improvements through the Prague Capabilities Commitment to the military capabilities needed for NATO's new roles, including: defence against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) attacks; secure command and communications systems; and improving interoperability of deployed forces and combat effectiveness. The UK is contributing a range of capability improvements.

Once implemented, these changes will together give NATO an enhanced ability to defend Allied territory, populations and forces against a wide range of threats, including terrorism.

Developments in United States Foreign Policy since June 2002

- (f) We fully support the Government's decision to align itself closely with the United States in the war against terrorism. We conclude that this policy has enhanced Britain's influence over current policy decisions, and has also helped to foster the "special relationship" in the long run (paragraph 46).**

The Government agrees that our close collaboration with the US in the fight against international terrorism has enhanced Britain's influence over current policy decisions and that this has had a positive effect on the wider transatlantic relationship.

- (g) We recommend that, in its response to this Report, the Government set out its policy on targeted killings, such as that carried out by the United States in Yemen on 3 November 2002 (paragraph 54).**

The scale and unpredictable nature of the terrorist threat posed by Al Qa'ida and related groups requires a preparedness to take rigorous action in self-defence. We cannot prejudge the action that may be required. But, in protecting the UK and its citizens, we would act in accordance with international and domestic law.

- (h) We recommend that the Government inform us, and likewise the House, if it decides to change its own nuclear posture or learns that the United States is planning a new generation of tactical nuclear weapons (paragraph 62).**

The Government will of course inform Parliament as necessary on all important matters affecting UK nuclear policy.

Al Qaeda and Other Terrorist Groups

- (i) We conclude that, despite over a year of vigorous international efforts to disrupt the network, Al Qaeda and associated organisations continue to pose a grave threat to the United Kingdom and its interests abroad (paragraph 76).**

We agree that Al Qa'ida continues to pose a grave threat, to the UK, its interests abroad, and more widely to the international community, despite some very considerable successes against their leaders and operations. Al Qa'ida and related groups will be overcome only through sustained international co-operation. The UK will continue to play a crucial role in maintaining and leading the international coalition against them.

The Threat from Iraq

- (j) We conclude that, although the possibility that Saddam Hussein might employ terrorist methods must be taken seriously, there is no compelling evidence linking the Iraqi regime to Al Qaeda. Neither the British nor the US Government has thus far provided any evidence that Iraq had any involvement in the attacks of 11 September 2001. Until any such evidence is provided, any military action against the Iraqi regime must therefore be justified on grounds other than its past or current involvement with the Al Qaeda network (paragraph 86).**

We agree with the Committee that the possibility of Saddam Hussein conducting terrorist acts must be taken seriously. The Iraqi regime has a long record of support for terrorism including for radical Islamic groups such as the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and Palestinian terrorist groups, the MeK in Iran, payments to families of suicide bombers as well as the assassination of political opponents in Iraq and abroad.

We must also guard against the terrifying prospect of Saddam Hussein passing weapons of mass destruction to terrorists such as Al Qa'ida. Saddam Hussein is developing them. Al Qa'ida is seeking them and would use them. Saddam Hussein and Al Qa'ida have a common disregard for others. Both are prepared to use terror to achieve their objectives. We have no evidence that Iraq was involved in the September 11 attacks. But there are links between Iraq and Al Qa'ida.

- (k) We conclude that evidence of Iraq's retention and continued development of weapons of mass destruction is compelling, and a cause for considerable concern. We commend the Government's decision to draw international attention to the scale of Iraq's illegal weapons of mass destruction programme, through the publication in September 2002 of *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: the Assessment of the British Government* (paragraph 96).**

We welcome the Committee's conclusion and are grateful for its supportive remarks.

- (l) We conclude that, given Saddam Hussein's record of human rights abuses, he would not hesitate to use torture and weapons of mass destruction against foreign troops and civilians if he believed that this would benefit his regime (paragraph 100).**

We fully share the Committee's view of this abhorrent regime.

- (m) We conclude that failure to address the threat from Iraq's weapons of mass destruction could pose very high risks to the security of British interests in the Middle East and the Gulf region (paragraph 108).**

We fully endorse this conclusion. We regard Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programme as the biggest threat to stability in the region.

- (n) **We commend the Government's commitment always to work within international law, although we recognise that international law must evolve to meet new challenges such as the unprecedented terrorist threat. We further commend the Foreign Secretary's commitment to strengthen the credibility of multilateral institutions—and, in particular, the United Nations—in pursuit of international security (paragraph 109).**

We appreciate the FAC's comments.

- (o) **We urge the Government to ensure that its efforts to address the threat from Iraq's weapons of mass destruction do not detract in any way from those to eliminate Al Qaeda and associated terrorist groups (paragraph 110).**

Terrorism and Iraq are both grave problems for the international community. We agree that one should not be pursued at the expense of the other. It is right and necessary to tackle both now with equal vigour. And they are interconnected problems. Disarming Iraq removes the very real and catastrophic threat of international terrorists getting hold of weapons of mass destruction.

Disarming Iraq

- (p) **We commend the Government's decision to work closely with the United States, to produce a strong and unanimous Security Council Resolution establishing an unconstrained weapons inspections regime and demanding Iraq's full disarmament of Weapons of Mass Destruction (paragraph 120).**

We greatly appreciate the Committee's support.

- (q) **We conclude that the difficulties faced by UN weapons inspectors are formidable. We urge the Government to offer every assistance to facilitate the inspectors' work, provided that such assistance does not compromise United Kingdom intelligence assets (paragraph 128).**

We fully endorse this conclusion. The Government is committed to supporting the weapons inspectors and is providing all possible support to enable them to carry out their work.

- (r) **We conclude that should the US, British and other governments seek to justify military action against Iraq for example, on an expanded doctrine of "pre-emptive self-defence," there is a serious risk that this will be taken as legitimising the aggressive use of force by other, less law-abiding states (paragraph 154).**

The Government has made clear that it regards military action as a last resort, and that anything we did would be in accordance with international law.

- (s) **We recommend that, in its response to this Report, the Government set out in detail the thinking behind its policy on the pre-emptive use of military force, and whether this policy has been reviewed following the publication of the United States National Security Strategy in September 2002 (paragraph 160).**

It is well established in international law that the right to take necessary and proportionate military action in self-defence applies not only where an attack has occurred but also pre-emptively where an attack is imminent. The Government supports the view that this right applies as much to imminent threats from terrorism as to the more conventional threats of the past. The UK's consistent position has been that we would only take military action in these circumstances as a matter of last resort. The Government has not considered it necessary to review its policy on this issue following the publication of the US document.

- (t) **We conclude that the notion of “imminence” should be reconsidered in light of new threats to international peace and security—regardless of whether the doctrine of pre-emptive self-defence is a distinctively new legal development. We recommend that the Government work to establish a clear international consensus on the circumstances in which military action may be taken by states on a pre-emptive basis (paragraph 161).**

There is already scope under international law to take into account all the circumstances, including the likelihood, nature and seriousness of any attack, in determining whether any threat is imminent. The Government will not speculate on the precise circumstances in which the UK would take military action, not least because of the advantage this would present to potential adversaries. We would therefore not wish to attempt to reach consensus internationally on the precise circumstances in which military action in anticipatory self-defence may be taken by states; and our strong view is that such a process would be most unlikely to be successful.

- (u) **We commend the Government’s decision, in its efforts to address the threat from the Iraqi regime, to focus on Iraq’s persistent violation of UN Security Council Resolutions. We conclude that unless new evidence emerges that Iraq poses an imminent threat to the security of the United Kingdom, any military action against Iraq should be taken on the basis of Iraq’s violation of successive Security Council Resolutions, culminating to date in UNSCR 1441 (paragraph 170).**

We welcome the Committee’s support for our approach. As noted above, we regard military action as a last resort and are committed to acting in accordance with international law.

- (v) **We conclude that Iraq must not be permitted to continue to defy the authority of the United Nations. The unanimous adoption by the UN Security Council of Resolution 1441 has made the obligation on the Iraqi regime to disarm absolutely clear, and has given the regime a final opportunity to comply with successive UN Security Council resolutions (paragraph 171).**

The Government fully endorses this conclusion.

- (w) **We further conclude that UN Security Council Resolution 1441 would not provide unambiguous authorisation for military action, were Iraq to fail to comply with its provisions. We therefore recommend that, in the case of Iraq’s violation of Resolution 1441, the Government do its utmost to ensure the adoption of a further Security Council resolution authorising the use of “all necessary means” to enforce Iraqi disarmament (paragraph 172).**

Under Resolution 1441, the Security Council will meet immediately on receipt of a report of non-co-operation by Iraq. Further decisions will depend on the circumstances. In the event of a material breach, which has now occurred, the Government has made clear its strong preference for a second Resolution.

- (x) **We recommend that the Government clarify, in its response to this Report, whether it believes that a further United Nations Security Council Resolution is legally necessary before military action is taken against Iraq (paragraph 173).**

As noted above, our strong preference is for a second Resolution. Following Iraq’s further material breach, the Security Council must, in Kofi Annan’s words, “face its responsibilities”.

Military Action Against Iraq

- (y) **We conclude that the establishment of the rule of law and functioning representative government in Iraq after a war would pose formidable challenges. We recommend that the Government examine carefully the possible models for post-conflict reconstruction in Iraq, including a United Nations transitional authority. We recommend that, in its considerations, the Government bear in mind the necessity for country-wide peacekeeping, civil policing, transitional justice, and representation of all groups in Iraqi society (paragraph 191).**

The Government is carrying out prudent contingency planning, examining all the points raised by the Committee.

- (z) **We recommend that the Government treat seriously the possibility that a war with Iraq could trigger instability in the Arab and Islamic world, and could increase the pool of recruits for Al Qaeda and associated terrorist organisations there and in Western Europe (paragraph 200).**

We believe that military action against Iraq, if that proves necessary, would be in support of the whole international community including Muslims, and would remove the biggest threat to stability in the region, the threat of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. At the same time we will continue to focus on the wider issues of concern, including Palestine, the underlying causes of terrorism, poverty and political exclusion. This is the only way to achieve lasting stability in the region. We believe the long-term benefits of such an approach will considerably outweigh any cynical move by Al Qa'ida to exploit it for its terrorist ends.

Taking Forward the War Against Terrorism

- (aa) **We commend the Foreign Secretary's decision to examine carefully the *Arab Human Development Report 2002*. We conclude that addressing *inter alia* the problems highlighted by its authors is important for the medium and long term success of the war against terrorism (paragraph 209).**

We agree that promoting human development in the Arab region is a key element in tackling the underlying causes of terrorism. This is an important factor in our long-term approach towards the region.

- (bb) **We recommend that, in its response to our own Report, the FCO set out its progress towards a comprehensive strategy for the Arab world, including an explanation of the extent to which it is working with the Department for International Development, the BBC World Service and the British Council on this strategy (paragraph 210).**

We are keen to see in the Arab world, as elsewhere, the application of democratic values and good governance, in particular the rule of law, transparency and accountability. We encourage this through dialogue with governments in the region and with a wide range of others in civil society, based on equality and respect. Our Islamic Media Unit has been engaging systematically with the Arab media on all aspects of foreign policy and has been advising other government departments, including the British Council, on working with these outlets. We have worked to strengthen the links between the British Muslim community and the Arab world, eg through sponsored visits by Muslim Parliamentarians and community leaders to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Tunisia. We have increased funding for the BBCWS, who have put Arabic services on a permanent 24x7 basis and are strengthening their news gathering presence across the region following the Spending Review 2002 discussions with the FCO. We fund a range of projects which support human rights training in schools and universities and human rights for women. Together with EU partners, we have also supported initiatives designed to promote dialogue with Arab countries on human rights and civil society.

We are in close touch with other government departments engaged in complementary activity, for example, with DFID on the promotion of good governance and the rule of law and the British Council on educational reform and contacts between young people. We are currently considering how to take forward this objective most effectively in a comprehensive and co-ordinated way.

(cc) We conclude that the Government is right to engage the leaders of Israel and the Palestinian Authority in an effort to revive the Middle East peace process. We are convinced that this policy must be pursued in parallel with international efforts to address threats from Al Qaeda and from the Iraqi regime (paragraph 220).

The Government continues to give the highest priority to efforts by the international community to revive the Middle East peace process. We recognise that tackling the Middle East conflict is necessary on its own merits, but that the issue must also be pursued in parallel with efforts to combat the threat of international terrorism.

The Prime Minister is personally committed to re-energising the peace process. He invited a Palestinian delegation to London in January to discuss Palestinian reform and nation-building. Reform of the Palestinian Authority is an important element of efforts to work towards a final settlement. The Foreign Secretary hosted the meeting on 14 January with the participation of delegations from the Quartet (US, UN, EU and Russia), Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. The Palestinians were represented in London by the Palestinian delegate, Afif Safieh. Due to the Israeli travel ban introduced after the suicide bombings in Tel Aviv on 5 January, Palestinian Ministers and civil society figures took part by videolink from Ramallah and Gaza.

Discussion in the meeting was wide-ranging and constructive and recognised the Palestinians' clear commitment to the reform of their institutions. The meeting secured a clear Palestinian declaration against violence and terrorism. The international community will support practical action to implement this. The participants applauded the work the Palestinian Authority has done on financial accountability and recognised that the Palestinians need to do more on the judiciary. The Palestinians made a commitment to developing a realistic timetable for free, fair and open elections; to producing an outline constitution by the end of this month; to ensuring public consultation on the draft before finalisation, including a referendum and to further work on judicial reform. This work will require support and encouragement from the international community. The UK and other participants made clear their readiness to assist reform efforts in practical ways.

This meeting in London complements the efforts of the Quartet who met in Washington on 20 December where they made substantial progress on finalising the Roadmap describing the steps to reach a final settlement on the basis of security for Israel and a viable Palestinian state within three years. The next step will be meetings in early February of the Task Force on Palestinian Reform and of Quartet Envoys. It will take action from all sides, including Israel, to maintain momentum and implement the Roadmap. We want to see early publication and successful implementation of the Roadmap once a new Israeli government is in place.

The Government will continue to do all it can to support international efforts to revitalise the Middle East peace process.

(dd) A year after the collapse of the Taliban, the stabilisation of Afghanistan and its surrounding region continues to be a critical objective in the war against terrorism. We urge the Government to continue and, if necessary, to enhance its efforts to stabilise Afghanistan, and to ensure that the lives of ordinary Afghans continue to improve (paragraph 227).

We agree with the Committee's assessment that efforts to stabilise Afghanistan need to continue. The Afghan people should be reassured that the UK remains committed to helping Afghanistan achieve stability, security and prosperity. As part of a huge international effort to rebuild Afghanistan, the UK has given some \$60 million since 11 September to UN agencies and other organisations towards the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan. But a lot more remains to be done. The UK has pledged a further £200 million to avert a humanitarian catastrophe and to improve access to basic health and education.

After successfully leading ISAF for its first six months, the UK contributed around 300 troops under the subsequent Turkish lead and the UK contingent will remain at this level under the German/Dutch lead. The UK remains committed to the reform of the Afghan Security Sector as the key to establishing long-term stability in Afghanistan. We have committed £5.7 million over three years to help establish the Office of the National Security Adviser, which will have a central role in the future security structure. The UK continues to co-ordinate international support for the Afghan Government's tough anti-drugs policies. The 2002 eradication programme destroyed 16,500 hectares of opium poppy, enough to produce 76 tonnes of heroin. The UK has also made significant ongoing financial commitments to supporting reform of the Afghan army, police force and judiciary, as well as work to support disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration.

(ee) While we understand that the US government has obtained valuable intelligence from prisoners detained at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, we are nonetheless concerned that the US government continues to detain many of these prisoners without trial. We recommend that the Government continue to press the US government to move rapidly towards the trial of these alleged terrorists, in accordance with international law (paragraph 238).

The Foreign Secretary has raised the question of detainees in Guantánamo Bay with the US Secretary of State on a number of occasions, most recently on 23 January. UK and US officials are in regular contact on the matter. We are pressing the US to move forward on deciding what to do with the detainees.

(ff) We recommend that the Government supply us with further information about the seven British citizens currently being held, including details about when and how they can expect to be tried, and whether, if found guilty, they will be liable to the death penalty (paragraph 239).

We are pressing the US to decide what to do with the detainees. It is for the US, as the detaining power, to decide whether they are going to prosecute them. We have made clear our view that, if prosecuted, the detainees should receive a fair trial. The US is well aware of the UK's opposition to the death penalty under all circumstances.

(gg) We recommend that, in its response to the Report, the Government set out in detail the Cabinet Office mechanisms for co-ordinating the "government-wide response" to the threat from international terrorism (paragraph 241).

Work is co-ordinated by three ministerial Committees:

the Sub-Committee on International Terrorism (DOP(IT)), chaired by the Prime Minister, which was established after September 11 to oversee the campaign against terrorism;

DOP(IT)(T), chaired by the Home Secretary, which considers assessments of the threat and co-ordinates policy on protective and preventative security in the United Kingdom and;

DOP(IT)(R), also chaired by the Home Secretary, which is responsible for policy on managing the consequences of major terrorist or other disruptive incidents in the UK.

The FCO, under the Foreign Secretary's direction, is responsible for managing the consequences of terrorist incidents affecting British interests overseas.

Departments retain responsibility for their specific areas of expertise, but the work is co-ordinated through a series of committees, which involve both Ministers and officials.

All Government Departments work closely with the emergency services, local authorities and the Devolved Administrations to ensure joined-up planning in all aspects of counter-terrorism. The work covers counter-terrorist activity in the UK and overseas. However, in line with Exemption 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, specific information on the proceedings of Cabinet and Cabinet Committees is not disclosed.

(hh) We recommend that the Government publish and implement the results of its review of the travel advice system at the earliest opportunity (paragraph 248).

The FCO has submitted to the Committee a memorandum and details of the review of its travel advice system. The results of that review have been implemented.

(ii) We recommend that, at the earliest possible date, the Government supply us with a full description of the process according to which travel advice is agreed among Government departments. Specifically, we seek details of the process of collating information in this area; of the relationship between the FCO and the Joint Intelligence Committee in deciding travel advice; and full details of the organisational structure and decision-making process within the Foreign Office, at both official and ministerial level, for the taking of travel advice decisions and issuing them to the public (paragraph 249).

The memorandum referred to above provided the full description requested; the Permanent Under Secretary of the FCO, Sir Michael Jay, also appeared before the Committee on 4 February 2003 to answer further questions on Travel Advice structures from the Committee.

(jj) We conclude that the Government must continue to address with the utmost seriousness its obligation to keep the British public informed of developments in the war against terrorism. This, we believe, is essential to ensure the widest possible public support for Government actions (paragraph 252).

We agree that ensuring that the British public, and indeed communities across the globe, are kept informed of developments in the ongoing campaign against terrorism is an important aspect of that campaign. The Government uses a range of means to disseminate information about the campaign. The Foreign Secretary and his Ministerial colleagues, through Parliament and through the media, continue to deliver key messages about the progress of the campaign. The Committee will have noted that the Government published on 9 September 2002 a comprehensive report on the progress of the campaign. Most recently, the Foreign Secretary made a statement to the House on 21 January following the United Nations Security Council Ministerial meeting. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and other Whitehall Officials and Press Offices maintain regular contact with the UK and foreign media, community groups and NGOs.

The FCO's Islamic Media Unit is also working with English language and foreign language media outlets which target British Muslim communities, in addition to its wider work on communicating with Muslim audiences overseas.

- (kk) We commend the Government’s stated commitment to keep Parliament fully informed of developments in the war against terrorism, through statements to the House, through regular Ministerial meetings with Select Committees, and also through further meetings between the Prime Minister and Select Committees. We look forward to receiving the specific dates of these proposed meetings (paragraph 253).**

We welcome the FAC’s positive comments on the Government’s commitment to keep Parliament informed of developments in the campaign against terrorism including through informing the Committee of relevant Ministerial meetings. The Government will continue to work with the Foreign Affairs and other select committees in order to inform both Houses of Government policy and progress in the campaign.

- (ll) We commend the Government for its firm and committed leadership in the war against terrorism. We conclude that Britain has contributed substantially to ensuring that the “international coalition” remains a reality, more than a year after the devastating terrorist attacks on the United States (paragraph 256).**

The Government endorses the FAC’s comments on the UK’s leading role in the international campaign against terrorism. Terrorism is a continuing and real threat to our interests, and those of the global community. Such a global threat requires an international response. The UK will continue to work with its partners to maintain the long-term momentum behind this international consensus.



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