

One Nation Recovery Papers

Global Britain and Development

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Introduction

Anthony Mangnall MP

This year the Prime Minister announced the merger of the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to create the new Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). The purpose of this was to create a 'new Department charged with using all the tools of British influence to seize the opportunities ahead.'¹

The creation of joint ministers between the FCO and DFID was an early indication of the direction of travel between the two departments. While unsurprising to Westminster hawks, the merger did come as a surprise to many non-governmental organisations and international bodies.

Responses to the decision has been divided both within Westminster and on the international stage. Some have welcomed the move as a concerted effort to align the UK's foreign policy and development aims into a more digestible strategy that reflects the views and objectives of a 'Global Britain' post Brexit. Others have raised concerns that such an act will detract from the UK's internationally applauded aid objectives, undermining our ability to deliver effective assistance to people across the world and help them to escape the hardships of poverty, famine and conflict.

In reality, only time will tell as to whether the decision to merge the departments was the right or wrong one. More pertinent and necessary considerations are how to grasp the opportunities that the merger affords those of us who are passionate about UK aid. How should the department function, what oversight and accountability should be in place, should the UK's global goals and objectives remain the same and what funding structure should be in place to maintain the UK's global leadership on aid assistance?

To address these questions, we explore the ways in which the merger can strengthen UK aid policy through the words of two previous Foreign Secretaries, one former Secretary of State for International Development and four backbench MPs who are making aid a core tenant of their first terms in Westminster.

This paper explores three core concepts surrounding the DFID-FCO merger:

The first considers what the policy priorities of the new FCDO should be, from tackling gender-based violence to the provision of education in the developing world. Our contributors examine how the UK's aid objectives should evolve under an increasingly fractured and inward facing international landscape.

The second is that of the structural integrity and organisation within the FCDO. What ministerial and independent oversight should be in place to scrutinise the UK's aid spend and objectives. What role should the Independent Commission on Aid Impact (ICAI) play and should aid policy be represented around the Cabinet table? How should the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) be spent to ensure that we meet our objectives to world's poorest and to fulfil our 0.7% target?

¹ PMO, PR, [17.06.20](#)

Third, what international engagement should be taken to strengthen our commitments to delivering a meaningful and effective aid programme. Should new international mechanisms and bilateral arrangements be created to enhance the effectiveness of aid and development?

Aid must never be an afterthought. Our country has long been seen as a champion of international development. Covid-19 is just another example of the need for the international community to work together, for the wealthiest nations to support the developing. It is the express hope of those who have contributed to this paper that the UK will maintain its obligations abroad, as well update and reform our aid programme to enhance its reach and effectiveness. By doing so, our country can lift millions more people out of conflict, famine, and poverty.

Recommendations

Below is a summary of all the recommendations made across this report. Not all the recommendations will be agreed to by each author. Each author's recommendations can be found at the end of their contribution.

Recommendations on policy priorities. The Government should:

- Take a more holistic approach to embedding democratic pillars in fragile countries;
- Shift UK aid policy from focusing solely on poverty alleviation to encompassing support for liberal values and human rights;
- Consider using the Global Human Rights sanction regime to target the terrorist group Boko Haram;
- Champion the role of female peacekeepers and encourage countries across the world to recruit more;
- Continue to fund teachers and scholarships in developing countries;
- Use our aid budget to provide greater financial support for bringing those responsible for conflict-related sexual violence to justice; and
- Support efforts to ensure that those delivering justice recognise conflict-related sexual violence as a distinct war crime, provide proper victim support, and collect evidence quickly.

Recommendations on the organisation of the FCDO. The Government should:

- Appoint a strong, Cabinet-attending deputy FCDO minister responsible for international development policy;
- Ensure that the parts of the FCDO responsible for overseas development have very considerable autonomy within the department;
- Change its target to spend 0.7% of gross national income on ODA from an annual target to a multi-year target over a rolling period;
- Continue to highlight how the 0.7% target benefits the UK's national interests;
- Maintain the rigorous scrutiny of the Independent Commission on Aid Impact; and
- Set up a new parliamentary committee to scrutinise ODA spending by all Government departments.

Recommendations on international engagement. The Government should:

- Seek to create an international development alliance with like-minded nations such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand to boost cooperation on shared aid priorities;
- Help deliver justice for Yazidi victims of ISIS by supporting the referral of their cases to the International Criminal Court or set up a new specialist court in the UK;
- Continue to follow OECD rules on ODA;
- Continue to push for reform of international rules to allow a greater proportion of peacekeeping expenses to be designated as ODA; and
- Hold governments in developing countries to account on their commitments to ensure their girls are properly educated.



1 - Towards a new approach to ODA

Anthony Mangnall MP

In 2006 David Cameron, then Leader of the Opposition, committed his future government to spend 0.7% of the UK's Gross National Income each year on aid and in doing so he made history.² In 2013, the UK became one of only a handful of countries to ever meet this UN target.

As a result of this policy decision, millions of lives have been saved or improved as a direct consequence of the UK's commitment to the 0.7% target. Since 2015 alone, the key achievements of the Department for International Development include:³

- Allowing over 14 million children to gain a decent education, 6 million of whom were girls;
- Supporting more than 32 million people with humanitarian assistance, including 10 million women and girls;
- Reaching over 60 million women, children and adolescent girls with nutrition programmes;
- Helping almost 52 million people to gain access to clean water or improved sanitation;
- Supporting almost 4 million people to raise their incomes or maintain or gain a better job or livelihood; and
- Helping to vaccinate 76 million children, saving over 1 million of them from preventable diseases.

Leaving aside the UK's moral duty as an affluent nation to support the less fortunate, our development programme has directly addressed some of the world's greatest challenges. From disease, conflict, and terrorism to migration, famine and climate change, the UK's work has sought to address these issues at source and thereby reduce the long-term cost of implications both to the UK and to rest of the world.

It is precisely due to the effectiveness of UK aid that significant concern has been raised around the merger and the future commitment to 'target 0.7%'. However, while seeking to retain and enshrine the UK's commitment to 0.7%, the opportunity to reform and enhance its effectiveness should not be missed.

A multi-year 0.7% target

The UK's objective in meeting its 0.7% target on aid each calendar year is a commendable goal. As already discussed, it has delivered meaningful and beneficial results to people across the world. However, the current mechanics of meeting this target can lead to aid being spent in a less than effective manner.

² David Cameron, Speech, [2006](#)

³ DFID, WMS, [28.10.19](#)

In 2013 the economy enjoyed better than expected growth. As a result, DfID officials were required to spend an extra £1 billion in the last eight weeks of the year to ensure that they met the 0.7% target. Such action raised significant concerns as to how efficiently budgets and aid programmes are managed.⁴

Similarly, in January 2020 no one could have predicted Covid-19 or the destruction it would wreak on our economy, with GDP down by 20% in the last quarter alone.⁵ This will mean, given the current structure of the 0.7% arrangement, that the UK's spend on aid programmes will be significantly reduced.

Not only do such scenarios jeopardise development programmes that are underway, they limit the ability for the FCDO to create a long-term development programme.

At present the UK's annual 0.7% target is based upon a calendar year. The Treasury requires all government departments to spend at least 80% of their ODA funding by the end of the year.⁶ Not only does this rule reduce the effectiveness of spending, the misalignment with financial years can lead to reduced time for programme spending. A recent report by the Independent Commission for Aid Impact on the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative found that:⁷

“Frequent delays in the disbursement of funds, combined with the FCO’s 80% rule – requiring that 80% of funds be spent by December of the financial year of disbursement – often reduces a 12-month programme to effectively nine or even six months with little notice. Partners across the case studies explained that they sometimes had to spend PSVI funds very fast, with disregard for the quality of programmes, to complete spending before the funding cycle ended.”

Two solutions are available for this issue.

The first is that the 0.7% target could be moved to a multi-year rolling timeframe. In such a scenario, a three-year time scale would strengthen long term aid objectives as well as delivering better outcomes to aid recipients and improved value for money for UK taxpayers.

The second is that the 0.7% target could be synchronised with the Comprehensive Spending Review. Generally held every five years, this would offer greater alignment with departmental allocations and provide reassurance that Overseas Development Aid has a rigorous strategic outlook that compliments longer-term Government objectives.

Such proposals have been raised before. In 2015 the National Audit Office (NAO) reported that:⁸

⁴ FT, [16.01.15](#); NAO, Report, [16.01.15](#)

⁵ ONS, Statistics, [12.08.20](#)

⁶ Nigel Adams MP, HCWA, [15.05.20](#)

⁷ ICAI, ‘Report: The UK’s Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative’, [09.01.20](#)

⁸ NAO, Report, [16.01.15](#)

“The requirement to hit, but not significantly exceed, aid spending equivalent to 0.7 per cent of gross national income every calendar year means the department has to hit a fairly narrow target against a background of considerable uncertainty”.

In their same report, the NAO recommended that the International Development Committee:⁹

“might wish to consider ... whether alternative, more flexible, ways of specifying the ODA target, such as a rolling three-year average would make the Department’s financial management easier and reduce the risks that arise from having to carefully manage both its calendar year and financial year spending.”

Shifting the aid target to a multi-year timeframe would eliminate the annual artificial deadline for ODA spending. It would also encourage greater thought and consideration around how, where and what our aid spend is directed towards. A multi-year funding structure would maintain our steadfast commitment to support the most vulnerable people across the world.

Using ODA to rebuild fragile states

In 2012, David Cameron spoke about his ‘golden thread’ theory around international development, stating that:¹⁰

‘you only get real long-term development through aid if there is also a golden thread of stable government, lack of corruption, human rights, the rule of law, transparent information.’

His concept proved prescient. The World Bank estimates that two-in-three of the world’s extreme poor could live in fragility, conflict, and violent settings by 2030, and that conflict drives 80% of all humanitarian needs.¹¹ Only by addressing these crises at source can we effectively provide room for peace, stability and poverty reduction.

However, the international guidelines limit the extent to which ODA budgets can be used to support peacekeeping efforts. These international guidelines on what constitutes ODA are set by the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC), on which the UK sits. Broadly speaking, international aid counts as ODA if it meets all of the following conditions:¹²

- The aid goes to countries or territories on the DAC list of eligible ODA recipients or to recognised multilateral institutions;
- The aid is provided by official agencies or their executive agencies (e.g. governmental departments);

⁹ NAO, Report, [16.01.15](#)

¹⁰ PMO, Speech, [15.03.12](#)

¹¹ World Bank, Guidance, [22.06.20](#)

¹² OECD, Guidance, [link](#)

- The aid is administered with the promotion of economic development and the welfare of developing countries as its main objective; and
- The aid is concessional in character, with any loans including a grant element reaching a certain threshold, tapered by the income classification of the country (e.g. 45% grant element for bilateral loans to Lower Developed Countries).

Added to which, there are additional restrictions in place for many forms of security-related aid, including limits on the proportion of spending on peacekeeping missions that can be designated as ODA.¹³

In 2016, the UK was at the forefront of pushing reforms that increased the share of peacekeeping costs that could be allocated as ODA to its current 15%. This included allowing aid to be used to support militaries in fragile countries on issues that promote development, such as human rights and the prevention of sexual violence, all to be classified as ODA.¹⁴

The UK's reforming zeal must continue. Pushing the DAC to increase the share of peacekeeping funding that can be allocated as ODA will encourage more states to prioritise the strengthening of fragile and war-torn states.

But peacekeeping operations are just the first step in supporting fragile states on a pathway to stability. As the Commission on State Fragility, Growth and Development noted in their final report on "Escaping the fragility trap", more needs to be done to give fragile states the building blocks of effective democracy.¹⁵ Going forward, the UK and our allies need to place greater effort into supporting fragile states to establish the pillars of democracy – constitutional checks and balances, the rule of law, and power-sharing – rather than leap head first into political elections.

By supporting short-term stability through greater peacekeeping missions and a more holistic approach to supporting states on their road to democracy, the UK can turn that golden thread of stable government into a golden rod that breaks the vicious cycle of conflict and poverty.

International Engagement on ODA

As part of the DAC, the UK's spending on ODA currently places it third out of over twenty members.¹⁶

The direction of the OECD and its members is based on a soft-touch approach. No member is required to spend on any one specific issue or area. As a result, across the globe there is significant duplication of work in attempting to tackle the same issues. Education relief and action to tackle gender-based violence are two such examples.

¹³ OECD, 'The ODA Coefficient for UN Peacekeeping Operations Explained', [link](#)

¹⁴ DFID, PR, [19.02.16](#)

¹⁵ Commission on State Fragility, Growth and Development, "Escaping the fragility trap", April 2018, [link](#)

¹⁶ OECD, 'Aid by DAC members', [16.04.20](#)

The UK should, under its 'post Brexit, Global Vision' mantra, seek to create an international development alliance from members of the OECD to enhance further cooperation and work on specific aid issues within specific regions.

Canada, Australia, and New Zealand's aid programmes are all in many ways aligned to that of the UK's, with similar areas of focus and spheres of operations. Greater levels of collaboration and joint action between our four countries would enhance the effectiveness of each nation's aid budget, develop international cooperation and improve outcomes.

At a time when international cooperation and multilateral bodies are under great strain and their ability to tackle major global crises and problems questioned, we must seek to create new and robust networks that maintain the rules-based order as well as fulfil our moral and ethical duties.

Conclusions

The UK's action around international development has been forward looking and progressive. From becoming one of the only nations to adopt and reach the 0.7% target to reforming international rules on ODA and promoting peace and security, our country can rightly call itself a global leader in aid and international development.

The new FCDO offers an opportunity for reform, to build upon our record by creating longer term strategies through a multi-year approach to the 0.7% threshold and further reforming international rules to bolster the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions. Added to which the merger offers the opportunity for a new era of international cooperation. By taking these opportunities, the UK will retain its reputation as an international development superpower.

Recommendations

The Government should:

- 1) Change its target to spend 0.7% of gross national income on ODA from an annual target to a multi-year target over a rolling period;
- 2) Continue to push for reform of international rules to allow a greater proportion of peacekeeping expenses to be designated as ODA;
- 3) Take a more holistic approach to embedding democratic pillars in fragile countries; and
- 4) Seek to create an international development alliance with like-minded nations such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand to boost cooperation on shared aid priorities.



2 - Using aid to support liberal values

The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, former Foreign Secretary

Where next for UK Aid? With the merger of DFID and the FCO and worries about government commitment to 0.7% these are turbulent times for Conservatives like me who are strong supporters of our international aid programme.

Prior to entering parliament I set up a small charity that built schools in Kenya for AIDS orphans and my first role as a new MP was on the international development select committee. I was part of a delegation to the DRC which visited Panzi hospital in Bukavu. I will never forget meeting the inspirational (and subsequent Nobel Peace prize winner) Dr Dennis Mukwege who set it to help women who had been raped and abused in that country's terrible conflict. I met Dr Mukwege again as Foreign Secretary and was proud to support my predecessor William Hague's remarkable campaign to stop sexual violence being used as a weapon in conflict.

The roots for our party's commitment to international development go deep, not least because of the work done by Andrew Mitchell as Development Secretary. His leadership did not just secure Britain's place as a development superpower, it changed our party too. The many trips he led to Rwanda with Project Umubano, two of which I joined, meant that many young party activists learned for themselves what it means to be a compassionate Conservative.

But supporting such values - as I passionately do - does not mean being rigid about changes that need to be made to aid policy. The biggest of these concerns poverty. When DFID was set up its focus was rightly on poverty - but that was in a period, not long after Bob Geldof Band Aid, when Africa and other developing countries had not acquired the capitalist bug.

Now in most African capitals to drive from the airport into the city centre is to drive past gleaming billboards for mobile phone companies and shiny new office buildings. There are still, for sure, pockets of shocking poverty throughout Africa but the majority of countries are on a well-trodden path to prosperity. This means that the focus of our aid policy needs to shift from being largely about poverty alleviation to encompassing support for the liberal values we hold dear: healthy parliamentary democracy, an independent judiciary, a free media and freedom of worship, especially for Christians whose persecution has often been overlooked.

The most important dividing line in the 21st century will be between those who support such values and those who do not. And Britain, with its long history of support for freedom and the rule of law, has a vital role to play in that debate as part of an alliance of democracies who share our world view.

In making that happen the Foreign Office, with its superb network of diplomats, has a vital role to play. That is why the DFID merger may turn out to be both timely and beneficial. Our commitment to alleviating the poverty of the poorest nations in the world must never be in doubt, which is why the junior Foreign Office minister responsible for development should sit round the cabinet table.

But if we get this right, the new super department could be a much stronger British voice, championing the values of open societies at a critical moment in history.

Recommendations

The Government should:

- 5) Shift UK aid policy from focusing solely on poverty alleviation to encompassing support for liberal values and human rights; and
- 6) Invite a FCDO minister responsible for development policy to attend Cabinet.



3 – UK Aid Flies the Flag for Britain and is a Vital Tool of Soft Power

Theo Clarke MP

Why UK aid is important

With the recent merger of the Department for International Development (DFID) into the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, coupled with the economic challenges of COVID-19, question marks are once again shrouding the UK's aid budget. However, changes in Whitehall should not distract from the fundamental point as to why we have a foreign aid budget.

The simple truth is aid works. As has been shown time and time again, UK aid saves the lives of the poorest, and most desperate people across the world, not just benefiting those who have the least but also helping to keep us in Britain safe too. UK aid assists in the prevention of terrorism, mass migration and piracy - scourges that all too often flourish in places of extreme poverty and fragility.

When we look at our world's current predicament, paralysed by a previously unknown pandemic, more pertinent than ever we see the impact of UK aid - helping to make the world healthier. This is a common thread throughout history. Through our partnership with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the UK has helped to vaccinate more than 760 million children worldwide against deadly diseases, preventing more than 13 million needless deaths. More recently, UK aid has helped defeat Ebola in Sierra Leone, and thanks to our contributions we are on the brink of eradicating polio from the globe forever.

We should be proud that through our aid budget the UK is saving millions of lives, and giving millions more the chance of a better future. We should be proud that our Government has invested girls' education as it leads to global prosperity, with the facts showing that if all girls went to school for 12 years, low and middle-income countries could add \$92 billion per year to their economies. A country that chooses to send dedicated people and resources to help those most in need, without remittance or reparation. A country that chooses to confront the dangerous and complex challenges of our world, against a global backdrop of increasing interconnectivity and malice. A country that chooses to be present for others in need. Our values as a nation are transparent.

It is here that UK aid is also helping to keep the world safe, protecting us all, at home and abroad, from forces that would do us harm. One example etched into memory is that of our work in Iraq. Thanks to the UK aid-funded mine clearance mission in the country, in 2018 more than a million displaced Iraqis, whose lives had been devastated by Daesh, were able to return safely home.

It should be well noted by now that when faced with conflict, disease, or no jobs, those in lower-income countries are more likely to seek refuge in Europe and are easy targets for extremist organisations. Investment in education, healthcare and jobs are key to tackling the sources of mass migration, destabilisation, and radicalisation. Just as the UK has done in Iraq, to counter these issues, which so often end up on our own shores, we must tackle their root causes. Our mission in

Iraq shows at its most germane how UK aid programmes across fragile states intersect with the big crises of the day - helping to make us all safer and ultimately Britain stronger.

But it doesn't end there. By supporting the development of growing economies, the UK's aid budget is helping to make the world more prosperous. The example of South Korea shows the power of UK aid in garnering shared prosperity. Having successfully graduated from being a former UK aid recipient to a high-income country, today South Korea is one of the UK's top trading partners in East Asia, providing jobs, investment and trade for Britain too. The UK now trades billions of pounds worth of goods and services with South Korea - and it all started with an aid budget.

Development can help champion our Global Britain ambitions

But it is not just more trading opportunities that fortified development strategies will bring in our soon to be post-Brexit world. As the Prime Minister has rightly set out, our post-Brexit goal is to become a truly Global Britain. Two sides of the same coin, development and diplomacy are both needed to get there. Our aid budget has a crucial role to play in achieving our Global Britain ambitions.

For generations, the UK's commitment to international development has sent out a clear message about our values as a country. We are outward-facing, tolerant, compassionate, and we respect democracy, the rule of law and human rights. The very same values that run through the Conservative Party.

As we so often see, the food, tents and other supplies that we distribute to those in need, are proudly marked with the Union Jack - its symbol helping to spread goodwill for our country in communities across the world. But it doesn't stop there. Our commitment to helping the world's poorest provides Britain with prestige and power on the world stage, opening doors at the highest level, strengthening our hand in global diplomacy. In particular, our diplomatic service is famous the world over, its hand ever-reinforced by our aid budget. UK aid programmes give our diplomats the necessarily political weight to succeed, helping them to reduce conflict and fortify Britain's relationships overseas.

The Commonwealth is yet another platform from which the UK's leadership is bolstered by our aid budget, ever-invigorating our clout amongst friends and allies. We are proud members of this group, full of young and diverse nations, full of ambition and potential. Over the past 23 years, DFID has worked closely with our partners across the Commonwealth to ensure that aid is cogent and efficient. This relationship must continue through the work of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

FCDO must maintain transparency and accountability in aid spending to ensure public support

Of course, the British public has a proud history of supporting those in need. We are a generous people, donating well over £10 billion each year to charitable causes from our own pockets. This considerable charitable spending serves as valiant proof of the British public's altruism. But people across the UK equally, and fairly, want to know how and where taxpayers' money is being spent. They want to see that our aid budget is making the real difference we all want it to. This is no bad thing. To achieve this scrutiny for the British public, the new FCDO must make clear two priorities.

1. Transparency

To ensure UK aid remains as effective as possible, it is vital that the new FCDO retains the high level of scrutiny and transparency achieved in DFID. Key to this, a cross-Government Committee, separate from the FCDO's departmental select committee, should be set up to scrutinise aid spending by all Government departments. The Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI), the independent aid watchdog, should remain intact too, and it should report into this new committee as the National Audit Office does to the Public Accounts Committee.

2. How the aid budget is spent

Although reform would be beneficial, the FCDO should stick to the Official Development Assistance (ODA) rules. It is in Britain's national interest to have an orderly, rules-based international system, rather than a global free-for-all. In doing this, we can ensure that the quality, poverty focus and value for money of other countries' aid investments match our own high standards. If UK aid abandons the ODA rules entirely, others will follow, and Russia and China will look to count their military spending as aid, furthering their aims of destabilisation.

In a post-Covid and post-Brexit world, the UK has an opportunity to cement our position as a leader on the global stage. Our commitment to international development and the aid budget will be central to this objective. The new FCDO can build on the great work of DFID, whilst also making the case to the public of why aid spending is the right and moral thing to do.

Recommendations

The Government should:

- 7) Set up a new parliamentary committee to scrutinise ODA spending by all Government departments; and
- 8) Continue to follow OECD rules on ODA.



4 – Delivering justice for victims of conflict-related sexual violence

Laura Farris MP

The crimes committed by ISIS against women and girls are unlike anything we have witnessed in modern times. Although sexual violence in conflict is nothing new, the systematic capture, enslavement and violence against Yazidi women was extraordinary in its scale and depravity.

The reality is that most of these crimes will go unpunished – just as they did in Rwanda and the Balkans. In April 2019, Amal Clooney, Counsel for Nadia Murad, the Nobel Laureate and Yazidi survivor, told the UN Security Council that thousands of perpetrators are held by coalition-backed Syrian Democratic Forces who lack the logistical support for extended detention. Thousands more ISIS fighters are detained in Iraq. Even if they are brought to trial, the UN has reported a lack of ‘due process’, charges that are simplified – usually confined to terrorism – and only one sanction, the death penalty.

Neither route delivers justice to Yazidi women.

What then can be done to prevent sexual violence at a global level and how can the UK meaningfully lead this effort?

The starting point is the international framework. The UN Security Council Resolution 2106 and the Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict adopted by G8 Foreign Ministers in 2013 signalled the first paradigm shift within the international community for treating sexual violence as a distinct war crime. But it was not until September 2017 that UN Resolution 2379 mandated the establishment of an Investigative Team to collect and preserve evidence for use in national courts of international crimes carried out by ISIS and support their domestic prosecution in lieu of referrals to the International Criminal Court. This has led to some important milestone cases with the first ever trial concerning genocide against Yazidi women by an ISIS fighter held in Frankfurt in April 2020.

However, trials such as these are the tip of the iceberg. Any meaningful attempt to prevent sexual violence in conflict can only succeed if perpetrators believe that those crimes will be punished. We cannot allow these horrific crimes to be committed with impunity. There are a number of options for addressing this available to the international community in all of which the UK could and should play a leading role.

First, such cases could be referred to the International Criminal Court. This is the preferred route of many Yazidi victims but has been complicated in recent years by scepticism shown towards the Court by the US and Russia, but this something that is almost certain to be viewed differently under Joe Biden’s forthcoming presidency.

Second, the UK should seek set up a specialist court based in the UK through a new treaty, specifically designated to hear claims of sexual violence and staffed by international prosecutors and judges with specialist experience.

Regardless of which of these avenues are pursued, the UK should seek to be at the forefront of cultural and evidential efforts to support these trials. First, the Government must ensure that security services and peacekeepers understand the crime to be a distinct war crime and treat it as such. Second, there needs to be proper victim support so that women do not feel shamed into withholding their stories. Third, there needs to be a commitment and focus on timely evidence gathering so that specialist courts have a reasonable chance of securing convictions. Finally, the Government must use our aid budget provide greater financial support for bringing those who commit these atrocities to justice.

None of this will happen overnight and can only hope to succeed if other significant partners share our commitment. But if a global coalition of 79 countries was able to agree that ISIS had to be defeated at all costs, it does not seem too much of a stretch that most could also agree that its most notorious crime must not go unpunished. Preventing sexual violence from occurring in the first place will only be possible if the international community can successfully deliver justice when it does.

Recommendations

The Government should:

- 9) Use our aid budget to provide greater financial support for bringing those responsible for conflict-related sexual violence to justice;
- 10) Help deliver justice for Yazidi victims of ISIS by supporting the referral of their cases to the International Criminal Court or set up a new specialist court in the UK; and
- 11) Support efforts to ensure that those delivering justice recognise conflict-related sexual violence as a distinct war crime, provide proper victim support, and collect evidence quickly.



5 - Maintaining a voice for International Development in the Cabinet

The Rt Hon Sir Malcolm Rifkind, former Foreign Secretary

As the last Foreign Secretary who had overall responsibility for overseas aid, I am delighted to welcome the proposed merger of the Department for International Development back into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office – with one major caveat which I will come to later.

I am a strong supporter of overseas aid, in which the United Kingdom is, rightly, a world leader. There is, of course, an ethical obligation for the richer countries of the world to help the poorest as they emerge from poverty and underdevelopment.

The United Kingdom, having been the British Empire and, now, a leading member of the Commonwealth, has a particular responsibility which it has never shirked regardless of which political party has been in power.

Overseas aid is an expression of soft power and I have always been sceptical of those who believe that foreign policy considerations should never influence the disbursement of the resources that are available to the government. It was such a view that led Tony Blair's government to make DFID a separate Government ministry in 1997.

No one country can help every nation around the world which needs aid and support. Choices and priorities must be identified. It is not unreasonable that we should concentrate on those countries with whom we have a historic and, through the Commonwealth, a continuing connection. There are also other countries where our relationship may be more recent but where we can have a legitimate and respectable aspiration to win their friendship and support on wider foreign policy objectives, as well as helping them realise their development aspirations.

The resources that have been available to DFID are not modest, at around £10 billion a year. David Cameron can claim the credit for making the UK one of the few countries that meets the UN target of 0.7% of GDP in the funding of overseas aid.

That was commendable. What was not was to embed that 0.7% in an Act of Parliament, making it the law of the land that, regardless of the state of the economy or of the public finances, International Development would be guaranteed a fixed percentage of Britain's GDP. Neither the NHS, nor education, nor defence nor social security have such protection.

But the reality has been even more foolish. While the percentage of GDP is fixed, inevitably the sum DFID receives each year is not – it changes according to the state of the economy. This has meant DFID's budget has not been predictable, and its fluctuations have, in a number of years, led the department to have more resources at its disposal than it knew what to do with at the time.

Few other Western countries have overseas aid disbursed by a separate government department – and the disadvantages of DFID being separate from the Foreign Office are clear. Firstly, DFID, in taking decisions as to whether to provide millions of pounds to one country rather than another does not need to consider whether it will assist or confuse the UK's wider foreign policy. The Foreign Secretary may not wish to help a particular country because of its poor human rights record. The DFID Secretary might take the view that the aid that is to be provided is more important and is, in any event, not directly relevant to the human rights situation. The outcome is confusion, both in this country and in the recipient country, as to what the policies and priorities of Her Majesty's Government are.

There are also disagreements as to how much of the aid budget should be distributed as bilateral aid from the UK to particular countries, and how much should be given to UN humanitarian or development agencies or other global institutions. The Foreign Secretary is likely to prefer aid projects going to particular countries rather than international institutions because of the specific benefits that can be obtained for Britain's wider foreign policy, while DFID would be unwilling to apply such a criterion.

Put simply, there needs to be a structure that ensures that such Aid is not disbursed either to a country, or in a manner, that would clash with and damage the UK's wider foreign policy. And so I welcome the return of DFID to the Foreign Office for that reason.

But, as I said, there is a caveat. I strongly urge the government to ensure that DFID should have very considerable autonomy within the Foreign Office, as it did in my day. Indeed there is no reason why it should not continue to have in day-to-day charge, a Minister of Cabinet status. The Foreign Secretary should work very closely with the relevant Minister and only intervene when it is important in respect of the UK's wider foreign policy objectives.

I had Lynda Chalker as the Minister in charge of what was then called Overseas Development Assistance. She was not in the Cabinet but should have been. She was the best Overseas Aid Minister the UK has ever had. The Foreign Office had two Cabinet Ministers when Sir Ian Gilmour worked with Lord Carrington, though Carrington, as Foreign Secretary, had the last word. A similar set-up should be re-adopted now.

There will inevitably be an outcry at this news – from the aid lobby, Labour, the Lib Dems and from the Guardian, who will claim that this merger is a sinister plot whose purpose is to decimate the aid budget and make the poor poorer. Such claims are nonsense and it will be easy for the Government to demonstrate that that is the case.

Critics have to realise that the Foreign Office has been significantly weakened in recent years. The Foreign Secretary no longer had any responsibility for Overseas Aid; International Trade had a Department of its own, and the Foreign Secretary was excluded from Brexit negotiations, despite the massive consequences for British foreign policy of leaving the EU.

It is to the Prime Minister's credit that that unhealthy situation is now being reversed. Dominic Raab is not just the Foreign Secretary; he has also been designated the First Secretary of State. The change of status as regards DFID should also be seen as part of that process and is to be much welcomed.

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Recommendations

The Government should:

- 12) Appoint a strong, Cabinet-attending deputy FCDO minister responsible for international development policy; and
- 13) Ensure that the parts of the FCDO responsible for overseas development have very considerable autonomy within the department.



6 – Protecting our promise to the poorest

The Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP, former International Development Secretary

This has been a difficult year for International Development and for Britain's well-respected leadership. At a time when narrow nationalism is on the march around the world – think Presidents Trump, Xi Jinping, Putin and Prime Minister Modi, to name but four – the international rules-based system is in retreat. Yet as we survey the challenges facing us – think climate change, protectionism, pandemics, migration and terrorism, to name but five – we can see that international cooperation has never been more needed.

No doubt the British Government's Integrated Review of Defence and Security will put more flesh on the bones of Global Britain and demonstrate how we intend to deploy our substantial role in world affairs post Brexit. Britain generally punches above its weight: we are one of the permanent five at the United Nations, in or out of the EU we are a major European presence, the second most effective member of NATO, and a major player in the north-south organisation that is the Commonwealth. And we have the English language with all its commercial and literary benefits.

We have seen the dismantling of DFID and its full integration into the Foreign Office. This is very different from the pre-DFID days when the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) was a sub-department within the FCO. There is a danger that British development policy and its role in our "Global Britain" offer could become blurred. But with careful effort it can still be highly effective – not least due to our commitment to the 0.7% promise. Under the old arrangements DFID, along with the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office, was at the heart of the National Security Council where diplomacy, development and defence were wired together into a coherent national policy. The NSC gave the Prime Minister a line of sight over British foreign policy in its broadest forms.

The challenge for the FCDO will be to recognise that development is not the same as foreign policy but that every penny we spend through the 0.7% serves Britain's national interests. And while the money is crucial, maintaining the morale of the great civil servants who deliver Britain's development policies, the academics from Britain's brilliant universities who help fashion them, the leaders amongst Britain's outstanding international NGOs and charities who are so often on the frontline of poverty alleviation, as well as the renowned think tanks that drive forward policy development, is crucial too.

Ensuring that the development budget is well spent is vitally important and requires constant attention if we are to have any chance of persuading of a sceptical public of its value. It is not just the moral case, it is the national self-interest case which above all shows how British development spending is used to build prosperity and tackle conflict for those we seek to help, but with massive benefits for us as we try to tackle the huge discrepancies of wealth and opportunities which disfigure our world. It makes us both safer and more prosperous here at home too.

If the case for 0.7% is not continuously made, the tide goes out on this important aspect of Global Britain amongst the public. And it can be made. In 2012, after two years of austerity in which the

Cameron-led government declined to balance the books on the backs of the poorest people in the world, support amongst the public at large for our international development policies went up from 46% to nearly 50%. Support was stronger amongst women and yet more so amongst those under the age of 35.

Part of the reason for this increase in support was the decision to set up a body for clear, independent evaluation – the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI). This watchdog reported not to Ministers (the executive), who can sweep inconvenient truths under the carpet, but to Parliament (the legislature) in the form of a select committee who also task the ICAI and publish their reports. The ICAI has become the taxpayers' friend.

Our aim should be to ensure that we can always have confidence – independently provided – that when a pound of hard-earned money is being spent on development, we are really getting 100 pence of delivery on the ground. When I set up the ICAI in 2010 there was unrest all round. The development sector worried that a 'bean counter' had been put in charge of assessing the effectiveness of International Development while civil servants fretted that they would be held to additional account. The truth is that Britain is good at International Development. We take the plaudits when we deserve them and rightly so. We must also put up our hands when things go wrong and immediately sort it out. This change in the quality and extent of evaluation was further enhanced by the Aid Transparency Guarantee led by Britain and Sweden – the first countries to publish all expenditure above £500 online for all to see.

The Prime Minister has made clear that Britain will stand by its 0.7% commitment. This is welcome. The rules governing this expenditure are clearly laid down by the 30 member countries of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD set up by the Americans after the war. There are voices in government saying we will stand by the 0.7% commitment, but that these rules need to be 'tweaked' domestically to reflect the different priorities of the UK. These are siren voices. Were the rules to be changed unilaterally, by Britain we would be pulling a thread from the international system that even President Trump has declined to do. If Britain were to make her own rules, as night follows day the money would be plundered by stronger voices within Whitehall and spent on battleships and bullets instead of on international development.

The 0.7% and the rules are two sides of the same coin. Indeed, the rules are the most important of the two. Take away the rules and there is no more 0.7%. A vital element of the international respect in which Britain has been held around the world will have been destroyed as the UK goes back on the promise we have made to the poorest people on the planet. As Bishop Desmond Tutu has said "a promise to the poorest is a sacred thing".

Recommendations

The Government should:

- 14) Continue to highlight how the 0.7% target benefits the UK's national interests;
- 15) Maintain the rigorous scrutiny of the Independent Commission on Aid Impact;
and
- 16) Continue to follow OECD rules on ODA.



7 - Make girls' education, education, education the war cry of the new FCDO

Nickie Aiken MP

Even before COVID-19, the world faced profound geopolitical, economic, and environment change. The USA is inward looking; China is undertaking an assertive foreign policy agenda and Russia is continuing its hostile stance towards the West while the UK seeks to re-establish itself as a nation free from the restraints of EU membership. As international bodies appear weaker against these growing national interests, democracy and fundamental basic human rights are under increasing threat. This leaves girls in developing countries more at risk of losing their hard-fought freedoms than ever before.

Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, established in 1989, every child has the right to a quality education. Sadly 263 million children around the world remain out of school with twice as many girls as boys never even beginning an education. According to UNESCO estimates, 130 million girls between the age of 6 and 17 are out of school and 15 million girls of primary-school age — half of them in sub-Saharan Africa — will never enjoy a single day in a classroom.

Someone once famously stood up and said his priority would be “education, education, education.” Given the importance of education in ensuring economic growth and social change, this should be the war cry of our approach to aid policy.

The importance supporting strong education worldwide is one of the merger of the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office should be welcomed. For far too long a disconnect had grown between our foreign policy aims and international aid objectives. The newly formed Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is now perfectly set to provide big, brave and bold goals to make a concerted effort to improve the lives of the world's poorest and ensure our national interests are also protected.

The new department should start by continuing with DFID's outstanding and respected Strategic Vision for Gender Equality and specifically place the championing of girls' education at its heart. It should also hold governments in developing countries to account on their commitments to ensure their girls are properly educated and consider withholding aid if individual governments fail to take reasonable action to achieve this.

Going beyond this, the new FCDO should prioritise action in the following areas to promote gender equality:

- Ending child and forced marriage
- Confronting outdated values within developing communities
- Tackling poverty and the causes of poverty

Ending Child and Forced Marriage

Tackling [the heinous practice of child marriage](#) must be a critical objective in improving the lives of the world's most vulnerable. ActionAid estimates that 250 million women living today were married before they reached 15. Child brides are less likely to finish their schooling and are often drop out of education before those who marry later. This has known knock on effects for the education and health of their own children, as well as the family's health and financial well-being. It is estimated that more than 41,000 girls under the age of 18 marry every day.

Ending this practice would help increase women and girls' expected educational attainment and improve their potential job opportunities. I believe it would also likely help in addressing violence against girls and women which is often linked to such practices as child marriages.

One action the Government could consider taking is using their new Global Human Rights sanction regime to target the terrorist group Boko Haram - whose name translated means "Western education is forbidden" - and their backers in Nigeria. Infamous for their kidnapping of girls from schools in 2013, the group continues to kidnap girls and force them into marriage in Nigeria and other parts of North West Africa.

Confronting Outdated Views of Women and Girls

Ending child marriage is one thing but the practice is deeply embedded in many areas of the world and we won't persuade more families to send their girls to school unless some of the major societal norms and deep-rooted outdated beliefs are confronted head on. There is a connection between the low value placed on girls and the desire to control them and particularly their sexuality and lack of support for a girl's education with many of the poorest and most conservative communities in the world.

One of the most significant ways to begin to question and change these mores is in supporting programmes that target boys and men to be a part of discussions about cultural and societal practices and demonstrating the importance to a family's economic and general well being if their women are properly educated. The FCDO must support a softly softly approach funding flexible school timetables and a curriculum that begins with the basics and is relevant to their daily lives. In the most traditional of communities classrooms may have to be within the village setting to build families and elders with the confidence that educating girls will benefit the whole community

The Government could also focus on championing the role of women peacekeepers. Women peacekeepers are better able to access populations in communities with outdated values, interviewing and supporting survivors of sexual violence, generating critical information which would otherwise be difficult to reach. Furthermore, they can serve as powerful mentors and role models for women and girls in post-conflict settings helping to challenge outdated values. While women now account for 6% of deployed uniformed personnel, up from 1% of in 1993, more remains to be done and the Government should encourage countries across the world to recruit more female peacekeepers.

Alleviating Poverty Through Education

Preventing child marriage and addressing society norms are all very well and important but poverty remains an important factor for determining whether a girl can access an education. For many girls in the poorest communities, families chose to marry them as young as possible for the dowry they will attract and having one less person to feed. They are little more than a commodity.

If more families are to be encouraged to send their daughters to school the education must be free or cost very little. FCDO can help by continuing to fund teachers, particularly qualified female teachers, and scholarships; reducing the distance to school by building more of them even in the most isolated of places. Thought should also be given by the FCDO in new innovative ways of paying families a dividend or such like to allow their daughter to attend school to make up for the loss of a dowry or work they may undertake to support the household income.

Investing in girls' education creates a ripple effect: educated girls tend to delay their first pregnancies, have healthier children, earn more income for the family, and are far more likely to send their own children to school. The result: better off families and communities.

Conclusion

The benefits of educating girls speak for themselves with positive effects carrying on from one generation to the next. Research suggests that a child born to a literate mother is 50 percent less likely to die before the age of 5 and every extra year of education is estimated to increase a girl's earning power by 10 to 20 per cent. The benefits for a country's economic growth is also unquestionable: The World Bank calculates that a 1% increase in female education raises the average gross domestic product (GDP) by 0.3% and annual GDP growth rates by 0.2%.

The UK is already providing lifesaving and life changing relief for girls in developing countries and those displaced in the ever-growing refugee camps across the world. Save the Children research reveals that four million refugee children across the world are out of school and missing out on their right to an education due to displacement, poverty and exclusion.

By considering some of the recommendations of this report, the FCDO can continue the world-leading work of DFID in promoting gender equality, providing girls in developing countries with the education they deserve, and secure our country's standing as an international development superpower.

Recommendations

The Government should:

- 17) Hold governments in developing countries to account on their commitments to ensure their girls are properly educated;
- 18) Consider using the Global Human Rights sanction regime to target the terrorist group Boko Haram;
- 19) Champion the role of female peacekeepers and encourage countries across the world to recruit more; and
- 20) Continue to fund teachers and scholarships in developing countries.